

# Somatic Psychotherapy Today

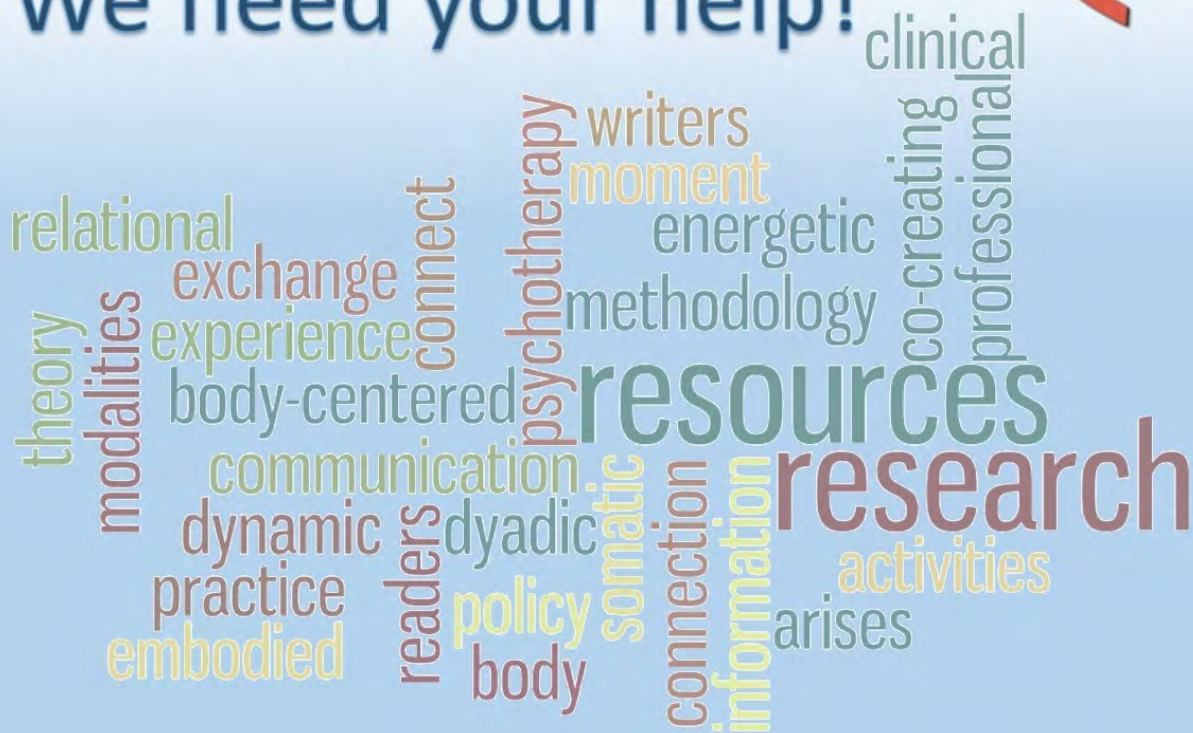
Volume 8 Number 1 Summer 2018



# Somatic Psychotherapy Today



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For information and to contribute please visit our website:  
[www.SomaticPsychotherapyToday.com](http://www.SomaticPsychotherapyToday.com) or contact our Editor-in-Chief, Nancy Eichhorn, PhD at  
[Nancy@NancyEichhorn.com](mailto:Nancy@NancyEichhorn.com)

An abstract painting with a textured surface. The top half is dominated by warm yellow and gold tones, while the bottom half features cooler blue and white tones. The brushstrokes are visible, creating a sense of movement and depth.

# Bodywise

weaving somatic psychotherapy,  
ecodharma, and the Buddha in  
everyday life

Kamalamani

Kamalamani's initial 2012 column introduced our readers to an intimate look at a Buddhist perspective in body psychotherapy. We were invited into an awareness of all sentient life and living processes; her writings encouraged personal reflection and professional consideration. We've been pleased to share her writings and to review her books.

Her book, *Bodywise*, comes from a place of gratitude and graciousness. Kamalamani offered to create an ebook of all her columns and to donate proceeds to *Somatic Psychotherapy Today*, to help defray the costs associated with an independently run international magazine. **It's generous gifts like Kamalamani's and others who donate to SPT that we continue to exist.**



# Somatic Psychotherapy Today

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### Volunteer Magazine Staff

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Nancy Eichhorn

*Editor, Layout Design*

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Diana Houghton Whiting

*Cover Design*



# Somatic Psychotherapy Today

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Nancy Eichhorn

*Editor, Layout Design*

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Diana Houghton Whiting

*Cover Design*

## From Our Editor



My mom left me a note the other day, a reminder of sorts, perhaps a nudge as I had been mulling over the upcoming issue and future directions:

“Dearest Nancy,” she wrote. “Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”

Insightful words from Ralph Waldo Emerson, relayed by my 88-year-old mother in support of me and my writing.

When I started SPT magazine 8 years ago, I saw a gap in the literature, a place to carve a literary path allowing others to network with a global audience of “like minded” practitioners.

Along the way, I’ve been honored to publish empowering articles, interviews, book reviews and author reflections. I’ve passed on information regarding association conferences and congresses, certifications and community gatherings promoting our field of study. This issue brings our path forward into newly discovered realms with book reviews and author reflections, interviews honoring colleagues receiving prestigious awards, and columns highlighting upcoming conferences for the USABP, the EABP, and APPPAH.

Each article honors a path forged by persistence and perseverance, by creativity and ingenuity. The authors we reviewed, the award winners we interviewed, the reflections writers shared about their process highlight pathways that were formed one step at a time.

We invite you to read our articles and to respond to our authors. We write from a place of experience and curiosity, and we write to engage others in conversations. Each author offers an email address at the end of the article, and we have a general email option: [Nancy@NancyEichhorn.com](mailto:Nancy@NancyEichhorn.com) where you can share your thoughts and we’ll pass them on to the authors and to our readers.

And if you find something of value in our Summer issue and you want to read more, please consider a donation via our website to keep us going strong.

We’re grateful for your readership and look forward to providing quality articles and reviews, personal and poignant author reflections, and more on our website: [www.SomaticPsychotherapyToday.com](http://www.SomaticPsychotherapyToday.com)

*Warmly,*

*Nancy Eichhorn, PhD*

## From Our Awesome Cover Designer

Hello All,



I was inspired by the concepts of gathering and collaboration. This is what drove my ideas for the cover of this issue. I just recently finished a class in collaboration and motivation and it has opened my eyes to how easy it is to say collaboration and how hard it can be to be successful. Yet, as I learn more about psychology and human endeavors its imperative that we try to collaborate. Many of our great achievements happen in relationship with others. It is exciting to see all of the conferences coming up and the somatic community growing and collaborating as it does.

Warmly, Diana Houghton Whiting, MA

Love, Work and Knowledge

**THE LIFE AND TRIALS OF**

*WILHELM REICH*

His books were banned and burned - in America.  
Sixty years after his death, the first factually accurate film  
about the man and his science.



AN ORIGINAL DOCUMENTARY

WRITTEN BY KEVIN HINCHEY  
PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY GLENN ORKIN & KEVIN HINCHEY  
ORIGINAL SCORE BY BRUCE ZIMMERMAN

[WWW.LOVEWORKKNOWLEDGE.COM](http://WWW.LOVEWORKKNOWLEDGE.COM)

The USABP conference is proud to feature the West Coast première of the documentary film, *Love, Work and Knowledge: The Life and Trials of Wilhelm Reich.*



**6-9 September 2018**

**PUT THIS DATE IN YOUR AGENDA!  
If you missed Athens, don't miss Berlin.**

*Body Psychotherapy and Challenges of Today  
Alienation-Vitality-Flow*

Freie University Berlin, Germany

<https://congress.eabp.org>  
Sekretariat@Koerperpsychotherapie-DGK.de





E U R O P E A N  
A S S O C I A T I O N F O R  
B O D Y -  
P S Y C H O T H E R A P Y

## 16<sup>th</sup> EABP Congress in Berlin

EABP is holding our 16th Congress in Berlin at the Free University from 6th-9th September 2018. At this congress we will address the challenges of post - modern society. Many presenters will speak about a "fatigue and burn-out society" which is characterized by a decrease in eros and relatedness. There is growth of alienation in capitalist work life as well as alienation from the self and the body. In his Vegetotherapy, Wilhelm Reich stressed vegetative vitality, the feeling of flow in the body, contact to the core of one's personality and the power to love as core aspects of somatic and psychological health.

In Body Psychotherapy, traditional theories of neuroses and character theories need to engage with changes in the zeitgeist. Increasingly we have to deal with disorders like: "burn-out", diffuse anxieties and most of all structural disorders, such as developmental deficits stemming from early childhood, and narcissistic and borderline personality disorders.

Our field needs to address these changes with corresponding concepts. The new challenges require a body-psychotherapeutic practice capable of finding the balance between holding, containing, and offering emotional expressive work.

Keynote speakers will include Rae Johnson, Gustl Marlock, Jeanne Nakamura, former EABP President Lidy Evertsen, Prof. Maurizio Stupiggia, Alan Fogel, Congress Chair Manfred Thielen, EABP President Carmen Joanne Ablack and Michael Randolph (see page 55).

This Congress is special for another reason—EABP is celebrating its 30th Anniversary! There will be a Poster Presentation including contributions from a range of well-known Body Psychotherapists, current committee chairs and experienced members who will be looking at future areas of development for EABP and Body Psychotherapy. After the Congress the Poster Presentation will be developed into an EABP 30th Anniversary e-book.

You have until the 31st July to secure a place at normal prices, so I encourage you to [book your place soon](#). After 31st of July late registration fees apply.



I look forward to seeing you there.

With warm regards,  
Carmen Joanne Ablack  
EABP President

# INTERNATIONAL BODY PSYCHOTHERAPY JOURNAL

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF SOMATIC PRAXIS  
INCORPORATING US ASSOCIATION FOR BODY PSYCHOTHERAPY JOURNAL

volume seventeen | number two | spring 2018



EUROPEAN  
ASSOCIATION FOR  
BODY  
PSYCHOTHERAPY



## From the Managing Editors

**Jill van der Aa**

**Antigone Oreopoulou**



The Spring issue of the *International Body Psychotherapy Journal* is on the [IBPJ website](#). Articles come from body psychotherapists in the US, Belgium, Greece and Israel.

As the Editorial Team describes in their Editorial:

*The papers in this issue frame our psychological abilities to look within, sense within, be within, and accept what is to be. Our contributors share their research and their explorations into: body awareness; bodily lies and deceptions that impact the quality of our lives; emotional competence through embodiment to facilitate learning; and meeting death with compassion, grace, body-to-body, soul-to-soul. As well, we share a review of biological explanatory models dealing with trauma and the human body.*

The EABP and USABP Boards are seeking applications for the following positions to start in January 2019:

**IBPJ Editor-in-Chief (EABP member)  
IBPJ Deputy Editor (USABP member)**

Together with the Managing Editor they form the Editorial Team and are responsible to the EABP and USABP Boards.

They have overall responsibility for:

- Identifying the Journal's aims, scope and direction, and ensuring that the established goals are met
- The professionalism and quality of the Journal's content as well as continually raising its visibility, facilitating innovations
- Publishing the Journal.

We are looking for experienced members who have a good knowledge of English and good writing skills (have already published their own books or articles), good organising abilities and communication skills and who are able to lead and work in a team.

The IBPJ is published twice a year.

The Journal's mission is to support, promote and stimulate the exchange of ideas, scholarship and research within the field of body psychotherapy as well as to encourage an interdisciplinary exchange with related fields of clinical theory and practice.

If you are interested and would like to see the role description, please contact: IBPJ Managing Editor, Antigone Oreopoulou, [ManagingEditor@ibpj.org](mailto:ManagingEditor@ibpj.org)

The Editorial Team: Asaf Rolef Ben-Shahar, Nancy Eichhorn, Debbie Cotton, Yael Shahar and Shamit Kadosh, has formed a close-knit unit and done excellent work over the last four years. We, the Managing Editors and the EABP Board, regret their leaving, thank them, and wish them well. But, in the meantime, this is not their last issue – another one is coming up in Autumn, and they request papers from you.

We have appreciated our time together, learning, writing, editing, with one another and with our contributors, all the while keeping our audience—you—in mind. To celebrate the change of our 'editorial season', we will offer papers written by our team as well as those from our colleagues—of course, all will have to pass peer review first.

So – colleagues – we look forward to your contributions, as always.

As I write this today I learn of the death of Joop Valstar (*see page 12*), an EABP honorary member, who played an enormous role in the EABP and designed the cover for the very first issue of the IBPJ.

Strangely enough it was just last night that I read Shamit Kadosh's tender article in the spring issue about the work she did with one of her clients who was dying. Today I think back on her article and how we struggle with our own "inevitable" deaths and how we can be with, and support our family members, our friends and colleagues as they face their deaths.

It reminds me how thankful I am of those who write, not only with erudition, but with compassion and understanding of what it means to be human – to live and to die. Joop was one of those people. And so, one colleague wrote this morning:

Thus do the old giants leave us, with courage, presence and love.

He will be missed.

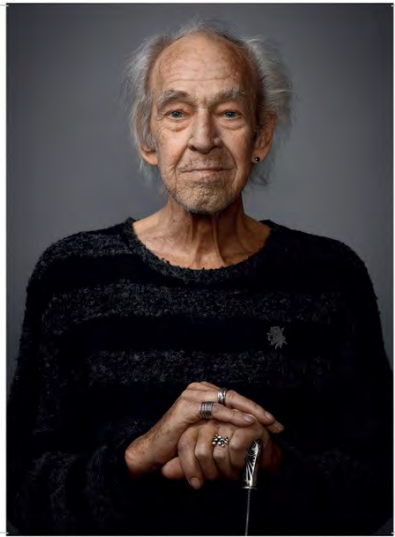


Photo by Erwin Olaf

# In Memory

## Joop Valstar

### 1945-2018

By Jill van der Aa, May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018

**In a world** which is increasingly superficial and directed to appearances and the outside world Joop was a man of character and depth.

**Not to say** that he didn't care for his personal appearance – on the contrary, he did. He dressed with flair. Perhaps the first thing you noticed about him was his beautiful coat or hand-crafted shoes; then his tall stature, greying hair and marked face, which could crease with a grin and warmth, or with great seriousness.

**Joop listened.** He chewed over what you said – perhaps for some minutes, some hours or sometimes days. Then would come a comment or an answer to a question or a problem, which he had considered from many different angles. He was never satisfied with a simple answer – his solutions were rounded, thought out, compassionate, surprising, meaningful.

**I personally met Joop** in 1999 when he came to the training I was following to talk about EABP. I felt drawn in, attracted by how he talked about his work and the Association and what it could offer us as newly trained psychotherapists. It wasn't a sales-pitch – what he said made sense, was intelligent, had passion.

**Then I attended** the congress in Travemünde and his workshop on outfit ("Second Skin") and personality. It was at this congress that he offered the NVLP as organiser for the next EABP congress in

Egmond aan Zee in the Netherlands in 2001 and he asked me to organise.

**Joop had established** the NVLP – the Dutch National Association – in 1999 -- and with a small group of dedicated people around him, built it up by inviting in the BP modalities in the Netherlands and organising together the biannual symposia with excellent guests and workshops by the modalities' members. He was also in the first board of the NAP (the Dutch EAP) and stimulated the BP modalities to join this organisation.

**We both remember** our first organisational meeting in my office when we got into an argument about an English word. Joop was particular about translation – and I had taught English and was a native speaker. I stood my ground and this time I managed to prove – eventually – that I was correct. But there began years of being corrected on language, punctuation, layout, where my ego took a dent, but where I began to appreciate his perfectionistic eye for detail. The results were always worth it. Everything that Joop did fitted.

**Joop had been** with the EABP from the beginning. He was a psychologist and trained in Unitive Body Psychotherapy with Jay Stattman. He had attended all the congresses and worked on several committees including the Training Standards Committee. Joop was present at the formation of the FORUM and the COUNCIL of National Associations.

**Joop's practice** on the Oudezijds Voorburgwal in Amsterdam became a home to many. Several local and international Training Institutes used the upstairs room for training and others met downstairs. Later the Board and the Science & Research Committee made a home for their meetings. It was not just a space – it was warm, light, comfortable and the center-piece was always a huge vase of flowers. Lunch and morning and afternoon teas were feasts with plenty of coffee, tea, beer, wine and Dutch cookies. Visitors from outside Amsterdam could also stay the night. In the days that EABP barely covered the costs and struggled to survive financially this was a tremendous gift to the Association.

**The congress** at Egmond aan Zee started on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2001. Tuesday before was 9/11 and suddenly it seemed as if all our planning and organisation would be for nothing – people would not want to attend or would not be able to travel. We expected two Keynote speakers from the USA. Luckily one turned out to be already in Europe. We only missed Mark Ludwig. Joop lead the reorganisation of the programme and the congress went on. He gave a wonderful thoughtful opening speech, which brought us all together. And the first session was a meditation, which settled us all into what became a wonderful and very successful congress where the 9/11 shock was integrated in most parts of the programme.

**Joop became** a member of the EABP Board in 2002, so supervised my activities when I took up the role of EABP Secretariat. We worked closely together, meeting once a week on Fridays to work on whatever was next. He worked very closely with a graphic designer and friend, Chiel Veffer, on redesigning the EABP logo and creating a House style which was used throughout the Association up until today. Together we updated the website and redid the Membership and FORUM handbooks. Under Joop's direction the paper Newsletter became a work of art and the Congress Grey Books too. We formed a wonderful collaboration.

**In 2006 Joop** became EABP President. He was particularly happy that his becoming 'the first gay President' did not bring up discriminative – negative or positive – issues in any way. Once again he hosted the Board meetings in Amsterdam. It was not an easy Presidency – Joop missed

experience and affinity to deal with several strong characters on the Board and decided after two years to step down.

**When he left** the Board in 2008 he continued to work on the Science & Research Committee and on the symposia held during the congresses. His presentation at the very first Science symposium was a statement of where EABP is and what the Association needs to work on. Little has changed. 'What am I doing anyway?' From a body psychotherapist's perspective he gave a brief historical framework in which to place his statement: "The main issue is the development of basic theory and research on a level that goes beyond beliefs and wishful thinking."

**Joop developed** the Wilhelm Reich Foundation, initially in The Netherlands, since 2014 on the European level – a foundation gathering funds for research and other developmental and promotional activities.

**Joop made** an enormous contribution to EABP from its beginnings in 1989 up until today. As few others, he participated in the COUNCIL, the FORUM, many committees, on the Board and indeed as President. He was prominent in forming the thinking about body psychotherapy and the EABP and in all the work he did gave it a face and a body.

**In 2012** (Congress Vienna) Joop was given the EABP Honorary Membership.



By,  
Jill van der Aa



Dear Somatic Psychotherapy Today:

Can you believe that summer time is here? I write this from my garden in sunny suburban Los Angeles, and I am grateful to see the return of the hummingbirds and parrots to our neck-of-the-woods. They keep us company on hot days, remind us to take a pause and appreciate the beauty and vitality of life. For that I am grateful.

I'm even more grateful for the tireless efforts of the USABP board, as we have all labored throughout the first part of this year to make our 2018 retreat-style conference the best in the last two decades of USABP history. Speaker registration just closed as I write this, and the final agenda will be announced soon. With nearly 80 different experts from various traditions and somatic orientations, it is shaping up to be a convergence of many different wisdom- traditions. I personally cannot wait to be there. As you may know by now, we will have Dr. Allan Schore deliver the keynote address, sharing his latest research on the neuroscience of embodied attachment repair.

As the board met to discuss our conference plans late last year, we surveyed our collective knowledge, and reached out to many of you for your input. We carefully examined previous recipients of both the Pioneer and Lifetime Achievement awards. It was apparent that though lifetime achievement recipients honored by previous USABP leadership had gone on to receive the pioneer award, the lifetime achievement recipients tended to have dedicated their *entire* lives to the field of somatic psychotherapy, whereas some pioneers, whose works had contributed to both the pedagogy and praxis that underpin our collective knowledge base, had often worked in *tandem* to somatic psychotherapy. Lifetime recipients were indeed somatic psychotherapists; pioneers haven't necessarily had to be exclusively somatic psychotherapists. While the spirit of the two awards are certainly similar, the current board sought to designate pioneers as people whose works have helped guide the field, and the lifetime recipients those whose legacy we all will inevitably stand upon.

We then explored relevant themes for this year's conference. We observed our nation in a time of such incredible uncertainty, at a pitch akin to only times of war, really. We have observed a collective rejection of the basic needs of being human, and thus we sought to help our membership address the calling of our times, throughout not only our curriculum and planning, but in selecting our honorees, as well.

The theme for this year's conference is the "Science of Connection: Honoring our Somatic Intelligence," and we deliberately sought presenters focused on embodied relational psychotherapy, which will be reflected in the announcement of the full conference agenda.



In light of that theme, this year's Pioneer Award recipient is Dr. Stephen Porges (*see pg. 26*). His revolutionary Polyvagal Theory has embedded itself in the curriculum of most of our membership institutions' training programs. His theory has articulated a biological framework underlying what we had known in the privacy of our own offices for years—that safety is foundational to human prosperity, and that our capacity for social engagement fosters our resilience. Dr. Porges' latest monograph, *Clinical Applications of Polyvagal Theory* (*see pg. 32*) includes a chapter illustrating how his theory has been embraced by body psychotherapy the world over.

Dr. Judyth Weaver, our 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient (*see pg. 19*) is one of the great Reichian psychologists of our time. Her service spans multiple decades as clinician, professor at the California Institute for Integral Studies, and founder and chair of the somatic psychology program at the late Santa Barbara Graduate Institute. Her international presence has spanned multiple continents, and she has helped midwife the careers of thousands of body psychotherapists. At a time when the feminine is clearly calling us all to pay attention, she is the perfect guardian of our field, whom we both embrace and honor.

Finally, in honor of the great Wilhelm Reich, we are proud to announce that our conference will also feature the West Coast premiere of the documentary film, "*Love, Work and Knowledge: The Life and Trials of Wilhelm Reich*." The filmmakers have graciously agreed to allow our conference to screen never-before-seen documents, recordings, photos and interviews with those who knew him. It is not to be missed!

If you have not reserved your space already, please do so while there is still capacity. Given the retreat-like environment of our host, USABP-member-school Pacifica Graduate Institute, space is limited. Retreat attendance includes all meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) in a beautiful environment overlooking the magnificent Pacific Ocean. So please register promptly at <https://retreat.pacifica.edu/usabp-conference/>, and on behalf of the USABP board, we look forward to seeing you in November!



Sincerely,

Dr. Christopher Walling, PsyD, MBA  
President, United States Association for Body Psychotherapy

United States Association for Body Psychotherapy  
2018 Conference

November 1-4, 2018



**Dr. Judyth O. Weaver**  
Honoree  
*Lifetime Achievement Award*

**Dr. Stephen Porges**  
Honoree  
*Pioneer Award*

**Dr. Allan Schore**  
Keynote Speaker

Register now for the 2018 USABP Conference

## **The Science of Connection**

Honoring the Wisdom of Our Somatic Intelligence

*Hosted By Pacifica Graduate Institute in beautiful Santa Barbara, California.*

The conference features over 80 speakers highlighting the science and practice of embodied relational psychotherapy and discussing new developments in trauma therapy, social justice, sex therapy, therapeutic movement, dance, and yoga therapies.

