

Psychosynthesis Research Foundation

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February 1, 1968

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Dear Colleague:

The fifth meeting of the 1967/8 series of Psychosynthesis Seminars (held on the third Friday of each month) will take place on Friday, February 16, 1968 at 7:45 P.M.

Mrs. Betty Keane of New York City will speak on "Sensory Awareness and Total Functioning," to be followed by a discussion on its place in Psychosynthesis.

The meeting will start promptly at 7:45 P.M. and will be held in the "Directors Room" on the mezzanine floor, Park Sheraton Hotel, 7th Avenue and 55th Street, New York City. There is a public car park across the street from the hotel.

We trust it will be possible for you to be present.

Cordially,

JACK COOPER, M.D.
192 Brewster Road
Scarsdale, N.Y. 10583
Phone: 914-725-4541

Date & Time of Meeting: Friday, February 16, 1968 - 7:45 P.M. prompt.
Place: "Directors Room", mezzanine floor, Park Sheraton Hotel,
7th Ave. & 55th St., N.Y.C.
Speaker: Mrs. Betty Keane
Subject: "Sensory Awareness and Total Functioning" and a
discussion on its place in Psychosynthesis.

PSYCHOSYNTHESIS SEMINARS

1967/8 SERIES

Fifth Meeting: February 16, 1968

Speaker: Mrs. Betty W. Keane, M.A.
470 West End Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10025

Subject: Sensory Awareness and Total Functioning

Participants:

Stephen Bendich	Frank & Hilda Hilton
A.J. Brodbeck, Ph.D.	Earl Johnson
Winnie Colton	Betty W. Keane, M.A.
Jack Cooper, M.D.	Victorija Mickans, M.D.
Mrs. Rena Cooper	Ann Peacock
Martha Crampton, M.A.	Graham Taylor, M.D.
Henry Elkin, Ph.D.	Shirley Winston, M.A.
Abdel-Moneim El-Meligi, Ph.D.	William Wolf, M.D.
Virginia Glenn	
Frank Haronian, Ph.D.	

Psychosynthesis Research Foundation
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Betty Keane:

In trying to speak of my work, I am faced with the contradiction Yasutani Roshi, the noted Zen master, once expressed: "I cannot tell you what Zen is, but I can give you a picture of it. The picture is never to be confused with the experiment itself."

Our work is called Sensory Awareness and Total Functioning or Physical Reorientation through experiencing. Its aim is to help you know yourself through the messages from your own organism, that which is often referred to as body. However, since the body cannot be separated from the mind, I will use the word "organism" to refer to the total person, that which you are.

Historically, in the development of Western man, a separation has been created between what is called the mind and what is called the body. Unfortunately, this split has often been re-enforced by religious emphasis and the educational process. We tend to emphasize and aggrandize the role of the intellect and ignore the fact that it is the response of the total person, the total physical organism that determines how we receive what we receive, how we transmit messages to others, and how we evaluate our environment - and experience ourselves in the world. The sense organs are the antennae through which we perceive our reality. By reality, I mean the world within us and its response to the world of people, objects and nature.

Every movement is the result of messages which pass from the central nervous system to the muscles, and the messages are varied according to the reports admitted by the sense organs. They tell us what is happening in the world and the central nervous system must evolve a plan of action appropriate to the occasion. It is the phrase "appropriate to the occasion" that creates the difficulty for so many of us. Man is a creature of habit, and for many of us early conditioned responses prevent our perceiving what is appropriate for the occasion. Early childhood impressions of what is right or wrong, how something should be, how we expect it to be, how it was last time, distorts our perception of how it is in the immediate moment.

Dr. Abraham Maslow, in his book Toward a Psychology of Being, stated certain basic assumptions about the development of a person. He says, "We have, each of us, an essential biologically based inner nature which is to some degree natural intrinsic. Each person's inner nature is in part unique and in part species wide. It is possible to study this inner nature scientifically and to discover what it is like, not invent - discover." This, I would say, is the essence of the work of Sensory Awareness for me; this constant discovery that we have such remarkably clear messages from within when we learn how to listen to them instead of trying to dominate them; that we are process and can become aware of changes occurring within us every instant; that we are not merely the roles we play in the culture, but that in essence, what is unique in each of us can express itself and be more present in our conscious behavior.

