

A Biodynamic Rite of Passage

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A biodynamic clinical session is a *rite of passage*. It is a three-step process of perception and prayer. Integrating factors from medical and cultural anthropology into a contemporary state of mind, body and spirit includes the following:

Step One – The Neutral

The intention in the beginning of a session is to stabilize the *wind of water and earth* elements in the client. In the body, the water and earth elements are conjoined as biological water with dozens of different fluids especially the interstitium and fascia. The fluid body is the *water-earth body*. In Tibetan Medicine their combination has a neurological fulcrum (of several) in the brain and body called the autonomic nervous system. The wind moves the water just as stress physiology moves the autonomic nervous system. It is the same metaphor. We perceive our fluid body as waves, currents, streaming, swelling and receding. When we meditate the perception and balancing of the earth element is enhanced by mindfulness of gravity and weightedness in the body. The posture itself is enlightenment as Suzuki Roshi said in *Zen Mind - Beginners Mind*.

We then attune to Primary Respiration. The client naturally attunes to our internal states (and us to their internal states) as we move our *fulcrum* of perception for Primary Respiration between the third ventricle of our brain and the horizon following the initial exploration of a meditation posture and the fluid body. We are an interconnected two-person biology reciprocally establishing a felt sense of safety. We allow that fulcrum to automatically shift to the heart-to-heart connection with the client. When the wind and waves of stress physiology in the client begin to settle by attunement to the therapist's state of abiding in the calmness and serenity of not knowing how to help, a neutral is perceived. This is a slowing down in the relational field and also a stillpoint capable of expanding to the horizon. This is the wind of space opening the door to transformation determined by the intelligence of the elements. Such a stillpoint is clear and potent rather than inert and dissociated which is the other end of the spectrum of the dorsal vagus being overstimulated and accessing an instinctual state of withdrawal. Dr. Jealous said to "wait, watch, and wonder."

Step Two – Ignition

The perception of the wind of water, earth, and space generates an Ignition, a transition to the healing priorities of the elements. They move in a therapeutic direction assisted primarily by the diligence of the therapist maintaining a container of safety and open awareness. Ignition is about the *wind of fire*. The fire element needs to be contained and redirected in between the core of the body: the pleural, pericardial and peritoneal cavities, and the sleeve of the body consisting of the muscular skeletal system and skin. This is the triple warmer in classical Chinese medicine. The primary fulcrum of the fire element in the body is the superior mesenteric artery.

The superior mesenteric artery is the first artery in the abdomen and pelvis of the embryo to develop. It arises simultaneously with the mesentery, the anchor of the intestines on the posterior abdominal wall. It holds and nurtures the entire small intestine and 2/3 of the large intestine. It is the source of heat that digests our food from an elemental point of view. Just as there are five fulcrums of Primary Respiration, the fire element has five fulcrums that include the superior mesenteric artery, the liver, the heart, the eyes, and the skin. The constancy of physical contact skin-to-skin, a form of kangaroo mother care in a biodynamic session, conducts heat and can naturally settle the wind of the digestive fire. The therapist must learn to belly breathe and place the wind in the abdomen surrounding and filling the superior mesenteric artery. This is achieved by concentrating on the focal point of the lower dantian for inhalation and exhalation. This type of breath is a gentle exploration of softening and opening the tensions held within the peritoneal cavity of abdomen and pelvis rather than a forceful mechanical pushing of the breath which just creates more waves and hotter fire.

The wind of fire is the greatest modifier of temperature and the intensity of the lava flow of inflammation. Understanding the hot volcanic goddess Pele in the legend of Maui from Hawaii, helps us understand the alchemical transformation of food being digested when something melts to become a different shape

or form from bile to feces, from blood to urine. The abdomen is now the *critical geography* of therapeutic input in the contemporary client. It must be contacted as frequently as is appropriate for a client. A map is not the territory.

Ignition requires a strong container as the client has a foot in both worlds. There is a foot with its roots in the history and gestation of whatever condition or syndrome is presently arising. And at the same time because of the neutral, the client now has a foot in the world of healing outside ordinary space and time. The client has access to the extraordinary space and time of the elements present from the beginning of the universe and coming to human form at conception. Thus, this phase in the biodynamic rite of passage must maintain an even stronger container for the client to navigate fearlessly between the seduction of one world to the other unknown world without interference such as excessive curiosity by the therapist or the client insisting on keeping their cell phone available during a session. Ignition is the phase of bearing witness and building accurate therapeutic empathy for holding the client in their totality and uniqueness with loving kindness and humility. It is their process that must be honored and remain free of inappropriate interventions and the overly zealous desire to help. The client cannot be helped in a conventional sense, rather in the extraordinary sense.

Step Three – The Health

When Pele is satisfied and calmed by the cooling breeze of Primary Respiration, like a fountain of water springing from the lower dantian, the final stage of the biodynamic rite of passage can occur. The last stage is the *wind of space* deeply manifesting its grace and sacred sound located in the inner ear, vision in the eyes, the inner heart and the entire rhythmic pulsation of the vascular system. This is the Health, a mind balanced by the wind of space in the heart and lower dantian. This is called potency in osteopathy. All such movement motivated by the wind as Primary Respiration is centered by the element of space, a self-knowing, non-thought awareness. Our perception periodically brings this awareness to the foreground and Primary Respiration fades automatically into the background. Thoughts become particles of space and the breath is discovered to be everything and nothing more than the wind of Primary Respiration moving the respiratory diaphragm. It is the flow of grace. Unbiased and non-judgmental choiceless awareness allows the physical body to synchronize with the subtle and very subtle bodies and the flow of grace can be accessed when appropriate and necessary. The witness comes forward, unbiased, non-thinking and synchronized with posture, breath and mind. The health is also practical.

In this rite of passage we are reclaiming dominion over our body. It is a politically active attitude of being Pro Soma. Each of us has authoritative knowledge regarding the care and nurturing of our bodies inside ourselves. Our bodies know what to accept and what to reject when given the opportunity at an elemental level. The care and nurturing of the body is the essence of the rite of passage that includes self-compassion and self-forgiveness for the ways in which we have harmed our body. We can wake up to engaging in self-safety and begin to avoid many of the noxious influences in the environment. We can establish a common somatic sensibility and restore the body's ability to heal itself and express its needs. This happens through an allegiance with interoceptive awareness unpolluted by unwholesome external influences and misperceptions of the external environment.

This biodynamic rite of passage is not a linear process in the treatment room or even in life. Biodynamic practice is continuous practice. Sometimes we are lucky and steps in the process are skipped and sometimes they are prolonged in their phases. Each phase is a galaxy of potential and the container builds alignment of the planets. Their orbits are eccentric and they are centered by the sun radiating from our heart. Therefore, we rest in our beginners' heart and relish the opportunity for not-knowing, which is the dynamic stillness, a gap in discursive thinking without fear. Sometimes the Void is accessed, the absolute end of the previous universe. It is there as a potential and requires the continual maintenance of a strong perceptual container for renewal, regeneration and incorporation as a spiritual human being endowed with common somatic sense.

Familiarity with death and dying must be known. Our work is palliative. The essence is in the experience of self-regulation. Never let anyone take your right to Health away from you. We all have a lot of work to do on ourselves first to be of benefit to others. We learn how to serve rather than fix or give a

treatment. We serve the whole that is pre-existing rather than helping what is broken. The colors, the wisdoms, the elements and the heart are the glue that binds the whole. "Be still and know..."

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