Along with dozens of published authors, we are hosting the west coast premiere of the exciting new documentary re-evaluating the legacy of Wilhelm Reich.

Join practitioners of countless somatic traditions including Sensorimotor Psychotherapy, Somatic Experiencing, Bioenergetics, Core Energetics, Hakomi, Focusing and more!

*CE credits available*

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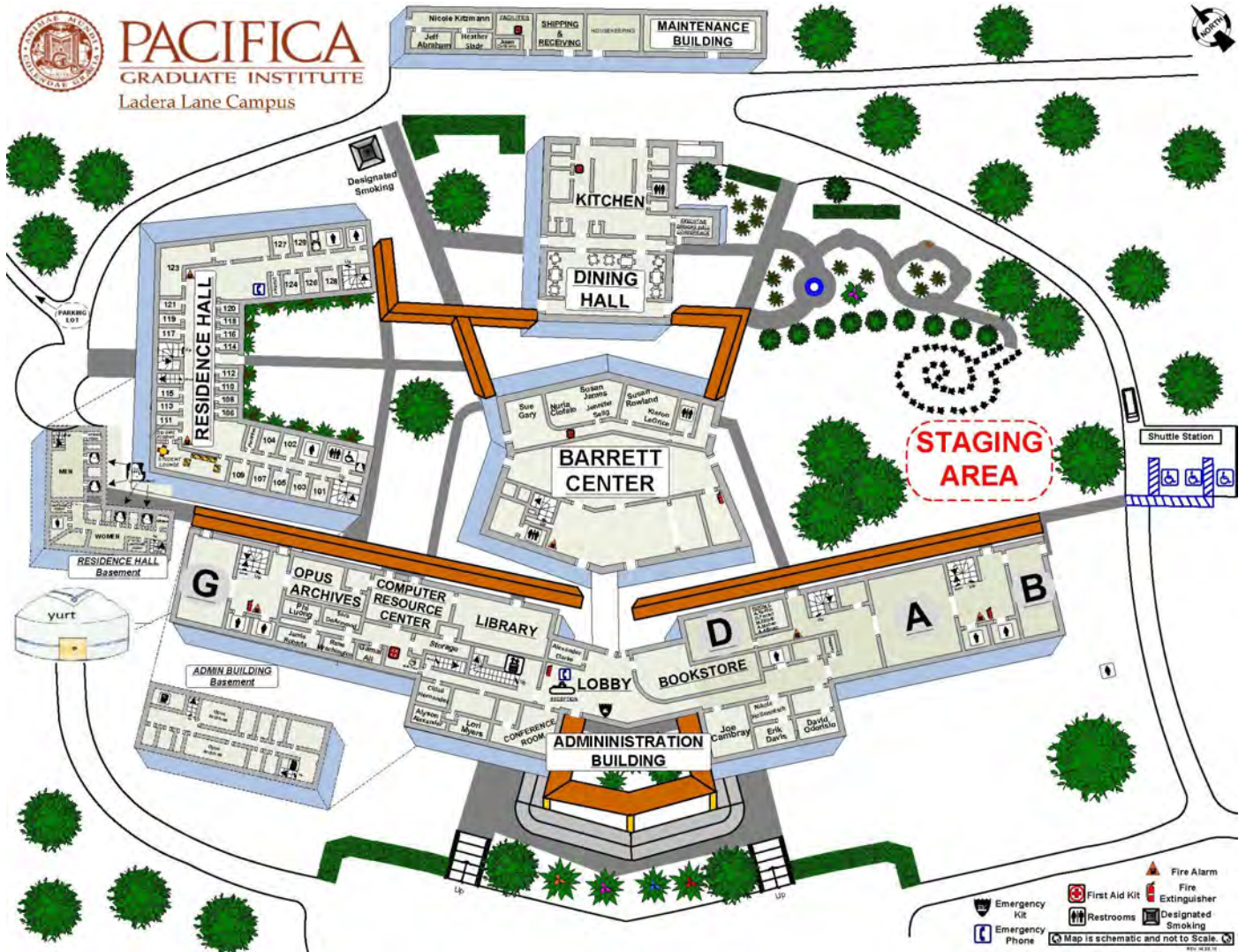


Are you heading to Santa Barbara for the USABP November conference?

[Be sure to register with The Retreat Center](#)

The conference is being held at the Ladera Campus, which is located at 801 Ladera Lane, Santa Barbara, CA 93108

**PACIFICA**  
GRADUATE INSTITUTE



A bird's eye view of the lower level of the Ladera Campus buildings



Since the United States Association for Body Psychotherapy's (USABP) inception in 1998, the Board of Directors have made it a priority to honor colleagues whose time and energy helped make body psychotherapy what it is today. From past to current contributions, the USABP believes that honoring body psychotherapy's history is an important part of their organizations' identity.

Originally, they created the Lifetime Achievement Award to recognize "the giants in our field". The award was given every other year at their convention. John C. Pierrakos was the first to receive the award in 1998. Alexander Lowen (2000), Ilana Rubefeld (2002), Stanley Keleman (2005), Ron Kurtz (2008), Peter Levine (2012), Albert Pesso (2012) and Eugene Gendlin (2016) followed (no conference was offered in 2014).

In 2012, the USABP conference theme was Pioneers of the Past—The Wave of the Future. To be consistent with their theme and wanting "to be more inclusive in honoring the pioneers who laid the foundations for the past and future construction of our body of knowledge and skill", they created the Pioneer of Body Psychotherapy Award. Six initial awards were given that year to Akhter Ashen, Eugene Gendlin, Charles R. Kelly, Arny Mindell and Jack Lee Rosenberg.

This year, at the Fall 2018 conference, Judyth O. Weaver will receive the Life Time Achievement Award and Stephen W. Porges will receive the Pioneer of Body Psychotherapy Award. SPT was pleased to talk with both recipients and share their reactions to the awards and learn a little bit of their story. These two remarkable people have contributed profoundly to body psychotherapy and somatic psychology and continue to give of their time and knowledge. It appears there's no apparent end to their humble willingness to give.

*~ Nancy Eichhorn*

# Lifetime Achievement Award

## An Interview with Judyth O. Weaver

By Nancy Eichhorn



Form and formless  
Movement and stillness  
Loudness and quiet  
Self and other  
I and thou

Can you truly present a picture of a person, on a page, when the dimensionality of the being moves beyond the here and now, expands beyond the human container of skin and bones into the expanse of all cellular energy, where dualities shape the singular organism?

No, not really, but one can share snapshots of a woman who has contributed much to the field of body psychotherapy, who has had an impact on many therapists' lives and on countless clients' lives. From dancer to sitter, from mother to teacher, from self to other, Judyth O. Weaver brings her essence into this life in wondrous ways.

*Continued on page 20*

## On Being Noticed: Getting an Award

When Karen Roller, secretary from the United States Association for Body Psychotherapy (USABP), first contacted Weaver to let her know she was this year's Life Time Achievement Award recipient, Weaver replied quite honestly, "Why?"

Talking about the distinguished award, Weaver shared that in her recollection past awardees were people who had created schools or methodologies like Stanley Keleman, Ilana Rubinfeld (the only other female recipient), Peter Levine, John Pierrakos, Alexander Lowen and so on. In her own humble way, Weaver said, "I've just been putzing along doing work I saw needed to be done and tried to do it. There were holes that needed to be closed."

Filling holes. Completing the incomplete. Finding stillness in movement, formlessness within form. Weaver has a knack for bringing seemingly disparate aspects into a cohesive whole.

At age 79, Weaver says that in Asia they count age differently, giving the person credit for the life before birth too, so in Japan she would be 80 now.

Weaver shared that she had an abusive childhood—she was not allowed to move and what she really wanted was movement. At age 17 she went to New York to be a dancer.

"I studied dance and also Asian culture... mostly the philosophy. As an unhappy child I searched for answers as to why I was here. What am I supposed to do? Different Western religions and philosophies gave me answers that I could not accept. When I studied Taoism and Buddhism it gave me no answers but told me that since I was here, to do the best I could. That I could understand and accept. I wanted to go to Asia and study more deeply. I was interested in China, but it was closed to

Americans at that time. India was too far, and Tibet, well I just wasn't sure where it was, so I focused on going to Japan. I went there in 1965 and studied movement, all kinds—kabuki and noh (both classical dance-dramas), tea ceremony, etc."

"After a year of studying the dance, etc., I went to a Zen Buddhist monastery and asked to be accepted. I was so passionate about wanting to stay there and study I forgot at that point that I was Caucasian, and I was a woman. This was a traditional Japanese, male enclave. 'Grace' and an enlightened teacher allowed me to stay."

"When the Zen master asked me what I had done in the U.S. and I told him I had been a dancer, he smiled and said, 'Now you will learn the highest form of dance, movementless dance.'"



Weaver laughed and admitted that while sitting on the cushion, supposedly in deep meditation, she had choreographed the best dance she ever did, in her head. She eventually performed it in Japan and in the United States.

After three years abroad, 2 ½ years in Japan and half a year in Mexico where she started a Zen center with a Zen monk friend from Japan, Weaver returned to the United States.

---

image from <https://www.holisticogaschool.com/entering-stillness/>

She recalled a moment in 1959, New York, before her journey to Japan. She was in her learning phase and saw a class for nonverbal communication and thought, *this is right for me*. But the course schedule interfered with one of her dance classes, so it was a no go. Several years later, after her return, she saw the same names: Charlotte Selver and Charles Brooks offering another class, this time called Sensory Awareness.

"After all my aspirations for dancing. I was no longer interested in putting my ego on a stage. I wanted to combine my desire for movement and stillness, for loudness and quiet. I came back with damaged knees after all that dancing and then sitting for hours in the monastery. I went to see Cheng Man-Ch'ing, one of the best T'ai Chi masters of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, for medicine for my knees. I studied at his studio with his senior teachers and learned the form of stillness in movement."

"Then I found Charlotte again. Sensory Awareness (*see side bar on page 23*) offers a slight form—people gather or one person, a leader makes suggestions, invitations. Charlotte hated T'ai Chi and the fact that I did it because it was a form. But for me, I had form and formlessness, moving and stillness."

Looking back on a lifetime of happenings, Weaver reflected for a moment, then said, "How did I do these things?, Well, I learned at the monastery that when you pass a piece of paper on the ground you don't say 'I didn't put it there so I'm going to leave it', you simply pick it up and put it in the garbage. You do what needs to be done. I left with strong learnings from the Zen monastery."

### **The Sensory Awareness (SA) Way**

Weaver's *curricula vitae* includes extensive teaching experiences nationally and internationally, co-founding a private graduate school, creating programs for graduate programs studies at an accredited institute, private client work, and writing/publishing articles, book chapters.

The foundation for her practice is an integration of Sensory Awareness with her Reichian training (she was certified in 1976 and earned her doctorate in Reichian psychology in 1979). Sensory awareness was an easy fit—it paralleled her life in the monastery: pay attention to detail, be conscious, aware, present, don't let your mind carry you away.

She became a devout Selver/Brooks follower. She studied with them starting in 1968 until 2003 when Selver passed away. Wherever they went, she was in tow, including places like Esalen Institute (Big Sur, California), Mexico, New York City, and Monhegan Island in Maine. With each stop, she met others who had been impacted by Selver's work, who brought SA into their own practice, at times without even being aware.

"Sensory awareness is essential," Weaver said adding that it is not a training, not a system. "You can't have mindful practice without the mind/body experience. It has always been part of traditional meditation, Buddhist and otherwise. I look back at the fifties and sixties, we were all in our minds. Then Esalen Institute opened and we were all in our bodies, but no one was connecting it."

"Charlotte Selver's work did that. She was teaching Sensory Awareness at Esalen. Selver gave Esalen's first ever experiential workshop in 1963. So many people were influenced by her—Rubinfeld, Levine, (*see [www.IBPJ.org](http://www.IBPJ.org) archives, volume 3, number 1, 2004—Selver for tributes and information*). Fritz Perls, Eric Fromm. Psychoanalysts were influenced. Fritz had private sessions with her for one and a half years in New York. He wanted her to work with his clients, but she refused. Wilhelm Reich was influenced by Elsa Gindler, Selver's teacher in Germany. Reich's second wife, had studied with Gindler and influenced Reich to include breath, energy, movement into traditional psychoanalytic practice.

*Continued on page 22*

“Charlotte was never a psychologist, she was a teacher. I’ve taken her work further in that direction since I’m also a psychologist and can integrate both forms of work,” Weaver said.

As guest editor for the USABP Journal highlighting Selver’s work after her death, Weaver writes:

“In Sensory Awareness, there is nothing to teach. It is just the activity of experiencing and working to be ever more present for the moment. As my ability to be more present deepened, like in Zen, the SA became more in me and I became more it . . . If I am going to be fully present and responsive to the moment and be able to help another be more in the moment, it doesn’t make sense to use a technique that I was taught some time ago. Sensory Awareness taught me the essence of being fresh and responding to what is happening at each moment . . . just what I learned in Zen” (Weaver, *IBPJ* 3(1), 2004/2005, pg. 57).

Weaver taught at the California Institute for Integral Studies (CIIS) for over 25 years. She was hired when it was still called the California Institute for Asian Studies to teach T’ai Chi. While there she integrated sensory awareness into the curriculum as a required course—one hole that really needed to be addressed, she said. She also established a course in the Psychology of Wilhelm Reich. Her courses included both form and formlessness.

Her work at CIIS involved creating the kind of training that she felt was necessary for somatic psychotherapy with a base in SA. She also integrated somatic inquiry into clinical applications in more professionally-oriented courses. These experiences supported her work when she was asked to create a doctoral program in somatic psychology when she co-founded the Santa Barbara Graduate Institute.

“In Sensory Awareness, there is nothing to teach. It is just the activity of experiencing and working to be ever more present for the moment. As my ability to be more present deepened, like in Zen, the SA became more in me and I became more it . . . If I am going to be fully present and responsive to the moment and be able to help another be more in the moment, it doesn’t make sense to use a technique that I was taught some time ago. Sensory Awareness taught me the essence of being fresh and responding to what is happening at each moment . . . just what I learned in Zen.”

## Charlette Selver

Charlotte Selver is considered a pioneer in the human potential movement. During her lifetime, she spoke against compartmentalizing humans into bodies or minds; rather, she supported a focus on a unified organismic human being. "The primary aim of the approach was to make it possible for a person to re-experience himself as a totality, to bring him back to the degree of aliveness and receptivity of which he is capable" (Selver, *IBPJ* 3(1), 2004/2005, pg. 8). She "coined the name Sensory Awareness to single out the awareness of direct perception as distinguished from the intellectual or conventional awareness—the verbalized knowledge that is still the almost exclusive aim of education" (Selver, *IBPJ* 3(1), 2004/2005, pg. 24).

SA is not therapy. "Its purpose is not to make living healthier but to make it more conscious; not to make it happier, but to let it come more into accord with our original nature . . . The more we arrive at our own original nature, the more we discover that healthier and happier living and relating comes about by itself" (Selver, *IBPJ* 3(1), 2004/2005, pg. 13).

"Marti Glenn and I met studying with William Emerson. When she thought of starting a school she asked Wendy (*McCarty*), me and Ken (*Bruer, her husband*) to get together. We all wanted prenatal and perinatal psychology to be integrated into mainstream practice. There was no degree, no strength behind it with medical professionals. When we learned from the state that the \$5,000 we were putting down to start the school meant that we could have four programs not just one, Marti asked me, 'Do you want to do a program in somatics?' I said, 'Yes.' I taught there and arranged it so that every time the students met on campus for the first year we did sensory awareness for them as a person, as an individual. The second year of their coursework, SA was integrated into more clinical use with clients, and the third year we offered supervision work with their clients so that the sensory awareness process in clinical application was witnessed and observed."

### **Coming to a Name: Somatic Reclaiming**

While living and teaching in Berlin, Gindler never named her work. When asked what she called what she did, she just said, *I work with the whole person*. After arriving in the U.S., Charlotte eventually named it Sensory Awareness. Weaver faced a similar situation. She did what she did but didn't have a name for it.

"One day after working, a client asked me, 'what do you call this?' I said, 'huh?' then thought a moment and replied, Somatic Reclaiming, because it is not that we have to acquire something new, but that we need to come back into ourselves . . . to rediscover, to reclaim our true natures."

Further contemplation on a name. The year, 1985. The place, Berkeley, CA. The Reichian "people" met monthly for a potluck and meeting, a time to socialize and share. Once Eva Reich joined them, talked about her work, her father's work. She needed a ride to the airport and Weaver volunteered her blunt-navy-blue 1965 Volvo. She called it her Jewish Model-T Ford. It was so old she had brought her daughter home from the hospital in it and drove said daughter to the airport to fly off to college. As no surprise, they were stuck in traffic and had time to talk, to get to know one another better.

"She asked me, 'What do you do?' I hesitated. Reich never wanted his work to be named after him but here in the West Coast we were trained in Reichian therapy. I said, 'I've been trained in Reichian therapy and integrated the work of Sensory Awareness.' Eva said, 'My father would be so very glad!' which started my relief and our connection— she has since become my mentor and my friend until her passing in 2008."

*Continued on page 24*

## Coming to a close

"When Karen Roller initially told me about the award she also mentioned that she had seen on my website that I was scheduled to be in Japan for a week-long workshop during the conference dates. 'If you can't make it, we can have someone else accept the award for you,' she said. Someone here said, 'Are you crazy! You are getting the Life Time Achievement Award and you are not going to be there!' Well, it was a miracle. People in Japan don't change easily. I had to find out if I even could change the dates. And I have a wonderful translator who really gets the work I do, and this was an even greater miracle—she could change her schedule, too. So, I fly to LA from Japan to attend the conference. I haven't been to a USABP conference in a few years. I was there from the beginning. I attended every USABP conference and presented, too. I'm excited about being there. Then I fly back to Japan for another SA workshop and then a weekend workshop on Reichian Therapy."

When asked about her intensive work schedule at age 79, she said, "I do consider myself retired. I'm not seeing as many private clients. I still do my two-week SA workshop on Cortes Island every other year. I teach every summer. I'm going to Japan and teaching there every year. I couldn't imagine not. I tried to skip a year, teaching the T'ai Chi workshop, but it didn't feel right. I still do T'ai Chi every day."

Weaver is receiving the Life Time Achievement Award for what she's done thus far. It wouldn't be a surprise if, in another decade, she's honored again for the work she's brought forward from 2018 to 2028. She certainly isn't slowing down anytime soon.

**Judyth O. Weaver** is a multifaceted teacher and counselor, incorporating extensive training in diverse areas. She holds a Ph.D. in Reichian Psychology. Judyth is the creator and founding chair of the Santa Barbara Graduate Institute Ph.D. Program in Somatic Psychology. She taught at the California Institute of Integral Studies (San Francisco, CA) for 25 years and at other graduate schools in the S.F. Bay area as well as being founding faculty at Naropa Institute, now Naropa University, (Boulder, CO) in the 1970's, creating it's T'ai Chi



Ch'uan program. She is certified in Reichian Therapy, Somatic Experiencing, massage, Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy, Prenatal and Birth Therapy and as a teacher of Tai' Chi Ch' uan, a senior teacher of the Rosen Method and Sensory Awareness. A former modern dancer, she lived in Japan 1965-1968, studying classical dance (Kabuki and Noh), tea ceremony, and other aspects of Japanese culture. She then lived and studied at Shofukuji, a traditional Rinzaï Zen Buddhist monastery, under Yamada Mumon Roshi. Since 1969 she has taught and led workshops at Esalen Institute in California, Hollyhock in Canada, and other educational centers in the western world, as well as in Russia, Japan, Taiwan, Mexico and India. Her life-long studies have been in dance, body/mind/spirit integrative practices, Buddhist practice and Taoism. Judyth now lives in Seattle, Washington, having relocated there to be closer to her grandchildren. Judyth maintains a private practice in Somatic Reclaiming, her development of body/mind/spiritual integration, which bases its work on the belief that we are all born basically whole, with what we need, but traumas, teachings, etc. confuse and deter us and that with support and awareness we can reclaim our natural inclinations and live the full lives that are our birthrights. Judyth's private practice is in Seattle, Washington and on Cortes Island, B.C. She also travels and teaches elsewhere throughout the world.



**Dr. Allan Schore is certain to deliver an informative KEYNOTE Address at the USABP Conference this November**



Over the last two decades Dr. Schore's interdisciplinary studies have been directed towards integrating psychological and biological models of emotional and social development across the lifespan. His contributions provide a substantial amount of research and clinical evidence which supports the proposition that the early developing, emotion-processing right brain represents the psychobiological substrate of the human unconscious described by Freud. His work has been an important catalyst in the ongoing "emotional revolution" now occurring across all clinical and scientific disciplines. Dr. Schore's activities as a clinician-scientist span from his generating interpersonal neurobiological models of the enduring impact of early attachment trauma on brain development, to theoretical developmental psychoanalytic conceptions of the early origins of the human unconscious mind, to neuroimaging research on the neurobiology of attachment and studies of borderline personality disorder, to his biological studies of relational trauma in wild elephants, and to his practice of psychotherapy over the last 4 decades. He leads Study Groups in Developmental Affective Neuroscience & Clinical Practice in Los Angeles, Seattle-Portland-Vancouver, and Boulder, and lectures internationally. Dr. Schore is past Editor of the acclaimed *Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology*, and a reviewer or on the editorial staff of more than 40 journals across a number of scientific and clinical disciplines. He is a member of the Society of Neuroscience, and of the American Psychological Association's Divisions of Neuropsychology, and of Psychoanalysis. He has received a number of honors for his work, including an Award for Outstanding Contributions to Practice in Trauma Psychology from the Division of Trauma Psychology and the Scientific Award from the Division of Psychoanalysis of the American Psychological Association, Honorary Membership by the American Psychoanalytic Association, and the Reiss-Davis Child Study Center Award for outstanding contributions to Child and Adolescent Mental Health. Dr. Schore has delivered a plenary address, *The Paradigm Shift: The Right Brain and the Relational Unconscious*, to the 2009 Convention of the American Psychological Association.

## USABP Pioneer of Body Psychotherapy Award: An Interview with Stephen W. Porges

By Nancy Eichhorn



When asked how he felt initially learning of his award, Dr. Porges said it was a two-phase response. First, he said, he felt flattered, and then, second, came a state of humility—he didn't quite understand how he fit in with the other pioneers in somatic therapies. "I'm not a therapist," he said, "though I've been told I have the heart of a clinician and I'm proud to have that."

"What the readers need to understand is that unlike awardees in the past—people who were instrumental in body psychotherapy, developing and branding an identity and professional connectedness to therapies that carry their name—I'm an academic, and I come from a different perspective, a different history than individuals whose works originated in somatic psychology. I'm motivated by curiosity to figure out how and why something works, to understand how the mind/brain/body relationship works in terms of health."