Dr. Maslow goes on to say, "This inner nature, as much of it as we know about so far, seems not to be intrinsically evil but rather neutral or positively good. What we call evil behavior appears most often to be a secondary reaction to frustration of this inner nature. Since this inner nature is good or neutral, rather than bad, it is best to bring it out and encourage it rather than suppress

it. If it is permitted to guide our life, we grow healthy, fruitful and happy. If this essential core of the person is denied or suppressed, he gets sick; sometimes in subtle ways, sometimes immediately and sometimes later. This inner nature is not strong and over-powering and unmistakable like the instincts of animals. It is weak and delicate and subtle and easily overcome by habit, cultural pressures or wrong attitudes toward it. Even though weak, however, it rarely disappears in the normal person, perhaps not even in the sick person. Even though denied, it persists underground, forever pressing for its actualization. To the extent that experiences foster and fulfill our inner nature, they are desirable experiences."

The work of Sensory Awareness attempts to help a person experience and then foster and obey his inner nature. This takes time and practice and delicacy. To have one experience is not the answer. To trust the strength within us needs time to let it become conscious and then let it develop and grow. In recent years, since "Body Awareness" has become a fad, the Sensory Experience has been put to many other uses. We drag in a Sensory Technique when we run out of words. We find out how it is to touch another person as if touching the person were more important than experiencing the way we touch him. Little has been written about the work since the teacher who developed it felt that in the writing it would be turned into a technique or a method and lose its essence through a mechanical approach based on concepts.

The main training to teach Sensory Awareness was an endless period of experimentation on the part of the pupil until he had arrived at the point where the teacher felt he was prepared to teach, much as we have in Zen training. My teacher was Charlotte Selver who, with Carola Speads, was among the first to introduce the work in this country. The work of Sensory Awareness was developed by Elsa Gindler in Berlin and Heinrich Jacoby in Zurich.

In Charlotte Selver's paper on Sensory Awareness, she says of Miss Gindler, "Elsa Gindler was a natural scientist of extraordinary quality. She made it her life work to explore to what degree we human beings develop our sensitive and perceptive powers and to what degree we cooperate with the forces of nature; that is, with the spontaneous development of energy within a given activity - with the processes of life and regeneration as they occur through us, with the dynamics of activity and rest - with the ever-present pull of gravity and so on. She found out that in the process of exploration, one can discover how hindering tendencies come about and that in this age of endless authorities of how one 'should be', we ourselves through practical experimentation can discover what we need to function more in accord with our natures - as we were born to function."

We work in many ways and each lesson will be different depending on the reports of the pupils before we begin. Usually we start work in lying on the floor and in simply becoming aware of how we experience ourselves. We find out whether we are cooperating with the force of gravity; whether in lying, we are letting the floor support us or whether we gradually become aware that the head is pulled away or the back is pulled away or the breathing is held or just what is occurring as far as our being on the floor is concerned. We sense whether we are letting our weight down to the fullest or whether we are dissipating energy through holding ourselves up when there is no necessity.

After a period of experimentation which may last for fifteen minutes or half an hour, the pupils are asked what they felt. Immediately one is struck

by the fact that twelve people have engaged in a similar activity and each one may have experienced something quite different. This often has a surprising effect on the group and opens them to a new understanding of how people function. There is no right or wrong way to feel. One feels what he feels. They gradually discover that one cannot manufacture feelings - or even anticipate them, and they slowly begin to develop the patience to wait for the messages to come through.

We work in sitting, sensing the tonus required to keep one comfortably upright and balanced, gradually getting in touch with our familiar attitudes of leaning or collapsing in a chair and sensing how different that is from really sitting. We begin to distinguish between collapsing (giving up), pulling away (resistance) and allowing the easy contact that lets us relate to the chair we are sitting on - to our environment.

We work in standing since it is the starting point of greatest potential for physical activity from which walking, running, fighting, dancing and all sports begin and to which they return. Easy and balanced standing in which inner reactivity mobilizes precisely the energy needed to keep one balanced and no more or no less.

We work with the feeling of space and time so that one might once again get in touch with his natural rhythm of functioning. Many young children are dragged a great deal by the adults who usually walk at a pace much faster than the child can manage. This is one type of experience that tends to confuse a child, and later an adult, about his natural rhythm in an activity. The work with space is most interesting. To truly become aware of the space between oneself and another is often a startling experience, and the reports we get are usually "It was there all the time but I didn't notice it." I have found in my classes that much fear of people is alleviated when one begins to sense the space between himself and another. The fact that we perceive people only according to their words and our reactions to them tends to create in many an unnatural dependency on what the other may say or do, and some withdraw from contact. Often pupils report that they don't care to be more open because they feel too vulnerable to the unpleasant aspects of the culture. However, when we get more in touch with the actual physical reality - that is, the chair we are sitting on, the air in the room, our feet on the floor, the space between us and another - a different perception of people takes place. As we come to quiet, as we call it, we experience more of a sense of ourselves and our center; the total scene tends to fall into a different perspective and one realizes he doesn't need to relinquish his sense of self in order to let another be present also. I would say the experience is similar to what is often described as a change from the spotlight type of consciousness to the floodlight sense of consciousness.

