

THE REALIZATION OF HOPE

by

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Anticipations and Interactions between Inner Worlds and Outer Worlds and the The Realization of Hope

I. An exploration into the relation between inner attitudes and body experiences.

Pesso Boyden System Psychomotor, PBSP®, is a form of psychotherapy that helps people create positive symbolic, "hypothetical past" events that they register in memory as an alternative to actual, negative, historical events. These new "hypothetical past" memories result in more positive images and anticipations of the future.

Human beings are either positively or negatively affected by:

- their past
- actually being in the here-and-now, and
- their anticipations of the future.

Experience in the three time domains is colored by situations that induce either hope or despair.

People who live in the grip of despair consider hope an illusion, a self-betraying way of putting pink lenses over the harsh realities of life. They believe that life is full of misfortune, disease, disaster, death and the frustration of desire. This conclusion prevents them from being involved in intimate relationships. They tend to stay alone, as they anticipate disappointment and hurt.

Hope is not an illusion, it is an engine that works, humming.

Hope is not apathetic, it moves us.

Hope is not a dream, it is being awake to possibilities.

Hope makes us friends, despair makes us alone.

Our experience of the outer world of people and objects is forged in the inner world of sensation and meaning. The resultant meaning determines how we will relate to the outside world. We cannot "by and large" remake the outside world to suit our fancy, but we can "by and small" remake the mind's inner world to suit the creation and realization of hope. We do not have to remain frozen in the despair that painful events lead us to anticipate.

The world is not only "out there". We are constantly translating the "out there" world into our "in here" world. With the mind-attitudes created in the "in here" world, we interpret and make sense of the "out there" world. We do not have to actually change the outside world to produce believable experiences that alter the view-points in our inner world. We can produce believable experiences for ourselves that change the hue of our inside world from the "color" of despair to the "color" of hope.

Thus, one does not have to face present day reality in an attitude of despair. One can face that reality with an attitude of hope. Hope positively changes how one lives actual life. A person with hope is at peace with what life produces.

A person frozen in despair experiences present day difficulties as invalidating and an attack upon the self. This view induces the wish for death to escape from that pain. No matter how much a despairing person continues to live, he/she is much more likely to experience untimely death than a person who faces life with the attitude of hope. No matter how close to literal death we may be while we are in the attitude of hope, we continue to live with a sense of meaning and satisfaction.

In the arc and timeline of life, hope is the spearhead of future existence; despair is the spearhead of future non-existence.

Our bodies live in worlds constructed by our minds. If our minds construe our surroundings to be hell, we live in hell — for all the senses in our body will interpret our actual experiences as hell. If our minds construe our surroundings to be heaven, our bodies live in the heaven delivered to us by our senses.

As we live in the "construction" of the outerworld that the inner world of our minds creates, we experience that "construction" through our senses. Then, in a circular fashion, our sensed experience of that "construction" of the outerworld then "feeds" or influences our minds.

If one would have a different history one would have a different attitude. This leads to the question, "Is it possible to construct a mind-believable, body-experienceable, 'hypothetical' history that one could store in the mind beside 'actual' history?" Here we are positing the notion of the creation of a "hypothetical past". We have found that such carefully constructed "hypothetical past" events can influence people's attitudes in much the same way that "actual" history influences people's expectations and anticipations of the future.

Now we will explore how to use the experience of our bodies to forge a new inner world of hope in our minds. Our integrated mind/body selves may then live in the active, purposeful, and satisfying world that is created by hope.

II. Basic equipment of the human Self: Its as yet unborn, un-integrated aspects

No two selves are identical. The human self is fundamentally unique with great potential waiting to be tapped and cultivated. However, not all aspects or facets of the self have had the opportunity to be seen and validated by the outside world or otherwise led to fulfillment and realization. Not-yet-born aspects are metaphorically pushing toward the surface waiting to emerge and be welcomed by the outside world. The emergence of a specific aspect into conscious life is a process that demands faith and trust in the acceptability of that aspect. We must trust what rises from the depths of the self as having been impelled by the same forces that lead to the continuity of life, possibilities and hope.

Human life is inexplicable and a mystery, but some of its qualities are describable. Although a new human life always comes from two other humans, we experience life individually. We hear only through our own ears and see only through our own eyes. We are individual at our core, receiving input from the inner/outer world and the cosmos.