Porges felt that the real question should be: Why am I receiving this award?

When one reflects on Porges' work, not only the Polyvagal Theory itself but also the immense impact his research has had on the fields of somatic psychology and body psychotherapy, as well on medical, social and educational fields, it's easy to understand why he is receiving this award.

As one colleague remarked, Dr. Porges "pioneered" the Listening Project Protocol, now known as the Safe and Sound Protocol (see pg. 86), "in his laboratory to test his hypothesis that specific interventions that stimulate the muscles of the middle ear could improve spontaneous social behavior" (Porges & Dana, 2018, pg. 36).

Always the innovator, Porges has received patents for devices he designed to enhance his research projects, past and forthcoming, and he has created protocols for and promoted understanding about medical and mental challenges that have positively impacted people's lives.

In terms of somatic psychology and body psychotherapy, his research and findings have had a profound impact by offering plausible neurophysiological explanations for experiences described by people who experienced trauma thus offering validity to both theory, client experience, and how somatic therapies work. Further, because he has written and presented extensively (250 peer reviewed journal articles) across multiple disciplines including: anesthesiology, critical care medicine, ergonomics, exercise physiology, gerontology, neurology, obstetrics, pediatrics, psychiatry, space medicine, substance abuse and psychology, his work created a portal allowing somatic therapies to enter the mainstream health care model.

*"Polyvagal Theory can be thought of as the science of feeling safe enough to fall in love with life and take the risks of living"* (Porges and Dana, 2018, pg. 188).

The Polyvagal Theory "emerged" from his "research and insights on October 8, 1994" (Porges, 2017, ix). It started with a personal curiosity that evolved into a "lifelong journey to understand how our physiology was related to our mental and behavioral states" (pg. 98). How it all came about is a fascinating story. Porges received

a letter from a neonatologist regarding a paradox—the notion of vagal activity being protective didn't fit with the concept that the vagus could kill you. Porges framed a question to create the foundation for his research: "How could the vagus be both protective when it was expressed as respiratory sinus arrhythmia and life-threatening when it was expressed as bradycardia and apnea?" (Porges, 2017, pg. 60). Investigating the neuroanatomy of the vagus and identifying the vagal mechanisms underlying this paradox evolved into the Polyvagal Theory.

He initially proposed his theory as a structure to generate testable hypotheses and to stimulate research. He never considered clinical applications in terms of mental health. Yet his work was embraced early on by other well-known 'pioneers' in the somatic field including Peter Levine (founder of Somatic Experiencing), Pat Ogden (founder of Sensorimotor Psychotherapy) and Bessel van der Kolk (author of *The Body Keeps the Score*). Curious about clinical applications, Porges attended meetings on attachment and trauma organized by Pat Ogden, gave keynote addresses on trauma via an invitation to Boston from Bessel van der Kolk, talked with psychotherapists—starting with Peter Levine some 40 years ago.

"They invited me into the world of traumatology; it was a welcoming, warm entrance into somatic therapies," he said. "Without their interest and foresight, Polyvagal Theory may have languished in my laboratory and not readily transitioned into traumatology."

Since its introduction, Polyvagal Theory has provided insight into "the mechanisms mediating symptoms that were being observed in psychiatric and physical disorders" and has "stimulated research and treatments that emphasize the importance of our physiological state and regulation of the autonomic nervous system in the expression of several psychiatric disorders and provides a theoretical perspective to study and treat stress and trauma" (Porges & Dana, 2018, pg. xi).

*Continued on page 28*

"I seek information to understand how things are put together. I am iconoclastic. I don't accept existing models, they are not satisfying to my mind, my body. I question and create plausible explanations and feel better."

A colleague noted that, "*During the last twenty years or so, Stephen Porges (1995, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2011, 2013) has been offering a continually deeper and more embodied awareness of how our tripartite nervous systems carry us along in this world, always responding adaptively in the moment. My sense is that this work has transformed him so much that now, when he speaks, we don't just hear his ideas but actually experience what he means by safety and social engagement* (Badenoch, 2017, pp. 9-10).

When sharing Badenoch's experience, Porges explained that Polyvagal Theory has become a manifestation of how his body interpreted his theoretical model—"it's all about connection, co-regulation," he said. "Theory and person become one, which benefits who we are."

He explained that theory and knowledge can translate into different strategies for how we try to live our lives. Life, Porges said, is a series of transforming experiences. When we're young, we want to put our first foot print down, but as we get older we look more at relationships, at connections with other people to optimize the human experience.

Who we are. Getting to know oneself appears to be one of Dr. Porges' motivating themes in life. What else motivates him, his creativity, his curiosity?

"I seek information to understand how things are put together," he said. "I am iconoclastic. I don't accept existing models, they are not satisfying to my mind, my body. I question and create plausible explanations and feel better."

If we don't understand our evolutionary history, however, if we don't understand

how neurobiology/neurophysiology interplay in our lives, we can be hijacked by our physiological state. One example he offered involved educational and work place structures. Porges explained that we are rewarded for suppressing our innate need to play, to engage in reciprocal social interactions rather than experience them. As human beings, our bodies crave play, we crave dynamic reciprocity with a partner—mutuality and reciprocity, interaction and connection. Instead we are taught to suppress our bodily needs to optimize our mental capacities, which puts our body in a defensive mode—it's put down, restrained whether we use drugs, exercise, anxiety. If we had a better understanding of our innate bodily needs, we might structure our time differently and spend less digital time and more face-to-face time. If you understand and allow bi directionality in how our lives are linked to others, it can improve your quality of life," he said.

"We all have to sit back and feel with some gratitude who we are. Humility and gratitude. Sure, my path was difficult but not insurmountable, not that painful. It was a good time for me to come of age as a scientist. Science was expanding so there was room for creativity, which empowered me to cross disciplines. I've been published in many journals accepted in many disciplines, that is very nice. And it is bi-directional—it's about what you know and what you can learn and understand. It's a feedback loop that is part of life I've really enjoyed."

"Twenty years ago, my son was just entering college, he was sitting in my office and I was very enthusiastic about what I was doing at the time. He asked me, 'Dad how long did it take before you could do

## Previous USABP Pioneer Award Recipients



**Akhter  
Ahsen**

what you were interested in?' I said, '30 years.' He's now a neuroscientist."

"What I'm trying to say is that it takes a long time to be able to express creative ideas in the world we live in. We have to forge a portal that enables you to do, to be creative," he said. "I spent decades feeding the beast. I understood the parameters of success in academia. Creativity can never be expired if you are always nurturing it. That's why it is so important when I receive feedback from others. It makes my day when something I've done transcends the laboratory and my work impacts other people."

"My fulfillment comes when other people integrate my ideas into what they are doing," he said. "A goal for a person like me is to be embodied in other people's work. I don't have a goal to have a school of Polyvagal Theory or Polyvagal Therapy. To have my ideas used by others is a dream come true. Being selected for this award illustrates that my ideas have permeated somatic therapies and illustrates that I am a welcomed participant and not a peripheral observer in the domain of body psychotherapy."

Some years back, when Dr. Porges was talking with the director of the National Institutes of Health, he boldly told the director that "We know too much to allow medicine to be practice the way it is." Porges elaborated that "We know too much about the body to allow treatment to continue as is - without an appreciation of bodily states and how shifts in neurophysiological states influence the effectiveness of medical treatments. Current knowledge of the body needs to be infused into both clinical practice and how we live our lives."

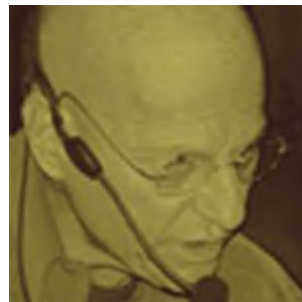
"I guess that statement defines me as a pioneer," he said.



**Eugene  
Gendlin**



**Charles R.  
Kelly**



**Arny  
Mindell**



**Jack Lee  
Roseberg**

*Continued on page 30*

## Moving forward

Porges has been involved in developing newer technologies to extract physiological markers from the human voice. "Voice

intonation conveys, signals safety and predation," he explained. "Low frequency, like the roar of a lion, is a predatory sound. Our bodies attune to different voices. Neuro-regulation from voice, a melodic voice, is regulated from the vagus nerve. We are developing a noninvasive measure. We recently received a patent for the new technology to measure heart beat using a webcam device, which will serve as a research measure of physiology. A major project has started at the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction where my wife, Sue Carter is the director. He is the Founding Director of the Traumatic Stress Research Consortium."

The intention is to create an internet portal to study trauma therapists and their clients to learn what works. Therapists often have trauma history themselves. The goal is to



sign up 1,000 therapists and 10,000 clients for the three-phase study: (1) survey research; (2) monitor voice; (3) monitor physiology.



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Images retrieved from: <http://www.123rock.net/voice-lessons-newbury-park/> and [http://steven-universe.wikia.com/wiki/File:Lion\\_roaring.jpg](http://steven-universe.wikia.com/wiki/File:Lion_roaring.jpg)

"We can change our whole understanding of trauma history as a psychological and biobehavioral experience. Our whole system carries trauma in terms of the regulation of our autonomic nervous system and it is reflected in voice."

He added, "In the tradition of Alfred Kinsey, who observed the diversity human sexual behavior and changed the world, we have a large population of people who have survived trauma and abuse, especially during childhood and they have not been witnessed and described. Social behavior, health, human sexuality. Neuro-regulation and autonomic nervous system. They are all linked.

When asked why this study, now, he replied, "No one's doing it." One reason for the lack of research, he explained, is that "all the people I know in the trauma world are functionally grounded in their school, in their tradition. Being a scientist and not a clinician has positioned me in the clinical world as a partner and not a competitor. I am welcomed by most clinicians, across several disciplines. I am welcomed because I support their work and make a sincere attempt to understand the neurophysiological mechanisms that enable their treatment models to be effective."

It is important to note that Porges is welcomed by many because one of his main motivating energies has always been to support other people's work. The "Listening Project is as close to a branding that I want to get," he said, referencing what is now called the Safe and Sound Protocol (see review on page 86). Because of his innate nature to research, share, and support, he is part of a vast network of colleagues throughout many disciplines. Through his efforts and findings, Porges has forged a collaborative foundation supporting the potential for growth and change, for expansion and expression.

### **Listening to Others: A Bi-directional Response**

While giving presentations, workshops etc. Porges kept receiving requests for more clinical examples. Not being a therapist, he recognized his own limitations and reached out to colleagues to share their clinical work.

*Clinical Applications of The Polyvagal Theory: The Emergence of Polyvagal-*

*Informed Therapies*, available this June, is co-edited by Porges and Deb Dana. The anthology offers 22 chapters with 25 contributors discussing how the polyvagal theory informed them and how they integrated it within their own diverse strategies be it trauma work, veterinary work, nursing, and educational strategies for physician-client interactions. (See page 32 for a detailed review.)

### **Conclusion**

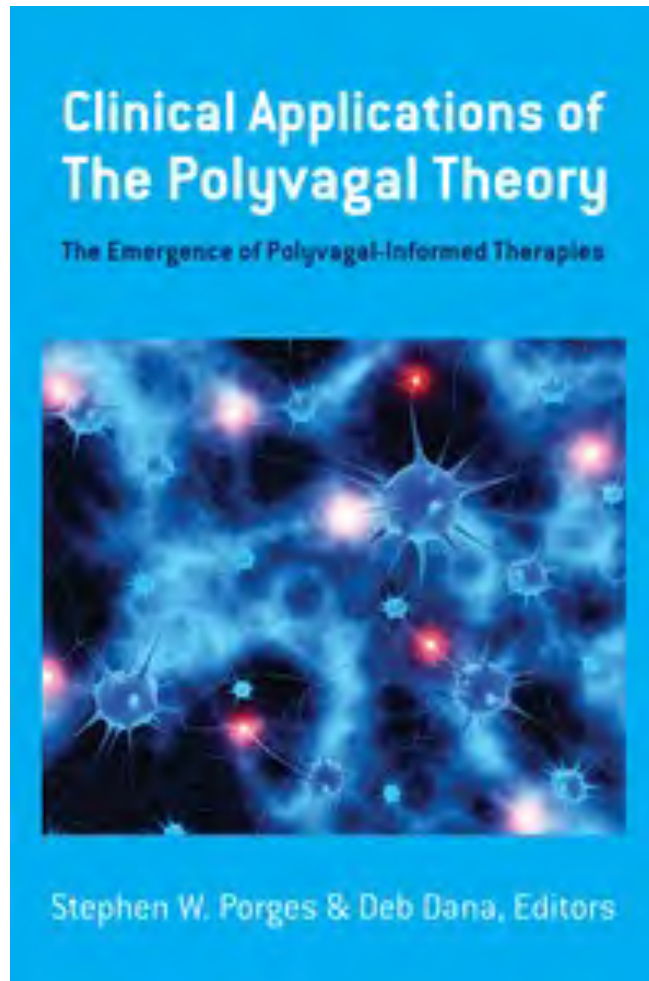
There is no doubt in my mind why Steve is receiving the Pioneer of Body Psychotherapy Award. He has continued to study, research, interact. He is informed and in turn he can discuss body psychotherapeutic theories from a polyvagal perspective with others adhering to more traditional psychotherapy models as well as those practicing across various disciplines (i.e., medical and educational).

Furthermore, he is and has been part of the foundational team of body psychotherapists, somatic psychologists, scientists, researchers, and writers who have created the path for others to follow with knowledge and science to guide and validate their way.

**Dr. Stephen Porges'** research intersects psychology, neuroscience, and evolutionary biology. Through his development of the Polyvagal Theory, Porges is discovering how the autonomic nervous system is involved in regulating the reactions and behaviors of individuals affected by a wide-range of traumatic experiences, including sexual assault and partner violence, bullying, and the trauma associated with diagnoses and treatment of the reproductive system. Currently, Porges is developing the Kinsey Institute Sexual Trauma Research Consortium to address the life-changing affects and treatments around trauma. He is creating a team of collaborative researchers and clinicians at the Kinsey Institute, Indiana University, and other partner institutions to document both the effects of trauma on people's ability to form intimate relationships and the development of novel treatments to reverse its effects.

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Deb Dana



Stephen W. Porges

[Click here to read a chapter from their  
book](#)

Excerpted from *Clinical Applications of the Polyvagal Theory* © 2018 Stephen W. Porges. Used with the permission of the publisher, W. W. Norton & Company. The following is the chapter: "Polyvagal Theory: A Primer."





Reviewed by Nancy Eichhorn

What happens when a question sparks a search? When a curious mind latches onto a quest to find answers that make sense, not just at a cognitive level but also with a bodily resonance, so it *feels* right?

Well, if you're Stephen W. Porges, you end up trying to understand how our physiology is related to our mental and behavioral states and then, with data in hand, you propose the Polyvagal Theory (1994), which links the evolution of the vertebrate autonomic nervous system to the emergence of social behavior.

According to Porges, Polyvagal Theory was generated as an expansive brain-body model that emphasized the bidirectional communication between the brain and the body. He proposed his theory as a structure to generate testable hypotheses and to stimulate research. He never considered clinical applications in terms of mental health; yet, clinicians have flocked to his workshops, his writings. They are drawn to the man and his theory. And at those trainings and webinars, meetings and symposiums, workshops and academic gatherings, repetitive requests resulted in two cohesive themes: make the academics more user-friendly and give us clinical examples—how can we better grasp the Polyvagal Theory and how does it integrate into what we do with our clients?

In response, Dr. Porges (2017) wrote *The Pocket Guide to the Polyvagal Theory: the Transformative Power of Feeling Safe* ([see our review in the Winter 2018 issue, volume 7, number 3, page 30](#)). *The Pocket Guide* uses a more conversational

approach, revised interviews actually so the text was originally created for therapists listening to Porges rather than reading his content that was original intended for academics and researchers.

Addressing the need for clinical examples was not quite as simple. Being an ethical scientist/researcher, comfortable with data and such, Dr. Porges knew his limitations. He was more than able to discuss clinical case presentations, deconstruct said presentations into constructs described by the theory but not being a therapist presented a challenge. So, he reached out to colleagues who were practicing therapists, some originators of their own methodological approaches others immersed in creating weaves of various approaches including a Polyvagal perspective. The result is his newest co-edited anthology, *Clinical Applications of Polyvagal Theory: The Emergence of Polyvagal-Informed Therapies*.

*Continued on page 34*

**“Polyvagal theory explains in scientific terms much of what I do in my own work as a therapist and trainer.”**

Dr. Porges and Deb Dana worked with 25 contributors to highlight how Polyvagal Theory played into their understanding of their clients’ physiological responses—how their physiology impacted their bodily responses emotionally, physically, and at times I would venture to say spiritually. Their goal was to have the authors explain how Polyvagal Theory enabled them to expand their work rather than have them simply recapitulate the theory itself. Porges does that in Part 1, Chapter 4: Polyvagal Theory: A Primer. Here he provides dense data, his ‘scientist’ voice is clear, articulate. His intention was to provide space for an academic tone, thus freeing authors to write in a more personal voice to convey how Polyvagal Theory influenced their work.

According to Porges, “The chapters provide vivid examples of how Polyvagal Theory provides the language of the body that has enabled the authors to passionately express their desire to understand and to optimize the human experience” (pg. xxv).

“The reading of the entire book works as an integrated ‘whole’” Porges shared. “My ‘visceral’ response to the entire work was different than my responses to the individual chapters. There was something about the process of reading the entire collection of papers... when I did, I knew it worked!”

Deb Dana shared that the “edited collection was a labor of love” and that at times “it was a delicate process of weaving in the Polyvagal Theory language.” It seems that though the contributors were using a foundation of Polyvagal Theory, they were not necessarily recognizing it so Dana and Porges worked to make it explicit.

**Four Parts Make the Whole**

There are four parts, 22 chapters, a preface written by Dr. Porges, and detailed biographical information about the contributors. There are over 400 pages. I received a PDF prior to the book’s release so was reading it on my computer. As many readers know, this is not my best way to access a text. I thought I’d simply scan the book, get pertinent information to start something while waiting for the book to be

“The reading of the entire book works as an integrated ‘whole’” Porges shared. “My ‘visceral’ response to the entire work was different than my responses to the individual chapters. There was something about the process of reading the entire collection of papers... when I did, I knew it worked!”

available in print form from W. W. Norton and Company. I started to scan, then I thought, *I want to read more to get background for the article about Dr. Porges receiving the USABP Pioneer for Body Psychotherapy Award* (see PP in this issue) so I focused. Then, I was hooked. I spent the entire day reading chapter after chapter. The writing styles varied. Some authors did discuss the theory more than I thought necessary, others were personal and enlightening and informative. I appreciated many of the anecdotes and the experientials that were shared. I recognized the name of a contributor who has written for SPT in the past and as expected, her voice captured my full attention; her case study of a woman named Rita was insightful.

It was helpful to see how therapists interpreted Polyvagal Theory in their work and in their lives. Safety has become the most prominent emergent theme from Dr. Porges’ work over the past few years, perhaps the past decade (I’m not the best with time sequences). And these therapists, doctors and nurses are using their knowledge of our physiological states—triggers, cues of safety, cues of danger and/or life threat—to inform their client work (including patients that are in fact animals); seeing it in action breathes life into what some might consider a stagnant theory—though they would be far flung clinging to that thought. One of the beauties of this theory is that, like the evolutionary basis forming its foundation, the theory itself continues to evolve, to expand as new data is forthcoming.

## Parts and Contents

The Preface, written by Dr. Porges offers his personal story as well as his part in creating Polyvagal Theory and its transition into the world of trauma treatment and psychotherapy in general. It is a fascinating portal into a personal perspective that readers are not always offered.

Part 1 is entitled, The Introduction of Polyvagal Theory into the World of Trauma Therapists. The three contributors in this section (not counting Dr. Porges' chapter, the primer discussed earlier in this review) are close colleagues and friends of Dr. Porges. These are the people who embraced his work early on and supported the application of Polyvagal Theory in the trauma field of the psychotherapeutic world. The contributors include Peter A. Levine, Bessel van der Kolk and Pat Ogden. Part 2 covers aspects of "Safety as the Core of Therapy". Part 3 offers chapters dealing with "Therapeutic Approaches and Clinical Applications". And Part 4 offers three chapters dealing with "Applications in Medicine".

The diversity of applications in different clinical settings is striking. You will read about work in a newborn intensive care unit, therapy with a survivor of torture in East Africa, and physician/patient interactions in an educational sense—per the author: being aware of the neurophysiology underlying reactions to illness and medical treatment, Polyvagal Theory can inform doctors as to "when to build trust and when to gather medical information".

Topics include: congenital heart defects; stroke and stroke recovery; Asperger's Syndrome; Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; Flight therapy—literally being afraid to fly in an airplane; and ethical animal care written from a veterinarian's (Polyvagal Theory influenced) perspective. And a nurse talking about the importance of person-to-person relational skills and cues of safety and caring that contribute to a patient's recovery.

Approaches include: Polyvagal Playlab (see page 185); Dance Movement Therapy and Core Rhythms (see page 207); Energy Psychology (see page 270); Theraplay (see page 227), Somatic-Psychological-Interactive-Model (see page 285);

Sensorimotor Psychotherapy (see page 34); Somatic Experiencing (see page 3).

As previously noted, the spread of Polyvagal Theory's influence is far and wide, nationally, internationally, impacting education, medicine, trauma work and divergent therapeutic methodologies/approaches/theories with their respective client considerations (man and animal). Yet they all maintain the commonalities of safety and social engagement in their work.

## Quotes about Safety

"Polyvagal theory proposes that cues of safety are an efficient and profound antidote for trauma" (pg. 61).

" . . . safety is a deeply visceral experience, felt in the heart, held in the lungs as breath, a connected experience, a familiar tone of voice, gazes, hand gestures" (pg. 90).

"Polyvagal theory can be thought of as the science of feeling safe enough to fall in love with life and take the risks of living" (pg. 188).

## Conclusion

My intention was to offer a glimpse of the contents, a sense of what the book covers and a perspective, well, okay, a personal opinion—this is a worthy read. If you want to experience the Polyvagal Theory in clinical settings, see how other therapists and clinicians interpret the theory and apply its principles to create safe, healing, nurturing environments with bi-directional neural communication to help maintain clients' nervous systems in a state of safety for optimal regulation, social communication, state regulation and learning, check out the book.



## Clinical Applications of the Polyvagal Theory: A Reflection

By Deb Dana

If Stephen Porges asked you to co-edit a book with him, what would you say? With my passion for Polyvagal Theory, my love of writing, and my friendship with Steve, my answer was an unhesitating “yes.” The process of bringing this co-edited book to publication has been a shared ventral vagal inspired adventure.

