

exploring his immediate world relationships, physical environment, and individual characteristics.

One way to facilitate action would be to ask the group members, at the beginning of a session, to think about their present environment. After allowing them time to think, the director then asks for a volunteer to go to the psychodrama stage and, with the use of chairs, build his life space so that the other group members might begin to identify.

Upon completion of this life space building, the subject is then asked to step back out to the group, and from that vantage point he should start to eliminate, add to, or explain aspects of his life space. As this is taking place, the director may ask the subject if it is all right with him if people auxiliary-ego at certain points. If the subject says 'yes', then a session is in full swing. If no answer is given, then the subject has had an opportunity to explore his life space and define it a bit more.

This warm up can be a whole group session in itself. After a subject has built his life space, the group should be included and people should be given the opportunity to share and identify with the subject.

---

Jerome Liss

## Open your chakras

Modern western medicine and physiology give us very few leads for understanding (and still less encouragement to undergo) the revitalisation forces of the body which are tapped by the new body oriented therapies. As indicated before, we must look to the experiences and surmises of people in the east to gain further perspectives regarding the forces in our bodies. The Kundalini, for example, is a special energy force usually described as originating in the first chakra or 'energy centre' and travelling upward along the spinal column to the very top of the skull. The Kundalini, also called 'the serpent power', is pictured to be like a serpent sleeping at the base of the spine. To picture this power as a sleeping serpent is to attest to its animal mystery, its vital power and potential destructiveness unless aroused with great skill and caution. This is to say that we have great body energies, mysterious in origin, which require great care in their arousal if they are to be channelled constructively rather than destructively.

The Kundalini power is aroused through meditation and special Asanas or physical positions. It is said to traverse and light up the special energy centres or chakras of the body. Each chakra is said to be associated with a particular function. The second chakra, located in the pelvis, is linked to sexual function. The third chakra, in the middle of the abdomen, is connected to strivings for power. The fourth chakra, in the heart region of the chest, is linked to affection and love. The fifth chakra, in the throat, is said to be connected to voicing the truth. The sixth chakra, slightly above and between the eyes, often known as the Third Eye, is linked to wisdom. The seventh chakra, located at the top of the skull, is also called the Thousand Petalled Lotus, and as the Kundalini power

passes through and illuminates this centre it is presumed that one experiences the full consciousness of God. In the Yoga tradition, which has explored these energy centres for thousands of years, there is a vast literature and series of rituals whereby each chakra may be opened and illuminated by meditating upon its associate colour, mantra or mandala. Empirical studies might eventually show a 'natural wisdom' in the association between particular chakras and colours, sounds and designs. However, the importance of the chakra for our purposes is that it provides us with one body map of centres of energy which can be stimulated, tapped and employed to revitalise the entire person. Also, each person may be typically employing several energy centres but not others. Thus, individual mapping is needed for anyone's reclaiming of devitalised energy sources. Many people have suggested that the body localisation for each chakra corresponds to a plexus of the anatomic nervous system. It is not too far-fetched to imagine these autonomic plexuses being stimulated by yoga methods of meditation and body positioning. They may also be stimulated by methods employed in the New Therapies such as direct massage, focal attention and particular forms of body expression. There are seven major energy centres described, but may there not be more? Are there not, too, energy centres in the joints, muscles and even bone marrow? Is not every part of the body a source of vital energy and a potential source for yet higher energy? The picture of the human being, totally illuminated, is the goal.

Another type of body mapping comes from the Chinese acupuncture. The theory of acupuncture is that there are two opposing forces within the body, the yin and the yang, and health depends on the balance of these two vigorous forces. The method of Chinese acupuncture is to insert needles in particular areas of the skin which would replenish or drain off these vital forces for the purpose of restoring a balance between them.

The yin and yang forces, if my understanding of them is correct, are presumed to run through body channels called meridians. One could wonder if there is any correspondence between these meridians and the vitalising body sensations experienced by people undergoing body therapy, sensations which Wilhelm Reich called 'vegetative streamings'. To go still further, could meridians and vegetative streamings correspond to actual channels in the body which are roots for electrolytic depolarisation? In other words, just as depolarisation at any point of a single nerve fibre will result in depolarisation along its entire track, could there be channels in the body which serve as roots for frequent electrolytic depolarisation? Of course, we are here at the deep end of speculation. But do not the new problems and observations raised by the New Therapies demand that we look still further in unravelling the mysteries of the body?

And to raise further questions: what are the functional connections, if any, between the chakras of yoga meditation and the meridians of Chinese acupuncture? How do these relate to vegetative streamings? And how do all these link to patterns of emotional convulsive discharge and experiences with the transcendental?

If we acknowledge our ignorance and press on with freedom and courage, then we are on the threshold of discovery. But will we survive to carry it through?

This article has been extracted from a forthcoming book to be published under the title *THE NEW THERAPIES, FREE TO HEAL*