

TRANSFORMATION



Visionary Craniosacral Work in Life Crises and Symptom Interpretation

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Transformation:

Visionary craniosacral work in life crises and symptom interpretation

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PREFACE

My interpretation of what happens during sessions, where disease or illness may originate, what issues we are dealing with in this lifetime etc. stem from a certain paradigm. My believe system is not a fixed dogma, but is in flux and evolves along with my work and myself.

Reincarnation doesn't ring as strange and unfamiliar anymore to us Westerners as it did let's say 30 years ago, when more travelers from the Occident went to discover India and other oriental countries, where they encountered spiritual masters and gurus and got exposed to the concept of reincarnation, prevalent in most eastern religions and philosophies . The number of people believing that reincarnation makes more sense than what the Catholic Church teaches us is growing, the New Age movement being one of its purveyors. The work and the books written by Raymond Moody (1), Dr. Elisabeth Kubler Ross (2) and other pioneers have made the idea of the continuation of spiritual life after physical death, and the reincarnation of the spirit, more accessible. I think that eventually, people believing in reincarnation won't be asked to prove their faith anymore, just like believers in heaven, purgatory and hell don't need to "prove" their standpoint in the Western hemisphere. The social consensus regarding life, its meaning and the transition called death seem to be shifting.

Reality certainly does appear different, depending on what glasses one looks through. In my case, not only do I believe in multiple lifetimes, I also believe that they occur simultaneously, as in my view linear time is a concept we use here on Earth to represent one kind of reality. I think that behind this reality lies a deeper one in which everything exists at once, not in the past or the future, just in a present that encompasses everything. In his bestselling book about destiny (3), Thorwald Dethlefsen explains this concept with a book that we hold in our hands. We can choose to start reading on page one and go on in chronological order until we finish it. After having read a few pages, we know what the beginning of the story is, but not the end; however, the ending has already been written, we hold it in our hands, we just have no knowledge of it yet. By the way, we could also choose to start by reading the ending and then move to other parts of the book. It doesn't matter, as the book is already written. The Akashik Records¹ represent this idea that everything that has or will ever be done is already "written" down.

This paradigm may seem to encourage a certain fatality. If the ending is already written, why bother? I think that we generally endeavor to lead a certain type of life because our soul chose a path before incarnating. Through the decisions we make, we constantly influence this path and therefore the outcome (and we accumulate karma doing so). The energy we are in at a certain moment leads to certain conclusions. If we shift that energetic state, the conclusions tend to change as well. To many people, these thoughts may appear strange and incomprehensible – until they have

¹ Different cultures and religions make reference to the concept of a book of records that contains everything that has happened before and will occur in the future. In her book "Voices of our Ancestors", Dhyani Ywahoo, a Native American brought up in the Cherokee tradition, calls it the Temple of Understanding. She describes a meditation that allows us to read in our Book of Life that we find in the library of the Temple of Understanding. "When the guards are assured that your intentions are beneficial to all, they will allow you to enter the library, and an angelic being will help you to find your Book of Life. You will be shown to your personal study room and the book of your lives will be brought to you, that you may ascertain your life purpose, assess your skills and gifts, and realize the means of actualizing your goals... You may look at and evaluate all stages of you life." (4)

parted the curtain into another lifetime themselves, in therapy or in a *deja vu*, for instance. It seems to be an experimental truth, an intuitive knowledge more than an intellectual concept or a doctrine.

Along with reincarnation, I believe that our soul chooses the parents that energetically correspond to the life task it has set for itself, therefore the place of birth as well as the time. Ripley Webb describes this vividly in his novel "Full Cycle" (5). I have the impression that our soul is androgynous and that we can choose to incarnate as man and as women, depending on what we want to experience in a certain lifetime. I am not only talking about human shape here, however. In my view at this point in time, I think that everything alive is animate – has a soul – and that our soul can incarnate also as an animal, probably as a plant and even a rock, as well as all kinds of other life forms from different planets and dimensions.

When Stanislav Grof was asked by a journalist (6) how he could explain that some Indian gurus did not seem to think much of reincarnation - as they did not perceive individual souls, but only one big spirit (I imagine we could call it God) - he answered that on a higher level of reality, everything appeared to be One. But on a different level, called Maya (illusion), we were indeed individuals, separated from each other by our bodies, histories, race etc.

This would explain an experience I have had in a session at the Light Institute in Galisteo, New Mexico, in February 2001: I traveled to a lifetime where I identified with one person, felt his feelings, thought his thoughts, experienced his death, while at the same time also being a female friend of this man – I was two people at once! This confused me at the time, until it clicked and I knew intuitively that indeed, we are all one and the separations are artificial, or an illusion. This concept is hard for me to comprehend intellectually, but nevertheless it makes sense to me. Reality strikes me as huge and our minds much too small to grasp it. My father, a very patient man and a rather atypical farmer with a critical, ever curious and philosophical mind, thought me all kinds of things as a child in his scarce time off, from jumping over a hedge like an athlete to calculating fractions. He was eager to pass on some of his knowledge to me, his first-born child, and I inherited a lot from him, one of the positive traits being his passion for reading. Dad used to puzzle me with his saying: "There is nothing that doesn't exist". A paradox I could not quite understand at the time. It seems very to the point to me now, though, and a good, albeit short explanation of reality.

So in this work, that rule of thumb applies too. The further I dive into it – and I am only at the beginning - the more I realize how important it is to approach it with an open mind, with as little preconceived ideas as possible. Because, if I allow it, anything can happen! Quite often, I don't know what the hell I am doing! My hands tell me to go some place; my intuition leads me to visualize a certain color. The more I trust myself - despite my mind which would like to analyze and comprehend - the



"Butterfly II" by Richard Henson

better the work. Sometimes, when I am lucky, a book I read or a conversation with a colleague gives me the explanation I was looking for. What a relief! However, more often than not, it is the process that I am experiencing with my client that validates my intuitive knowledge. Letting go is therefore still a lesson I am learning, and sometimes struggling with... Trusting that my client's and my soul know what is needed, that our dreambodies will dance their dance together, is essential.

My intuitive knowledge has been confirmed or expanded by many books, but mostly by my teachers, who I would like to thank for their valuable contribution to my life and my work: Hugh Milne, Chris Griscom, Navjit, Arthur Munyer, the people at Esalen Institute, Dr. Mallory Fromm, and especially Don Massat, who I am currently studying with and who helps me reach deeper levels in myself and therefore in my work.

INTRODUCTION

Technically, I started pursuing this path three years ago, at the Esalen Institute in California, with a class in energy work (Seiki) and one in massage. At the time, I was deeply stirred by the ups and downs of a very intense love relationship (which ended for good two months later). Additionally, I knew I had to leave my managerial position in corporate communications – a dream job I had fashioned according to my taste and enjoyed fulfilling tremendously, until I realized that it was over. I was ready for something new. Fortunately circumstances made it so that, as my career was fading out, I felt ready to move into energy work. I had had several key experiences that told me this was an avenue I would have to explore. Well, what better time for a transformation! The stage was set, the crisis at its apex: With my heart and my life shattered in a thousand pieces and a career I could not pursue any longer, there was not much left to hold on to.

The day before I left California for Switzerland, I met Hugh Milne in a post office in Carmel... Two months later, in April 1999, I attended the first visionary craniosacral class in Winterthur, Switzerland. In May, a fellow student offered me to work in his office a day a week – and I started practicing. The pieces all seemed to fall into place almost effortlessly. All I had to do was create space in my life for things to happen and surrender to the flow.

Half a year later, however, I was back in a rut, working in three demanding and very different jobs, including my own practice. I kept it up for a year. At this rhythm, nothing was much fun anymore and I knew I had to drop everything, including my home and the country I was living in... After a few months of incertitude and questioning, I left for a sabbatical to the States. The only thing I knew for sure was that I would finish my craniosacral training with Hugh in Big Sur, the rest was a multitude of question marks. For a control freak like me, all this letting go was not the easiest thing to do! But I learnt increasingly to trust my intuition and guidance. When I needed an answer, it would pop up in some way, like one time in the form of a loud, oracle-like sentence that woke me up in the middle of the night.

After I had completed the craniosacral classes in Big Sur, I went to spend the holidays with my sister and her husband in Southern California. At the Christmas dinner, I met Jorge, a Puerto-Rican living in California. Who would have guessed he would become my husband six months later? After crisscrossing the States, with some stops at my parents' home in Canada and my own in Switzerland, Jorge and I ended up in Chicago, where a friend of mine offered me to work with him in his "Beyond Wellness" center. That is where my path has taken me so far... although we do have a few ideas, Jorge and I gave up on planning. I know for sure, however, that from a very busy, successful communication expert, focused on her career, I turned into a much calmer, surprisingly steadfast, light worker. Somehow, I know what I have to do, even though life throws a few wrenches into the system every now and then.

My own transformation has attracted people in crisis – I could help those clients trust the process and move ahead because it seemed as if I were a few steps ahead. This also explains my interest in the subject and therefore this thesis. Writing it, I learned a lot about the topic and about my knowledge – which I sometimes, impatiently, wish I did apply more often in everyday life! I hope that you will find pleasure in reading this paper and that it provides you with some interesting additions to your own body of knowledge and experience.



“Les quatre Saisons”, Alphonse Mucha. The rhythm of change is inherent in nature, therefore in ourselves.

THE CHANGE WE FEAR

Isn't this strange? After all, most of us have transcended the age of the diaper and of crawling on all four without the pain of loss. It might have left deeper traces in our psyche, but I doubt that many would voluntarily agree to go back to that stage of development. Once we have spread our wings, we know what it feels like to fly, metaphorically speaking. We might have our wings clipped, and more than once, but the memory of flying is recorded in the cells of our brain and body – and we will long for that sensation. Yet, when it means leaving a relationship for us to grow, be it with an employer or a lover, we sometimes wait for a long time, stagnating in the old form rather than embracing the new possibilities that our being has to offer. Deep down we know that if we leave, we won't be able to go back. We are closing a door and don't know what to expect on the other side. I wonder if the caterpillar knows what to expect when it starts spinning its cocoon?