In *Clinical Applications of the Polyvagal Theory*, Steve’s intention was to gather a group of clinicians whose work was informed by Polyvagal Theory. Although the beginning chapters are written by recognized leaders in the field of trauma, this book came out of Steve’s commitment to ask people who were emerging as leaders to write chapters. Steve wanted this edited collection to feature clinicians who were in the trenches creatively bringing Polyvagal Theory into their work every day with complicated clients. As he traveled and gave presentations, Steve would talk with people who were incorporating a foundation of Polyvagal Theory in innovative ways and invite them to be a part of our book project. We began calling our chapter contributors our “Polyvagal family”, and each time Steve

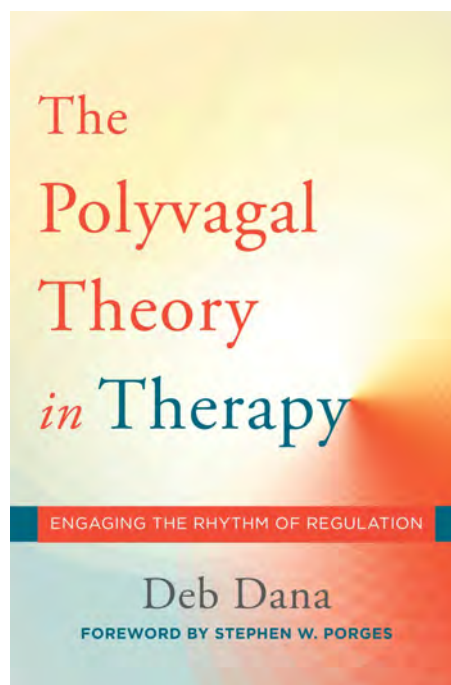
emailed me to introduce a new potential author, he said, “Here’s another member of our family.” I came to know our chapter contributors through emails, phone calls, and Skype conversations. It was a sweet experience of autonomic attunement and the ease of connection that brings, in these beginning Polyvagal partnerships.

This edited collection was a labor of love and a delicate process of helping our contributors incorporate the language of Polyvagal Theory. We asked our contributors to put Polyvagal Theory first and write about their work through that lens. To assist them in that, I took on the role of their Polyvagal Theory translator. Although our authors were already using a foundation of Polyvagal Theory, they were

not necessarily naming their work in that way so we worked to weave the theory more directly into the writing, which meant bringing it more explicitly into their awareness so it would be clear to our readers. As with any family, our Polyvagal family brought many moments to celebrate along with inevitable moments of messiness. Finding the flow of twenty-two voices and topics was a challenge. Getting writers who are passionate about their work to stay within a word limit is almost an impossibility. Deadlines came and went as we inched closer to having a manuscript to submit. There were times when I felt the joy of successfully helping an author shape their chapter and times when I waved the white flag and Steve was there to pick up the pieces and take over the editing with the same wonderful combination of kindness and brilliance that he brings to all of his work. Over the many months of work, Steve and I created a rhythm. We made time to enjoy the experience of reciprocity and a shared ventral vagal state. And when trying to help authors engage in the vulnerable process of shaping their stories became “too great a neural challenge” for my system, I reached out to Steve and found his co-regulating response. This made it possible for me to return to our authors with my own regulated nervous system and create the foundation of safety that is necessary for a shared flow of creativity and a successful editing experience.

At the same time, I was working on this book with Steve, I was writing my own book, *The Polyvagal Theory in Therapy: Engaging the Rhythm of Regulation*. Although I quickly learned that writing my own book was far easier than co-editing the collected edition, wandering back and forth between the two projects turned out to be a regulating resource. When editing other people’s words became too much, I would go back to my own writing and when I couldn’t find my own words, I’d return to another author’s chapter. It was truly a Polyvagal Theory immersion experience.

*Clinical Applications of the Polyvagal Theory* offers reflections on why Polyvagal Theory enables change and how the theory informs models, paradigms, and protocols across an array of disciplines. It presents the work of



clinicians who are helping to build the future of Polyvagal Theory. They have beautifully shared how Polyvagal Theory has been instrumental in their clinical practices not only changing how they work, but also shaping who they are and how they navigate their lives. This anthology was probably percolating in Steve’s thoughts long before he asked me to work on it with him in 2014. At that moment I had no idea what the pathway to publication would entail. Steve forewarned me that it would be both a labor-intensive project and a rewarding one. Now, with the manuscript completed, I can feel the ways these chapters invite clinicians to expand their models of practice. I am excited by the possibilities of a growing community of clinicians who are exploring Polyvagal-informed practice. And I am nourished each time another person joins our Polyvagal family.

**Deb Dana**, LCSW is a clinician and consultant specializing in the treatment of complex trauma. She is the coordinator of the Traumatic Stress Research Consortium in the Kinsey Institute and lectures internationally on ways Polyvagal Theory informs work with trauma survivors. She is the developer of the Rhythm of Regulation clinical training series and author of *The Polyvagal Theory in Therapy: Engaging the Rhythm of Regulation* (Norton, 2018) and co-editor, with Stephen Porges, of *Clinical Applications of the Polyvagal Theory: The Emergence of Polyvagal-Informed Therapies* (Norton, 2018).  
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[rhythmofregulation.com](http://rhythmofregulation.com)

# Quickies

3RD EDITION

## THE HANDBOOK OF BRIEF SEX THERAPY

EDITED BY  
**Shelley Green and Douglas Flemons**

FOREWORD BY MICHAEL F. HOYT



**Reviewed by Kevin Jeffrey Goldwater**

Despite the obvious benefits the world of psychotherapy has brought into both individual and communal lives, many cultures still consider therapy taboo. The action of attending therapy is misunderstood and often maligned: going to a shrink is for the crazies, seeking out professional help signifies inability for self-sufficiency, deviating from a biopsychosocial norm from translates as if you are broken. Surpassing the taboo of therapy itself is that of sexuality. Sexuality alone is a taboo subject—the exploration of one’s sexuality, the preferences and expression of such are hushed, driven into the darkness by a societal dictum that preaches uniformity and singular experience. Discussing one’s sexuality in terms of therapy and biopsychosocial healing can be difficult under the effect of the taboo nature. It is precisely this attitude—the one of taboo avoidance—that Shelley Green and Douglas Flemons -combat with a smile in their edited anthology entitled, *Quickies: The Handbook of Brief Sex Therapy*.

*Continued on page 40*

Therapists can and do feel uncomfortable and unqualified to handle sexual discussions with their clients. They often refer clients to a 'sex' therapist or a like-focused clinician to have these sorts of conversations. Green and Flemons, however, suggest that therapists encourage active discussions (maintained with professionalism and a clinical lens) about sexuality; it is, after all, part of the patient's development and understanding of their relationships. *Quickies* reflects just that attitude—encouraging open and integrated discussion throughout the entries.

Although potentially considered a taboo topic, this anthology attempts to abolish the apathy and discomfort associated with discussing sexuality in the clinical setting. The twenty contributors offer clear, concise, and intriguing entries regarding the most under-discussed and ever pressing issues in sexual theory, such as non-monogamous relationships and sexual lives of cultural minorities.

### **Content and Coverage**

*Quickies* is in its third edition. The growth it has shown in the revisions team-up perfectly with the immense drive for social change, i.e. the #metoo movement, indigenous resurgence movements, education reform and such that are being elevated to a new level by increased social activism and through social media.

The book comprises five sections with each covering a different theme. Accompanied with case examples and research, these sections are relatively dense, but the writing styles of the contributors combat this by creating a tone that is easily digestible and interesting to follow. While paired with research and case examples, each author weaves themselves into the narrative in a discussion like manner. The fourth chapter "Come Again? From Possibility Therapy to Sex Therapy" for example begins with the author commenting after a pun, "As a brief therapist, I consider myself an expert on helping people make changes, but I don't consider myself one when it comes to the choices they make or the preferences they hold. Clients are the experts on their lives" (99). This reflection not only provides a conversation between reader and author, but allows the reader to approach these

contributions from an active reckoning stance.

Green and Flemons begin by explaining their foundational ideals of brief sex therapy and discuss how their "Models of Brief Sex Therapy" is based on relationships. Four guiding types of relationships reflected in this initial entry are traced throughout the anthology: Between the Therapist and Client; Between Partners; Between Clients and Desire; and Between Clients and the Problem.

Content also covered includes Beyond Monogamy, Cultural/Sexual Minorities, and Sexual Violence. Beyond Monogamy discusses the reaches of monogamy in today's world. The author explores the wounds left by affairs, then continues to discuss the increasing trend of consensual non-monogamy and ends on one of the newest explorations of sexuality, the role of the internet in sexual dynamics.

Cultural/Sexual Minorities, discusses same sex couples, transgender identifying individuals (the first mention of such since past editions), and approaching brief sex therapy with multicultural and third world individuals. While together in the same section of the book, each subject is given more than adequate attention. These under-discussed social groups are not only described well and discussed in an open manner, they are done so in a way that respects, acknowledges, and sometimes combats the experiences of minority individuals.

The same can be said about the following section, Sexual Violence. The stories shared in this section are done so with the care needed for such a discussion, allowing emotional respect while maintaining academic professionalism.

*Quickies'* updates have also allowed the authors to supplement their discussions with modern evidence. In discussing transgender individuals within, contributors reference the current recent and unending debate regarding gendered bathroom rights. In discussing sexual violence, our attention is brought to the recent Stanford rape trial (*Los Angeles Times*, People v. Brock Turner, 2016). Both examples highlight not only the relevancy of these issues today, but how prevalent these issues are in our everyday life.



*Quickies* concludes by returning to theory, with further explications of theory and more intensive exploration of the building blocks of brief sex therapy, complete with a case study on a severely depressed gay man. Despite this ending note, *Quickies* communicates, explains, and shares hot button topics of human sexuality in ways that are entertaining, educating and meaningful throughout the book. While intended for academics, the nature of *Quickies* allows anyone to be able to pick up the book and learn not only about the methods and ways of brief sex therapy, but of various cultural taboos in a normalized fashion that they may not otherwise explore. *Quickie's* has quickly (no pun intended) become one of my favorites, and I have no doubt it has earned its place on the shelf of the psychological zeitgeist.



Photo by Rick Gomez

**Douglas Flemons** is professor of family therapy, clinical professor of family medicine and co-director of the Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention at Nova Southeastern University. A co-director of Context Consultants, Flemons is also an AAMFT Clinical Fellow and Approved Supervisor. Flemons resides in Florida.



Photo by Rick Gomez

**Shelley Green** is professor of family therapy at Nova Southeastern University and a Clinical Fellow with the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. As co-director of Context Consultants, Green specializes in working with couples with issues of sexuality and intimacy. A licensed marriage and family therapist, Green resides in Florida.

**Kevin Jeffrey Goldwater** studies applied psychology with a minor in music and social & cultural analysis at New York University. He is set to graduate in May of 2019. Born in Chicago, Kevin has done immersive research on psychoanalytic theory and the role of gender in today's media. Most recently, Kevin has been working in cultural psychology, focusing on the impact of colonialism on indigenous and minority patients. In addition to working for *Somatic Psychotherapy Today*, he writes reviews for the *International Psychotherapy Journal*.

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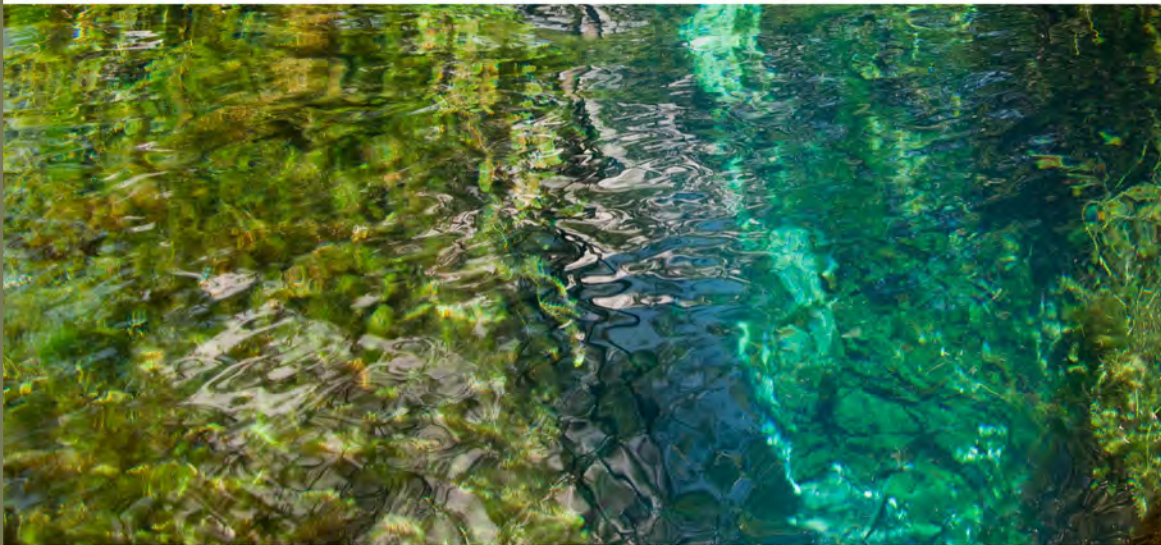
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# **THE SACRED PATH OF THE THERAPIST**

**Modern Healing, Ancient Wisdom,  
and Client Transformation**



**IRENE R. SIEGEL**

**Reviewed by Nancy Eichhorn**

Our life journeys are our stories—they offer fodder for conversation, for connection. They become staple for books waiting to be written. Some travelers share their tales as memoirs, others mirror a fictionalized character after their truth and create a picture of themselves through the lens of another. Others bring their experiences forward into a more professional sense, especially if that was part of their story to start.

But, to impact others interested in our journey, the traveler turned writer must extend the experience beyond the places they went, the people they interacted with, the basic sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations they recall. The experiences recounted, be it—a spiritual trip to study with a master shaman in Peru, completing a doctoral degree in Transpersonal Psychology, witnessing the birth of a thought that extends into a spiritual interweave of psychology and shamanism— must form core moments of conception, create an understanding, an awareness that becomes life altering for author and reader.

Irene Siegel does all that and more as she shares her journey into the jungles of Peru, the hallways of academic institutions and her own curiosity that culminated in not only dramatic changes in her clinical practice but also the creation of her newest book, entitled, *The Sacred Path of the Therapist: Modern Healing, Ancient Wisdom, and Client Transformation*.

The book “addresses the subject of spiritual resonance within the psychotherapeutic process, and the integration of psychotherapy and awakening of spiritual consciousness based on my own experience as a psychotherapist, the reporting of my research participants, and the synthesis of my clients’ experiences over the years. The journey of healing unfolds in sacred space and is transformational for both therapist and client” (pg. 10).

Siegel’s goal is to lead readers down “a path, through knowledge and experience, that will awaken a process in you” (pg.11).

She approaches a difficult task with simple, clear, detailed text. She imparts information about alternative ways of knowing, ways of tracking information and energy flow, ways of holding resonance in a shared field based on connection to the divine source, while sharing how to weave all this into a therapy session (pg. 10).

Words, she says, are not all that adequate in situations like these—bridging “the egoic process of reading and intellectually understanding the information, a left brain linear process, with a right brain process based on a nonlinear emotional experience of expanded awarenesses.”

Siegel is aware of the need to both cognitively understand and bodily absorb the material—bring it in, be with it, let it be with you, let it be you. To counter this gap, she offers guided meditations along with journaling experiences throughout the book. And, a huge must have in my opinion, readers can access audio versions of several of her meditations, for free, from her website (see page 11 for website address).

### **How it Began**

The book is derived from Siegel’s doctoral research project, seasoned by over 40 years working as a psychotherapist and shaman. When Siegel started graduate school (she received her doctorate in 2011 from the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology), she noticed that she was having spiritual experiences in client settings—spiritual awakening seemed to be a natural outgrowth for many of her clients. She wondered if a therapist’s consciousness could be a catalyst for their client’s transformation within a field of higher, or soul, awareness (pg. xiii). Her questions became an exploratory study to determine if other therapists shared her experiences and what they were seeing with their own client base.

The participants in the study already shared a respect for “the silent spaces in the psychotherapy session where sacredness emerges, boundaries diffuse, ego identification diminishes and resonance between therapist and client expands within a sea of shared energy and consciousness as they become centered and focused

*Continued on page 44*

within" (pg. xiii). It is a biased study. But, it had to be. How can you study commonalities if the participants don't already think alike? How can you study the divine and its presence in a clinical setting if you are an atheist? If you do not believe in a presence or power greater than oneself?

For this approach, for this vantage to come to clinical life, therapists who are immersed in their own theological work, who are meditating, present and witnessing themselves in relationship with the Divine, will undoubtedly see a resonant impact with clients if they are attuned and attached. Attunement in this instance, per Siegel, is used to describe the interrelational resonance between two or more people, which is considered an important element of effective psychotherapy and spiritual resonance as well (pg. 20).

### **A Look Inside**

There are eight chapters, an epilogue, glossary, references, index, acknowledgements and a preface. Siegel's intended audience appears to be therapists, especially those interested in more spiritual aspects of the divine and its presence in therapy. She offers step by step meditations

to help guide therapists "toward greater inner awareness and activation of spiritual resonance perceived through alternative ways of knowing" (pg. 38). As well, readers most likely will have an academic foundation, the font is small, the pages filled with print (an occasional black and white chart or sketch), the content is supported and cited, the content is complex, instructive. She introduces/explains Ken Wilber's transpersonal developmental model, various models of transpersonal psychotherapy, energy psychology, transference, countertransference and more to create the foundation for her clinical approach. She brings in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy (EMDR) and its significance in this work.

She also makes some assumptions that one can hope to occur, but in busy lives and clinical practices, it is not always likely. First, she assumes the reader will journal and will do the experientials created to cultivate one's skills of mindful awareness, meditation, inner focusing, and coming within. There's an exercise to develop divine attunement (pg. 39), which I personally appreciated and want to repeat. There are 'Reader Reflections' and written guidelines to process and use the information. She invites readers to set "Growth Goals".



Image from <https://blog.creative-capital.org/2015/05/strategic-marketing-for-artists-part-three-choosing-a-path-and-taking-action/>

There are clinical experientials—vignettes of therapists going through their own spiritual processes.

This is not a sit down and simply read experience. Nor is this the type of book you skip around from chapter to chapter—the material builds on itself. This is an opportunity to expand your experience of self, other, body, mind, spirit, to be with a “whole” including all that is beyond and outside of yourself as being all of you and how this expanse can positively impact your clients, and your own life.

**“We are not a body with a spirit but a spirit with a body . . . our soul is our essence”** (pg. 92).

Siegel is clear that spiritual resonance is not a therapeutic model by itself but rather it becomes part of the fabric of one’s therapeutic approach and is applicable without sacrificing the standard protocols of one’s trained methodology (pg. 84)—any process can benefit as clients learn how to focus their attention inward, as they integrate breath work, imagery, meditation and body movement to shift their experience, to move from an egoic need to analyze to simply notice their somatic and intuitive experience. She looks at this as a blend of psychotherapy with a higher range of consciousness.

Her conversation about energy medicine and psychotherapy that starts on page 79 felt pertinent to all therapists, not just in terms of energy though it is because of the energy field we all share that it occurs. She talks about boundaries, which I perceived as emotional as well as physical and spiritual—“you can be compassionate and empathic without taking on someone else’s energy. Once you do that, you are ultimately of no use to them and it is only draining and detrimental to you. You will create a codependent relationship where your client feeds on you, and you are drained and exhausted.” How many therapists, especially when first starting out, lose their boundaries, give away themselves, their time, their presence?

The book “addresses the subject of spiritual resonance within the psychotherapeutic process, and the integration of psychotherapy and awakening of spiritual consciousness based on my own experience as a psychotherapist, the reporting of my research participants, and the synthesis of my clients’ experiences over the years. The journey of healing unfolds in sacred space and is transformational for both therapist and client.”

Furthermore, the information in the entire chapter on the human energy field felt applicable beyond the confines of this book. Even when talking about entering sacred space, Siegel’s point extends beyond spirituality. She writes that:

“In order to work within these expanded ranges of consciousness and perceive the subtle bodies, the therapist must enter sacred space, the deep internal communion between oneself and a divine cosmic force. Then the client can learn to do the same. Whether one calls this force God, Spirit, higher self, superconsciousness, or soul is not relevant. It is the experience beyond the word that is important . . . the body is a good doorway in” (pg. 100).

I think that grounding, centering, focusing, noticing what is happening within oneself to

*Continued on page 46*

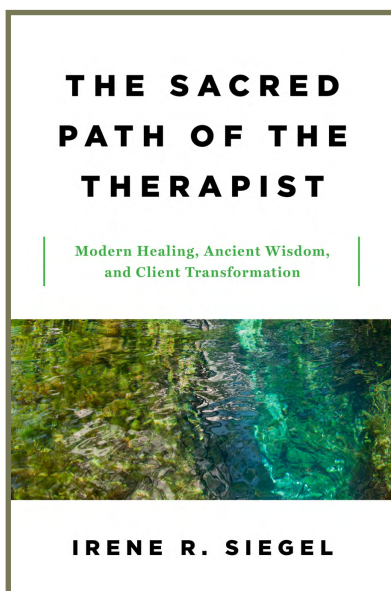
distinguish what is yours and what belongs to the client is essential before, during, after the session. I've studied many methodologies, trained, practiced, experienced many ways of being with myself and my clients. For me, entering a sacred space before each session allows me to be present, to witness, to embrace, to embody, to listen, to sense into, to be with my client and not lost in my head or, even, lost in my body.

## Epilogue

Siegel writes that, "As consciousness awakens, clients find great meaning and purpose in life. The therapist does the same" (pg. 171). She notes that, "Spiritual awareness is embodied, and cosmic consciousness is reflected in the sacred

journey on the path of transformation, bridging psychotherapy with science and the spiritual wisdom of ancient healing traditions" (pg. 179).

She is strong in her belief and she competently supports this faith with data, theory, clinical vignettes, and opinion. I felt the content was fascinating to consider. The experientials offered me ways to explore, to sense into and connect with the divine, to let this bodily container sealed with skin to dissolve so that I was no longer stuck in a reality filled with a past, present, future, with wounds, pains, sorrows, overwhelm, with ecstasy even. For moments, I simply was, and connecting with this empty space of fullness will impact not only my work but also my life.



## Curious? Want to read a bit of the book?

Excerpted from *The Sacred Path of the Therapist: Modern Healing, Ancient Wisdom, and Client Transformation* © 2017 by Irene Siegel Used with the permission of the publisher, W. W. Norton & Company. The following is from the chapter "Mindfulness, Attunement, and Spiritual Resonance."