As we get more in touch with ourselves, we also learn more about others. In class, we work with each other, sensing our response to another's touch and how open we are to receive contact. We sense the weight of another's arm, the weight of his leg or his head. We begin to feel something of how his breathing expresses itself, so that slowly we become aware that we are something in addition to our usual ways of perceiving ourselves. We begin to distinguish between what is the idea or the image of a person and how we actually experience him. Our usual perception is based on how we look; whether we are tall or short, or fat or thin, or homely or handsome, and so on. However, in class, we attempt

to come to a sense of ourselves and others as total physical organisms. The organism is what we have in common. The word is often divisive. It is difficult to describe what can happen when we begin to receive a person on this level.

Sometimes I feel that I am really attempting to teach philosophy through helping people experience more about the way they function. Dr. Thomas Syz, in his excellent report on his work with Trigant Burrow, speaks of Burrow's discovery of the partitive functioning of human beings. He says, "Burrow referred to detaching and substitutive implications of symbol usage and he proposed the concept that in the course of human evolution two systems of reaction have become differentiated, the total organismic process and the affecto-symbolic part function. Conflict arose where the symbolic zone of responses has encroached on the zone of the organisms' reactions as a whole."

I could not put what I attempt to do in such scientific language. However, I do know from experience that when a person begins to sense himself and others in a more total way, in an organismic way, he ceases to be so self-critical, so bound up in what Burrow refers to as the "I persona". He experiences himself more as part of nature. As one pupil put it, "When I become more conscious of self, I become less self-conscious."

We also work with letting the head grow quieter so that the ceaseless chattering we do to ourselves can abate for a moment and we can experience the surprising well-being that occurs when we let the mind be with the activity of the moment instead of miles away. A Danish mystic once illuminated the human condition in a delightful way. He told the story of God sending the angel Gabriel to Earth to offer eternal life in exchange for a moment of man's time, but the angel had to return to God without delivering the gift because, when he reached the Earth, he discovered that everyone was living with one foot in the past and one foot in the future and no-one had a moment of time.

We learn the security of coming to inner quiet and concentration which can bring us so much well-being and self-acceptance. Often, when we feel scattered and tense, we want a pill to become more peaceful, but once we get in touch with the natural tendencies of the organism to restore itself to order and quiet we can allow to happen much of what we need for ourselves.

Perhaps, since most of you are therapists, you would be interested in how many therapists have used Sensory Awareness as a therapeutic adjunct. Sensory and kinesthetic awareness is a rich, untapped source of communication between the therapist and the patient. I'm sure many of you are already aware of the ways in which inner feelings are expressed through posture, facial expressions, breathing, gait and voice, indeed in all of the expressive movements including the physical activities of standing, sitting, walking and lying. The experience of working in these activities can give a patient a vivid anchoring point to reality, allowing for the kind of direct perception that leads to more accurate self-knowledge. Then too, when one begins to experience his physical attitudes directly, and allows change, the psychological attitude often becomes easier to relinquish.

Sensing the self-directive powers of the organism helps a person trust himself more. He feels in time that some essence within him is working for him rather than against him. Usually, when we let ourselves feel the tension long enough, it tends to give. Sometimes, this is the person's first actual

experience of the health in him. Sensing that he can permit change when he feels anxious and uncomfortable - that he can be aware of holding his breath and allow change - that he can help himself in many ways without depending on others, makes him feel less helpless and he somehow gains more self-respect. have often felt that people weren't given enough tools to help them experience the way is in them. The nature of the way we work is that there is no right-wrong; that we can accept what we feel, what is in the immediate moment; that we gradually must develop the patience to wait for change without trying to order it. This slowly becomes part of the patient's attitude toward himself. It tends to soften overly judgmental, masochistic and impatient attitudes. He begins to like himself more. There is one other point I might mention: Many patients become dependant on release. We cannot always release our emotions and, if we do, it often creates even greater fear in us - fear of reprisals, hurting someone we love, and so on.

The sensation that we do not need to repress emotion but can let it be felt and experienced by us without necessarily acting on it often makes one feel very much more secure. The experience of most people with intense emotion is that they will destroy themselves or another if they don't get some release. However, once one realizes he can be aware of what he feels without judgment and with acceptance, he begins to sense that there are organismic variations in the state and he begins to be interested in it rather than judgmental. In time, he can manage to stay present for what is occurring since he experiences that he is not only his emotions. This very often leads to much deeper understanding and insight. A very wise analyst once said to me, "Suppression of feeling and emotions causes illness. Awareness and acceptance of feelings and emotions, and the choice not to act on them if you feel they are inappropriate, builds character." This year I have been teaching a group with Dr. Harold Streitfeld who has been working with some more active forms of emotional release, and we are both interested in further exploration of this question.