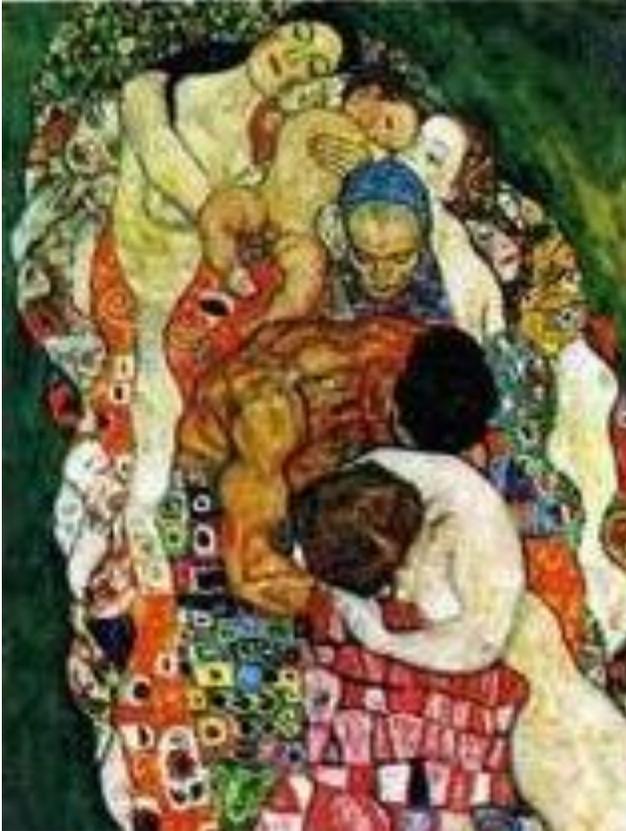
If we can go back to flying – meaning that we regain our liberty of movement, our vision, our freedom - we will go on exploring those realms, advancing in our pursuit, eventually finding some new shape. However, if we feel captured in our box, unable to spread our wings for too long a time, we will get depressed, or sick, or both. People who cannot remember consciously what it feels like to be free, to follow the universal movement, seem to do it unconsciously. They look for ways to evolve. Eventually, they find them – unless they are unable to reach the light by themselves. In either case, pain in the form of an illness or disease (dis-ease = not being at ease) shows us that



we are in a state of crisis. This can become apparent on a psychological level first, before it manifests in the physical body. **Life crisis is what propels the transformational process forward. In visionary craniosacral work we can address the deeper causes of an illness to go beyond the symptoms and help the individual change and therefore heal.**

I feel blessed when someone who has recognized he or she is in a crisis comes to my office. These clients are usually more eager to

change something in their life than others who have not reached the apex yet and are still looking for a quick fix, an easy way out. These clients seem harder to work with, as their denial has to be addressed first. Sometimes, a change of therapy or therapist, or the interruption of therapy, are ways of trying to avoid the deeper problem – and the change that its (re)solution implies.



“Death and Life”, Gustav Klimt

TRANSFORMATION

“Change is an integral characteristic of life; where there is life there is unending change.”⁽⁷⁾ Nothing stays the same, everything changes. Why does something that sounds so sensible and obvious, once we start thinking about it – a reality expressed by multiple sages throughout history – create such havoc in our lives? I imagine that if we were able to go with the flow, these universal truths would be facts, not forces that could create whole new branches of consultant jobs (“corporate culture and organizational change”) and boost book sales with recipes on how to adapt to, on an individual level, or precede, on a corporate level, an ever faster changing environment.

How does Webster Dictionary define change and transformation? “Change: To make or become different. Transformation: implies a major change in form, nature, or function.” The difference seems to be a matter of degrees, the latter implying a more profound shift. “Transformations... represent radical change, the quantum leap.”⁽⁸⁾ I also think that transformation, like its somewhat more mystical synonym metamorphose (“to change strikingly the appearance or character of”⁽⁹⁾) is unidirectional: Once it has happened, there is no turning back. No becoming the old self again. Actually, the old and the new self might look completely different, as in the case of the caterpillar turning into a butterfly. However, change does not mean becoming someone else, but realizing some other aspect of one’s soul - the soul being much too multifaceted to be manifested all at once in one shape. “Because an atom, a matter, a form is changed, does not mean that the essence, the source or the spirit of it has changed; only in its form of manifestations, and not in its relation with the first cause”.⁽¹⁰⁾

Nobody would expect a butterfly to trade its wings and its lightness to become a slow and in comparison rather plain looking caterpillar again. We know that once there is a cocoon, we have to say good-bye to the caterpillar’s manifestation. Strangely enough, we humans don’t seem to work quite the same way. Having no such obvious indication of an impending transformation as a cocoon, we tend to cling to our old state and resist transformation. It seems so much safer to stay the way we are. But everything changes and so must we. Resistance to change, like the resistance to adapt to one’s environment, has a price that, in its physical form, is pain that can become unbearable unless dulled by drugs.

Physical transformation is common to all of mankind, it is a part of the process of growing up and older, of the normal life pattern. This process ought to be accompanied by psychological and spiri-

tual growth, if we believe that spirit and mind precede the slower moving energies of the physical world. However, in a society lacking deeply anchored initiation ceremonies and rituals of change like ours, a society obsessed with youth and fearful of death (the final transformation in this lifetime), the mind and especially the soul are sometimes left behind, creating yet another discrepancy that puts our being under a considerable amount of stress.



In the “I Ching”, the Chinese Book of Change, these symbols represent stagnation and change/revolution. ²

A girl having her first period has begun the process of becoming a woman, the blood being the most visible sign of her transformation. She might not have a regular period, or sometimes – for different reasons – she might not have a period for a long time – but she won't return to girlhood (on a physical level). This is a stage she has passed, the transformation has happened. Later on in her life, menopause will be a slower and somewhat less obvious shift, but it also will be irreversible (unless hormones are being administered from outside her body). Then of course death, if one believes in life after death or reincarnation, as the apotheosis of transformation, from a body-mind-spirit entity to a pure spiritual state. The body is left to decay, or is being burnt, there is no way to turn that situation around (mummification slows down the process, but doesn't reanimate the body, in near-death experiences the soul seems to return back into the body which therefore does not have the time to start decaying). However, a new physical home for the soul can be created through reincarnation: a perfect transformation.

In her book “Light Emerging” (11), Barbara Ann Brennan describes an interesting occurrence in the form of a seemingly increase in incarnations in the same body: The change of one's life purpose and personality while continuing to live in the same body, a process that seems to take about two years and that, for obvious reasons, saves a lot of energy. According to her description of the phenomenon, this seems to be the kind of transformation I experienced three years ago. Imagine: Instead of getting old, dying, looking for new parents, being conceived, born, grow, become an adult

² “I Ching Cards”, Made in Switzerland by AGMULLER, distributed by U.S. Games Systems, Inc. Stamford, CT 06902 USA

again and so on, the soul goes from one life path to another while staying in one and the same incarnation! Talk about a metamorphose needing a minimum of energy!

According to certain systems, evolutionary jumps occur every seven years throughout life. In her inspirational lectures on the “Natural Law” (12), based on Yogananda’s teachings, Rev. Eloise Page explains that at age five, when we undergo the first of these shifts, moving from babyhood to childhood. We start going to school, we experience the first feelings of responsibility; on a biochemical level, our tastes in food change. At twelve, we open the door to adolescence; the changes in the body chemistry are the most noticeable, new feelings and thoughts arise, emotionally we are on a roller-coaster ride. At 19, adulthood commences, we focus on education, on independence and become more responsible and somewhat subdued. At age 26, we root ourselves, possibly in marriage, with children and a home; emotionally we become more stable. We enter the spiritual cycle at age 33, where we evaluate the believe systems we were brought up with and make adjustments; we also come into a sense of individuality. Life begins at 40! We come into the fullness of our talents and capabilities, we are reaching out for fulfillment; the hormonal changes have an effect upon our outlook, our actions, our sensitivity; we might feel frustrations because of certain goals we haven’t reached; we possibly need new stimuli; if we manage to harness these energies and channel them toward new objectives, we may come to a new stage of enlightenment. And these cycles go on throughout our entire life.

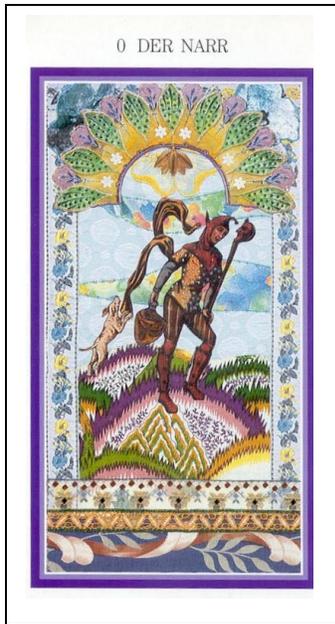


This also explains why it would be quite an illusion to believe that because we have just gone through a transformational process, which might have been painful, we are fine and can rest on our laurels!

Although some people put their every thought and effort toward “security”, there is no such thing as stagnation in the universe. Energy flows incessantly, gives us impulses, propelling us forward. It would be an illusion to believe or even so much as hope to stop growing one day, to no longer have to struggle or press against the barriers, to no longer have to develop... Again and again there are new octaves of higher truth, of greater dimensions. (13)

Visible change has a certain rhythm, like nature, but in fact, shifts occur constantly, often unnoticeably, like the reproduction of our cells. Trying to stop the evolutionary process however means creating new pain, hence the importance of staying in the flow. This corresponds to the “discoveries” of modern science: In his books “The Tao of Physics” (14) and “The Turning Point” (15), Fritjof Capra, a physicist and Berkley professor, explains how quantum physics emphasizes the “becoming” instead of the “being”, the process instead of the solid substance.

So, if transformation is a normal part of our lives, why make such a fuss about it? – If you have been working in a large corporation lately, you know what sums of money and what energy are being invested in consultants and programs to make people and ultimately the corporations themselves change (change management for the management of change...). Although I doubt that the intention of such change would be to let employees grow wings! – We seem reluctant to change. It is frightening not to know how it will feel to be in a cocoon. And the outcome is also uncertain: Are we going to be a lovely colorful butterfly or a dull and unwanted moth? How are we supposed to



know – and even if we did, could we trust that knowledge and hand the steering wheel over to fate? Most of us like to be in control – transformation for a large part defies our willpower as to a definite and pre-defined outcome. (On the other hand, willpower can be a big aid in staying with the process, even if it hurts, and coming out of it truly transformed by the experience.)