[Click here to access an excerpt](#)



Photograph by John Allocca

## Author's Reflections

### The Sacred Path of the Therapist: Modern Healing, Ancient Wisdom, and Client Transformation

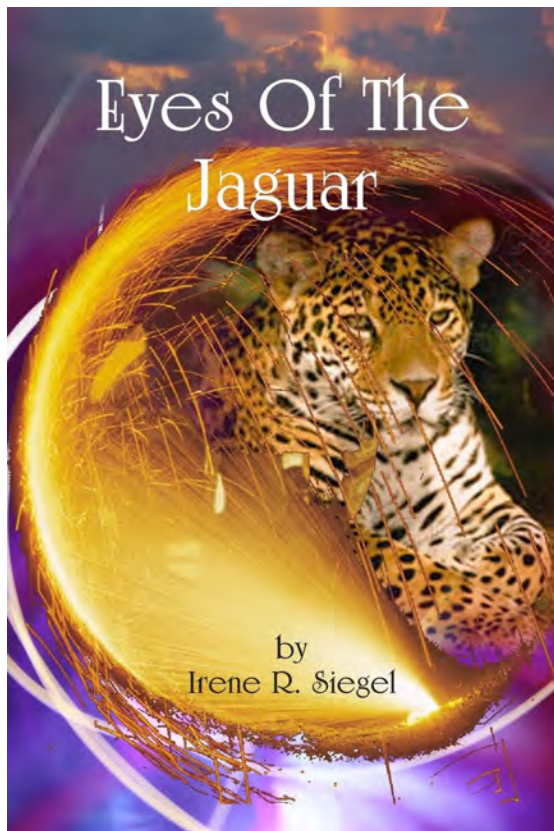
by Irene R. Siegel

There was a time when I couldn't imagine how to integrate my spiritual path and my Western training as a psychotherapist. I was traveling down to Peru periodically over a 10-year period, stepping into the mystical non-ordinary world of the shaman, while working as a clinical supervisor in a psychiatric hospital. I felt hurled down to South America, as if literally picked up and thrown down there by the circumstances and synchronicities in my life. I knew I had a choice, but not really. Destiny was calling to a tradition so foreign from my upbringing, but it activated a deep knowing and memory of ancient wisdom and truth.

My first book, *Eyes of the Jaguar*, was about the beginning of this mystical journey. I didn't consider myself to be a writer and felt as if this book wrote itself through me. The words of the book refused to stop moving through my thoughts until I put them down on paper. It felt as if it was part of my spiritual initiation process, with a life of its own and an impact that I could not have known.

I believed strongly in a holistic interrelated paradigm of body/mind/spirit, as taught in the shamanic tradition. I meditated on how to integrate it all, and the inner wisdom of my soul whispered back, "It will integrate." I learned to trust my inner guidance, and as time went on, I was able to see the integration within myself. As the therapist and the shaman became one within me, my work became more integrated.

*Continued on page 48*



I began to have extraordinary experiences in my work when I took the EMDR Basic Training in 1996. In the silent spaces of bilateral stimulation and client processing of traumatic memory, I began to sink deep within myself, accessing a shamanic state of inner focus and heightened intuitive senses. I tracked the energy flow between myself and my client. There was information in this flow, far beyond what the client could consciously verbalize. Using my inner vision and bodily sensations, I sensed the ebb and flow of energy and the processing of my clients. All I did was maintain my connection to the earth, and to my higher self, or soul. My clients' traumas were being reprocessed quickly, as they reported extraordinary experience of their connections to a greater cosmic whole. The processing took us from the negative beliefs, disturbing emotions, to body sensations. Trauma therapists know that memory is not just stored in the brain, but in the body as well. I was learning to access the energy field through the body—within the cellular structure itself, where not only traumatic memory is stored, but ancient memory and higher wisdom can emerge. Through the imagination, my clients were learning to do the same. In my own

imagination, light filled the room and my clients' energy field expanded. My clients were quickly shifting from negative beliefs such as "I am not lovable," to "God loves me, so I must be lovable," to "I am love," to "I am light," to "I am." The meaning and context of their traumas and their paths in the world were transforming as inner wisdom was infused into their expanded perceptions, and spiritual consciousness was evolving. I identified this experience as *spiritual resonance*, as the client and I would resonate with the energy of a larger cosmic whole.

I wondered if this experience was happening for other therapists and their clients. I was almost afraid to ask because it sounded so unusual to me. Other therapists were not talking about this experience openly. I had reached the point where I needed to explore further. Although I had a master's degree in social work, I decided to go back to school to get a doctorate in the field of transpersonal psychology through the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (now Sofia University). I learned to conduct transpersonal research. My study was called: *The Therapist as a Container for Spiritual Resonance, and the Observed Impact on Client Transformation: A Heuristic Approach*. I learned that I was not alone, and that although other therapists could relate to the topic, it was difficult for them to find a language for it.

It has been this long and winding lifetime journey that led me to write *The Sacred Path of the Therapist: Modern Healing, Ancient Wisdom, and Client Transformation*. And yes, the work presented in the book is integrated because it is integrated in me. The presentation of the information and lessons in the book feel like an expression of my purpose and mission in this lifetime - to contribute to the growing and evolving field of psychology, translating transpersonal psychology into a practice of transpersonal psychotherapy as I know it. Once again, I know I have a choice, but not really. I have felt driven and have overcome the concern of being different from the rest. The shaman and the psychotherapist can be one, and the potential is in all of us. The processing of trauma cannot be complete without the



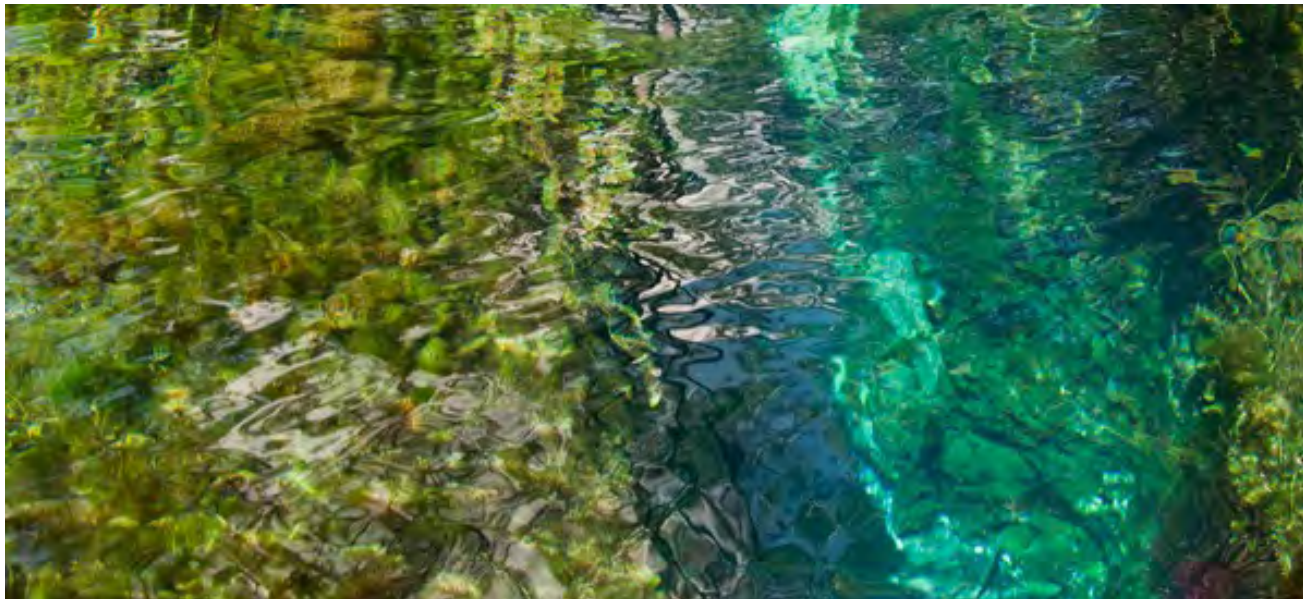
integration of body, mind, and spirit. Psychological healing has the potential to entwine with spiritual awakening, as consciousness evolves.

My experience and my continuous study of the subject has led me to the realization that a true healing must be holistic in nature. Every aspect of us, body, mind, and soul, holds the holographic pattern of the larger whole. My shamanic teachers have taught that a true healing must include healing of the ancestral wounds. In our culture we are limited by our focus on the healing of our current moment and our past from birth to the present. The doorway to those deeper unconscious wounds can be accessed from any entrance point, but must include the vibrational patterns of the current, past, and ancestral wounds held deep in the body, the energy field, and the depth of the psyche. My experience has shown me that the consciousness of the therapist becomes a vibrational tool of transformation with which the client may choose to resonate. As the therapist opens to his or her sacred path, there is an opportunity to become the tool of transformation and awaken consciousness within the client. This goes beyond creating change and adaptive functioning for our clients.

Prior to writing the book, I had presented this topic for several years in a row at the EMDR International Association conferences. It is that interest and support of my work that had given me the strength to write the book. Therapists expressed great appreciation for my putting words to an experienced that they knew deep within themselves. Once I started to write, the process took on a life of its own. Once again, I was driven, and couldn't stop until all was expressed. I have come to a place of realization that I am a writer. I feel that I have something important to share and to contribute. I have taken this concept and this way of approaching my work and my life and have done my best to apply it to my writing. My book, *The Sacred Path of the Therapist*, has been a heartfelt attempt, from a level of expanded awareness, to bring forward an integrated, cohesive, and at times scholarly explanation of an experience that has no words.

*Continued on page 50*

It has been this long and winding lifetime journey that led me to write *The Sacred Path of the Therapist: Modern Healing, Ancient Wisdom, and Client Transformation*. And yes, the work presented in the book is integrated because it is integrated in me. The presentation of the information and lessons in the book feel like an expression of my purpose and mission in this lifetime - to contribute to the growing and evolving field of psychology, translating transpersonal psychology into a practice of transpersonal psychotherapy as I know it.



According to ancient Mayan cosmology, we are in a new planetary cycle of awakening consciousness. The timing of the writing of this book connects to the initiation of a larger planetary cycle that the Mayans predict will take us beyond linear time and space into multi-dimensional cosmic awareness, over the next 1000 years. It is at some point during this cycle that we will realize that we are all inter-connected and that all living things are our brothers and sisters. It's a beautiful vision, with an unclear and uncertain road to that end. I want to believe that my book and my teachings will contribute to the forward movement of the field of psychology, as we all are called to adapt to new belief systems and ways of thinking. The Mayan Elders, at a United Nations presentation in 2010, said that to change the planet we need to work on ourselves. "Meditate every day," they said. It is this message that I have tried to articulate in the book, offering exercises for readers to go deep within and find their own spiritual resonance. It is through experience that the therapist and client can hold a vision for transformation beyond normal functioning, expanding the context of treatment.

Transpersonal psychologist Frances Vaughan (1993) wrote in *Paths Beyond Ego: The Transpersonal Vision*, "Consciousness is both the instrument and object of change. The work aims not only at changing behavior and the contents of consciousness, but also at developing awareness of consciousness itself as the context of experience" (p. 160). Her inspirational

message reverberates in my heart and thoughts, as her message proves itself true in the confines of my office between myself, my client, the earth, and the Great Spirit. It is through this awareness of higher consciousness and interconnection that I set an intention and vision every day for my life, my writing, my teaching, and my psychotherapy practice. You will see my vision and intention in my book dedication:

This is dedicated to the healing of the earth;  
the conscious evolution of the human  
species;  
and the unity of all living things.

Aho, Great Spirit...

**Irene R. Siegel, PhD, LCSW** received her doctorate from the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (now Sofia University) and her master's degree from Columbia University School of Social Work. As an Approved EMDR Consultant, speaker, and teacher, she conducts her integrative psychotherapy practice in Huntington, New York. She studied authentic ancient healing traditions in North and South American, and teaches the integration of Western psychotherapy and science with ancient healing arts. Her website is [DrIreneSiegel.com](http://DrIreneSiegel.com)

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## 2018 APPPAH Regional Conference

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**BODYDYNAMIC INTERNATIONAL**

Somatic Developmental Psychology



## It Takes Courage to Stay in the Shy Moments

By Hadi Bahlwan Marcher and Lene Wisbom



Hadi Bahlwan Marcher

Lene Wisbom

A man enters a party with many new faces; to join in, to connect with these unfamiliar faces, he makes a joke. Everyone stares at him, no one laughs. The joke falls flat because it was loaded with harsh humour and this party was not the best place to share it. At this point, the man probably experiences feeling a sense of shame after seeing the response. He looks awkward and becomes quiet. It is an uncomfortable situation for all.

After his failed joke, the man barely speaks to anyone the rest of the time he is there. The shame got stuck or the man got stuck in the shame. The awkward incident prevented him from socializing and feeling connected with other people at the party. After the party ended and the man headed home, he noticed that he was very lonely. He was so caught up in shame that it was all he was sensing, along with some bodily pain. All his attention and energy went to trying to regulate himself in this feeling.

Please join us at our upcoming workshop at the 16<sup>th</sup> European Congress for Body Psychotherapy, September 6-9, 2018, in Berlin, Germany

So, what can he do? What can a therapist do to help a person to move forward? What resources and strategies can a person get from Bodydynamic in this case?

In our upcoming workshop at the 16<sup>th</sup> European Congress for Body Psychotherapy, September 6-9, 2018, in Berlin, Germany we will present the basic theory and understanding of how shame influence our lives, what tools you can use to work with the emotion and we will present physical exercises related to this theme.

### **Shame from a Bodydynamic Perspective**

As humans we seek contact. Our quality of life depends on how well we can socialize. Being liked by our friends, belonging to a group to our family is not only nice, it gives us a feeling of safety—together we have survived. It lays deep in us. Shame and shyness is a point to regulate how we are together.

In Bodydynamic we believe that we are born with an inner sense of dignity and a drive towards mutual connection, which is part of all later learnings that form our personality and our way of being. These two basic drives work together continuously much like a "tuning fork" as the body seeks a sense of balance that affects all areas of our lives. Every second of every day, we cross a boundary into new realities and challenges. We are 'exposed' when we step forward, when we say something or show an interest and at the same time try to stay true to ourselves. For example, job interviews, making new friends, dealing with disappointment or dealing with joy, seeking support or help, and even figuring out how to 'be' on a romantic date, there is an unconscious sense of

-how much can I stay in connection with myself and with others, be part of,

or

- how much do I protect/ stay in myself in connection and as a result disconnect with the surroundings,

or

-do I leave sense of myself to stay connected and as a result lose myself.

If we have been shamed in our childhood and our actions were personalized, so not just our actions were wrong but we as a person was made wrong, most likely we will not even sense the shyness. Instead, we may go directly to the feeling of being wrong or feeling that the world is wrong, and we may either start bullying our self (that critical inner voice we all hear putting ourselves down, attacking us for our misdeeds) or we may lash out at others, at the world.

Shame in this instance is a defence mechanism and Bodydynamic does not want to break defence mechanisms nor make them disappear. Our defence mechanisms have helped us to survive. If we can acknowledge and make space for them, we have an opportunity to get out of stuck old patterns and create or develop new ways of being and acting.

To understand the system of Bodydynamic, it is important to keep in mind that Lisbeth Marcher created the practice, which became a theory. It is unique in that the aim is to honour the defence mechanism and to create more so a person has options to choose from. Another aspect is that, in Bodydynamic, therapists work with the physical body. The *Body Encyclopaedia*, written by Lisbeth Marcher and Sonja Fich, describes how the different muscles are connected to various themes that arise in therapy sessions.

*Continued on page 54*

Bodynamic has developed therapeutic approaches both verbally and bodily. In this practice, we work with seven main emotions: joy, sadness, fear, anger, disgust, sexuality/sensuality, and shame. We acknowledge that our emotions have a bodily reaction – chemical and neurological—and that they come with an impulse to act. The more we can stay with the actual emotion, the more we can take responsibility for our choices and thereby our actions.

When we look at reactions to shame as a defence mechanism, we see that bodily and behaviourally it has a variety of responses:

- read cheeks,
- hot hands,
- faster heartbeat,
- the impulse is to look down/away,
- impulse to hide,
- either get very quiet or start talking about something else,
- make funny moves or joke around,
- getting an empty feeling inside or just wanting to disappear,
- talking the moment away,
- going into the sense of being wrong,
- saying inappropriate things.

A way to think about shame is that the feeling tells the mind that I need to do something to correct some behaviour I felt ashamed of. In that way, shame can be an extremely helpful reaction—it becomes a signal so that we can stop and reflect. We are aware of something we did, and after evaluating we understand that maybe it was not right. It takes courage to experience shame and stay in contact while it feels very unpleasant.

In the therapy room, as therapists, we often tend to back away when the client becomes shy, perhaps a normal response in our relationships outside the therapy room as well. In Bodynamic, we believe it is much more beneficial for the process to address the reaction, for instance saying to the client, “I see that your cheeks are red now and my guess is you are a little shy now, is

that true?” To stay with the shy moment or feeling of shame can become a resource that can open the door to be more authentic, and to be more present with all the qualities. You can be more you.

In Bodynamic we have developed ways of working bodily with

- connectedness,
- heart contact,
- feeling backed by yourself and others,
- how to develop usable boundaries
- sensing our limits,
- creating and maintaining energy,
- ways of positioning ourselves,
- the feeling of self-confidence,
- being able to balance different roles.

Bodynamic has specific ways of working with these themes that can be helpful in addressing issues around shame. The goal is that, in the end, the client feels courageous enough, strong and connected enough to go the field of discomfort and gather all the diamonds there.

We look forward to sharing more about Bodynamics at our September workshop.

For more information now, please visit: [www.bodynamic.com](http://www.bodynamic.com) or email us at [info@bodynamic.dk](mailto:info@bodynamic.dk)

### **Hadi Bahlawan Marcher**

Hadi is a third generation Bodynamic therapist and thanks his grandmother Lisbeth Marcher for founding this dynamic and precise practice. He is a co-owner, board member and international teacher of Bodynamic.

### **Lene Wisbom**

Lene is a senior Bodynamic teacher. She teaches worldwide at all levels in Bodynamic International. She has published Bodynamic Books, written several manuals and revised all other manuals used in the educational programs. She is a board member and a member of the planning team in Bodynamic, a member of the Danish Psychotherapist Association since 2001, and a member of the European Association for Body Psychotherapy since 2012.



**These keynote speakers are not to be missed at the EABP Congress in Berlin 2018.**



**Gustl Marlock:**  
The Structural Changes of The Soul in Postmodernity



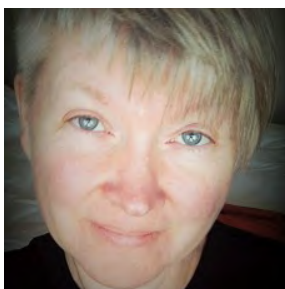
**Prof. Maurizio Stupiglia:**  
The pain in the virtual world: a new challenge for Body



**Lidy Evertsen:**  
Making inner and outer connection



**Jeanne Nakamura:**  
On the Experience of Flow



**Rae Johnson:**  
Navigating Gender in Body Psychotherapy

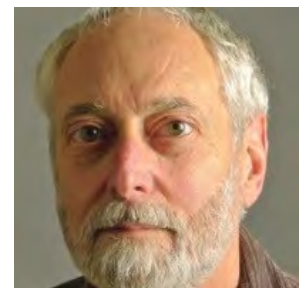
**Carmen Joanne Ablack:**  
Towards intercultural working - pitfalls and possibilities for body psychotherapy



**Michael Randolph:**  
On Vitality



**Alan Fogel:**  
States of Self-Awareness and the Therapeutic Vitality of the State of Embodied Self-Awareness



**Manfred Thielen:**  
Body psychotherapy and the Challenges of Today and Tomorrow





# Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness

**PRACTICES FOR SAFE AND  
TRANSFORMATIVE HEALING**

**DAVID A. TRELEAVEN**

**FOREWORD BY WILLOUGHBY BRITTON**

Reviewed by Nancy Eichhorn





[David Treleaven](#)

Synchronicity prevails.

Here I am talking with Stephen W. Porges about his new co-edited anthology, *Clinical Applications of the Polyvagal Theory: The Emergence of Polyvagal-Informed Therapies* (see pg. 32), and his Safe and Sound Protocol (SSP) and its expanded use with trauma survivors (see pg.86).

Then I read [David Treleaven's](#) new book, *Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness*. He is clearly Polyvagal informed and savvy; furthermore, he's talking about incidents in the past that I'm reading about in my local paper, today.

Some background is necessary—there is social, cultural, and racial trauma occurring in grand proportions in my hometown.

Stephon Clark, a 22-year-old African American man, died when police fired 20 rounds, eight of which impacted the young man's body—six in his back.

*Continued on page 58*

The officers believed he had a gun; it was a cell phone. Black Lives Matter, an organization Treleaven mentions in his book, has been staging massive protests. Unrest is an understatement. Trauma is widespread.

To toss in more trauma, Stephon's 25-year-old brother Stevante Clark has been in and out of police custody since his brother's death. He first stated that he was having mental health issues, difficulties dealing with his brother's death but was then quoted as saying, "I thought I had mental health issues, but I talked to a chaplain in there (*in jail*) and they told me I gotta quit saying that, 'cause I don't have that." He was recently released on personal recognizance, facing four criminal counts including assault with a deadly weapon and making a death threat.

The local papers are bringing up past police killings including Freddie Gray whose neck was broken while in police custody in Baltimore, and Eric Garner, a young African American living in New York who was arrested for selling single cigarettes on the street. When police couldn't handcuff Garner, they used a choke hold, Garner was quoted as saying, "I can't breathe." He died on the way to the hospital.

The traumatic stress from these events, impacting those in the respective families and in the surrounding communities is apparent, real. The outreach moves beyond our locale, beyond the United States. It is resonating around the world.

Now, why, you may ask, am I talking about all of this when I'm supposed to be reviewing Treleaven's book?

Because he talks about it, too. He brings up Gray and Garner and other experiences to ground the realities that we live with in terms of trauma. He talks about race, ethnicity, affiliation, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity, and more, all of which have been associated within a person's trauma story because of social and cultural bias, prejudice, abuse. "Oppression—defined as an "unjust exercise of power and authority" (pg. 183)—"continues to engender traumatic

experiences every time there is another hate crime or police killing," Treleaven writes (pg. 10).

Treleaven is clear that understanding the social context of trauma is a central part of what he calls 'trauma-informed' or 'trauma-sensitive' work (pg. 17).

While many may consider trauma to be an individual experience and work with a client in isolation, i.e., focusing on systems inside the body—the relationship between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, or parts that split off in the aftermath of trauma, Treleaven widens the arc and factors in systems that are alive outside of the body (pg. 178). He includes the relationship between an individual and the larger social system that surrounds them. Integration—which, he says, is at the crux of recovery—asks us to connect the internal and external systems that are involved in traumatic stress (pg. 179). As therapists, he asserts we must look at our client's social context—one's social identity, locale, peers, community, and country of residence.

"Absent an understanding of how individual and social systems interact, we can potentially cause harm, break people's trust, and perpetuate systems of domination. This isn't a matter of political correctness or saying the right thing but offering a truly liberatory framework for those we work with" (pg. 179).

If we put blinders on, if we ignore the entirety of a person's experience, including the impact of our own background, our own sense of have and have not, we are setting up yet another dysfunctional experience. Per Treleaven (pg. 190), who quotes from Nieto et. al., 2010, pg. 42:

*"It's a sign of privilege for Whites to say they are going to view people of color only as people. If I don't see their race, I'm not going to see their lives as they really are. I'm seeing them as an abstract 'human beings', not as people who've had certain experiences. I'm going to miss or misunderstand how their experiences have shaped them."*

## Getting to the book

Treleaven writes from personal experience—with trauma, with mindfulness. He incorporates his movement to seek solutions, to take an activist's stance, and connect with others putting forth energy to create balance and find answers that aren't easy but may save lives. His work is well cited, data is given, names of and theories from people well-known in the trauma field are discussed i.e., Bessel van der Kolk, Pat Ogden, Babette Rothschild, Stephen W. Porges, Peter Levine.