Let me say in closing that people come to the work of Sensory Awareness for many different reasons, and the work is so non-directive that each one translates it according to his own needs, but the people who remain with it long enough to reach some of the deeper aspects of their nature are usually filled with awe at the untapped potentials they discover. It is startling to experience the wisdom of the human organism.

I think this is all I need to say now because I promised we would do some work together.

Dr. Wolf: Touching on the student at the New School who spoke about the more conscious you are of the self the less self-conscious you are, this is one of the things we use with actresses who experience stage fright: you see, self-conscious doesn't mean self-conscious; it means consciousness of others and of their criticism.

Keane: I must give credit to Dr. Wolf for really clarifying for me what I was doing and my own direction in the work. I first met him five or six years ago, and he drew me a diagram, an outline, that I have never forgotten. He drew a circle, but with spaces not a continuous line; and he said that when we work with the organism and get the organism quiet - what is crudely called relaxation - we are working through at the "being" level; and the spaces in the line of the circle indicated the connection between the "being" level and Nature, the Allness, the Cosmos.

DEMONSTRATION

(At this point the participants formed their chairs in a circle around the room and Mrs. Keane began to give directions; these were given slowly and quietly with long pauses in between - indicated by Ed.)

Keane: Take a moment to get in touch with what you feel at the moment. You might close your eyes if you want to. It makes it easier to tune in to what is happening inside you.....Do you have any sense of where you are touching the chair?.....Has anyone any feeling of how long he is? From where he is touching the chair to the top of his head - don't think about it, just feel..... And someone might have a sense of how wide he feels.....Is there any awareness of breathing?.....Where would you say you felt movement within you?.....Within you - right at this moment?.....Why don't you follow the breathing for a little while; don't lead it just follow it, and get interested in it..... Now I wonder if we might raise one arm, very, very easily up in the air, and feel how much of the side is touched or reached when we raise an arm..... Keep your arm up for a while..... Does anyone sense the air on his hands?..... How long are you now on the side where the arm is up, along the side? Do you have any feeling of that?..... And now, very easily, and not putting it in any particular place, let the arm come down and settle where it wants to..... Let us try it once again with the same arm but sensing the hand coming through space without trying to push it up, but rather, feeling how sensitively the hand can begin to reach the air - let it reach towards the air..... And what do you feel of the entire side - let the arm really come up until it is beside the ear. Get the sense of how you are there, what space is available to you..... And when you are ready, again let it come down and come to rest..... And now how are the two sides - are they the same or different?..... Take a moment to sense how the two sides feel and find out if you have any sense of what is happening there And then try the same thing with the other arm..... And again, try to get in touch with how you experience the sides of yourself when you raise an arm. (This is an activity we engage in so often - when we reach up to a shelf and so on.)And again sense the two sides..... And feel how you are totally now.

I will not ask you to repeat this experiment because we want to do several things tonight. Now, tell me, if you care to, what you experience here. What is happening? What did you feel in the experiment and what do you feel now?

Various Responses:

I feel how wide I am.
I feel more open.
I feel more in possession of myself.
It was a delicious feeling of relaxation.
I feel physically warmer.
My eyes feel good.
There is a change in that I feel more in myself rather than being scattered.

I feel more in balance.

Keane: This is a very simple experiment, but one can see that you really need to do very little to begin to get quieter. Now this time let us close our eyes and let both hands come up through space - let them come up very easily

until the arms are raised..... And now will you begin to rock back and forth very gently..... Now what do you feel you are sitting on? What part of you touches the chair when the arms are in the air?..... Again sense what you feel of breathing - how much space is available to you for breathing now..... When you feel that you have come a little more into balance and you will just have to feel that through; it will be different with each, but just find out if you can come to a sitting position that feels a little bit easier for you than the one you were in before..... And then let the hands come slowly down to rest..... Again feel what you can experience of the chair, your contact with the chair, whether it has changed or whether it is the same, see if there is a sense of contrast..... Now once again, without opening your eyes, let us use the hands as antennae, and let them move through space until you touch another person..... Can you not anticipate where the person is going to be - allowing the eyes to remain closed..... so that the experience can just happen as it happens and be fresh for you..... and give yourself a moment to receive the touch of the other, feel it on the palm of your hand, or the back of your hand, or wherever the contact is..... Can you get in touch with any different sensation where you are not in contact with the other - the other part of the hand - what do you feel? Stay a moment, holding the other person's hand and sense what you can feel totally..... what you get in touch with in contacting another?..... Yes, and when it is enough, let your hands come back to rest on your lap, and feel how they are.....