“That is the great struggle...: You erroneously believe that what is most obnoxious to you is you. This, at the same time, is the cause for the great resistance, inherent in all human beings, against changing. For, since you do not believe that you can essentially be anything else but that which you dislike, you have to hold on to it nevertheless, because you do not wish to cease existing.” (16)

Here we have quite a dilemma. Not only are we afraid of the transformational process and its outcome, but we also believe that we will not get any better – even though we don’t think much of ourselves to start with!

At this point I would like to mention an interesting model for transformation developed by Carol Person. In her book “The Hero Within” (17), she explains how, throughout life, we evolve from the archetype of the Innocent to the archetype of the Orphan, on to the Martyr, the Warrior, the Wanderer, until we turn into the Magician. Each archetype possesses its own characteristics. We usually live two or more of the archetypes at once, however, one dominates. The stage of childhood corresponds to the archetype of the Innocent represented by the “Fool” in the Tarot. As we grow up, we gain knowledge, lose some of our innocence and move towards the archetype of the Orphan, to perhaps become a Wanderer later.

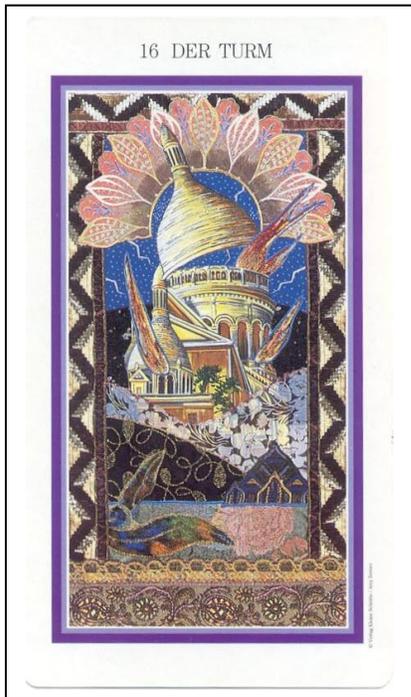
Some people tend to stay stuck mainly in one archetype. For instance, the typical housewife in her role half a century ago – in many cultures this still is the case; that is what women’s movements are mainly fighting against – spends a major part of her life as a Martyr. We know what happens when her children leave the house and her husband looks for excitement elsewhere. The typical man, especially the businessman, defines himself as an archetypal Warrior – he tends to wear himself out and end up with high blood pressure and maybe a cardiac arrest, or cluster headaches. The Magician, the shape-shifter who, through his imagination, creativity and willpower creates his reality represents the apotheosis. However, even if we reach that stage, we do not stay there, but go back to other archetypes. This is not a regression, but evolution in a spiral. We become the Innocent again on a higher level.

This is obviously a more complex explanation of the transformations that take place in a lifetime than the caterpillar and the butterfly. I do not think that one excludes the other though, in my opinion they are complementary. For instance, before we shift



from a Martyr to a Warrior, we most probably experience a life-crisis. Take the example of the housewife who sees the meaning of her life evade her when her children leave and she possibly finds out about her husband's extra-marital affairs... She will probably go through a "dark night" of the soul, before she turns the situation around, goes out there to look for a job, emancipates herself financially and also emotionally and turns from a Martyr into a Warrior, possibly; a stronger woman who stands up for her rights. Will she ever go back to who she was before? She could not, even if she wanted to – she has uncovered another aspect of her soul and finds herself on a different level of the evolutionary spiral.

The typical midlife crisis as experienced by men seems to be an attempt to stop growth by clinging to some past that needs to be let go of: Wisdom is calling, not the follies of youth. By refusing to surrender to evolution, we create havoc in our life and for those closest to us. This touches another important aspect of life changes: They not only affect the person directly involved, but also those close to him or her. When one makes an energetic shift, which will be translated in physical life as well, the people in proximity will feel a change; they will not be able to continue with their business as usual, but will have to adapt in some way. The husband of a housewife and mother who emancipates herself after 25 years of dutiful service cannot continue expecting the same behavior of his wife. This means he has to change his ways as well, possibly sharing in household chores, and most probably being faced with a woman who speaks her mind, when before, she might have tried to adapt to his opinion. Her children will also notice that something is different with their mother. She might stop pampering them and expect them to take their share of responsibility. They can welcome the change in their mother, or they may wish she had stayed her "good old self". Whatever the reaction, the nature of the relationship will alter and the children will have to take a few more steps towards adulthood. The most visible transformation of the mother will therefore have instigated new developments for her husband, their children, and in turn for those close to them. Like a stone dropped in a pond: Where it falls, the rings are the most visible, but the growing circles, although less perceptible, will reach the shores of the water body eventually, therefore affecting the whole pond. Although we mostly feel separated from others, we are all connected, so if one part of the web moves, the others will do so too.



The Tower. (22) The eruption of the boil: Crisis “tears down and breaks up, which is momentarily painful, but transformation is unthinkable without it”. (23)

the abyss comes the voice of salvation. The black moment is the moment when the real message of transformation is going to come. At the darkest moment comes light.” (19) According to Webster Dictionary, crisis is the turning point for better or worse in an acute disease or fever; a paroxysmal attack of pain, distress, or disordered function; an emotionally significant event or radical change of status in a person's life; the decisive moment (20).

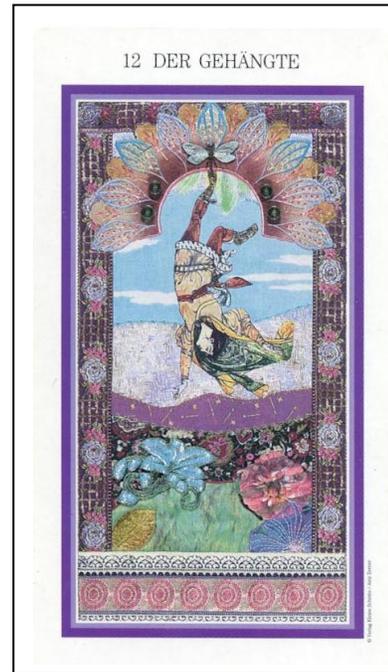
If, like the Magician, we recognize the need for transformation and the opportunities that change brings along, if we go with the flow, the crisis preceding change might be minor. However:

“When necessary change is not accepted willingly, you automatically put yourself into a state of crisis. The intensity of the crisis indicates the intensity of the opposition, as well as the urgency of the need for change. The greater the need for change, and the greater the obstruction to change, the more painful the crisis is going to be.” (21)

CRISIS

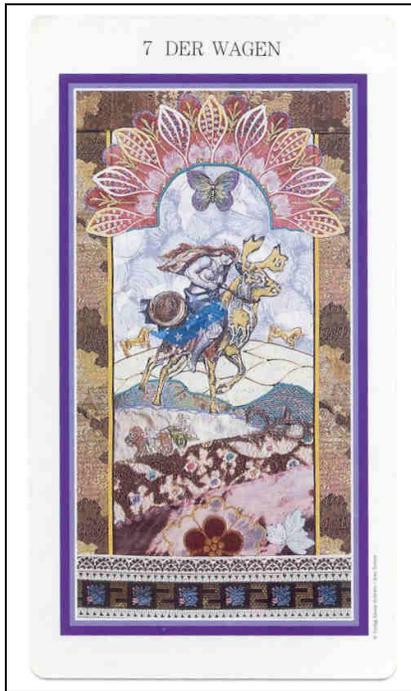
“Crisis is an attempt of nature to effect change through the cosmic lawfulness of the universe. If change is obstructed by the ego, the part of the consciousness that directs the will, crisis will occur to make structural change possible. ... Every crisis ultimately means such a readjustment, whether it appears in the form of pain, difficulties, upheaval, uncertainty, or merely the insecurity that comes from starting out on unaccustomed ways of living after giving up a familiar one. Crisis in any form attempts to break down old structures based on false conclusions and therefore on negativity. Crisis shakes loose ingrained, frozen habits so that new growth becomes possible (18).

The guide talks extensively about crisis in the “Pathwork of Self-Transformation”. Joseph Campbell, in “Power of Myth”, has this to say: “One thing that comes out in myths is that at the bottom of



The Hanged Man. Radical change: The situation is turned around 180 degrees, everything is upside down. However, the wind of change is blowing, bringing with it new growth and transformation (as represented by the butterfly).

This also means that if we willingly let go of old negative believe systems and ideas to discover new ones that ultimately serve us better, we do not need to suffer through the descent into hell and the ascent to the light. This is also what I observe in my practice: People who are willing to change – even if it means giving up their old lifestyle, social and marital status, material wealth – are able to heal themselves with less pain and trouble. Others who hold on to what they have, to what represents security to them, suffer more and longer.

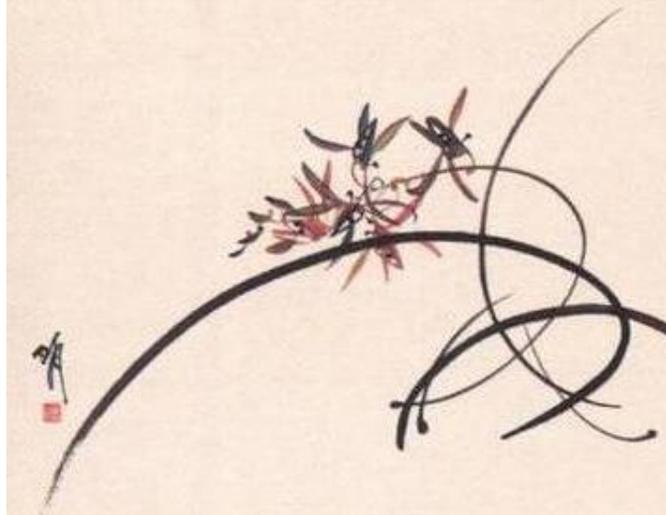


The Wagon. A pro-active form of change: New territories are seen as positive, as something to go for, there is much less pain involved (or necessary).

The more proactive we are – meaning that we move ahead on our own initiative, somewhat like the rider on the card “The Wagon”, instead of waiting to be pushed forward by life– the less likely a crisis is to occur. After all, we create our reality, we look for the necessary challenges that will make us grow. So if we take the reins in our hands and move on, we avoid stagnation. There is no boil forming, which in turn would need to erupt – the paroxysm of the crisis – for the situation to turn around. It takes courage to consciously create one’s own life, the courage to act, and the courage to let go, whatever is appropriate at the time. How often do we try to escape a test, believing that by putting the head in the sand, we will avoid an issue? This only postpones the necessary decisions, and gives the boil time to form... The growing pains will be worse than if we had made the move. I believe there are no mistakes in life – the important is to decide and go on, which can mean wait, but do so consciously, not out of cowardice. Life does not reward the ostrich behavior. Not because it wants to be mean, but because we try avoiding the lesson and therefore evolution, which is what life is about. Going against life and the universal currents will hurt and is ultimately impossible.