Despite the fact that all information received by our senses is perceived only by ourselves, we are not isolated. We are all made the same, out of the same stuff, by the same basic formula. Created in our mother's womb, each of us repeats the same basic steps of our species' evolution through historic time. Information about that evolutionary and species history is packed into all of our genetic, pre-made, maps of the world. Each of us is born with a lot of information about life.

Let us review some of the conditions of human life.

- We are inalterably connected to the cosmos and all other life, yet firmly conscious only of our own personal experience.
- We are made of the material of molecules and atoms, but also the life giving stuff (sperm and egg) of other human beings.
- As matter, we were created first in the crucibles of galaxies, then as humans, born in the womb.
- We are embedded in all that came before — non-personal and personal — yet we face a personal present and future, experientially alone.

This implicit allness and explicit oneness I call the human self.

- To fulfill one's self is to be all one is.
- To be all one is, one must make choices or be only as all others are.
- The human self cannot tolerate being other than it is.
- The human self has no satisfying choice but to fulfill itself.
- The human self is born only in the human body. We cannot become ourselves without our bodies.
- The human self is born in interactions with other human selves.
- We are always becoming ourselves, moment by moment.
- The process of self birth goes on throughout life and does not stop until death.

Each day of our lives new parts of ourselves arise and push toward the world for contact. The new part, innocent in the world, tentatively looks for a place to fit. It "seeks" shapes and conditions that seem receptive to its shape and likely to result in satisfaction, safety and continuity. It "seeks" those things that match, complete and validate itself. When aspects of the self are realized in satisfying interactions, new positive maps are formed in memory.

An example:

The new part reaches toward the world like a child's hand toward an object. If some significant interactor slaps that hand, the child learns that its reach, or what it reached for is forbidden. If that significant interactor permits the hand to find its object, the child learns that reaching and contact with that object is "allowable". This satisfying experience validates the wish, embedded in the feelings in the hands, for the attractive object. Satisfying interactions assure the continuity and life of that part of the self.

So new parts are given birth.

So new maps are formed of the world.

III. The PBSP® "structure" deals with the "despair-hope continuum and balance"

Diane Boyden Pesso, and I founded PBSP® in 1961. We developed a unique, body-mind method of re-organizing and clarifying the inner world and experience of psychotherapy clients: the PBSP® "structure" (see Pesso, 1969, 1973, 1991).

As the practice and evolution of our work continues, supported and assisted by highly qualified psychotherapists in many countries, one thing remains constant. Clients' work in structures produces shifts in experience and attitudes that result in increased trust and confidence in life. Therapists in our network regularly receive reports from clients that their life plans and activities produce more satisfaction following their psychotherapy.

During the course of therapy we note the directionality of clients' lives -- whether they are moving toward hope or despair. One of the goals of the work is to help clients incline their life balance in the direction of hope. The shift toward hope coincides with a change in how they internally experience the outside world and with a changed attitude toward the world.

Attitudes are not only represented by what people say, but also by how they hold and move their bodies. Hence, we closely follow clients' posture and movements during the work in a "structure".

A "structure" provides a carefully arranged setting where clients can "live through" past experiences they have not yet understood and where they can discover feelings and emotions that were overlooked at the time.

The client who has a turn for a "structure" may begin by talking about what troubles or concerns him/her at the moment. At the discretion of the client and/or the leader, those emotions, feelings, or events which have the highest amount of excitement or distress associated with them are focused on.

The procedures used in a structure are designed not only to reconstruct past events for detailed scrutiny and exploration but also to examine the bodily responses in the client as he/she participates in this reconstruction. Frequently, in a real life situation, we may feel much more than we are saying, knowing or doing anything about. A structure provides a laboratory setting where we can examine our bodily responses to find out what some of those as yet unacknowledged or fully experienced actions might be, to note what parts of ourselves were not able to be "born" in the original situation. Then, in the

structure we permit the "birth" of those parts and help the person act and behave in the manner that might have been suppressed, unacknowledged, or overlooked in the original event.

The client can experience how it might have been in the past if those parts had been validated and satisfied with the help of ideal figures, now role-played by group members. Thus, a structure provides a "second chance" to make situations that had or initially had despair-producing consequences, turn out in a positive, hope-inducing way.