He uses Jon Kabat Zinn's definition of mindfulness: "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally" (1994, pg. 4) and looks at the process of mindfulness as enhancing self-regulation including: attentional, emotional, and body awareness. He also brings in Rothschild's 'observing self' and 'experiencing self' when he talks about the importance of dual awareness—the ability to maintain multiple perspectives at the same time, which he says is an important skill for survivors.

Part of Treleaven's work also includes training with Peter Levine, learning Levine's trauma intervention program trademarked as Somatic Experiencing. While he appreciated the process, Treleaven felt something was missing in the work. Although the teachers talked about the *biological roots* of trauma, he says, they never discussed the *social roots*, including systems of oppression that correlate with trauma (xxi). He sought a bridge between personal and social change.

Then he met Staci Haines who, together with Spenta Kandawalla, founded generative somatics—a national, nonprofit organization based in Oakland, CA., that combines social analysis with trauma healing (xxi). (Treleaven is donating 60% of his book proceeds to generative somatics, The Healing Justice Program of Black Lives Matter, and the Sogorea Te' Land Trust).

## Things were coming into place.

Immersed in mindfulness meditation, Treleaven experienced emotional discomfort while sitting in meditation. His process to

*Continued on page 60*

"Absent an understanding of how individual and social systems interact, we can potentially cause harm, break people's trust, and perpetuate systems of domination. This isn't a matter of political correctness or saying the right thing but offering a truly liberatory framework for those we work with."

understand what was happening, why, and what to do about it formed part of the foundation for his current work. Over the years he learned that he was not alone.

Today, with mindfulness exploding on the scene—be it Buddhist, Taoist, Zen, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction and so forth—the process of coming within is seen as beneficial, and it can be. But, it turns out, mindfulness meditation can create distress for participants who are dealing with trauma.

Treleaven cites that “an estimated 90% of the world’s population will be exposed to a traumatic event during their lifetime” (pg. 16). As such, there is a greater chance that someone struggling with traumatic stress will be in a mediation class. Meditation, as he experienced himself and has heard from clients repeatedly over the years, can increase agitation, trigger thoughts, images, memories, physical sensations of traumatic events that create distress. Unfortunately, many trainers are not aware of trauma’s impact nor are they prepared to adequately help these people.

Offering a reassuring note, Treleaven writes that mindfulness itself doesn’t cause trauma but “the practice of mindfulness meditation offered without an understanding of trauma can have a negative impact” (xxv). It is a resource, he says, but not a cure. It can help regulate arousal and support stability, but we need to “adapt mindfulness to meet the specific needs of trauma survivors as opposed to expecting them to adapt to us” (xxiii).

### **Defining Trauma-Sensitive Practice**

To start, it’s important to know Treleaven’s definition of trauma-sensitive practice, which comes from the U.S. National Center for Trauma Informed Care:

“A program, organization, or a system that is trauma-informed *realizes* the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; *recognizes* the signs and symptoms of trauma in client, families, staff, and others involved with the system; *responds* by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and seeks to actively resist *re-traumatization*” (xxiii)

From this basis, he extrapolates what he calls the ‘Four R’s’: realize, recognize,

respond and avoid re-traumatization. These are then woven within his framework, which consists of five core principles:

- (1) Stay within the window of tolerance
- (2) Shift attention to support stability
- (3) Keep the body in mind
- (4) Practice in relationship
- (5) Understand social context

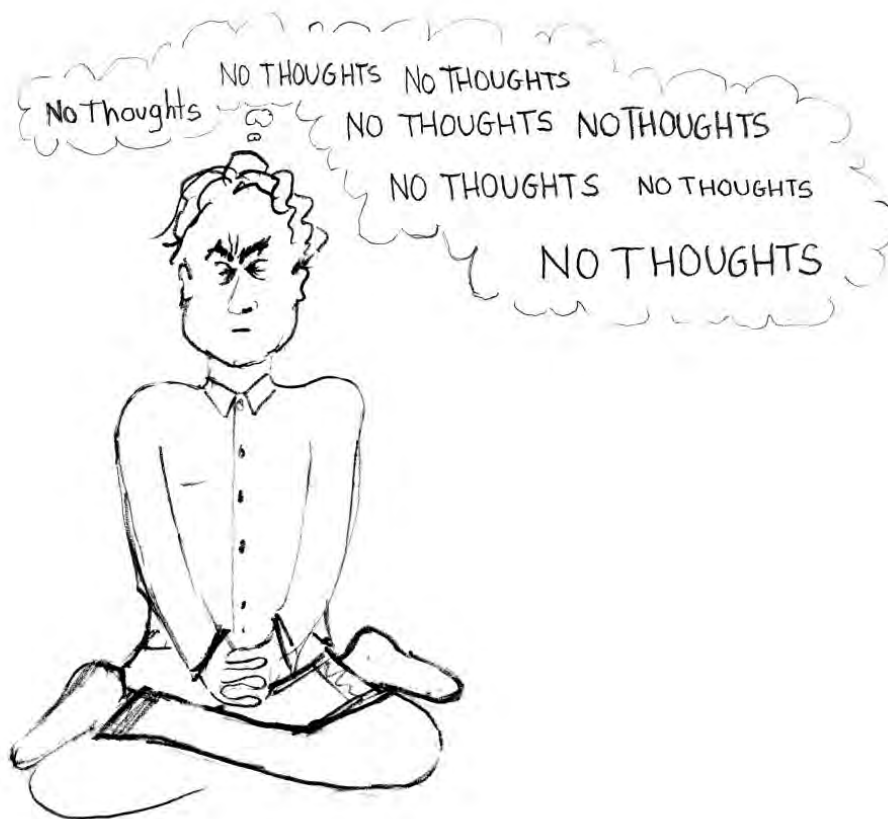
Each chapter is titled with one of the principles in which he offers suggestions for modifications to mindfulness practices that support the four R’s and the five principles. His interventions follow a phase-oriented approach to trauma:

- Stabilization and safety
- Remembering and processing trauma memories
- Integration with family and culture, normal daily life

The book is divided into two parts. Part 1 discusses mindfulness and traumatic stress. Part 2 covers the five core principles, presents theories, and modifications to apply in client work. There are case studies in each chapter, used rather creatively. The material offers a concrete look at what he is discussing, but more than being a pull-out-box or a story at the end of the chapter, he comes back to each case study throughout the chapter and elsewhere in book when relevant. First, we meet the client (or collage of clients), then we learn a bit of David’s thoughts, he offers some analysis, then, when he introduces theory and practices with modifications, he brings the clients back in . . . clever. I appreciated the complete integration.

Integration is an important term in this book. Treleaven notes that trauma creates disintegration and rather than label someone PTSD, it might do more to ask: “Is this person struggling with a traumatic experience they were able to integrate?” (pg. 14) as a starting point.

Treleaven covers trauma’s effects on the brain and body. He looks at our neurophysiology and barriers to integration that include fear and shame. He offers a list of potential signs that someone might be experiencing traumatic symptoms in meditation (noted as dysregulated arousal) that include:



How not to meditate. Image used with permission from <https://www.sunship.com/sit-illustrated>.

- Hyperventilation
- Exaggerated startle response
- Excessive sweating
- Muscle tone extremely slack or rigid
- Noticeably pale skin tone
- Emotional volatility (enraged, excessive crying, terror)
- Disorganized speech, slurring or words
- In ability to make eye contact during interactions
- Reports of flashbacks, nightmares, intrusive thoughts (pg. 102).
- While talking about shifting the client's attention to support stability to avoid the fear/immobility cycle, he reminds readers

that sustained attention on traumatic stimuli can cause dysregulation, retrigger traumatic states and land one outside their window of tolerance (pg. 113). He weaves in Porges' work with the vagus nerve in several ways. One, he talks about the need to create and keep a balance between *hyper arousal* (increased sensation, emotional reactivity, hypervigilance, intrusive imagery, disorganized cognitive processing) and *hypo arousal* (relative absence of sensation, numbing of emotions, disabled cognitive processing, reduced physical movement (pg.94)—we want to be in the center, in our window of *tolerance*. He then ties in hyperarousal with the sympathetic nervous system, with flight or fight; hypoarousal aligns with our dorsal vagus activity, and tolerance ties into the ventral vagal nerve—aka our social engagement system.

*Continued on page 62*

Safety and neuroception are mentioned as well. Dr. Porges coined the term neuroception to describe how our neural circuits distinguish whether situations or people are safe, dangerous, or life threatening. Perception depends on cognitive awareness of sensory input while neuroception is an unconscious experience occurring in the most primitive parts of the brain. As Treleaven writes: "If we 'neurocept safety' our nervous system inhibits our animal defenses (flight, fight, freeze) and grants access to social engagement system" (pg. 155).

## Conclusion

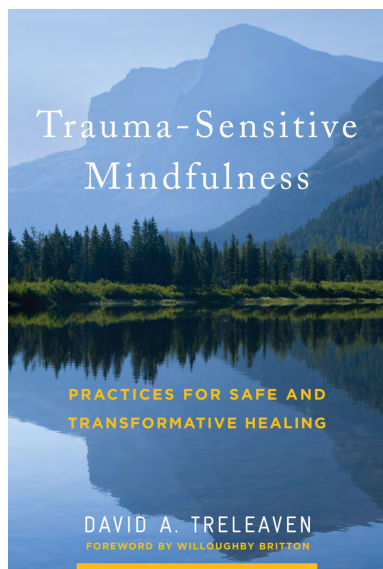
There's more to say, but it is Treleaven's story to tell after all and best for you to learn from him, in his voice, not mine. I offer his "footnote", on pages 202-203, as a rather spectacular statement to end this book review:

"For practitioners who have grown up being treated as 'White' (which we know to be a social rather than a biological category and therefore fluid), we have a lot to gain from engaging in these questions. Not only can we better serve clients, work with peers, and love our families and friends. Not only can we come to know our selves better. These alone are vitally important and life-affirming grains. But there is a layer below. It may take courage to interrogate what we've taken for granted our whole lives, including the subtle and not-so-subtle lies

that racism tells us about who we are and who other people are. It many take determination and support to change the behaviors we've been conditioned into for years. The reward that lies on the other side? We can stop participating in the massive divide-and-rule scheme that constitutes racism's historical origins and current purpose on this continent. We can align ourselves with equality and justice, and in this way, step toward the possibility for true healing on the collective as well as individual levels" (pg. 203).

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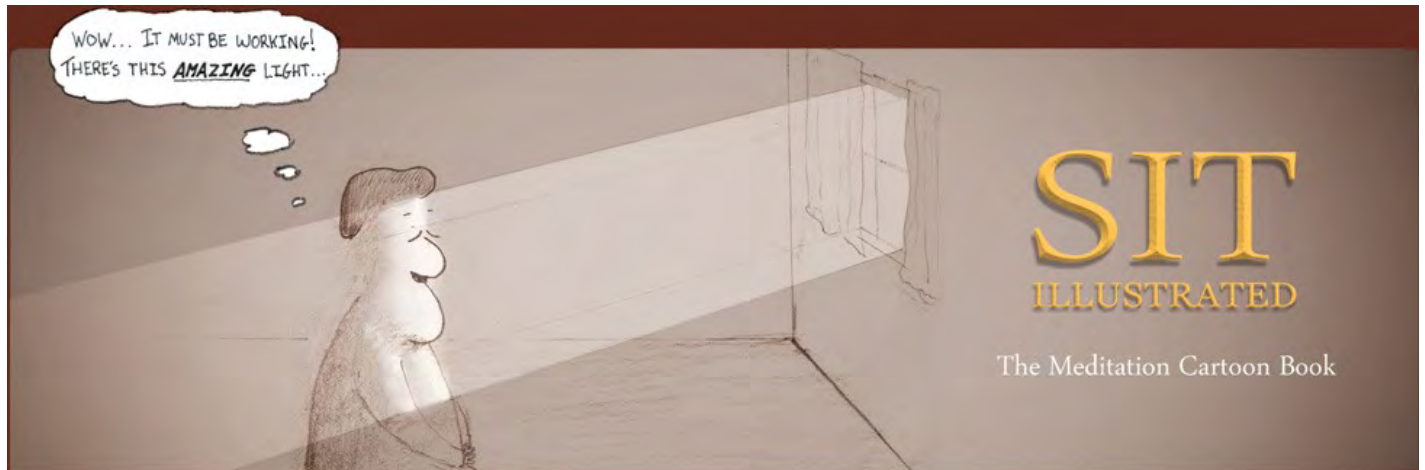
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## Curious? Want to read a bit of the book?

Excerpted from *Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness: Practices for Safe and Transformative Healing* © 2018 by David A. Treleaven. Used with the permission of the publisher, W. W. Norton & Company. The following is from the Introduction.

[Click here to read](#)



**Sit Illustrated: The Meditation Cartoon Book**  
**A humorous anthology of original illustrations drawn from the**  
**experience**  
**of a group of meditators.**  
[www.sitillustrated.com](http://www.sitillustrated.com)  
 copyright 2010 Sunship Productions

*Goldwater continued from page 65*

In addition, Kort's book does seem to focus on the queer clients who identify under the gender binary. While indeed exploring the spectrum of gender identity in a multiple of way in the book, Kort's narrative does seem to focus heavily on the binary during general discussion.

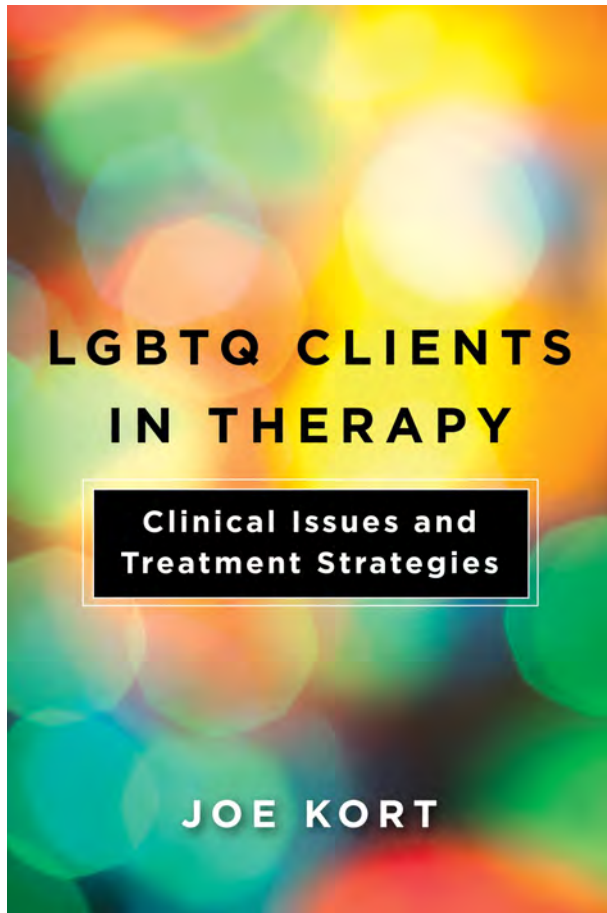
Even with these deficiencies, Kort has been able to create a book that touches on the past with reflection and explores today's situations with knowledge. Kort should be acknowledged and praised for his efforts, as Kort has a difficult job to tackle in reviewing LGBTQ clients in general and hitting every dimension is less than possible. Littered with modern day references and exploding with new information and approaches, *LGBTQ Clients in Therapy* is close to being an informative review of sexuality in psychotherapy for clinicians and queer-informed novices alike. It reminds readers to look at sexual selves not through their personal lenses, nor political lenses, but the lenses of the client. As a queer man, I am thankful that Kort has taken the time and energy to develop such an important addition to our professional literature, and I look forward to the day that it updated and earns its spot in the psychological zeitgeist.



Photo of Joe Kort by: John Hardwick Photography

**Joe Kort** is a licensed sex and relationship therapist specializing in sex therapy, LGBTQ issues and Imago Relationship Therapy. An author of four books and a regular blogger for *Psychology Today* and the *Huffington Post*, Kort is also part of the University of Michigan's Sexual Health Certificate Program. He resides in Michigan.

**Kevin Jeffrey Goldwater** studies applied psychology with a minor in music and social & cultural analysis at New York University. He is set to graduate in May of 2019. Born in Chicago, Kevin has done immersive research on psychoanalytic theory and the role of gender in today's media. Most recently, Kevin has been working in cultural psychology, focusing on the impact of colonialism on indigenous and minority patients. In addition to working for *Somatic Psychotherapy Today*, he writes reviews for the *International Psychotherapy Journal*.



### **Reviewed by Kevin Jeffrey Goldwater**

I don't think it's ever been easier to be a gay person. This perspective comes from a queer-identifying, twenty-one-year-old, living in New York City who also grew up in Chicago. Despite the news of the decimations of queer men around the world (Chechnya, for example) and strings of phobia and hate-filled rhetoric that stream from our Commander-in-Chief's Twitter, queer youth, now more than ever, are finding opportunity to not only explore and question sexuality but to discuss and reckon with it. While it is still remarkably difficult to navigate today's world as a queer person, apps like Grindr and Scruff link gay men to peers just down the block and across the country. Homosexual marriage has been legalized in the United States and non-monogamous partnerships are on the rise. I lived the first few years of my life in fear, ashamed of expressing the queer person that I am, but this cultural shift and increased discussion of non-heteronormative experience has allowed me to explore, question, discuss and reckon with my sexuality to the point where I have shed any associated taboos and am in full embrace and proud of my identity.



Littered with modern day references and exploding with new information and approaches, *LGBTQ Clients in Therapy* is close to being an informative review of sexuality in psychotherapy for clinicians and queer-informed novices alike. It reminds readers to look at sexual selves not through their personal lenses, nor political lenses, but the lenses of the client.

The cultural shift that allowed my transformation is the same shift that ignited Joe Kort to write *LGBTQ Clients in Therapy: Clinical Issues and Treatment Strategies*. In 2008, Kort published a similar book, entitled *Gay-Affirmative Therapy for the Straight Clinician (GATSC)*. Kort's new book is adapted from *GATSC*, and highlights the need for an updated, societally concurrent exploration of sexuality in light of the recent shift. Kort now expands his attention to gay teen, transgender, bisexual and sexually fluid clientele.

Kort begins his book by discussing the basics of psychotherapy and queer identity. While relating the history and assumptions that go into treating queer clients, Kort also shares what it is to be a gay-affirming therapist and how to go about being such. Discussing myths and errors in tandem, Kort gives a clear and informed introduction to the more specific portions of his manifesto. Kort covers an in-depth examination of the development of queer clienteles in the following 16 chapters. Topics range from "Covert Cultural Sexual Abuse" to "Trauma from Growing Up LGBTQ to Coming Out". The first seven chapters cover the expected processes of coming out and the role of queer identity on development, along with the roles of outside forces that become traumatic and abusive indirect or directly to LGBTQ clients' upbringing. Kort continues with chapters eight through twelve by examining coupling in today's queer relationships, whether related to monogamy or the identities of the partners. Kort then concludes his book with four chapters that seem to be themed with the 'new' material Kort is including—gay teenagers, trans and

bisexual clientele and sexuality fluidity are all covered. Complete with introductory quotes, case examples, and a tone that is easy to follow and work with, Kort does an excellent job educating his reader on various dimensions of sexuality and the smaller subsets within them.

While *LGBTQ Clients in Therapy* is possibly the best of the queer-informed psychotherapy books I've encountered, there is still much missing. In reference to the parent of this book, Kort shares that "I [was] shocked when I reread *GATSC* at my apparent heterosexist, heteronormative, monogonormative mindset... In this book, I am less afraid to bring up various sexualities, various fluidities, various sexual preferences as healthy possibilities for LGBTQ individuals" (xiii). It is precisely this mindset that prevents Kort's book from being a go-to handbook for treating queer clients. Kort's assumption that he has progressed to including the minority effects in his book is unmerited—his tone is progressively less hetero-primed and monogonormative, however it has still not touched on the role of race, social economic status, and indigeneity in queer clients' lives. These concepts are not only incredibly influential on queer lives but are essential if one plans to discuss the whole of the queer spectrum or treat a client in the multidimensional way they deserve. A monodimensional approach to anything, never mind sexuality, is dangerous. It is especially important to maintain a multidimensional view with regard to potentially delicate concepts like sexuality.

*Continued on page 63*



APPPAH  
Birth Psychology

## Our Conference for You

By Jeane Rhodes  
Conference Chair



**We will celebrate** the first major APPPAH event in Colorado by kicking off the weekend on Friday afternoon, October 5<sup>th</sup>, with a showing of the updated version of Stephen and Kathleen Gyllenhaal's amazing film, *In Utero*. The screening will be followed by a panel consisting of moderator, Barbara Decker, and panelists Annie Brook, Kate White, and Dr. Scott Poindexter.

**As the conference chair**, I will officially begin the conference Friday evening with introductions to the amazing team that put this conference together and then offer orientation to the venue and the conference theme. In expanding upon the theme, I will touch lightly on sandplay therapy and how it relates to trauma informed care, including the sharing of carefully chosen sandplay scenes that evoke prenatal and birth experience.



**John Chamberlain** will then speak on the topic, "What Freud had Wrong about Babies." Tracing the evolution of theory from Freud's "blank slate" of the amoral newborn to

a recent Yale study about the moral sense of babies, he will rely heavily on David Chamberlain's body of work.

**Friday evening** will end with a special

treat. Patricia Hansen, a highly respected local yoga teacher, will lead us in a unique yoga session that can be done in street clothing, in and around the chairs where you have been sitting for two hours.



**The conference theme** was inspired by Kate White, APPPAH's Education Director, who will kick off the second day, Saturday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, with her presentation titled "Trauma Informed Care from the Baby's Perspective: A New Model of Care to Help Families Thrive."

**Stephanie Dueger**, Associate Editor of JOPPPAH, follows with her look at "Healing early relational trauma (from conception on) with Attachment-Focused EMDR".



**The Saturday morning** program concludes with a special panel examining potential solutions to the opioid crises. Drawing on local experts in the field of maternal and fetal medicine, this panel will delve into the current opioid crises and address what prenatal and perinatal psychology has to offer in the way of long-term solutions.

**The lunch break** on Saturday will present the optional opportunity to partake of a buffet lunch while seated at one of ten tables hosted by inspired speakers who will introduce their topics and lead the ensuing discussion. Check the website for the listing of table hosts and topics as they are added. Once all ten table hosts have been chosen, you will be able to reserve your spot at the table of your choice.



**Saturday afternoon opens** with John Chitty, author of *Working with Babies* (2016), who will draw on chapter five of that book to bring us his "Talking with Babies" presentation.

**John is followed by** an amazing lady, former president of APPPAH, author of the wonderful book, *Womb Prints*, and originator and founder of the STAR program, Barbara Findeisen. Barbara will be talking about the value of group therapy in working with birth issues. You don't want to miss this one!



**Saturday evening** brings you two dynamic ladies. Peg Bledsoe, APPPAH's amazing secretary, kicks off the evening with an introduction to the Enneagram and how it is related to birth process. And Karen Strange will be taking time out of her busy schedule to bring us a talk on "How to Support Repair, When There Have Been Interruption/Interventions at Birth."