Visionary Craniosacral Work

Why address life crises with visionary craniosacral work? This work is based on cranial osteopathy and therefore partly explainable on a physical level. Technically, it is about the delicate sensing of cranial bones and the sacrum. It has to do with improving the flow of the cerebrospinal fluid and optimizing the cranial wave. By affecting the brain and the spine, it influences the nervous system, therefore the whole body.



But craniosacral work goes deeper: It is energy work. Elusive, mysterious and subtle, difficult to explain in words. The effects, however, can be tremendous and manifold. It affects the whole human being, the dreambody: the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual bodies or aspects of a being. The state of consciousness of the practitioner is more important than the method, secondary in my view. Visionary craniosacral work allows the practitioner to be fully involved in the process, to be present, to use her touch as well as her inner ear and the eye that “sees clouds a thousand miles away”. This work comes from the heart, and that makes it so effective. A practitioner that opens her heart allows the client to get in touch with the divine - unconditional love. This is the ultimate healing power!

Visionary craniosacral work ought not to make the client dependent, but empower him instead. It resembles a dance of two souls and one is not always sure of who is leading and who is being led. (There may be more souls involved, actually, in particular when we call in the guides to help us during a session; sometimes the room is crowded with entities working together!) Both client and therapist have their part to play. The therapist cannot be a “God in White” who talks to his patient in incomprehensible jargon and makes him feel exposed and powerless. Quite the opposite: Successful treatment depends on the therapist’s ability to create an atmosphere of trust and to communicate on a deeper level with his client.

Moreover: We cannot heal others – the client has to heal himself. We can facilitate his process, but he needs to go through the transformational process, evolve and come out of the experience with a greater knowledge of himself, whole, healed.

Healing, on the other hand, is an active and internal process that includes investigating one’s attitudes, memories, and beliefs with the desire to release all negative patterns that

prevent one's full emotional and spiritual recovery. This internal review inevitably leads one to review one's external circumstances in an effort to recreate one's life in a way that serves activation of will – the will to see and accept truths about one's life and how one has used one's energies; and the will to begin to use energy for the creation of love, self-esteem and health.(24)

Visionary craniosacral work does not demand the strict adherence to a protocol - it is an art. One technique, the right one at the right time, can be enough to open the door into other dimensions. Its magic lies in the imaginative, creative, intuitive aspects of the work. It can be a journey into the sacred, the most profound of the client and the practitioner alike. It might take the client back to his childhood miseries, birth traumas, or even into archaic wounds or systems of condensed energy that are connected to other lifetimes. Unlike science, craniosacral work is not reproducible; a valid reason for the scientific mind to distrust or dismiss it. However, to the objective observer, the results should be proof enough.

Craniosacral work does not so much address the symptoms as it goes back to the cause or causes. By the way, I do not think that every client needs to be “cured” for the treatment to end successfully.



Healing exceeds the medical cure and makes sense to the client, not necessarily to anyone else: Accepting one's illness could mean healing, facing death with open eyes could be exactly what this soul needs; after all, death is the ultimate crisis – and transformation – in this lifetime. Healing means becoming whole, reconnecting with one's soul, finding a balance and being able to go on with the assembled energy of the whole being, with trust in life and its processes, instead of experiencing energy blockages, feelings of defeat, fear. Sometimes, it is under the most adverse conditions that the soul finds its way to God, the unity, and ceases being torn apart by inner conflicts. Some people radiate from out of their wheelchair. Others welcome death with open arms and a smile.

Death in the tarot: major changes ahead

The process of death itself is such a crisis that brings about the ultimate transformation.



“Girl before a mirror”, Pablo Picasso

Symptom interpretation

Symptoms are the beginning of healing, not, as traditional psychiatry postulates, the beginning of an illness or disease. We all are marked by traumatic experiences; these accumulate until the cup is full, until the organism cannot take any more and has to free itself. This only is possible through making the traumas conscious and expressing them, or through psychosomatic manifestations that bring them to the surface. The external appearance is a mirror of what we are carrying inside and that rises from our depths. (25).

Stanislav Grof developed his view of symptoms throughout his many years of practice as a psychiatrist who went beyond the paradigm of his profession and time. Some of the experiences he describes so vividly resemble what hap-

pened in sessions and during meditations I have had myself or I have witnessed; experiences difficult to describe to others, as they seem so “out there”. They are very real to the person living them, though.

I do not work much with Grof’s birth matrixes myself (yet). I share Thorwald Dethlefsen’s view that the birth process is a condensed version of the life to come, not so much the cause per se of our traumas as a representation of the issues we bring with us that we want to address in this particular lifetime (26). However, I have observed in myself how it affects my present life when I can relate themes of it to those of other lifetimes. It assists greatly in undoing knots and getting rid of unnecessary baggage. In a month long seminar with Chris Griscom at the Light Institute in Galisteo, I had the opportunity to work on issues I have difficulties with in this life by addressing them in other lifetimes, a truly enlightening experience!

The German psychologist Thorwald Dethlefsen and the physician Ruediger Dahlke wrote a very interesting and comprehensive best-seller about the interpretation of symptoms: “Krankheit als Weg” (27), which translates roughly into “illness as a path”. In their view, every symptom has a deeper meaning: It communicates important messages from the soul. In a sequel called “Krankheit als Sprache der Seele” (28) (illness as the language of the soul), Ruediger Dahlke goes even more into the detail of many different symptoms. Every time I am ill, I consult these books to find out more about the deeper causes – I also use them to get a more encompassing picture of my clients and their diseases.

In regard to the chakra system, Caroline Myss’ Book “Anatomy of the Soul” (29) is a big help in relating the soul centers to life issues. My first impression, however, is always intuitive and therefore the

most important one, as it applies to the person on the table - to life, not theory. I think that while different areas and parts of the body have their energetic charges, every individual is different. Most of us seem to have a weak spot, where we are most likely to be affected if something is wrong in our lives – the weak link that breaks first when under stress. I believe that this spot is connected to traumas in other lifetimes (whether called archaic wound, COEX - system of condensed experience -, or energy cyst) and closely linked to our life style and to the task we have chosen in this incarnation.

Case Studies

Daniel

Daniel, 40, felt the need for change in his life. He had been working for the same international corporation in a similar position in the controlling department for over ten years. He had been through management training, but to the day still was not in charge of any employees. He managed a large project that somehow did not want to take off. Daniel was not satisfied with his situation anymore. Then, to top it off, his girlfriend left him, after eight years of living together. His world broke into pieces, even though he knew that this relationship was not what he had dreamed of and he had not invested much energy into it. Daniel became depressed, could hardly get out of bed to go to work (he had always been a night bird, but had learned to make an asset out of it, being able to work until late at night or even around the clock when necessary). But now he came to work even later, was not efficient. Above all, he felt the need to empty his heart.

That is how he became my first regular client. Working in the same company as the head of the communications department, I was also some sort of counselor for many who felt the need to talk to someone about problems at work or at home. Daniel told me his story and I spent quite a few working hours listening to him and trying to help. I realized that being in an important transition myself, from a member of top management to a body worker, I could help him better by using my newly acquired tools. So Daniel and I started working together. He not only had his depression to get over, but also a smoking habit as well as the use of recreational drugs that he wanted to quit. Physically, he suffered from lumbar disc injuries that would put him to bed for days after strenuous exercises like playing handball or motor bike riding, his favorite hobbies.

During our weekly or bi-weekly sessions, Daniel would talk a lot. I felt more like a psychotherapist at times than like a craniosacral therapist. However, in the short period of a month, his mood had improved considerably. After two months, he was starting to go to bed earlier and getting up earlier as well as to improve his diet. His need to smoke diminished. His back had improved so much that he could ride on his motorbike for a week and go to work the day after without pain, something he had not been able to do in years. Daniel was in the process of transforming himself and it was beautiful to watch him becoming conscious of his patterns and hearing him express his wish to change some of them, his relationship to authority – his father especially, but also his boss – and with women being two major ones. He realized that ultimately he had to modify his view of himself, if he wanted to see the world through different eyes.

It seemed to me that we made beautiful progress; however, Daniel tended more and more often to miss appointments. At first, I let it pass – I was still new at this job, working mostly with friends and acquaintances and had not any set business rules yet. At one point I commented on what was becoming a habit of his, one that seemed to be about avoiding to dig deeper into himself (my suggestion to meditate regularly was met with interest, but not carried through, for instance). He stated that he wished to see me regularly, once a week, but he came once every two weeks at the most. He wanted to stick to his own rules, just like he wanted to quit smoking dope. Both would work for a while, until he would fall back into his pattern and look for evasion (his own words).

When doing hands on work, I had started by concentrating on his sacrum and his psoas muscle to alleviate his back pain. At the beginning of our therapy, the pelvis felt like a heavy rock. After a few

sessions, it started to become alive, the cranial wave getting stronger. This physical symptom was taken care of in a matter of a few months. When I felt it would be time to do some intra-oral work (i.e. smoking habit which he cursed, and therefore a sensitive area), because I felt a lot of pent up tension in his jaw, I met resistance. Daniel was conscious of his “smoker breath” and felt bad about opening his mouth to let me work on his tight mandible, where I felt a lot of withheld emotions. This shyness had impeded even his love life. We talked about this and he started to slowly open up. Only to a certain point, though.

He failed to show up for appointments, until at one point, when I felt that I came up against the same wall of resistance again, I told him that he would have to make up his mind: Was he seeing me because it was pleasant – sometimes I would give him a massage, sometimes he only wanted to talk, sometimes we did craniosacral work – or because he wanted to work on himself? Both were fine with me. But I urged him to make up his mind and let me know, so we could determine an objective and a path – meaning a certain frequency and regularity in treatments, or decide that it was for his pleasure and well being and he could come whenever he felt like it. It seemed to me, however, that it was important for him to be conscious of his choice. He affirmed that he wanted to work on himself with me, not with another therapist, as he trusted me.