Now in class we would normally repeat this five or six times, but what happened this time with you?

Responses: I felt strength on this side and warmth on the other side.
I feel enriched.

Keane: Yes, how often do you shake hands with people and don't feel enriched?! That is because we do not let ourselves receive. I think that is one reason that people often feel so starved for contact - it needs a certain quiet in order to receive another person; you have to be present and quiet for we are so over-active most of the time that we don't really receive another's touch and what it can give us.

Responses: The hand that was touched was energized for a little while.

Wolf: The tips of the fingers are supposed to be where energy is transmitted.
(Crampton: Yes, I could definitely feel that.)

Keane: I wonder if we have room here to work a little with perception. Let us split into two teams so that one line of people is standing on this side of the room and one on the other. We don't really have enough room here but we can try it.

First, I would like you just to look around at each other..... very easily, and really let the other person in..... Can you regard the other and keep a sense of your feet on the floor..... and your breathing..... And just how the people seem to you..... Then, will you close your eyes and let yourselves get just as easy in standing as you can allow..... Let us put our hands over the eyes for just a moment to find out if we can become a little quieter through the eyes too..... And let yourselves be so awake to the touch of the palms that the response might go the whole way through the head, and even the

back of the neck could become a bit gentler and easier..... Let your head fall forward very gently into your palms..... And find out if the weight of the eyes can begin to come forward also..... Who senses the length of the back of his neck when the head is over?..... And when it is enough, just very gently help the head back to where it seems in balance and easier..... And could you let it come to a place where you wouldn't need to feel it was clamped on, where you could just let it be balanced easily..... And again, just let the hands come down, with the eyes remaining closed..... Now I would like you to walk with closed eyes - with very, very tiny steps because this is a small room, and you can use your hands to protect you until you touch another person, but do keep your eyes closed. I am going to walk straight ahead but you begin walking towards the middle..... find out if you can get any sense of the distance you cover with your eyes closed..... And just sense the contact with people when your eyes are closed; keep awake to what is happening to you..... What is the quality of this group contact?..... And now begin to walk backwards until we feel that we are about where we were originally, and then sit down. And now let your eyes open and see each other again. Thank you very much; and now what happened that time?

Haronian: What was so pleasant to me was the quiet. I notice too, now that I have my eyes open, how much my eyes are watering and how relaxing this is. Very enjoyable!

Keane: Normally we stay much longer with each thing, and we will work for half an hour with each experiment, but I wanted you to taste some of the different ways we work so it would give you the feeling of what we do. Of course, you cannot get the response you would if you spent more time with each experiment. For instance, in this last experiment I would prefer to do it in a larger room with one group at one side of the room, looking across at the others; and first have them travel the distance visually to the other person opposite - travel it visually on the floor so that they will find out how this is as far as distance and space is concerned. Then if you have them walk the distance even with open eyes they find it different; and then travel it with closed eyes, which again is different. So you really can explode many static notions in a very simple experiment.

Brodback: Why did you mention about using the hands to protect them?

Keane: Simply because I thought people might be anxious about bumping into each other, people who have not worked with this before. What did you think about the nature of the group, standing together with closed eyes? Did you feel anything about it?

Responses: Very nice.
A sense of delicacy.

Haronian: At one point I wondered if we were going to begin breathing in unison.

Keane: Yes, there was a group movement - something larger than any one person almost as if the whole group was beginning to move the individual, because of the movement of the breathing. Did any of you sense that?

El Meligi: I had a sense of unity in terms of continuity of the body. I would like to ask about the touching experiment. When I am touching my own hand or the hand of somebody else, is there any difference?

Keane: Very often, if you maintain contact for a time, the sensation becomes slightly deadened; however, if you part hands for a moment, you get in touch with the feeling of your hand again; and you again sense ^{the} contact with the other. If you remain awake enough in your contact you can sense more.

Wolf: Isn't that the same principle as that all that you can ever experience is the change? You have a certain amount of contact and then eventually no change; then you separate and there is a "cooling" or whatever, and then again you get a difference.

El Meligi: I was thinking about the experience of the boundary - how far do I go? Do I end here or out here? Who exists - me or the other one in my consciousness?

Hilton: I think you can play it two ways. Betty told us to experience how it feels when the other's hand - when your hand - was on mine; and I could sense a total shift when she said, "Now experience the contact of the other person." There is a difference between registering your hand and the effect of your hand on mine. Whether these are two types of sensitivity I do not know; but it was interesting, for there was a definite switch without moving our hands at all.