**We will close the evening** with some special music and poetry readings. At least that is our plan at this point – this part of the program is still evolving as we want this last evening to be exceptional.

**Sunday morning** opens with Barry Weinhold's amazing presentation on the role of fathers, titled, "The Male Mother: Highlighting the Role of Fathers in Raising Responsible Children." The role of fathers is too often neglected and so important to the improving of perinatal and family health.



**Janae Weinhold** follows with "The Mother-Child Attachment System as the Immune System." Dr. Weinhold's presentation highlights the convergence of research during the past few years, particularly the Adverse Childhood Experiences study that

clearly correlates early disturbances and disruptions in the mother-child attachment system with long-term physical and mental health issues that include anxiety, mood disorders, autism, and a host of chronic and degenerative diseases.

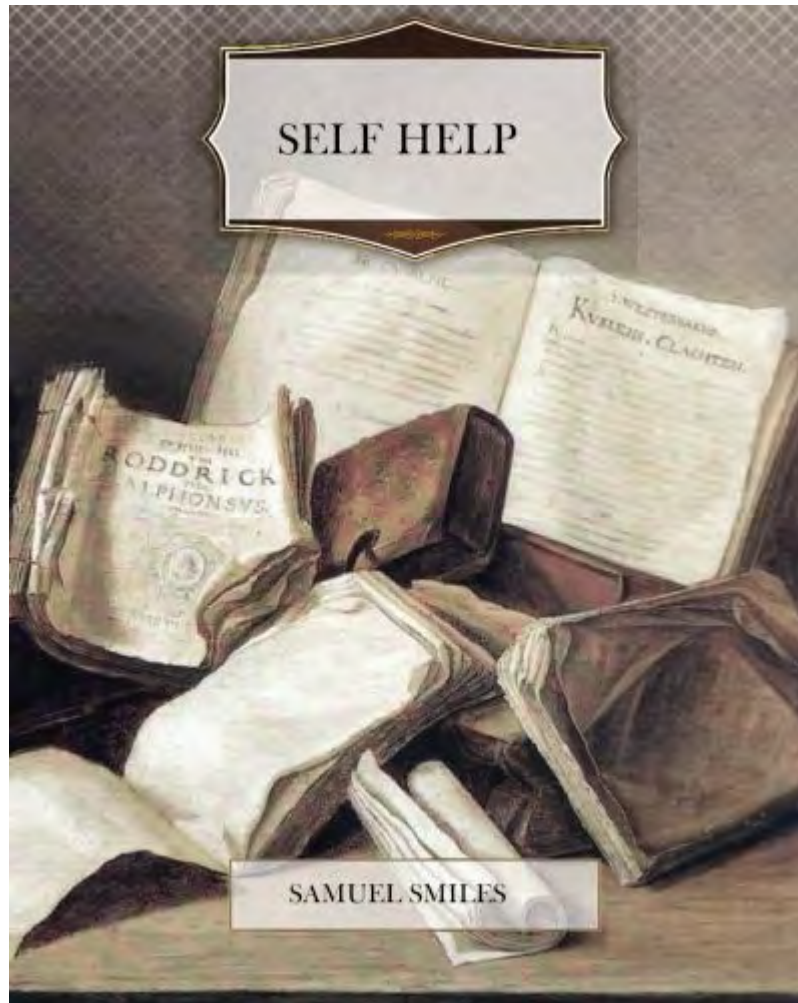


**Susan Highsmith concludes** the conference presentations with "Words: Pathways to our Psyche and Soma". As Dr. Highsmith states, "We can make a profound difference in the birthing paradigm—at NO cost—by changing our language, the essential words that we use."

**We invite you to join us** in this unique celebration of life and exploration of the possibilities that are inherent in the coming of life with conception, gestation, and birth for each individual. We are on the brink of discovering what it means to truly THRIVE! As individuals and as the whole of humanity.

# Self Help Books: A Genre Unto Themselves

by Nancy Eichhorn



I'm a self-help junkie. I know, the word junkie might connote that I still need help, but the reality is I've read self-help books and tried self-help programs for as long as I can remember. I've always had a voracious appetite for self-improvement. I grew up with the message that I was not good enough, so I strove to be better, to be accepted, all the while knowing I was defective and I needed to fix my faults to be loved. Now, at age 58, I've come to terms with my existence and my essence. I know I'm good enough. And yet, I'm still drawn to self-help books.

Clearly, I'm not the only one. Self-help books, also known as self-improvement books, have been around a long time. The genre's name came from a book published in 1859, a best seller by Samuel Smiles, entitled *Self Help*. Some people say the Bible is possibly the first and most significant self-help book ever published.

When I looked at the recent books I requested from various publishers, I realized they had a theme. Most of the books were self-help books. But in this instance, the ones I'm sharing here transcend the basic recipe. Yes, all books follow recipes. Based on the genre there are guidelines, rules to write by and self-help books are no different.

Self-help books typically make a promise to teach you how to do something to remedy your distress—you have a problem and the author has the solution. They offer instruction and examples, including their own story of pain and success. There are exercises and hands-on action steps—small steps mind you, to take the content and make it concrete so that change can occur. Authors also repeat themselves throughout the text and offer relatable examples. They are descriptive, motivating, and at times inspirational.

You can often see the following outline in self-help books:

Introduction: shares who the author is, why said author is qualified to write this book, and why the author decided to write this book.

There is then a ten-chapter minimum.

Chapter 1 will explain the problem and the pain associated with it. The author will connect with the reader through empathy.

Chapter 2 will introduce the solution and how they came to it including reasons why it is effective. They will share real life examples along with their own story.

Chapter 3 through 9 will offer step-by-step solutions, and at the end of each chapter there are exercises, activities for readers to participate in.

The book will conclude on a positive note with a motivational speech of some sort.

Self-help books often focus on popular psychological themes that people believe can be controlled with motivation and effort. If they just increase their self-awareness, focus on positive thinking, work to visualize and actualize their intentions, whatever "it" is, their performance will improve, their relationships will improve, their satisfaction in their lives will improve, and all of this will be achieved more quickly by reading the

book rather than by going to see a traditional cognitive behavioral therapist.

Because they are mostly written with a first-person voice and often include the author's personal transformation, self-help books are more reader friendly than typical psychology or psychotherapy books, which tend to be written in an impersonal and objective voice.

Titles are the first tip-off in terms of how the author plans to grab your attention and get you to buy the book—they focus on what you are seeking to remedy, to change in your life. There are three main categories: (1) the book is named after a goal; (2) the title begins with the words How to . . . (3) the title begins with the word You . . . such as You Can do this . . .

Some examples:

- ⇒ Dale Carnegie wrote, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* in 1936. Fifteen million copies were sold.
- ⇒ Norman Vincent Peale wrote, *The Power of Positive Thinking* in 1952 to teach people how to reprogram their thoughts.
- ⇒ Leo Buscaglia (I personally love his books) wrote, *Living, Loving and Learning*. Over 13 million copies of his books have sold, in 20 languages.
- ⇒ Thomas Harris wrote, *I'm Okay, You're Okay* in 1969, a book based on Transactional Analysis. My parents, who were friends and colleagues with the Harris', are mentioned in the book for their work (in the introduction and in Chapter 9).
- ⇒ John Gray's 1990 blockbuster, *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*, has outsold almost every known book sans the Bible from what I read.

The list is long. Years and years of books, many still relevant, many still selling today. This once 'niche' genre has seen significant shifts. One worth noting is that early self-help books were associated with mutual-aid (solving issues in a relationship). Today, they have come to be viewed as individual undertakings. Herein is one of the major differences in terms of the books I am reviewing.

*Continued on page 70*

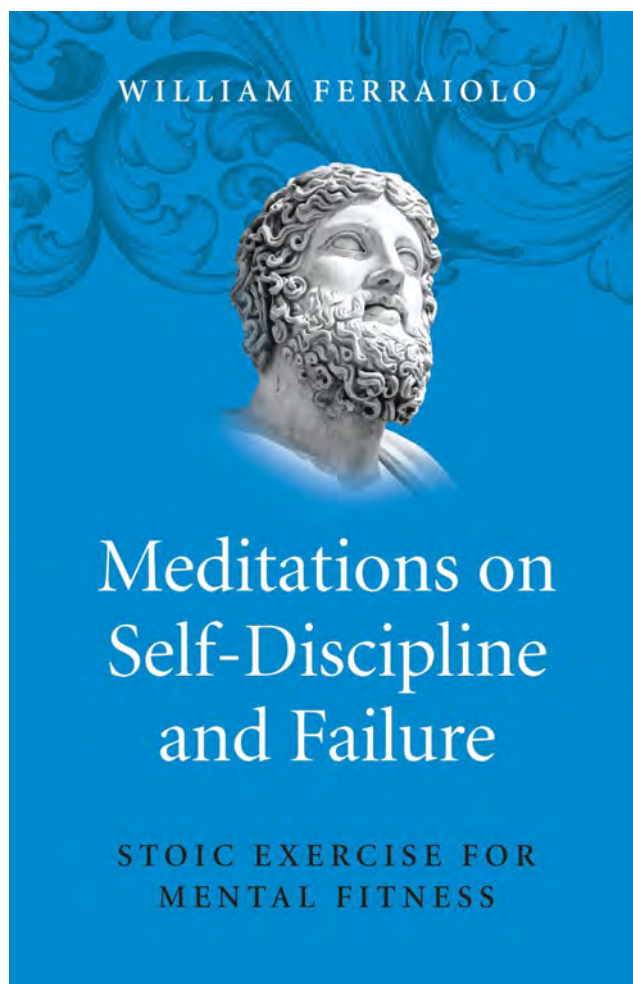
The books I'm sharing in this self-help section do indeed follow the genre's rules. But there are differences that, for me, move them into a category of their own. In my mind, they were written to be heard. These authors broke some of the rules. Their work doesn't necessarily fit into one specific category—their writing creatively overlaps different genres, which can lead to interesting material and potentially successful book sales.

Beyond promises of a better life, these authors share their clinical expertise, their personal knowing, their learning and wisdom to bring readers into a relationship to heal. Yes, there are exercises and journaling suggestions, there are websites for guided meditations and peer support, but the emphasis is not on going through this alone: the focus is on doing it together. Understanding why the concepts being shared are important to healing our inner wounds readers can change and/or shift their core beliefs that were established during difficult relationships as well as modify adaptations made unconsciously to survive challenging times.

There's a depth in these books that provides a sense of safety. I trust what these authors are offering. Their information is based on neuroscience, trauma treatment, and mindfulness/meditation/sensory awareness/shamanic practices. The authors come with the understanding that as human beings evolved, our brains evolved, wanting and needing connection. We grow and thrive in attuned relationships with healthy and safe attachments. I see these books being used in conjunction with either group or individual therapy. They are designed to use alone, but I see their power, their value when used in relationship, like with a trusted therapist.

I offer reviews of four self-help books and invite you to read and experience the material for yourself and perhaps share them with clients and colleagues (who can share them with their clients).

The advertisement features a light green background. On the left is the cover of the book "THE 10 BEST ANXIETY BUSTERS" by Daniel Strachan, with a blue and green design. On the right is the cover of "Healing Traumatized Self" by Judith S. Lewis, with a red and white design. In the center, a text box contains the following information: "SPECIAL OFFER for SPT subscribers" in large green letters, followed by "W.W. Norton & Company is pleased to offer a special discount for Somatic Psychotherapy Today subscribers! Purchase ANY book at Norton at [wwnorton.com/psych](http://wwnorton.com/psych) and receive 25% off and free shipping by entering the promotion code SOMATICPSY at checkout." A small version of the W.W. Norton bird logo is in the bottom right corner of the ad.



Written by William Ferraiolo

Reviewed by Nancy Eichhorn

William Ferraiolo's newest book, *Meditations on Self-Discipline and Failure: Stoic Exercises for Mental Fitness*, is written in the style of philosophical approach based on the Stoics. While the word 'stoic' means to endure pain and suffering without complaining or showing your feelings, a Stoic, with a capital S, dates back to 300 B.C. when someone named Zeno founded Stoicism, a systematic philosophy that taught people that they should be free from passion, unmoved by joy or grief, and that they should submit to unavoidable situations in life without complaint.

Ferraiolo's tone and posturing parallels the philosophies he prescribes to, completely. He confronts readers, challenges them to face reality, 'look it in the eye' as he uncovers common human feelings and situations that may lead to dysfunctional affective states such as depression, anxiety, guilt and so on.

*Continued on page 72*

**He holds readers** to a higher sense of truth, has them look at their own self-defeating desires to control other people as well as hold onto delusions such as: politicians will tell the truth; people will not be biased, prejudiced, hateful, and so on.

**Along with the introduction**, there are 30 “books”, not chapters. There’s only 163 pages but this content, the way it is presented and the depth of reflection possible if one sits with the words and contemplates what they mean to the self, it might be a year before you are done.

**Reading the PDF version** that I received, I considered our current political climate, our current state of war and hate, of destruction of self and other. Ferraiolo’s direct approach spoke to me as a potential place for people to go who respond to and respect this type of challenge, perhaps responding to a more confrontational style. I can see therapists with clients who need a more down-to-basics citation, and Ferraiolo is qualified to do so, with wit and a sense of, I’m here too. The book is written in second person, so it addresses “you” the reader, the author is talking to you with no space for nonsense or self-aggrandizement.

**It’s hard for me to capture** the essence of the meditations—Ferraiolo writes things like: “You are slightly smarter than an ape or dolphin” (pg. 23) and “Complaining about an insect bit is an indication of an irrational petulance . . . When the inevitable occurs, only a foolish child whines about it” (pp. 70-71). There are statements that resonated with me . . . “practice gratitude” (pg. 24), “Your voices are your own”, “Do not blame nature, environment, or hereditary for your failures” (pg.25) and “Everything that can suffer, does suffer” (pg. 163).

**But to capture the quality of this book**, of Ferraiolo’s writing, you have to read his writing. I offer some of his work, with hopes that his publisher will not be too upset with the length of quotes I’m sharing. Believe me, it’s a drop in the bucket in terms of the entirety of his text. I hope these small snippets capture your interest as his writing did mine, and that you take time to read more.

### **From the Introduction**

*“You are reading these words because you seek counsel and you have not quite found what you are looking for anywhere else.*

*Had you found what you needed elsewhere, there would be no reason for you to continue searching, and no reason to look here, in particular. This seems a reasonable inference, does it not?*

*You do not want to be merely another whining, self-absorbed weakling who cannot handle daily life without running to Mommy, or some phony academic with a fancy degree or a television show— or call a psychic hotline! Life is hard. You get it. There is, however, something about your way of being in the world that is not quite comfortable.*

*Maybe your diet is out of whack. All that processed food, and microwaveable junk cannot be good for you, can it? Have you been watching too much television? Are you really getting the kind of restorative sleep that you need while tossing and turning on that mattress of yours? You know a lot of people who are taking antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications these days. There really is no shame in going to see a psychiatrist anymore, is there? Everybody seems to be doing it. Of course, not everybody seems to be getting much benefit out of it. The psychiatrists are doing pretty well for themselves, but their patients seem about as fouled up after “getting help” as they were before. Besides, how can you possibly know what kind of doctor or therapist you really need? Do you need to talk through your early childhood experience with some Freudian, or would you be better off with some hardcore cognitive-behavioral therapy, and bottle of Xanax to get you through those particularly rough patches at work, or on airplanes, or when your mother-in-law comes to visit?*

*Luckily, you are reading just the right book. There is no complex theory presented here for you to absorb, ponder, and then try to apply to your own life in some step-by-step fashion. You will find no twelve-step program explained in these pages, and you will not be encouraged to join any organization, or club, or religious cult, or any other outfit that charges dues and issues newsletters. You will find no case studies here. You will not be instructed to confess to anything, issue apologies to anyone, or attend any seminar. You will find one thing in this book. You will read meditations. This is not meditating in the style of Eastern wisdom traditions like*



*Buddhism or Hinduism (although there is nothing wrong with those practices). These are meditations as we find them in a lot of Western philosophy and religion. You will not, however, need to know much about those academic areas (although there is nothing wrong with learning some of that stuff). No, you just read along and, maybe every once in a while, stop to consider whether what you are reading applies to your life and your struggles. You will find that a lot of it does. As you may have noticed by now, this book is written in the second person—which just means that the word “you” designates the meditator.*

*Think for yourself. The words you read may prompt you to reconsider some things, or to consider some other things for the first time, and you may have a very different experience than another reader of the same text— but that really is part of the point. Each reader adds a different set of experiences to the writing.*

*Just read and let yourself think about what “you” seem to be dealing with. The deepest struggles that we all face, the difficulties that keep us up at night, and the concerns that cause us to wonder if we are living the lives that we ought to be living cannot always be addressed in language suited to a seventh-grade reading level. The words get a little “fancy” now and again. This is not for show. The deepest recesses of your mind, where the greatest discomfort arises and festers, is just not the kind of subject area that can be explained to the average twelve-year-old. Are you an average twelve-year-old? If so, you may want to leave this book on the shelf for a few more years. If not, then you may want to read on. It is not an easy read, but nothing worthwhile is ever all that easy. It is also not a particularly pleasant read. The word “Failure” appears in the title, after all. Also, “Self-Discipline” is generally kind of difficult to master. Ask a Marine or a Navy Seal. That is another running theme you may notice. You, however, and your thoughts, and your character, and your behavior, are your business. Ultimately, they are the only things that are really up to you. That is what these meditations are all about. What do you, and you alone, control? What kind of person do you want to be? Get started becoming what you want to be. You never*

*know how much time is left. Turn your attention inside.*

**See what I mean?** It’s intriguing. Ferraiolo has a distinct voice, his approach doesn’t leave room for self-pity, blame. There’s no way you can simply put your head in the ground (can’t play ostrich and pretend you don’t see). You must simply read these words and absorb what resonates, sit with what triggers you, explore the bodily sensations that arise when the mind perceives a potential assault and realizes that there is nothing here to defend, nothing to fight against, it’s all just here, presented for you to consider. Amazing actually.

**I appreciated his candor,** when he writes, *“You will find a lot of self-criticism here, and a lot of discussion of unpleasant experiences. Do not be frightened by the unpleasantness and try not to take the criticism personally. Remember, you did not write this stuff. The author did that, and the author’s mental life is, frankly, not yours— and you need not trouble yourself about the contents of someone else’s mind”*

#### **And then**

*“That is what these meditations are all about. What do you, and you alone, control? What kind of person do you want to be? Get started becoming what you want to be. You never know how much time is left. Turn your attention inside.”*

**I find his words coming back,** different passages, different moments in time. I can’t help but pause and consider my situation, look at what I’m expecting, wanting, at what I’m frustrated with because it’s not happening. And then laughing and letting go.

**I believe a powerful book resonates** well beyond the act of reading, when the author’s words become part of my own internalized mental chatter, when concepts spontaneously arise matching a situation I’m experiencing. It’s not a conscious attempt to remember what so and so wrote but it is just simply there. Ferraiolo’s style has a way of resonating with themes in my life, in the lives of those around me. And while he doesn’t offer steps or tools or exercises to “fix” anything, his “meditations” do offer a path for self-reflection, awareness, and if one wants, change.



[Stoic](#)  
[Reflection](#)

[By William](#)  
[Ferraiolo](#)

The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius have provided inspiration, comfort, and counsel to intrepid readers for approximately two millennia. Having read through it yet again (for at least the twentieth time), I found myself puzzled by the fact that I had never undertaken a similar exercise. Keeping a journal of my thoughts about the vicissitudes of the human condition, and my struggle to understand its challenges, had not become a habit. Marcus, as far as we know, never intended to have his ruminations published. Those thoughts were not meant for the world at large. He simply kept a journal for his own use, for his own efforts at self-rectification and self-governance. The original title was *To Himself*, and the book in which he recorded his thoughts was not, to our knowledge, shared with family, friends, or staff. The last great Roman Emperor thought a great deal about the nature of the good life, the nature of virtue, the temptations to vice and weakness, and his own insignificance by comparison to the vast Cosmos and the power of the all-pervading, governing Logos (the organizing principle of the natural world).



Marcus Aurelius

He regarded himself as a simple man, an ephemeral being, and nothing more than an actor in a grand play authored by Zeus—the only true king, worthy of genuine reverence and awe. His simple humility is exhibited repeatedly in passages such as this:

*Letting go all else, cling to the following few truths. Remember that man lives only in the present, in this fleeting instant: all the rest of his life is either past and gone, or not yet revealed. This mortal life is a little thing, lived in a little corner of the earth; and little, too, is the longest fame to come – dependent as it is on a succession of fast-perishing little men who have no knowledge even of their own selves, much less of one long dead and gone. (Meditations, Book Three, 10)*

The most powerful man on the planet regarded his life as “a little thing, lived in a little corner of the earth,” occupying merely a fleeting moment. The Roman Emperor understands that even he, in the final analysis, is just another “fast-perishing” person playing a role assigned to him by Fate. We can all learn a great deal from this man and his humble wisdom. I certainly hope that I have done so—though I see no evidence that I am capable of emulating the greatest Graeco-Roman Stoics such as Marcus, Seneca, and Epictetus. I decided to

begin collecting my own thoughts about the pursuit of wisdom, virtue, and my seemingly constant failure to make any real or lasting progress. Perhaps this endeavor would help me to stay on the “straight and narrow,” or, at the very least, occupy my time and mind with a virtuous aim.