In the structure we graphically see before us the actual, remembered situation to which the client was subjected. After providing the alternative new situation we also have the privilege of seeing and hearing how clients feel as they experience this life enhancing possibility. Structures provide an opportunity for clients basic life expectations and anticipations to be realized.

IV. Elements and conditions that lead toward life are evoked in the structure

If we analyze the example (at the end of section II.) we can determine the necessary conditions for the realization of a new facet of the self

What are the elements?

- * First, the experience of an impulse arising from a newly emerging part of the self. This wish may be felt as a sensation in the body, as, for example, the feeling in the hand of the child.
- * Next, there is the selection of the object which seems most likely to satisfy the feeling in the hand. Or it may be the reverse: first the selection of the interesting object and then the feeling in the hand. The wish is quite selective; the child may reach out for the mother and not for the father or v.v. Thus the expression of the hand is dependent on the pre-selected person or thing.
- * Then there is the sensation of contact and interaction with the object.
- * Then there is satisfaction resulting from the action and contact.
- * Then there is the significant figure (observer) giving permission and validation.
- * Then there is the assignment of meaning or value to the event.

Thus, a new map is formed containing all the pertinent symbols and elements which have been constructed and gathered in the "structure". We can refer to such maps as psycho-organic memory (see Wassenaar, 1995, this volume).

The new map is "colored" by the life-enforcing confirmation of the newly emerged parts of the self. Those parts can now "anticipate" satisfying interaction in relation to the newly "structured", inner representations of the outer world. The new map will be used for future reference when similar explorations into the world occur.

In real life, as well as in "structures", if most of the necessary or required conditions are met for the realization of the newly emerging part of the self, the map will include hope for the future. If most of the conditions are not met, the map will include despair and no image or expectation of a livable future. For if reality has deadened hope, the self can not do much living

Now we can see clearly how "structures" are used as an instrument to awaken the rebirth of hope. Aimed by newly formed life validating maps made of "hypothetical past" memories, hope can be the spearhead of the life of the self as it arcs from the past, through the present into the future .

Let us look once more at the inventory of required elements in this unfolding realization of new aspects of the client's self.

There must be the capacity of the inner world for feeling, sensation and for the immediate recognition and registration about what is going on in interaction with the selectively-attended, outside world. here must be the body which is the organ for sensation. there must be the object in the outer world.

There must be the capacity for expression through action with the body as the vehicle for action in the outer world.

There must be the satisfying interaction between the self and the outer world.

There must be the significant observing figure.

There must be the capacity for determining interactive meaning.

There must be the capacity for map-making, i.e., the capacity for symbolization.

There must be the capacity for recording in memory.

There must be the capacity for record retrieval.

What is the function of hope in this inventory?

Hope presents us with images of satisfaction in interactions before they are actually available. This helps us know what to look for before we have found it.

Hope assumes there must be a way to find it.

Hope rarely takes no for an answer.

Hope supports the attitude, "If there is a problem there is a solution." Hope sustains us during the intervals before satisfying completions take place.

If we assume this is an inventory of what must be present to produce a well established self in harmony with all its aspects and welcoming to those emerging, then we come to some interesting conclusions.

For instance, the emergence of a new aspect of the self cannot take place without:

- inclusion of the body or an interactive outer world
- action or satisfying interaction
- a meaningful observer, validating that interaction
- meaning or without symbolization
- recording by map-constructing memory
- hope

My experience has confirmed that using these elements in "structures" I can assist clients to become more themselves and live a more satisfying life with other people in this world. I am not so interested in having the self be developed for its life in heaven. I am mostly interested in facilitating the life of the self in the body during here-and-now, body-time experience — living with the people of this world now.

V. A body-mind related review of the despair-hope balance that is laid down in memory as an internalized map.

We base our experience on sensation felt in our bodies. Our minds then make meanings and decisions based on those sensations. That is how we construct a picture of our world. We first "feel" (perceive, sense) a pre-selected part of it, and then, with the stored information in a specific memory-map related to that pre-selected part of the outside world, we place a commentary on it. Was it acceptable or unacceptable, was it pleasant or unpleasant. Is this an accepting or rejecting world, or a pleasant or unpleasant world. We continuously rely on the maps made of earlier experiences in relation to that particular part of ourselves and the world.