Elkin: This experience reminds me of swimming - my own body feeling was like that after swimming. And everything we have done here has a sort of soft gentle quality; and in swimming - however strenuously - the water is soft, gentle and delicate.

Keane: I am very interested in the fact that men sometimes feel that the work is too gentle, too delicate. Dr. Harold Streitfeld and I have the most interesting discussions, because he thinks this is a "male-female" thing; that women prefer gentle work and men want more activity. However, some psychiatrists have told me that in this kind of experience they realize that there is no such thing as passivity because there is so much activity going on in the human organism even when you are sitting still; and you really begin to realize that you are movement whether you do anything or not. When men start to take lessons I often start them with large movements rather than have them do anything so quiet. Often people feel threatened by quiet activity; yet if I could just show you the changes that can take place in one lesson, working in this small way, you would hardly believe it. For instance, people who could not get their knees to the floor sitting crosslegged find that after half an hour's work, in this very gentle way of sensing weight distribution rather than pushing or working strenuously, will suddenly find their knees resting on the floor very easily. So it is quite potent to work this way. I wonder if any of the men here would enlighten me as to whether they think the work is too passive.

Haronian: It doesn't seem that way to me - the quietness is what I like. I myself will often sit quietly concentrating on the feeling inside my body all over, and after a few moments I find myself picked up. Attending to what is going on in my body in this quiet way has a very stimulating effect - a toning up. Is this the sort of thing you aim towards?

Keane: Yes, this is what happens when you really work for a while.

Brodbeck: I think it is a matter of patience for this requires quite a bit of waiting, of quietly waiting; and people who have difficulty waiting may need to

discharge feelings before they can progress.

Keane: That is a very important point....

Taylor: Apropos the point you made, Frank (Haronian), I was very tired when I came into this session and, strange to say, I found this energizing, creating energy. At first I was almost falling asleep but now I feel awake.

Keane: Yes, it is difficult to explain because we have really done very little. Let us try working in a slightly different way.

(Here F.H. sat on a chair and Betty Keane stood behind him.)

Keane: This is the way we work often. We get in touch literally with how we and another are made. We might start by allowing one's hand to rest on the other's shoulder - gently, like this. And sensing what we feel under the hand; and the person being touched also senses similarly. And now, if I take my hand away..... what do you feel in the two shoulders, Frank?

Hilton: The right one (where the hand had rested) feels lighter.

Keane: And now if I take his arm and lift it. This is extremely interesting; he is helping me; and you will be surprised how quickly you get in touch and sense whether a person can trust an arm to you or whether he cannot. And now Frank is letting me have the weight much more. Often, when you don't make the effort to bring your own arm up, you experience much more of the natural length you have through the side. What is happening with the breathing? Do you feel that it has picked up, Frank?

Hilton: No, it hasn't picked up but there is a much greater sense of freedom, and of lightness in the arm - greater than in the other side.

Keane: Now let me bring the arm back to rest - you will see that I follow his weight; never put anyone any place, you follow what is. Now, look at his two sides - the two shoulders and the length from under the arm to the waist. This side is longer, you see, and the shoulder rests more easily. He tends to let his shoulders weigh very heavily on him!

And now let us all work with each other in the same way; first letting one hand rest on your partner's shoulder as I did here with Frank. Sense how it is and then remove it. Then raise his arm for him. It's amazing the effect that just placing a hand on another's shoulder can have. It makes me wonder why we do such extravagant things at times to get an effect.

(Here the group split up into twos, one sitting, the other standing behind him, going through the same procedure that Mrs. Keane took with Frank Hilton. Ed.)

Keane: As you do this keep in touch with yourselves; one thing you find when you get quieter is that you may become aware of many of your attitudes toward people.

Sense what is happening within before you start. Sense your breathing and your feet on the floor; become as present as you can for the activity, and give your partner a chance to feel how he is before you begin. Place a hand on

one shoulder first so that he can sense the contrast; then you may touch both shoulders.

(Here the group spent 20 minutes going through the experiment, and reversing roles halfway through. At the end of it they were all talking animatedly and were absorbed in helping each other. Ed.)

Keane: (after observing the group for about 10 minutes) I would like to call your attention to what has happened to the group. Here is a very trivial activity, and yet see what has happened to everybody - chummy and friendly. This invariably happens in the classes, people exchange their experiences and the leader doesn't have to say a word. It is a very interesting thing, and I mention it particularly for those of you who work with groups of people.