Daniel took over a month to contact me again. Meanwhile he had started to think about taking massage lessons himself. He also resigned from his position and founded his own company. He still was not sure about what he wanted to do with me. He felt very grateful for the progress he had made, but confused as to our relationship. Was he to consider me as a friend or as a therapist? I tried to make it clear that while at my office, I was a therapist and it would help to keep that distinction clear. Daniel still could not make up his mind, so we made another appointment three weeks later. When the time came, he did not show up, and he did not call to cancel the appointment either. Knowing that to be a typical behavior of his, I waited. About two months later, I still had not heard from him, so I phoned him. Daniel felt bad about not having contacted me, he felt bad about having to talk to me (authority) and the conversation seemed an utterly unpleasant experience to him. I tried to give him the opportunity to look at this typical behavior of his, addressing it to help him find new ways of dealing with similar situations. I realized that Daniel was not ready to face this mirror.

This was the last contact I have had with my first client - unfortunately, in my eyes. I felt that we had both been triggering each other: Me by holding him accountable; Daniel by showing me that I needed to be clearer about my boundaries and that I also had to have the courage to open up and speak my truth, even if I was reluctant to do so. He and successive encounters made me realize that everybody advances at his or her own speed, that I'm not the measuring stick and my task is not to push people to where they are not ready to be. I wish Daniel and I had had a closing session, eye to eye, instead of on the phone, because I do believe that we were both in each others lives during an important transitional period, and this, as such, is very valuable to me.

Symptom interpretation

Disk injuries:

In his book “Krankheit als Sprache der Seele” ⁽³⁰⁾, Rudiger Dahlke compares the spine to a snake. According to his study of oriental wisdom, the serpent symbolizes growth and development (which

imply change). The development takes the snake away from the earthbound (physical realm) into the air (spiritual realm). The same applies to the spine, in this explanation. Because the spine is constituted from the bony vertebrae and the jelly-like disks encapsulated by tough fibres, it also symbolizes the balance of the masculine (hard) and the feminine (soft); stability and flexibility. Conscious physical stress and emotional and spiritual - often unconscious - stress, burden our disks (in Dahlke's opinion, unconscious burdens create problems more than the conscious ones). They try to adapt to the pressure – stepping in for the individual that fails to adapt his lifestyle instead – until it gets too much and something breaks or bursts. The result may be a herniated disk.

As the legs are often affected in disk injuries, first chakra issues come into play. Being grounded, standing up for oneself, standing straight, and the theme of advancing are involved. The stiff, upright patient shows a lack of flexibility and adaptability, often also too much pride, in his position. Inflexible structures and exaggerated honesty govern his life. Moderation, balance and modesty are strangers to him. His soldier-like frankness appears forced, though, not genuine. The task of such people is to transform this constantly demonstrated forthrightness (in German: Aufrichtigkeit) into a deeper integrity (Geradlinigkeit) and honesty towards oneself. They also need rest. Often they do too much to gain appreciation and appraisal from the outside, because there is an inner lack of it. Instead of covering this feeling of inferiority with so much effort, it would be wise to learn to live a more peaceful life and let go of the burdens. "Feelings of inferiority push one to doing instead of being – to performing and take on heavier burdens than one can carry. The secret lies in accepting and loving oneself."⁽³¹⁾ A wide-spread difficulty, and definitely Daniel's too.

In his case, this seems also related to his ambiguity towards authority/father figures; he craves their approval and rebels against them at the same time. It is looking for love in the wrong place. Love cannot be gained or deserved; true love – as represented by the love of the mother towards her child – is unconditional. The love of oneself is essential to being able to love unconditionally and therefore being loved in the same way. And this is definitely a big issue for Daniel.

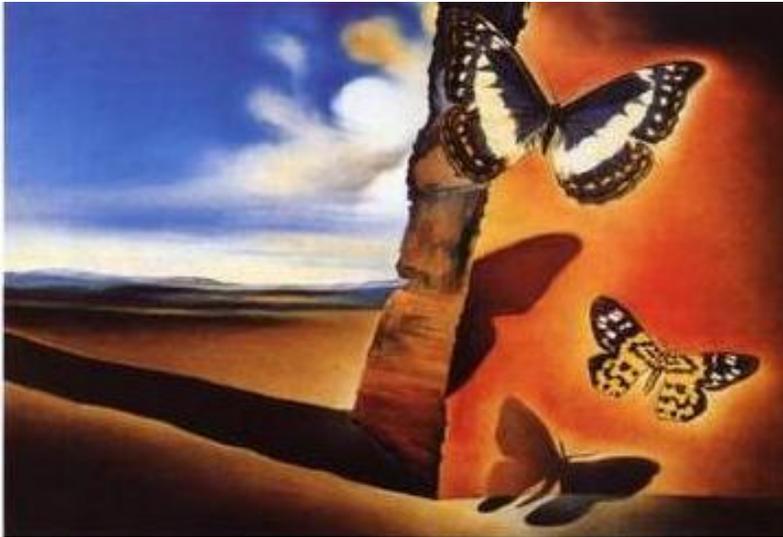
The lower back also has to do with 2nd chakra issues like sexuality and creativity. In my experience, people with low back pain tend to deny their sexuality, to block their sexual impulses or to control and rationalize them. In a society that has not found a balance between Puritanism and pornography, it doesn't surprise that so many suffer from symptoms in their lower back. Daniel did have a hard time opening up to his girl-friend sexually; he was also uncomfortable with me doing intra-oral work.

Depression:

In my view, depression is neither an emotion nor a feeling. It rather constitutes a state of mind in which one unconsciously tries to cover up feelings and emotions one does not feel ready to face. Guilt and anger, sometimes with an underlying sadness, seem to boil under the cover of depression quite frequently. These low vibration energies could be transformed by making them conscious, looking at them, getting them to move through one, instead of keeping the smoldering in the shadow, the unconscious. By not being willing to accept the painful, the client with depression also eliminates higher vibrations, joyful emotions. As my psychotherapist kept repeating: You cannot have one without the other!

What most of us tend to do is avoid or deny the seemingly “negative” emotions of fear, anger, and sadness as a shortcut to “positive” feelings of happiness and compassion. But there is no route to true joy and compassion except through the prior emotions, and all we get without the experience of fear, anger, and sadness are cheap imitations of joy and compassion – pleasantness and sentimentality. (32)

Depression is a refusal to live, a denying of life and the life-force within us. It represents a violation of the soul and is unbearable in the long-run, lest dulled by drugs.



“Paysage aux Papillons”, Salvador Dali

The last time I talked to him, Daniel had not completely emerged from the cocoon yet. I hope that he will do so in his time, and that by then, Daniel will be able to look into the mirror and smile at what he sees. Nevertheless, the back pain is gone, he can do sports normally again, he has come out of his depression, he left his job and his biker gang that did not suit him anymore, started his own company and took up massage as a

new addition to his life. He changed the look of his apartment, quit smoking dope for weeks or months at a time and started dating women again. His relationship with his father improved remarkably. All this occurred in about one year.

Adam

Adam, 57, came to see me five times altogether. Also a colleague from work, head of the finance department of the corporation Daniel and I were working for, Daniel had referred him to me. I was quite surprised when Adam called me to make an appointment, although also very happy about it. Just before leaving the company, I had learned that Adam had been diagnosed with chronic leukemia. His doctor had given him about six months to live. He was getting chemotherapy weekly and he also consulted a psychologist at the hospital every two weeks.

Adam looked like he was not going to hold on to life for much longer: very pale and tired, and he had lost weight. When he showed up at my office the first time, he could hardly walk up the stairs – he seemed exhausted and out of breath. I had the impression upon seeing him that he would be my introduction to death, a realm I had hardly been confronted with until then. When he exposed his situation, I was touched by his openness, knowing him to be rather reserved in a professional environment.

When I touched his sacrum for the first time, however, I was surprised: His sacrum behaved like that of a young and healthy man, his cranial wave telling me “I want to live!” My intention instantly changed: From wanting to help him in his transition, it shifted to getting him well again. I advised Adam to tell his doctor that he was receiving energy work, as this might help him reduce the dosage of the drugs he had to take.

I paid a lot of attention to his sphenoid that had a torsion lesion and appeared to my inner eye like a white dove with a broken wing. I told him about that image and asked him about the role of spirituality in his life. He happened to be writing a paper on Islam at that same time and told me about his extensive knowledge of the Christian religion. But he was aware that his interest in religion so far had been of a more intellectual rather than spiritual nature. I asked him to consider this and reflect upon the possibility of connecting religion with his feelings and gave him a list of books that could help him bridge that gap.

When I told Adam that his sphenoid was telling me “I love the money, but I hate the job”, he confirmed the reason for his disease to be his disagreement with the CEO of the company, his boss, and the way he ran the company, while at the same time feeling at his mercy, as he needed the income. It surprised me that he expressed his conviction so clearly, as I knew him as being a rather rational man. Adam also realized that his youth had not been an easy one. Being born during World War II in Nazi Germany and having spent a year in a prisoners’ camp in France as a little child had left traces. Also, the marriage with and the divorce from his former wife had taken a toll. However, he considered himself to be a lucky man and was proud of his achievements.

In the course of a few sessions, Adam changed noticeably. People who had to do with him at work commented to me about how different he had become, so that they hardly recognized him. He had lost his hair because of chemotherapy, but gained some weight, he regained his color and he looked like a completely transformed man: charming, alive – and able to express his feelings, even at work! I was amazed by his sudden transformation. His doctor lowered the dosage of his medication to about half and instead of increasing, his leucocytes decreased noticeably. Adam could not only walk up the stairway to my office easily, he also picked up downhill skiing again, his favorite sport that he had feared he would never be able to resume again.

During sessions, I repeatedly saw the color red and I would visualize it as long as it seemed appropriate. I did not know what it meant at the time, but told Adam to wear red clothes more often and to perhaps decorate his desk with a bunch of red flowers. He answered that as a matter of fact, he had just bought red tulips for the office. During our last session together, I had a vision of Adam running through a field of red poppies towards the sea. It was full of light, life and joy de vivre. Later, I read in Barbara Ann Brennan's book "Hand of Light" (33) that the visualization of red is used in the treatment of leukemia.



"Oriental Poppies", Georgia O'Keefe

Adam's successor was finally found, after a few too busy months at work. Adam could now let go of the heavy responsibilities. He invited me to his farewell party, where he thanked his successor and me for saving his life. The former because he had taken that heavy burden off him, me because of my "magic hands", as he put it. His public acknowledgement of craniosacral work deeply moved me.