As each new sensation and judgment is added to the basic map it is colored by the despair-hope balance. In the therapy session we assist the client in moving toward the direction of hope.

During a structure clients' maps are illustrated and illustrated and externalized first by the preliminary critical or validating figures and then by a construction of historical scenes. They show not only what the client has lived through but presents clients' expectations and patterns for what their future will bring. Maps control and guide us through the present and into the future. If we have an unchanging map our past and our future will be very similar. If we have a constantly changing map our past will seem ever re-organizable and our future will always be new and unexpected.

Our maps become our fate. While some may say that our fate is never in our own hands, we have demonstrated that our maps can be made by our own hands! By applying this knowledge in a structure, a client can choose his/her "hypothetical memory" based experiences and explore his/her reorganization of meaning. In so choosing, the client's "pilot" becomes stronger. When clients recognize they can thus change their fate, they have much greater hope for the future. Those are two goals of this work — greater strength of the "pilot" and greater hope.

VI. The form of the structure further discussed

In an atmosphere of safety, care and respect that we call the "possibility sphere," the therapist closely and carefully tracks the meaning of verbal, nonverbal, and emotional information that comes to clients' attention as it rises to the surface of their minds and bodies. This meaning becomes increasingly clear representing what we call "center of truth" and "true scene."

A role-played "voice of truth" figure externalizes and illustrates the clients' spoken thoughts and beliefs by stating, in the imperative, the old "truths" the client lives by. If the client says, "I have to take care of myself because there is no one in the world who will do that for me," The "voice of truth" can be instructed to repeat that phrase, word for word except for changing the pronouns: "You have to take care of yourself because there is no one in the world who will do that for you."

A role-played "witness figure" validates the clients' emotional expressions, naming each emotion (and the context of the emotion) in a compassionate, accepting manner; ("I see how bitter you feel as you hear that statement.").

These techniques provide clients with an interior-exterior perspective and a comprehensive view and of the architecture and content of their cognitive and emotional processes while they are vividly connected to their feelings, sensations and impulses. This in itself is quite empowering, but we do not stop here.

Such clear internal and external views of consciousness spur the client's associations and induce the recollection of past, life-shaping, events that have a similar configuration and emotional effect. Memories evoked by the "true scene" are powerful and experienced almost as if they were happening in the present. The client is thus in the dual position of "reliving" a vivid memory while at the same time observing him/her self from a therapeutic perspective.

If the client recalls the painful memory of the rejection and disappearance of his/her father while a child, the client can ask a group member to role-play the "rejecting and disappearing" aspect of his/her father. The client then places this figure in the room and establishes the "historical scene".

Although absorbed with this externally represented memory, the client is nonetheless able to use his/her new-found awareness of emotions, body sensations, and impulses as the motive force to express what is coming up from moment to moment. "Accommodation," the role-playing procedure that provides the wished-for interaction that matches each action, not only allows full expression of each emotion but provides maximum relief and satisfaction. Clients can thus air and safely integrate feelings that have been long buried and deeply repressed.

However, emotional expression alone is not enough for long lasting change. New learning requires new experience. What has happened, as well as what has not happened shapes our character and personality during our formative years. We cannot undo the past, but clients in a PBS® structure experience what it might have been like to have had a non-rejecting, non-disappearing father. While clients are in the 'as if real' situation, vividly remembering past events, interactions with symbolic "ideal parents" provide their remembered child selves with experiences that would have had a positive influence on their attitudes towards themselves and the world.

For instance, a role-playing, "ideal father" might be asked to say, "Had I been back there then, I would not have rejected you or disappeared. I would have fathered you while you were growing up." The client hears this while deeply connected with memories of past feeling states that are now coupled to the immediate experience of body and eye contact with the ideal figure. This is a complex orchestration that includes memories of the literal past, linked to the present symbolic scene which is presented as part of a hypothetical past. All this, coupled with emotionally laden tactile, auditory, and visual input, gives the client the stuff out of which he/she can construct new positive images of him/her self and the world. These experiences and images enter the psyche at a core level and produce psychological/neurological reorganization.

The psychological re-mapping fostered by the creation of a hypothetical past acts as an antidote to the negative conditioning of actual past events. These new experiences give clients a positive lens through which to see and experience the world. They have moved in the direction of hope. They can now choose not to succumb, as they habitually had in the past when difficulties arose, to states of chaos, depression and anxiety. Thus clients can function more productively in present day, reality settings.