(Comment passed to one of the couples. Ed.) Yes, it is amazing what happens to the breathing through just laying the hand on the shoulders or chest. Also the effect of placing the hand on the abdomen or the small of the back.

Haronian: I was thinking of last night and a patient of mine who had been having pain through the diaphragm, and obviously anxiety was the cause. Would you suggest anything, Betty, to relieve that? For instance, the kind of thing you have just said?

Keane: It might; you could try it and see - if you are very gentle; she might appreciate that contact and might respond.

Haronian: It might release the feeling that is bound up in a therapy session.

DISCUSSION

Cooper: Betty wants to talk now about whether there were any spontaneous images during any of the work we did.

Keane: No, Mr. Hilton had raised the point that at a previous seminar I had mentioned spontaneous images arising with my classes. You see, we discourage imaging strongly, because people are so filled with ideas that they just can't feel; and they substitute images for the feeling. Many of you people use imagery, the Guided Daydream, etc., but that is something else again; as I said, in doing this work images will often come up spontaneously; but I do not attempt to handle that kind of material.

Elkin: I had a spontaneous image tonight. Also, there is the point I mentioned to Jack Cooper - that your voice has a lot to do with it; it is soothing and puts us into a receptive role. And we are receptive because you are sort of "playing the mother".

Keane: That is not the way a lot of my male pupils see me! (laughter) But what about this question of imaging? Is there anything that anyone wants to say?

Peacock: It seems to me that it is a relief just to have the experience without images, because images bring in mental action, and it is much more refreshing to have the experience without the imaging.

El Meligi: When we were doing the early experiment of rocking backwards and forwards, I had the image of a camel and rider. It came spontaneously. I know that after a while (in riding a camel) you establish a sort of synchronicity but this is awfully difficult to achieve. Other people in riding a camel get all sort of cramps except those who really know how to ride one for it has a peculiar gait. But touching on this, in therapy do you incorporate these methods with something else? Do you use it with patients, etc.?

Keane: I do not call myself a therapist, I am a teacher. However, I have felt - long before the Esalen Institute was formed - that therapists simply needed to use these more total organismic methods along with their therapy. I went up to see Abraham Maslow about it, and he agreed totally - this was several years ago. He told me that I must be prepared to have my heart broken and that no one would listen to me. Then I saw Dr. Kurt Goldstein the year before his death and he said, "Forget psychiatry; go to the Zen methods for they are the only people who will accept it." But I could not forget psychiatry; I myself had been helped a great deal through the combination of the verbal and non-verbal work; so now I find that, since the Esalen Institute started, many psychiatrists who had never before dealt with any physical methods are calling me to work with them in groups - where people try to physicalize, to experience what they have been talking about. For instance where a doctor has a group in group therapy. (Wolf: Oh, I thought you meant a group of psychiatrists!) No, but I hope that will come next! Psychiatrists are now becoming interested; but sometimes I wish psychiatry was more oriented to the fact that one often needs a kind of constant - I hate to use the word "discipline", but it is just that. You have to give yourself to something, even if it is to getting quiet every day to listen within. You cannot have change without allowing something new.

Wolf: You might be interested to know that in Germany every year there is a conference, the Lindau Conference, and about 700 psychiatrists go to it, where they do just this kind of thing; and that is why I raised the question a moment ago.

Keane: I am hoping that the Aurion Institute will serve such a purpose here in America for we have had an amazing response and we are introducing a number of physical methods which you really might not discover in any other way. Last time we had the Alexander techniques demonstrated; that is a method which happens to be more suited to individuals. It was hard on the teachers because they had to work with each participant individually; but the group enjoyed it and it was an excellent weekend. And we will have Albert Pessio who is well known in Boston for his work in the hospitals there with the mentally disturbed.

El Meligi: All this work is done silently, no talking? (Keane: Yes, silently - except for the report which we might have after a period of quiet work.) And during this period you will be doing a number of exercises? (Keane: Yes.) Working to a plan? (Keane: No, spontaneously.)

Mrs. Hilton: Do you have children in your classes or work only with adults?

Keane: Charlotte Selver said that in Germany they worked with children but I haven't done so here.

Hilton: I am particularly interested in the remark you made during your talk contrasting the comparatively quiet method with the more violent release of say the Bio-energetic methods.

Keane: People who have had the more violent methods often seem terribly dependent on emotional release. Whereas people who have had this work seem to gain more of a sense of strength and patience and an ability to stay with something. Harold Streitfeld and I are experimenting with the two kinds of work in a class at the present time.