"A year later, Adam was still working, but as an independent consultant. Two years later, I received a postcard from Australia signed Adam in which he

expressed his hope that I was doing as well as he was! It still makes me happy to think about the deeply moving sessions with him.

Leukemia

Cancer represents the small entity that is not under control anymore, but is detaching itself from the bigger entity it is part of and starts acting according to its own interests, forgetting the interests of the bigger unit and ultimately threatening its life. It seems to forget that by doing that, it eliminates its host, and therefore its own life. It shows us on a human scale what we are doing on a global one by the way in which we exploit our host, planet earth. We are the cancer of this planet (29), as Thorwald Dethlefsen puts it. Therefore, cancer has to do with a refusal to live in accordance with a bigger law, subordinating one's immediate interests to that of a bigger entity. By denying that it is part of a unity, the cell negates its connection to the source. Religion (re-ligio, reconnection to the origin, the unity), is an issue here. The ultimate questions "where do I come from" and "where am I going" have sunken from the conscious into the unconscious, the shadow, to eventually be manifested on a physical level as a life-threatening disease.

This interpretation corresponds with my vision of a white dove with a lame wing that I saw repeatedly when working on Adam's sphenoid. The dove, representing spirituality, wanted to take off, but could not because of its left wing that was hanging down powerlessly. On the other hand, Adam felt he had to follow his bosses policies, he subordinated himself to the company, although he was against the course taken, therefore denying himself. The torsion lesion of his sphenoid showed me

that he “hated the job, but loved the money”, that his loyalty was all twisted up. His body expressed the conflicting loyalties and revolted against the oppression his mind and his fears told him he needed to endure.

I believe that his decision to take his life back into his own hands, to emancipate himself emotionally from a company he had grown with, combined with chemotherapy and craniosacral work helped him regain his life power. Adam taught me not to have preconceived notions about the development of a therapeutic process, nor about a human being as such! Had I not been ready to abandon my thought forms about Adam and his disease, I could not have allowed the rapid change that took place and Adam would have had to look for another therapist, or do the healing on his own.

As I am writing this, a friend tells me that she has heard from Adam recently. He is still working for the same corporation, being in charge of important financial projects in different subdivisions. He seems to be doing well and is a big asset for the company in which he has found a new role that seems to suit him and his sense of loyalty better. I intend to contact Adam to let him know that I still think very fondly of him.

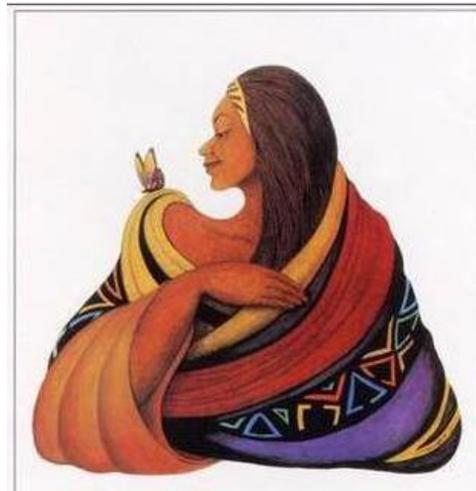
Susan

Susan, 40, with a PhD in physics, one of the few women engineers in the steel business in Western Europe, married, no children, came to see me, not knowing what to expect. She loved the calming effect craniosacral work had on her and we had sessions together twice a month. She had lost her job about half a year earlier due to the sale of her department to another company. This had greatly affected her, as she was deeply invested in the turn-around of her business. Instead of giving in to resentment or resignation, however, she had decided to start her own consulting business in the very male dominated steel industry. I admired her courage and felt that this choice would help her greatly emancipating herself from the father figure. Her father had been a CEO in the steel industry and it felt like she had to prove to him how good she was by following in his footsteps.

Susan had some irritating pain in her right knee and her lower back was hurting. I started working with her sacrum. At first, this felt like lifting a large piece of wood. Her thighs were the place where she gained weight and it looked to me like she had to protect herself in this area. After a few sessions, the cranial wave became much more alive, the sacrum felt a lot lighter and more inclined to move. Susan also opened up, the rational engineer showing her feminine and vulnerable sides. I felt honored to work with a friend in such a way and she had told me that she wanted our friendship to grow through our working together. The last time I worked on Susan, her pain in the back and in the knee had gone a long time ago, and she was three months pregnant! Sadly, she miscarried. I was shocked by the news, as I realized how important this pregnancy had been for her. In a poem I wrote to her I tried to express my feelings and to share her pain. Shortly afterwards, her mother died unexpectedly. I hoped she would continue her work with me, but she felt too vulnerable to be touched so deeply; she said she would resume her biweekly sessions once she felt more stable emotionally. Before that happened, I left Switzerland to continue my studies in the United States. In the meantime Susan and her husband became the proud parents of a little girl.

The transformation Susan went through in the two years after she lost her job was remarkable: from a rational, guarded, number oriented woman to a perceptive, wise woman who loves to work with people and to grow in the interaction. Instead of setting objectives, planning every step of the way and following them through with appropriate measures – the way we were told to do it in the corporate business world – she takes things less seriously and smiles at the opportunities life presents to her. And she seems a happier, more balanced woman.

At first, I was a bit apprehensive about working with Susan as her therapist. I knew her to be a rather intellectual and reserved person who would not easily reveal her feelings. I didn't want to damage our relationship, which I appreciated. However, through our work together, we developed more trust in each other, we dared to become vulnerable and our relationship deepened. We developed a real friendship and became more com-



"Enchantment", Albert Fennell

comfortable with dropping the façade and sharing our pain. Having her best friends spread over several countries, like myself, made Susan appreciate our closeness even more. Unfortunately, the physical distance has since made contacts rare and less spontaneous. I would love to partake in the evolution of Susan as a mother and her husband as a father and be a witness to their daughter's first steps on more than a short video sent by e-mail.

Symptom interpretation

Low back pain:

In my experience, low back pain stands for emotional rigidity, high standards, set rules, high expectations towards oneself and others (low self-confidence). Physically stiff, people with low back pain tend to be unbending and to repress their sexuality or sexual needs and impulses. They have a high degree of self-control and often fear being hurt when opening up.

Knees:

The knee belongs to the first chakra and therefore represent roots: Susan, German, has married an Austrian and lives with her husband in Switzerland. Although Germanic, the mentalities of these three countries are quite different and moving from one to the other is not as easy as it may seem. Germans tend to be upright and somewhat uptight, critical, but also trustworthy and reliable. They speak their mind, even if it clearly means provoking a conflict. Austrians in my experience operate with more charm and charisma; they are friendly and instead of running through walls, they seem to be more at ease with following the flow. They can be great in public relations or in manipulating others to their ends. Switzerland is a neutral country and its inhabitants avoid conflict, reverting to diplomacy instead. The Swiss live in a tiny country and have adapted to the lack of space by watching each other closely, being righteous and meticulous in such an extreme way that it can be unbearable for anyone from another culture.

The first chakra also stands for safety: She had to establish herself in an environment that is not used to dealing with women. She has been laid off twice from big corporation and so-called "secure" jobs during major restructuring processes.

Grounding: She was not so much trying to live her own life as she was unconsciously searching to please her father, who had dominated her family. She was not centered in her own power as a woman, but lived mainly in her head.

The legs represent moving forward, the knees flexibility (unbending) and also aggression, like the elbows. Those joints allow us to make angular movements and take threatening positions. The knees also help us having a very solid and yet flexible stance by slightly bending them, as in martial arts. It is when standing straight and stiff that we are more vulnerable.

Some of the questions pertaining to the 2nd chakra area are ⁽³⁴⁾:

- Are you comfortable with your sexuality?
- Are you a controlling person?
- Does money have authority over you? Do you make compromises that violate your inner self for the sake of financial security?
- What goals do you have for yourself that you have yet to pursue? What stands in the way of your acting upon those goals?

Mark

I include the following case, even though I mainly did Trigger Point work³ on Mark, as I would like to stress that there is not one technique that suits every illness. It is important to use whatever method seems appropriate at a certain time.

Mark, 53, quality manager in a fast paced electronic company, seems to live a very conscious life. He eats a healthy vegetarian diet, exercises regularly, plays music, sings, runs a Krishnamurti Forum. On top of his demanding job, he goes to school. 1999, he suffered from disk ruptures in his lower back and spent several weeks in bed, seeing the chiropractor twice a week. He feels under pressure, is afraid his back will make him suffer badly again, does whatever he can to prevent it, but somehow cannot change the routine of his job and the ever increasing pressure.

Being my neighbor, he finds out about my new occupation and calls for an appointment. I first do a craniosacral session with him, to find out how his body and soul respond. Touching him, I feel the same heaviness in the sacrum as with other clients who have lower back injuries. Also, the cranium seems unwilling to open up. I work with him a second time. Still the same reaction of his body telling me something like "now don't you think you will get me, I have had enough treatments, I have to do enough exercising, thank you very much". I realize that although he seemed the perfect candidate for successful craniosacral work to me, this method is not appropriate for Mark at the present stage. So I switch to Trigger Point therapy.

I advise Mark ten weekly treatments. Mark dutifully makes his appointments and sticks to them, although he is afraid of massage, having had numerous bad experiences with practitioners who hurt him and did more harm than good, according to him. At first, I can feel the trauma in his back and legs. So I am quite conscious of my heavy responsibility while treating him. He is very alert and ready to let me know as soon as he feels uncomfortable. After 30 minutes or so, I can feel his body slowly starting to relax. At the end of the session, Mark tell me, surprised, that even though I went deep, I always stopped right before it hurt. "This is the first time someone can go so deep without hurting me." He looks puzzled.

As we continue working together, he feels more at ease and starts enjoying the sessions. His back pain is fading away, he can start doing sports he had not considered realistic a few weeks earlier, and his whole face and look are changing at the same time. He lightens up, opens up and becomes more alive. He considers leaving his job, unless his boss changes something about his workload. He seems in very good spirits, and about after five weeks, he tells me he met this great woman. For the first time in his life, he is really and passionately in love! He radiates.

After the 10th session, Mark goes skiing, hiking and dancing with his sporty girlfriend and he feels no pain. From a somewhat sober and bland looking person, Mark has turned into a radiant man in love. He moved in with his girlfriend and is still looking for a job that would match his personal and spiritual interests.

