

Biodynamic Principles of Treating the Immune System

German Storm Zoom, Michael J. Shea, PhD, August 2020

We had a little over 60 people on the call. The translation was excellent. Almut is such a pro. We had about 5 minutes of brief exchanges waiting for more to join the call. It was heartwarming for me to see their faces since my entire teaching schedule in Germany was cancelled for this year. I also was able to say hi or at least wave to some other participants before we began. I thought that this informal beginning was wonderful. I was planning on doing a view of everyone's faces at the end but got surprised.

New Immune Meditation

The first 35-40 minutes I led a guided meditation on the three levels of biodynamic perception: *still point-neutral-heart ignition*. Stillpoint, a craniosacral therapy metaphor is the silence in Zen of "non-thinking" from a famous Japanese Zen koan:

- When Priest Yaoshan was sitting in meditation, a monk asked,
- "What do you think about, sitting in steadfast composure?"
- Yaoshan said, "I think not thinking."
- The monk said, "How do you think not thinking?"
- Yaoshan said, "Non-thinking."

We live in the silence of non-thinking with an inner breath up and down the spine and up and down the descending and abdominal aorta. The inner breath that moves up and down the center of the body and fills the abdomen to the point of the Lower Dantian. The Lower Dantian is anterior to the bifurcation of the abdominal aorta into the common iliac arteries. It is located more precisely in the superior and inferior hypogastric plexi of the ANS. I invited participants to place their hand over that spot just below the umbilicus. This is very important and perhaps the main way to help ourselves and our clients move their lymph which will be discussed below.

The second step is a biodynamic *neutral*. It now includes the capacity to bear witness with non-attachment to our mind and emotions. We take a *step back* from our mind and emotions into the silence of the inner breath. We must wait for our mind to slow down and stop mentally comparing everything with everything else always having preferences and stories. So, the neutral is also a type of stillpoint and a space of silence. It includes awareness or an evenness of attention that is calm and peaceful. This takes time. We wait for as long as necessary for the neutral to emerge. One time I had a client with whom I waited a year for the neutral.

The *third* step of heart ignition involves freeing the heartbeat to then engage the world with Primary Respiration. It is the felt sense of feeling our heart drawn out of our body towards the pain and suffering of the world and including our own pain and suffering. I noted the three types of thinking: a cascading waterfall, a winding river with occasional white-water rapids and finally a calm ocean. Sometimes taking a step back from the waterfall is difficult and requires going outside in the natural world.

The New Fluid Body

I then discussed an integrated model of the fluid body that sees the lymph as water channels from Tibetan Medicine and the marrow as a deep embryonic fluid body channel. The six layers of the contemporary client's fluid body for biodynamic practice are:

1. The global fluid body especially of Zone A and B
2. The vascular tree (arteries and veins)
3. The water channels of the lymph (including thymus and spleen)
4. The embryonic channels of the bone marrow (osseous skeleton)
5. The kidneys as regulator of the water molecule
6. The fascia and interstitium

As a metaphor the lymphatic vessel are sandwiched between the interstitium and the fascia. It is a continuum of metabolic fluid function in which the lymph derives its water from the interstitium. The fascia is a pervasive dense fluid system itself in its interconnection with the interstitium and lymph vessels as a single unit of metabolic function (anabolism/catabolism). The fascia must be considered when working with the lymph. I gave an example from a client with a compression fracture of the tibial plateau. As the healing progressed, lymph edema became more prevalent in the knee and the ankle. I

had to free the fascia starting in the inguinal area then the knee and ankle. This is so I could clearly palpate the external iliac artery, the femoral artery, the popliteal artery and tibialis artery. Then lymphatic pump skills could be employed. This expresses the logic of bridging between the fascia, vascular system and lymph in treatments.

Protocols

There are different schools of lymph drainage (Vodder, Chikly). I spoke directly about the traditional osteopathic approach to the lymphatic system. Remember that the osteopathic intention is to improve immune system function with their lymph protocols. It is recommended Osteopathically, that a purely lymphatic session of work should begin with opening the lymphatic thoracic duct on the left side of the client's neck. However, the contemporary client may need to have the cisterna chyli approached at the beginning. These are really the first two choices since they represent the proximal and distal ends of the main retroperitoneal lymphatic channel connecting the input from the abdomen and lower extremities with the subclavian vein.