One of the girls who had been in my Sensory Awareness class before did have a very big emotional release in this experimental class. I did some psychodrama with her; then had her beat on a couch, and it was a very good release for her, which she claimed the quiet way didn't get to for her. And a lot of the people when they hear that we are running this type of group want something of that type of release; but the whole question is a very big one and should be investigated. Possibly each person finds his own way - so many ways are needed.

Winston: I have the feeling, after being exposed to a little of what Alexander Lowen does, that working with very strong stimulation tends to desensitize, and as you become desensitized, stronger and stronger stimulation is required to get any response.

Keane: That is a very important point.

Hilton: Do you think there is a link here with the transmutation and sublimation that Assagioli speaks about? I know this is going deep, but I sense that with this quiet method there will be less need for an explosion after a time because there will be a more controlled use of emotion - a controlled, directed and maybe creative use.

Keane: Yes, I also think you get a deeper insight. There is a fascinating type of therapy based on Zen methods which was developed by a Dr. Morita in Japan. In this method a patient is permitted to tell his story once and from then on he may not refer to his problem. He is treated in a hospital setting where he is put in bed and may only get up for meals or the bathroom. At first, the patient is relieved because he is no longer faced with his daily responsibilities. Soon, however, he discovers that his tensions begin to build again and he is encouraged to endure them without release. Dr. Morita feels that talking about difficulties "waters down" the essence of experience. Thus, a patient can't experience "in his own flesh." In Morita Therapy, they want to intensify the neurotic condition so that it can work toward the inner person and reach its culmination point. At the moment this culmination point is reached, the natural or, as Morita calls it, the creative life force is reached.

Cooper: That reminds me that Assagioli said that he did not like the pseudo-intellectuals. People tend to defend themselves with words; and the psychological mechanisms are often psychological defenses against knowing yourself. Regarding your question, Frank, sublimation could also be a defense against knowing yourself, and that is why there is such a big debate about it in psychiatric circles.

El Meligi: My present work is with overstimulated schizophrenics, and the stimulation increases from the environment into their organism to the extent that they are either completely lost, spread and fragmented by the environment or else they go into catatonic stupor; and in either condition they are lost. I think that what is happening here (in Sensory Awareness) is that you are getting the individual in touch with his organism so that he will not be split and fragmented.

Keane: And in touch with the environment too. (El Meligi: As containing or integrating?) Yes that's right. Dr. Burke Dawson has said that this work is excellent for schizophrenics, for it helps them to keep in touch with physical reality.

Colton: What about the value of contrast. I was working with Meredith Jones and "big" movement - more vigorous - activities. I loved this, but at times I wanted something "small" - more quiet - and it seems to me there would be great value if you got the two going.

Keane: Well, I would like to do that, and I do in my private lessons. I'll have a person move as he wants to, but I usually end the lesson with the quieter work. In the class lessons I tend to the pure Sensory work since most people want that. One can work in many ways though - we often run, move freely and spontaneously.

Crampton: This approach to the body, or rather this bodily awareness, seems to be very much in harmony with the principles of psychosynthesis. It is really like a non-verbal Dis-identification Exercise. As you pointed out in the beginning, in experiencing this inner center of being one sloughs off all the problems and conflicts, and realizes they are there but are not really important.

Keane: Yes, and very quickly too because it is so direct. I often think that an ideal psychiatric session might be, say 15 or 20 minutes of this work, and then verbal work based on pupils' reports of what they felt in the experiment. One might cut through a lot of irrelevant material that way.

Crampton: Are you familiar with the work of Dr. Virel? Graham and I worked with a practitioner of his method in Paris - the contrast between the letting go and then the conscious performance of an act, in which one gets in touch with one's center of awareness; i.e. "I am consciously making the movement"; what Virel calls "the conscious act".

Keane: Yes; for example, just taking a step is really one of the most thrilling experiences you can have - the movement from one foot to another. The book of Shattucks Experiment in Mindfulness speaks of this "meditative walking"; it is sensing all the weight shifts that take place in a step. You could not want more of a miracle than this. (Cooper: Or breathing!) Yes, when you really begin to experience the miracle of the human organism.

Cooper: It is fascinating to watch people learning a musical instrument they have never played before - to watch them discover fingers they never realized they had, the movement. This, plus the music, brings them in contact.

Keane: Yes, you see it is that attention, that coming into center.

Cooper: You saw some of the men out at the penitentiary, Betty, how they began to get oriented towards the instrument, and then to the music, and then their awareness of the instrument, so that they were forgetting their drugs and alcohol and they were right there in the moment of experiencing. It is amazing to watch them contain themselves within the musical field. (El-Meligi: Are there any papers on this?)

Keane: Very little has been written. The people who developed the work were too afraid that it would turn into a mere technique and lose its essence.

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