Each person has a central, organizing and executive part of consciousness that we call the "pilot". In our developing years, that aspect is either subdued or reinforced, depending on the belief system of the

society, culture of family unit we happen to be born into. In this work, we are guided by the interactive "logic" ruling the relationship between the psycho-organic inner world and the experienced-sensed outer world (see Wassenaar, 1995, this volume) PBSP® therapists lead structures in ways that support and reinforce the development of the client's "pilot" as well as help him/her move in the direction of the life affirming polarity of hope.

Some people come to therapy with an undeveloped pilot and a deaf ear to inner voices of hope. They are unwilling to be responsible for choices and want the therapist to take full responsibility for what happens in therapy. Such clients, left to their own devices, only listen to their negative voices and tend to focus only on what has been wrong in the past. If left unchecked, this way of working can be an imposition on the therapist and the other group members. While clients are not as yet motivated to improve their lot, they tend revenge upon any and all around them for their miserable past experiences. Some part of them doesn't want therapy or anything else to change their lives. That part incorrectly assumes that life is unchangeable and wants only to extract a pound of flesh from others in compensation for what has happened. When that revenge motive can be symbolically expressed to the appropriate figures in a structure, clients become more conscious of their inner processes. They are then more likely and willing to also "listen" to the energies that lead to their own present and future satisfaction, rather than only to those "voices" which lead to their and others' frustration.

Among our many states of being we can be awake, asleep fantasize, dream, think, feel, play and work. Clients in a "structure" are encouraged to tap into those different levels of consciousness and being. The client's "pilot", enriched by the energy and information gleaned from this exploration, can organize the structure of his/her innerworld in ways that lead to a fuller life.

Structures and dreaming are alike in that fantasy is freed and primitive emotions are released. Structures are different than dreams in that emotional states are not unlinked from body expression as they are in dreams. A dreamer hardly moves his/her body with the exceptions of occasional twitches and the perambulations of sleep walkers. A client in a structure utilizes the normal feeling-action nerve-pathways that dream states sever.

A structure is like fantasizing, but with the inclusion of actual body movement. In fantasy we permit ourselves to consider things that we could not do in reality. In structures, clients fantasize in their minds and also experience and motorically express the tensions or sensations they have in their bodies.

As we mature, natural, primitive behavior patterns, which are happily permitted in the form of play, are slowly superseded and overlaid by more "civilized" behavior patterns. Some children may never have opportunities for such active, full-bodied play due to parental demands that playing not be so noisy or "rough". If repressed, those unvalidated energies and patterns may later "pop out" unexpectedly, in a frightening way, under conditions of stress or loss of control. We see that under the names of shell shock, war neuroses, nervous breakdown, because of loss of disaster, etc.

In a structure, clients re-connect to their adventuresome urges while they "make-believe" knowing that what they are doing is not "real". Structures license access to those robust energies, vividly connected to life, that are available in childhood. In structures, the playing adult client uses his/her "pilot" to oversee the activity and lead it to life enhancing goal

A structure includes thinking and feeling. It permits the fullest expression of feeling into action and then interactions with the "pilot" watching and thinking about the choices and meanings are applied to the experience. The client is busy making new maps for him/her self to use in future real life activities in an attempt to live a happier more hopeful, satisfying life.

"Structures" are ways of getting to all the facets of the self simultaneously and interweaving them in ways that are more satisfying than literal experiences of the past would have permitted.

X. Epilogue

In emphasizing interaction as an absolute requirement in the task of becoming one's fullest self it makes it clear that we cannot do this work by ourselves alone. Some independent individuals take offense to this and say they can survive perfectly well without any help from others. But survival is not the goal — becoming the fullest self is the goal. We should never lose sight of the fact that we are part of a vast interactive network that includes the inner world and outer world of ourselves and multitudes of others. We must learn to see clearly the part each of us plays in the unfolding evolution of the individual self and the society as a whole. We are not atomic individuals untouched by others. We are made of all that was before us. We must diligently gather and harvest this inheritance, and, conscious of the directionality of positive existence, actively participate in our own and the planet's becoming.

I wish my partner contributors in this volume of Communication and Cognition success in your writing and in your efforts to shed light on the most important topics treated in this issue.

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