³ There are different kinds of Trigger Point work. I was instructed by Arthur Munyer, Carmel, CA, in an intuitive and process-oriented approach. Arthur Munyer worked and thought for many years at the Esalen Institute in California, co-developing Esalen Massage, which his Trigger Point therapy is combined with.

“*The Dance*”, Henri Matisse .

“The dancing path leads us from the inertia of sleepwalking to the ecstasy of living the spirit of the moment.” (35)

No lower back symptoms here! The dancers are in the flow, their sacrum fluid, their backs flexible - the 2nd charkas are open and happy!



On our first meeting, Mark had managed to intimidate me with his sensitivity and his fear of being hurt. So it touched me particularly how his dreambody started trusting and opening up to me. I have a feeling that our work helped Mark getting involved with another woman on a deep and meaningful level. Revealing his radiance, he became so much more attractive as a man and a human being.

I realized once more how different the image a person projects can be from the core and how rewarding it is to peel away some of the layers, be it with visionary craniosacral work or some other modality. It made me feel good to have Mark's trust. Seeing him freshly and happily in love at 53 was thrilling!

Symptom interpretation:

Lower back:

See pages 21 and 28

Questions pertaining to the 2nd charka area in Mark's case would be (36):

- How often do your survival fears dictate your choices?
- Are you comfortable with your sexuality?
- Does money have authority over you? Do you make compromises that violate your inner self for the sake of financial security?
- What goals do you have for yourself that you have yet to pursue? What stands in the way of your acting upon those goals?

John

John, 50, a manager in a large US corporation, came to my office after his left lower back got injured in a car accident. The doctor had told him that his muscles were inflamed and that it would take some weeks or months for the pain to subside. John also suffers from Parkinson's disease that started to manifest two years earlier. He is under medication to keep the tremors under control and allow him to continue exercising his stressful occupation. Tendons were removed from his left arm (because of tennis elbow); ever since, it has been weak and painful.

After a few sessions – he comes to therapy three times a week (twice with me, once with another practitioner), a surprising involvement for a man who works from 12 to 18 hours a day – he tells me that he had been to Vietnam. It surprises him that he even mentions this episode of his life to me, as he never talks about it. He also relates that he “came down” with Parkinson's after seven members of his family passed away the same year, including his mother who died of that same disease.

From the beginning, I've been drawn to work on John's 2nd chakra area, as I feel something important going on at that level. I invest a lot of time in working on his sacrum, his piriformis and coccygeus, and most of all his psoas muscles (very tight on both sides and unready to let go). We do craniosacral work, Trigger Point Therapy and Esalen Massage ⁴, plus the massages he gets once a week from other therapists. After a few weeks, John starts to be able to relax, he falls asleep on the table (he averages about three hours of sleep a night...) and he unwinds and releases. Sometimes his limbs have tremors, sometimes he looks quite serene. On top of his sessions, I give him some homework to do: meditation exercises for when he wakes up at two o'clock in the morning and wants to resume his work!

I start doing some work on his cranium (although sessions with him are usually long, I can only use a few techniques at once, as every hold takes 15 minutes and more before I feel that I can release it). His head feels heavy, the bones unwilling or not used to move. A few sessions later, they open up. At the end of this session, he relates to me that he is considering leaving his position for a lower rank in the same company. He does not know yet how to go about it, he has not discussed it with his wife, but he actually thinks his health is more important than sticking it out five more years, until he gets his full pension.

About two months after we started therapy together, the pain in his low back, radiating into his thigh, persists, despite all the work in that area. John comes in for a session before a very stressful two week period in which he works 13 days, 19 hours a day. I give him a “healing session” – pure energy work I learned from Rolf Steiner⁵, an early student of Barbara Ann Brennan. John goes in a deep state, in which his hand keeps pressing his psoas and his groin area. After the session, John gets up, feeling “weird”. I tell him to sit down and breathe deeply. He is starting to be in real pain and looks at me with frightened eyes. When I ask him if he wants to lie down again, he agrees, although he is supposed to be back at work. My feeling tells me that we will have to go deep into his second chakra area, that there is a major miasm ⁶ that needs to be released. John's pain gets

⁴ For more information on Esalen Massage, contact the Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California.

⁵ Rolf Steiner lives in Switzerland where he runs the Snowlion School. Classes are taught in France.

⁶ Miasm: A condensed, lower vibrational energy that typically attaches to a weak area in the body or a “negative” feeling, both having lower vibrations. This energy can come from childhood traumas or may have traveled with us from

worse as I start doing deep tissue work, though it is in no way proportional to the pressure. I keep checking in with him to see if he wants me to go on. He does, although by now he is in tremendous pain, bending over in all directions. I ask him to let go of this energy (which appears to me to be the feeling of guilt he has carried around all his life, instilled by his religious upbringing), and I ask the miasm to leave John. This low vibration energy does not feel at home anymore in this man who, through the work he has been doing, has raised his vibrations. It wants to hold on, but can't really. It is "disturbed", so is John, who doesn't need this emotion anymore and is looking for a way to let go of it. All this is new for John and rather frightening, therefore I try to explain to him what we are doing while he experiences it. Some information sinks in, some other things he cannot comprehend yet. When a big "chunk" of this miasm leaves him, however, he tells me: "I know what this is. This is the guilt I was brought up with and have had all my life regarding drinking and especially nudity. The guilt is leaving me."

At the end of this session, John feels somewhat sore, but the intolerable pain is gone. The session after this I do Trigger Point work with John. I feel however that the miasm is not completely gone (John did not have the chills that usually accompany the leaving of such an energy), especially as John's hand returns to the indicated area while he sleeps on the table. I also have the impression that other miasms are attached to the energy of guilt. After checking in with him, I go back to his second and first chakra areas and we release some more of this energy, again with lots of pain. A routine we repeat from this point on in every session, releasing the miasm bit by bit.

A few sessions later, I notice another miasm in his neck. The same happens as during the release of his energy of guilt: John is in great pain, but is willing to go through it. He does not know what this one is about, he fears that the miasm from his groin has moved to his neck. My feeling, however, is that this energy is not quite as deeply rooted and has to do with his mother and his family in general. When I ask him about it, he starts expressing some of the grudge he holds against his brothers and sisters. They don't seem to stick to their promises and John has to take over the responsibility for them, just as if they were his children. As to his mother, he regrets not having been with her often enough before her death; he also misses her. When he came out of the session, John went on talking about his family; something had been set in motion.

other lifetimes. It goes beyond Stanislav Grof's COEX (center of condensed experience) and resembles more an energy that has to be "exorcised". It possesses an intelligence of its own, but when asked where it comes from, it often says that it has been placed in a certain spot by a force of darkness. Miasms may talk through the subject they inhabit, they can look through their eyes and act for them, so that sometimes in session, we are dealing with this energy, and not with the subject himself.

Releasing a miasm raises the person's vibrations and can considerably improve their health. In my limited experience, I have encountered several such miasms; they talked to me about their fear of leaving, as they would be punished by their master for not doing their duty; they screamed and swore. They looked at me with hatred or anguish when leaving the body. They seem to fear the light, as they were told that it was bad for them – until they realize that they have been lied to. When they go towards the light, their darkness is transformed into their true nature: light. That seems the most efficient and least painful way to make them leave a body. Once they are light, they do not seem to come back to take over a part of the personality again.

However, if the subject chooses to stay within his known world and doesn't change his attitude upon the leaving of the miasm, he will attract other miasms of the same kind. Or he may attract different ones that are somehow related to the one that left. If some guilt leaves him, he may attract fear of punishment, for instance. It takes a lot of work on the self to be conscious of the emotions we go through and to consciously let go of those we don't need anymore.

In the meantime, John's neurologist changed his medication to stop the pain in his arm. The side effects were so unpleasant though that John had to undergo three days of testing in the hospital. His medication was considerably reduced after that.

A couple of weeks later, I feel a new energy coming up for John: anger. I feel it resonate in me very strongly, which makes working with him quite challenging. The anger seems to have been hiding behind the guilt; it is also located in the area of his 2nd and 1st charkas. While I do deep tissue and Trigger Point work, I sense a "cloud" of anger moving from him into myself! I'm afraid I am about to start screaming and biting! Although I don't feel angry at all, there is this tremendous energy of frustration and anger in me. I tell John I have to leave the room and I go take a shower with salt to cleanse myself. Back in the room, I burn sage to smudge the room. I tell John that I cannot continue working on him and explain the situation. Surprisingly enough, he seems to understand what I mean. So John starts talking about his father, the physical abuse, the lack of support he experienced in his childhood. He can now feel this anger that he harbored his whole life. When John leaves the office, he is cheerful and his facial expression much more pronounced than usual (due to Parkinson's, his face has become a mask with little facial expression).

I, on the other hand, feel lopsided and ready to bite someone! At home, I exorcise this energy that no doubt could attach itself to my own feelings of anger and frustrations, because this is a vulnerable area for me (I just had had a kidney infection – kidney represent anger – a month before). It is a very noisy and powerful session in which I dance to tribal music and feel myself become a wild cat! To an occidental observer (fortunately there were none!), it would have looked like someone losing it... However, I afterwards could relate to the healers and shamans I had seen on television, be it in tribal African societies or in Voodoo ceremonies, where the healer, to cure someone, would take on the energy (miasm) that made the person ill and exorcise it through him or herself.

The following day, John was back in my office, still smiling and joking. He said: "I don't know what happened, but something did. I feel like I got rid of something - I'm in a much better mood." I thought an easy, quiet session would be appropriate and gave him an Esalen massage. When I started mobilizing his legs though, he started unwinding. I did more work on his thighs, his first and second charkas, and eventually, John felt chilled, a sign that the energy had left him. The most surprising to me, however, was that I had the feeling I was working with a different person. John's body felt about 80 pounds lighter! I lifted his legs without a problem (he weighs over 200 pounds), he for once let go of his limbs, instead of holding on. He vibrated at a much higher level than ever before. I was quite flabbergasted by this huge change that had occurred in one day.

John had told me he was afraid of dying like his mother, asphyxiated by the muscles contracting in her esophagus. He was wondering if he would ever be able to enjoy his retirement (his brother had died at age 48). After that remarkable session, I told him that he was healing himself and that anything seemed possible.