Dr. Sutherland typically would *end* a cranial session with a lymphatic wave-pump inferior to the left clavicle of the patient in order to open the left thoracic duct thus bridging from the neurological system to the immune system in one simple technique. [The lymphatic vessels drain into collecting ducts, which empty their contents into the two subclavian veins, located under the collarbones. These veins join to form the superior vena cava, the large vein that drains blood from the upper body into the heart. The left thoracic duct drains the lymph from 75% of the body, aside from the right upper right limb, right breast, right lung and right side of the head and neck (which are drained by the right lymphatic duct)].

Then the lymphatic ducts of the upper and lower extremities that go through the main lymph distribution areas in the inguinal area and axillary areas must be considered especially their regional fasciae as just mentioned above. Then the cranium and neck channels are considered. This treatment logic must also include contact with the spleen, thymus, kidneys, marrow, and vascular tree in order to have an effective treatment or series of treatments. The treatment logic is determined by the nature of the client's lymph system and individual needs.

The osteopathic approach is to also make sure that the respiratory diaphragm is free to move especially the transversus abdominus muscle is able to expand during inhalation and naturally settle back during exhalation. This is a prime mover of the lymph and an important aspect of treating the client. This includes making sure that the client's lumbar vertebrae are flexible since the cisterna chyli is embedded within the fascia of the crura of the respiratory diaphragm. In addition, the 12th rib is a crucial area for respiratory freedom and must be checked. The contact involves testing the flexibility of the 12th rib ipsilaterally. The hands suggest a latch-key type movement, supporting it gently and compressing it towards the spine and then allowing it to decompress and float. This opens many accessory muscles of respiration, the pleura and diaphragm itself that are attached to the 12th rib. These skills and others regarding freedom of movement in the diaphragm and a global breathing response may constitute the actual beginning of a treatment aimed for helping the lymph move.

Then I lost signal with Almut from a nearby lightning strike at the halfway point of the Zoom. We had four power surges in our home that day from tropical squalls and another two during the Zoom. I had to reboot, and it worked. Now, you should know that at the very beginning of this Zoom a very fierce tropical rain squall began. It is a heavily electrically charged low hanging storm cell cloud several kilometers in diameter with sometimes hundreds and thousands of lightning strikes because of its compressed dimensions of hot electrically charged moisture. It truly always reminds me of heart ignition.

So, the lightning initially was several miles away but intense rainfall began. During the 90-minute zoom there was 3 inches of rain that fell and fell hard (this is 8cm of rain in 90 minutes). That's "raining shit and bricks to splash it" as my father-in-law used to say about our weather here. The National Weather Service issued a flash flood warning and sure enough our street was flooded during the Zoom and the highway next to the ocean.

All the while there was a growing closeness and proximity as the center of the storm cell approached and indeed it did pass directly over the house towards the end of the Zoom. It brings with it massive lightning strikes they can actually happen sometimes within 100m of our house. It gets your full attention because of its raw power of light and sound. The thunder is awesome. So, part of me is monitoring the storm and trying to be coherent for the Zoom.

And you do not want to be out and about when there's tropical lightning as some unfortunate local golfers have found out in the back swing of their nine iron. So more and more of my attention is going outside because I am sitting right next to a window that allows me to sense thunder and see it all at my side. I had put the window shade down to improve the quality of the Zoom image but the sound was deafening and the flashes coming from the lightning would make it through the sides of in the shade. We went about five or 10 minutes late and I knew I had to wrap it up because of the intensity of the storm that was on top of my home.

A flash flood warning was issued for our area during the Zoom and the front of our house and street flooded and drained within several hours. We walked to the beach an hour later and could see the remnants of flash flooding on A1A which is the famous highway that goes up and down the edge of the Atlantic Ocean here in Florida. I had just started my closing statement and all of a sudden there was a massive lightning strike close by and it created a power surge (which now happens several times a day with these cells going over our home), the Internet went down and my image was frozen. However, it was an imperfect ending because I had just started to say goodbye. But I wanted to just say hi to everyone and have a little reunion with so many participants I know and that was not possible with the sudden ending.

The street had begun to flood and indeed there was a flash flood as our whole street in front of our home was under water and it came up close by a couple of meters to our front door. We have excellent drainage around where we live because of protected wetlands (swamp) on three sides of us. And on the other side is the ocean a block and a half away. We have never flooded in our home here in 30 years. This is what the street flooding looked like at the end of the Zoom in front of our home.



All is well that ends well. It was very intense for me trying to get across a message about treating the immune system of the contemporary client to the participants. And at the same time being aware that the heavens were breaking loose outside.

The whole Zoom was recorded. It includes the sounds of nature happening right outside the window next to me. The link to the zoom is on our German website under Newsletters from August, 20th, 2020. You can hear the background noise of the fluid body of nature talking to us. It was a beautiful message.