

SESSION THREE ω BECOMING MORE INTIMATE WITH THE WORLD

Your body is your own unique living structure. Your life is your most intimate work of art.

Prior to Session Three, your sides are relatively shorter than your front and back. Your thorax is supported mostly by the shoulder girdle. It is as *if* your trapezius muscles (from the neck to the shoulders) act as a coat hanger. Shortening in the lumbar region and pelvic rotations are visible. Session Three focuses on the sides, arms, shoulders, sides of the neck, and trunk of the body. Like the first and second sessions, the third is concerned with freeing the superficial fascia. However, during this session, we begin to go on to deeper levels.

The purposes of Session Three are freeing the shoulder girdle: widening the sides of the thorax, allowing for deeper breathing; and lengthening the sides, complementing the

Staying Present

When I showed a fellow bodyworker the first draft of my writings, we went page by page through the manuscript. As we reached the section about touch, her face changed. I had described “Active” and “Passive” touch as ways of working. She said: “There are very few situations when I would encourage someone to be truly passive when they are being touched. When someone is relaxed, they can still be present. When I am working with someone, I rely on being met; I experience touch as an exchange. Even when someone is giving me a massage, my intention is to meet the touch, rather than having something done to me in a passive state. It is important training for life.

Bodystories, Andrea Olsen

lengthening of the front and back accomplished in the first two sessions. After this session, breathing is typically much fuller, especially in the sides and back, two places where most people tend to breathe much less deeply than they could.

This session also works to release a key muscle of the trunk (quadratus lumborum) which connects the bottom (twelfth) rib to the top of the pelvic bone (crest of the ilium). This muscle, when normal, anchors the rib cage and maintains the proper distance between the ribs and the pelvis. When tense, it shortens and thickens, decreasing the distance between the ribs and hips. Breathing becomes more difficult, and the abdominal organs have less room in which to function. Revitalizing and lengthening this muscle thins out the middle of the body, often making it appear as if the person has lost weight, when actually the “spare tire” around the middle has disappeared, because the distance between the ribs and pelvis has increased.

The chest is primarily a feeling focuser, amplifier, and translator. Not only does it process the emotions that flow upward from the belly through the diaphragm, but it also

gives passion and interpersonal relatedness to these feelings. All the emotions, reactions, and expressions mix and swirl in the chest, continually changing form and direction as they proceed from creation to expression.

In order for individuals to make full use of the life force that is available to them, it is necessary that they make full use of their breathing/living apparatus. Most of us breathe shallowly and quickly when we are nervous or upset. If you experiment with shallow, quick breathing, you will notice that you begin to feel anxious and uncomfortable.

Fritz Perls offers the following definition of anxiety: "Anxiety is the experience of breathing difficulty during any blocked excitement." It is the experience of trying to get more air into lungs which have been immobilized by muscular constriction of the thoracic cage.

Tension in the area of the heart usually indicates a state of chronic over-self-protection. The individual who holds tension in this region attempts to encase their heart and heartfelt emotions within a protective coat of armour. The armour guards against hurt and attack and locks away feelings of warmth and nourishment. This tension develops into muscular armour and is experienced as pain when the muscles are confronted. In addition, the left shoulder will often accommodate a protective attitude toward the heart by rotating slightly forward in a posture that suggests a guarding action, such as a boxer protecting his face and head. The result of Session Three is indeed "heart warming."

PREVIEW OF SESSION FOUR

During Session Four you will begin to experience a new way of obtaining your physiological security. We will alter the core line that runs vertically through the body by working on the legs and lower pelvis. We will also begin working with the all-important position of the coccyx. After this session, your walking will begin to change toward the way you were biologically designed to walk.

AUTOGENIC TRAINING FORMULA II

The second **Autogenic Training** (AT) formula is **MY RIGHT HAND IS WARM**. This exercise increases the circulation to the extremities and generally improves blood flow. When mastered as warmth of the whole body, it gives a fine degree of control over body temperature.

For this **AT** formula, attention is paid in a passive way to the warmth of the right hand. A good way to achieve this warmth is to call upon a visual image of warmth. Picturing your arm in the sun or comfortably near an open fire is usually effective.

As you begin each practice, visualize The Return to use at the end of the 10 minutes. Make a statement to yourself, **I AM AT PEACE**, then the first formula, **MY RIGHT ARM IS HEAVY**. Heaviness makes the warmth come quickly, so it is important to **NOT** begin formula two until you can achieve total heaviness with ease in a short time, say one to two minutes. After you have experienced total body heaviness, begin the formula, **MY RIGHT HAND IS WARM**. Make a sign for “WARM” and see it three times with your mind’s eye. Use your formulas three times in succession, and picture your signs.

Limit practice time to 10 minutes for both formulas together, not 10 minutes each. Remember to do your Return at the end, as getting up quickly without The Return will leave you with reduced muscle tone. The Return restores tone and energy following deep relaxation.