John is still coming for weekly sessions. He challenges me as a practitioner. I would love to help him move forward, and observing him make two steps forward and one step back, under considerable pain, is difficult. I very much appreciate his trust in me; however, sometimes I wonder if I can really help him. On one hand I know I do, simply by listening to him and allowing him to share confidential material with someone. On the other, he is seriously ill, takes a lot of medication and his physical symptoms make me question my knowledge, skills and even intuition! I guess that I have

to give up the idea of wanting to cure him and simply do my best and then step back. That sounds easier than it is, sometimes.

Symptom interpretation

Parkinson's:

According to Rudiger Dahlke (37), this disease is often found in individuals who push themselves to the limits. People who want to shine with their achievements and end up doing it with the sweat on their face (the typically frozen, oily appearance of Parkinson's). The external success, however, is not matched with inner development. They have to show a mask of perfection, instead of expressing who they truly are. Their skin, an organ of contact with the environment, shows the dis-ease. A person suffering from Parkinson's has often ignored his own stiffness in expression and movement, until the body shows it undeniably. He lives in a state of unadmitted fear (John is afraid of dying, but doesn't want to talk about it – according to Dahlke, during World War 1, there was an increase in Parkinson's disease). No emotions are shown on this mask, which looks like the face of death. Movement in general is reduced. This person shakes uncontrollably and seems to want to shake something from himself, something that frightens him. Perhaps his own reality?

Lower back pain:

The car accident seems to have exacerbated the situation, but a weakness was probably there energetically long before. John was raised believing in guilt regarding drinking, dancing and nakedness. In his religion nakedness is bad. It is equated with sexuality and there seems to be hardly a distinction between sensuality and sexuality – coming for massages must have been quite difficult for him, for instance, as it meant trespassing deeply ingrained beliefs. We have talked extensively about this topic; being a European woman and a massage therapist probably helped me explain to him that a massage is a sensual pleasure and does not need to have a sexual connotation. That it is up to the people involved to choose what they want to experience. And that a woman exposing her breasts on a beach in Italy may do so simply because she loves the feeling of the sun on her skin, the sense of freedom, and not at all because she wants to attract men sexually. Psoas: His father physically abused John. He also would not show any recognition when John performed well in sports, for instance. John's self-esteem as a child and teenager was low, he did not believe in himself and is still quite surprised that he, as the only one of his large family, made it financially.

Arm:

We hold things with our arms, we hold people in our arms; we hit with them, we caress with them; we grab, we push away; we lift, we carry, we hold on, we control. Arms are the extensions of our heart. They are our main mean to establishing contact with our environment, to keep in "touch".

The pain from the accident and from Parkinson's are mainly on the left side of John's body: the feminine side, which he has neglected, being the tough kid, a soldier in Vietnam, a hardcore manager. When John started to take control of his life and achieving more than he ever dreamed possible, he did not intend to ever let go again (hadn't there been this nagging fear of death, which he however managed to sweep under the carpet). He neglected and often denied his emotions, because they did not fit in with his life style and his picture of himself. Once he came to a session looking worn out and distressed. When I asked him what had happened, I told me he almost fired

one of his subordinates. And he told this man that he did not care about how he would deal with it. Whereupon I asked John whether that was the truth. He answered that it was not, he actually did care about his employees and firing one of them was the most difficult thing for him to do. I advised him to be sincere about his emotions and dare to show them, but definitely not to repress them completely or even lie about them. His soul obviously could not take that kind of abuse any longer.



“Deux Femmes courant sur la Plage”, Pablo Picasso

Feelings are real. They are not ideas that can be turned off. They are not abstractions. They are physical manifestations of energy, uniting body and mind and bringing them to the moment. Unexpressed, repressed, or suppressed, this energy becomes toxic. Without release, it surfaces in lumps, clots, tumors, spasms, migraine headaches, and other symptoms of physical distress. .. The only real option, the only healthy alternative, is to embrace our emotions, to be friend them, to make them our own, and to learn to experience and express them appropriately in the moment. (38)

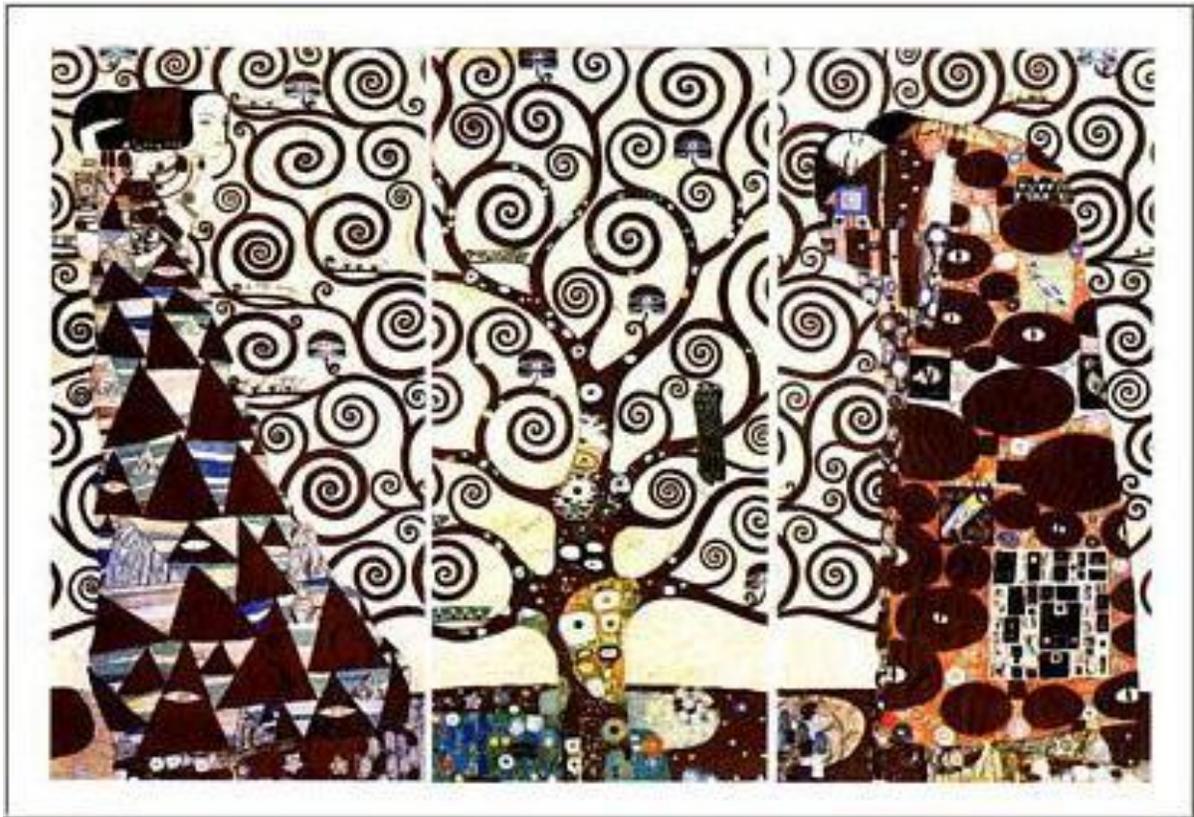
With John I experience a battle for change. There is a desire to turn the situation around, and the fear of letting go. On some days, John looks young and adventurous, on others old, gray and stuck. I don't know at what rhythm he will choose to go about transforming himself. I don't know if I will witness the metamorphose. Craniosacral work is a great tool to help John open his eyes to new horizons. Whether he chooses to explore them, and when, is written on another page. It is up to John.

CONCLUSION

We cannot change anybody else, we can only change ourselves. Why does it seem so much easier trying to fix and modify everything and everybody around us, rather than look at ourselves and our (urgent) need for a changeover? Even passively waiting for others to change before we make a move is a behavior based on insecurity and a desire for power over others. "Insecurity because we are avoiding our own decisions as to how to shape our lives, desire for power because we want to impose our views, our insights, and our attitudes onto others." (39)

Even illness can represent such a desire for power, as the inability to take care of ourselves gives us a handy lever for manipulating others. But "every negative experience, every pain, is the result of a wrong idea" (40) to which we mistakenly cling. We run against the bars of the prison we created for ourselves and suffer the pain and anguish. Then, instead of changing our approach, we expect pity for our weakness, with which we in turn make others move to our disguised orders. Those power games are "sickening": Be it a struggle against life in the shape of change itself or a battle for attention, an attempt at receiving love. Not only is it not a very enlightened attitude to have, it does not work!

Ultimately we pay the price for manipulation and power games, as well as passivity. As cause and effect often occur with a big time lag between each other, they may be hard to relate to each other,



"The Tree of Life", Gustav Klimt. Endless in its ramifications, forever growing, creating, changing, evolving.

which in turn leaves us in the illusion that they have nothing to do with each other. When the boomerang comes back to us, we sometimes don't recognize it as our own and we blame fate for hurting us this hard. Did we see the bigger picture, all those connections and links we create throughout time, we might learn faster. But most of us seem to have a blind eye and to choose the hard way. And then, instead of being thankful for the rocks we encounter on our road, we damn them, not realizing that we ourselves created those difficulties out of a need to change our way(s).

So far, my experiences have shown me that visionary craniosacral work is a powerful modality when it comes to addressing such life crises: It can help us deal with the rocks, yes, but more so with the underlying wish to find new paths, a different approach to life. The symptoms and the healer's intuition guide us to the issues to be addressed. With craniosacral work, as subtle and delicate as it may be, we crack the armor to reveal deep fears and hidden treasures. The craniosacral therapist can help the client to raise his vibrations and support his evolution towards the light, if the client chooses to do so.

It is by stripping ourselves of our masks one by one, by looking at our uncomfortable shadow, acknowledging our needs and shortcomings, that we become whole – therefore healed. By recognizing that we are not better – or worse – than our neighbor and finding our place in creation, we allow ourselves to feel connected to others and the world. By shedding our defenses and letting others enter into our heart, by sharing our essential self freely, we experience union. We do not need to cry for love, if we only give it! Opening our hearts to the other, to the flow of our feelings, to the current of life, keeps us healthy. "Human beings can be free and healthy in areas where they do not resist change. There they are in harmony with the universal movement." (41)

There is so much more to life than what meets the eye. So much more than we could ever fathom! Life is a mystery, love its vital current and evolution its driving force.

*Spread your wings, and you can fly.
Open your heart, and it will sing.
Songs of wonder, joy and love.*

*All you need is trust
That your heart knows best.
And that your soul is part of it All –
Just like mine.*

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