During the height of the U.S. Presidential election campaign of 2016, I found the time and opportunity to consider the many ways in which I had allowed external states of affairs, conditions beyond my control, to cause anger, frustration, and anxiety to undermine my equanimity. The more time I spent in introspection, the more I realized that my mental states were being dictated by contingent circumstance rather than by reason and a mature pursuit of honorable character. I regularly, and repeatedly, allowed myself to slip into unhealthy cognitive habits and toxic emotional states. Allowing this to continue struck me as intellectually lazy and, in some sense, cowardly. I needed to take steps to get my cognitive house in order. Marcus’ *Meditations* struck me as an excellent model for developing and cultivating rational discipline. Thus, I began a rigorous, even brutal, self-assessment. I found weakness, irrationality, and sloth befouling my thoughts time and time again. These habits, and the unreasonable beliefs and expectations undergirding them, had to be challenged and expunged. This process would prove to be neither easy nor pleasant. The first of my reflections on the human condition spilled out onto the page and ultimately read:

*You can control nothing other than your own attitudes, values, and efforts directed at mental discipline. The rest of the world is as it is, will be as it will be, and unfolds as it does with or without your consent. This is as it should be. Indeed, this is as it must be. You have enough to contend with just governing your own thoughts and actions. Your consciousness and your will are more than enough to keep you busy, engaged, and challenged. Master yourself, administer your affairs, discipline yourself, and you will have accomplished more than most ever dare. This is your only purpose. Are you not ashamed to allow the events of the day to throw you off balance? What business is it of yours if lives begin or end, warfare erupts*  
*Continued on page 76*

*Ferraiolo continued from page 75*

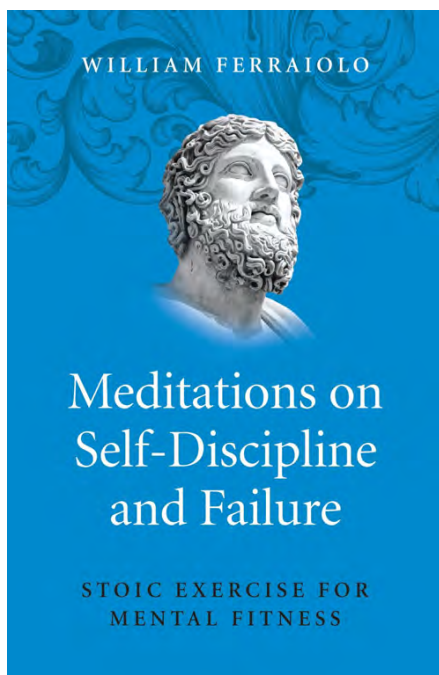
*here or peace is restored there, economies shudder, earthquakes strike, or storms beat down upon the land? Will it all to be otherwise if you can. What answers directly to the exertion of your will? That, and only that, is your business. Do not invite needless distress and perturbation by insisting that the world must conform to your expectations or whims. Who, after all, do you think you are? Control the very small sphere that answers to your direction. As for the rest, cultivate gratitude for the opportunity to draw breath and take part in a life that you never earned.*

Hopefully, that encapsulates as much of the Stoic worldview and its analysis of our circumstances as could be managed in a brief written meditation. This began my work, and it culminated in a book that, as far as I am aware, I did not originally intend to publish or share with others. My work was initially intended only for my own self-rectification and my own consideration. Ultimately, I decided that the content of my reflections might be useful to others who

struggle with similar challenges. A few titles presented themselves, but *Meditations on Self-Discipline and Failure: Stoic Exercise for Mental Fitness* struck me as a better fit than the others. It is my hope that the value of self-discipline, and a rational approach to the inevitability of failure can be understood through the prism of a Stoic conception of mental discipline and fitness. Surely, many other persons face challenges similar to mine. If I can provide some assistance to those who struggle to maintain reason and cultivate virtue, then my efforts will not have been wasted. The author and the reader need each other. We are, in some sense, in this thing together. Good luck.

**William Ferraiolo** received a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Oklahoma in 1997. Since that time, he has been teaching philosophy at San Joaquin Delta College in Stockton, California. His work can be found here: <https://deltacollege.academia.edu/WilliamFerraiolo>

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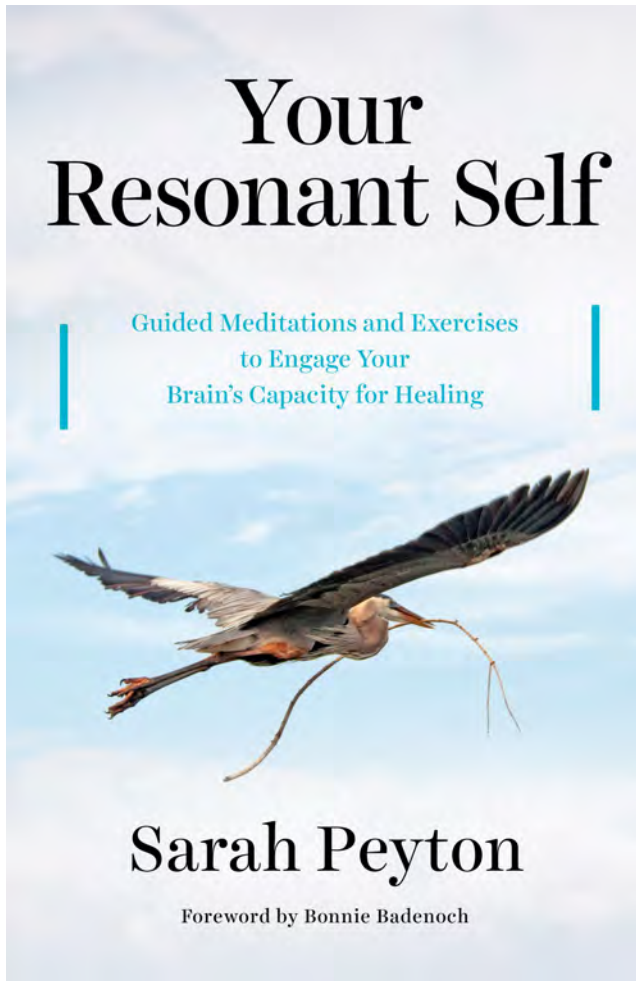


Curious?

Want to read more?

We offer our gratitude to William Ferraiolo for his permission to share Book V with our readers.

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to access the PDF excerpt.



Reviewed by Nancy Eichhorn

Sarah Peyton wrote her first book over a year ago. I received a reviewer's copy when it was first published (2017) but life happened, and it was shelved for another time. My apologies to Peyton and to her publisher, W. W. Norton and Company. Her book, *Your Resonant Self: Guided Meditations and Exercises to Engage Your Brain's Capacity for Healing* has much to offer.

Peyton wrote the book to help people learn how to be with themselves—their emotional and resonant self. She writes about a two-person relational experience: self to the other within—the critical and judgmental voices that hamper our quality of life.

*Continued on page 78*

**The book is written** with a reader's needs in mind. New terms are printed in bold font, clear definitions and explanations are given. I appreciated her choice of words, her snappy sentence structure, and her pace and tone. There are headers to distinguish different sections, pictures, charts and other visuals. She writes as if talking with you, acknowledging and accepting you as you are, where you are, all the while nudging you forward with small steps to experience self-warmth and self-acceptance. Questions encourage reflection. There's repetition and reference to what is coming next.

**Her big focus** is the brain. She teaches about the brain and its default mode, why it does what it does, and how to make changes. She supports brain integration, using resonant language to change the brain through guided meditations and empathy. When she talks about the brain, she is referencing the entire nervous system that runs throughout our body, including the brain in our skull. It's a full body and skull experience. She also integrates the science of mindfulness—the brain can be engaged in an experience while it is observing and holding the self with kindness. She writes that the 'solution' to your current state is to learn how to be both experiencing and holding the experience, this duality is key to maintaining inner calm in the face of life's challenges.

**There are stories** and experiences from her 10 years of teaching classes at various prisons (not easy students). She correlates her experience with prisoners with those who may be imprisoned by their own thoughts and habits. She writes with a sense of 'you are not alone', such as on page 31: "If you have doubts that talking about feelings will help you, you are in good company. Research shows that most people don't believe that putting words to emotions helps at all."

**Peyton writes** to first engage the reader's understanding then she offers experiences to deepen that understanding, both cognitively and from a bodily sense. She explores three main themes: we are built to connect at all ages and if we don't have someone to connect with, we can learn to connect with our own self-witness; every

voice we hear in our head, despite how viscous or dysfunctional it may sound, has at its root, the intention to help; and healing is doable, attainable, and if we are patient and follow its logic and timing, we can grow forward, make the changes, be with our self with love and compassion.

**There are 14 chapters.** Each focuses on a core concept and the relevant parts of the brain involved. There are specific meditations to fit the content. Chapter 1 introduces our default mode: how we talk to ourselves. Chapter 2 addresses the benefits of resonance and attunement. Chapter 3 introduces the concept of self-understanding and learning how to become your own self witness. In chapter 4 readers start to explore their inner critic, the voice that condemns them. Chapter 5 looks at the foundations of anxiety and how to transform worry into dynamic peace. Chapter 6 looks at healing old hurts, and Chapter 7 offers anger as a gift, a guide to learn more about the self. The remaining chapters look at ancient fears, dissociation, attachment, depression, addiction, compulsions, and finally how to bring our resonant self-witness into relationships with others.

**There is a self-assessment** in the appendices to help readers see where they are at the start, and where they might want to focus their time and energy in terms of the meditations. There is an online URL to access recordings for the meditations, a huge plus in my 'book'. I feel frustrated when authors who offer meditations in their book and expect me to do them by myself, like how can I read it and do it at the same time? This is one of those unspoken triggers that I think hinders many self-help books. Videos, mp3s, etc. are essential, and need to be free of charge. To offer meditations and then charge for the recordings is another trigger.

**According to Peyton,** *"The Meditations form a bubble of safety and care that you can step into, whether your hand is touching the page, you are listening to a recording, or your eye is looking at the words on a screen. This guided imagery extends an experience of a world where you matter, where you are deeply accepted, and where you make sense"* (Peyton, 2017, pg. xxxvii).

**Bonnie Badenoch** wrote the Foreward. She's a therapist/writer I 'met' reading Stephen W. Porges and Deb Dana's new anthology, *Clinical Applications of Polyvagal Theory: The Emergence of Polyvagal-Informed Therapies*, (see pg. 32). Badenoch writes that she's known Peyton for eight years and that the content offered in this book can be a foundation for self-healing.

**She notes:** "I trust this book will hold each of us well on our journey toward greater resonance and compassion . . . Sarah's offering will be a cherished resource for growth and healing" (pg. xvii).

**From an overall vantage,** Peyton synthesizes neuroscience and brain science, trauma treatment and the power of empathy into her healing method with the intention of helping people rewire their brain and restore their capacity for self-love and well-being. It will be up to readers to take it in, be with the educational component as well as the experiential. Together, there is the potential for change.

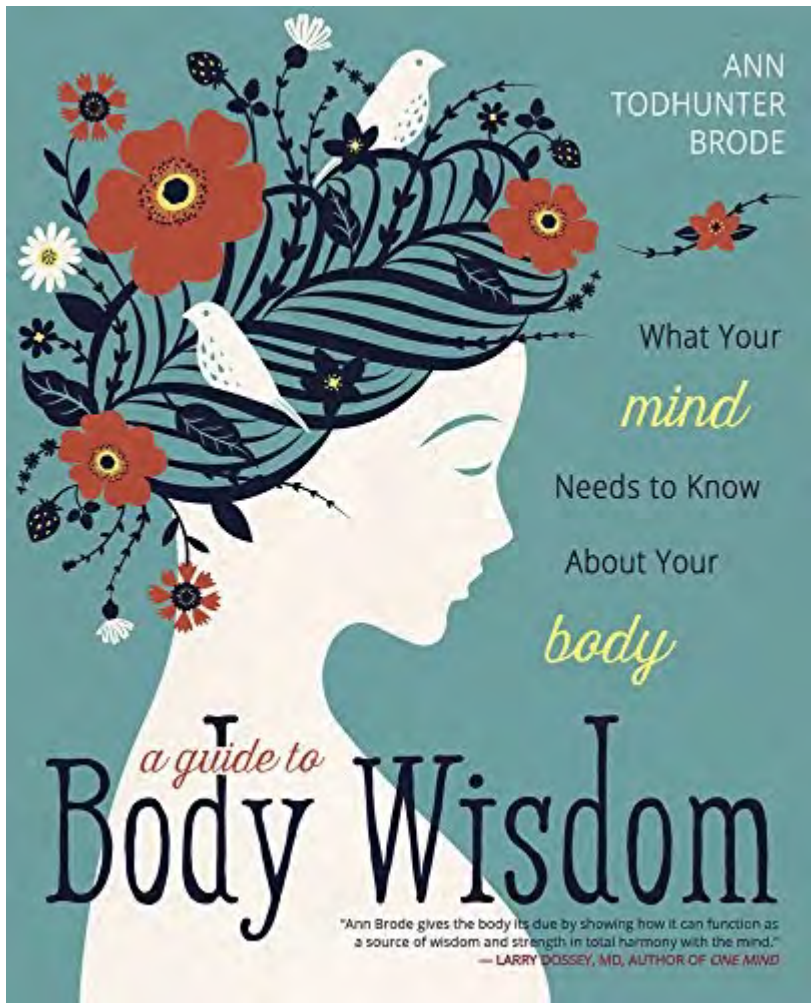
#### References

Peyton, S. (2017). *Your resonant self: Guided meditations and exercises to engage your brain's capacity for healing*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

*"The Meditations form a bubble of safety and care that you can step into, whether your hand is touching the page, you are listening to a recording, or your eye is looking at the words on a screen. This guided imagery extends an experience of a world where you matter, where you are deeply accepted, and where you make sense."*



Image retrieved from <https://www.pinterest.com/lydiaakers9/bubbles/?lp=true>



Written by  
Ann Todhunter Brode

Reviewed by Nancy Eichhorn

Ann Todhunter Brode has focused on the body, mind, spirit relationship as it shapes our physical relationship for more than 40 years. “Your history determines your shape and eventually your shape determines your history,” she writes (pg. 105). Brode is a teacher, therapist, healer, and writer—her articles have been published in Health Source Magazine, Santa Barbara Independent, Huffington Post and our own SPT magazine. We like her voice, her style, her presence on the page. She offers her new book as both an instructional and a therapeutic experience to teach readers how to live consciously in their body.

Brode’s intention is to help readers find their way back to their essential body by giving them tools to learn about themselves (body, mind, spirit) and then take care of themselves. She notes that once readers awaken their body’s innate wisdom, they’ll be “impressed by what it has to offer” (pg. 11). She wants to help readers cultivate a baseline for relaxation and develop body-oriented strategies for



diverting the intensity of stressful times (pg. 12) and teach them how to be more emotionally aware and emotionally intelligent (pg. 13). As readers systematically release restrictions, they can integrate new information and find comfort living in the present moment (pg. 15)

Capturing the overall interaction between the reader and her book, Brode writes that the 'mind' is the seeker, the 'book' is your personal trainer and your 'body' is the master guide.

From the Introduction, readers begin their explorations into mind, body, spirit in 9 chapters (there's also a bibliography and resources and a troubleshooting section).

Each chapter has specific components. Data—science. Experientials are noted as Try This and Explore. 'Try This' offers short experiential exercises to illustrate the concepts being introduced and developed, an on-the-spot check-in. Explore offers in-depth invitations to participate in more extensive processes to learn more. There is science, psychology and short clinical vignettes woven into each chapter. Brode's personal story is not woven in, this isn't about her journey but rather her professional work and people who have benefited from her protocols.

Chapter 1 sets the book's foundation in terms of Waking Up. Readers learn how to start at the beginning, to expand their understanding and explore their body IQ. Chapter 2 is the Body Wisdom IQ Test, designed to help readers see how tuned-in they are to their body. There are 21 questions with a, b or c responses to select from. The questions were written to give readers an idea of how much of their body's intelligence they are currently using. It's also designed to stimulate a sense of getting in touch with your body and inspiring curiosity to learn more. The scoring is simple, and the final result gives readers their Body Wisdom Intelligence Scale (score), which is meant to introduce readers to their body's intelligence, and awareness. After you finish reading *A Guide to Body Wisdom*, Brode suggests taking the IQ test again to see just how much your Body IQ has increased.

Chapter 3 looks at the basics: breathing, eating, sleeping, moving, fitness, etc. Chapter 4 deals with stress and relaxation; Chapter 5, Healing, Chapter 6, The

Emotional Body; 7 Intimacy and Intuition, 8, Body and Spirit and 9 Your Body Wisdom for Life.

The Troubleshooting index at the end is interesting and rather useful. It offers common situations people find themselves in such as: physical pain and chronic tension; sleep issues; anxiety; emotional upheaval; stagnation; old habits and addictions; self-confidence; giving and receiving love; existential crises; and spiritual connections. Each situation has a precise recipe of readings and exercises to personalize the readers experience.

While reading her PDF I appreciated Brode's knack for picking everyday examples, situations that readers can relate to, simple scenarios that we all face with practices woven into the text along with official "to-do" experientials designed to guide us toward full awareness. I was taken by several of her activities such as the use of a mirror to see the self externally from a new perspective, to see what you are seeing with some understanding and then experimenting with putting on a new role (a new facial expression, posture, movement etc.).

Her creative use of terminology offers readers easy to grasp experientials such as the stress-0-meter, the shape of our stress, and our stress foot print. When talking about stress, she starts with a picture of your body—how stress has shaped it. Where are you braced? Heavy? Restricted? She talks about fear living in the body, anger in a clenched fist, sadness in slumped shoulders.

*Continued on page 82*



She looks at the emotional history of your tension and gives concrete examples for what she calls in between times of stress to help readers see themselves, see their stress embodied.

**A bit from Brode** (page 101):

*Imagine a scale that measures action/relaxation for any given activity. Each thing you do registers the select muscles and tensile strength necessary to accomplish the task at hand. At one extreme, resting and sleeping require no muscle work and major relaxation. Because you don't need your shoulders scrunched or your forehead furled, this tension would increase your score on the stress-o-meter. For lifting, driving, or typing you need a specific amount of tension to do the job. If you over-muscle, your score goes up on the stress-o-meter. Pay attention over the next few days to your body tension and see how you score. The following in between times can shed the spotlight on your action/relaxation ratio:*

*When you wake up in the morning, do you feel rested and begin your day slowly? Or, does your body feel pumped with the tension of an emotional issue, looming deadline, or simple habit?*

*When you walk to your car do your arms and legs swing easily? Do you feel a bouncy reverb with each step? Do your eyes notice the world around you? Or, are your hands jammed in your pockets, your feet pounding the pavement, and/or your eyes fixed on the ground?*

*When you break for lunch, do you truly take a break and show up for eating, relaxing and socializing? Or, do you take your work out to lunch and forget to enjoy the food and company?  
Subtracting tension at the beginning (and throughout) your day will reduce the sum of*

*stress in your body. Anytime you can let go of stress, you make room for more focus and vitality. When you get to the end of the day, it just makes sense to do a major tension dump.*

There are more questions and from this assessment, readers create a picture of themselves. The book is all about readers seeing into themselves, to witness what is and where it might have come from and what to do about it. There are questions to stimulate reflection and the recommendation to keep a journal as well.

**Now It's Your Turn**

There is much to this guide and jumping is the way to start. You can read the book, interact with Brode (Facebook, website) and via audio/instructional videos that have been designed to facilitate some of the concepts presented in this book.

You can find them at <http://www.anntodhunterbrode.com/media/>

There are three guided mediations to help you relax and focus and videos on waking up, loosening up, sleeping and more.

You can check out Judith Aston's videos that explain simple movement principles and the ergonomics of walking, sitting, support, alignment, and more.  
<http://www.astonkinetics.com/instructional-videos/>

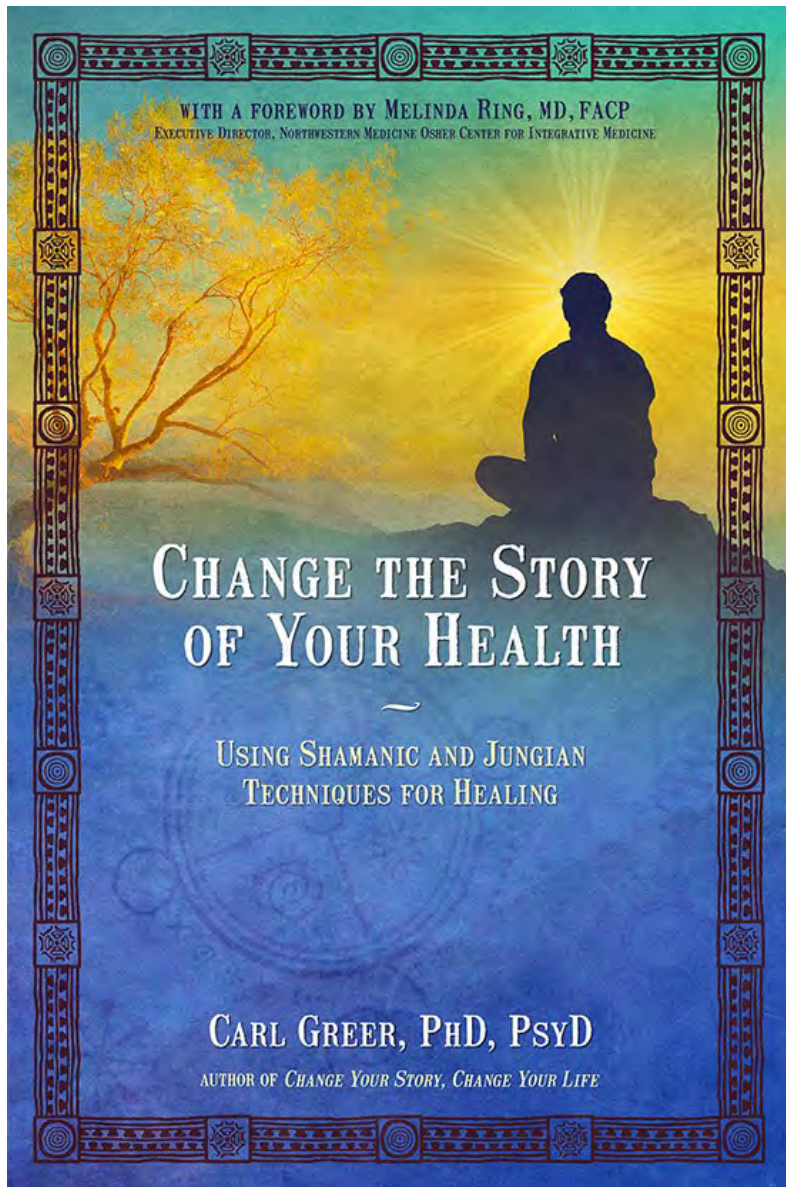
Brode is interested in your body wisdom journey. She believes that your discoveries and insights may be helpful to other people, and she invites you to share them. She writes:

Jot down what you've learned, personal insights and healing insights. Include your permission to publish the account. Copy, paste, and format as an email and send it to [ann@annbrode.com](mailto:ann@annbrode.com)



**28<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL  
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6-10 DE MARZO 2019  
MÉRIDA YUCATÁN



Written by Carl Greer  
Foreword by Melinda Ring



Reviewed by Nancy Eichhorn

“Healing isn’t just something that comes from medicine or surgeries; it comes from a shift in the way we perceive ourselves and our connection to our health and our bodies” (Melinda Ring, M.D., FACP, Greer, 2018, pg. 15).

Shamanism and Jungian analysis—the transpersonal realm and the unconscious. As George Hogenson, PhD, notes, Carl Greer offers “A remarkable melding of Jung’s analytical psychology and the ancient, and global, traditions of shamanic healing . . .” in his newest book, *Change the Story of Your Health: Using Shamanic and Jungian Techniques for Healing*.

*Continued on page 84*

“The overall goals of the practices are to help you make and maintain healthy lifestyle changes by enhancing your connections to the invisible energetic realms that surround and infuse the material world.”

Similar to what he did in his previous book, *Change Your Story Change Your Life: Using Shamanic and Jungian Tools to Achieve Personal Transformation*, (see [SPT Volume 5, number 2, Spring 2015](#)), Greer shares his personal experiences and the experiences of others. He provides a cognitive experience with plenty of information. The book is written in a way that is easy to understand and provides a bodily presence with numerous exercises (shamanic journeys, meditations, visualizations) to support the work. One familiar practice is what Greer calls a “ritual” to use before doing any of his “expanded awareness practices”: opening and closing sacred space, cleansing your energy field, and doing mindful breathing to prepare. Within this in-depth book written to explore our health story and choose a more desirable one, he also offers the potential for new experiences, be it:

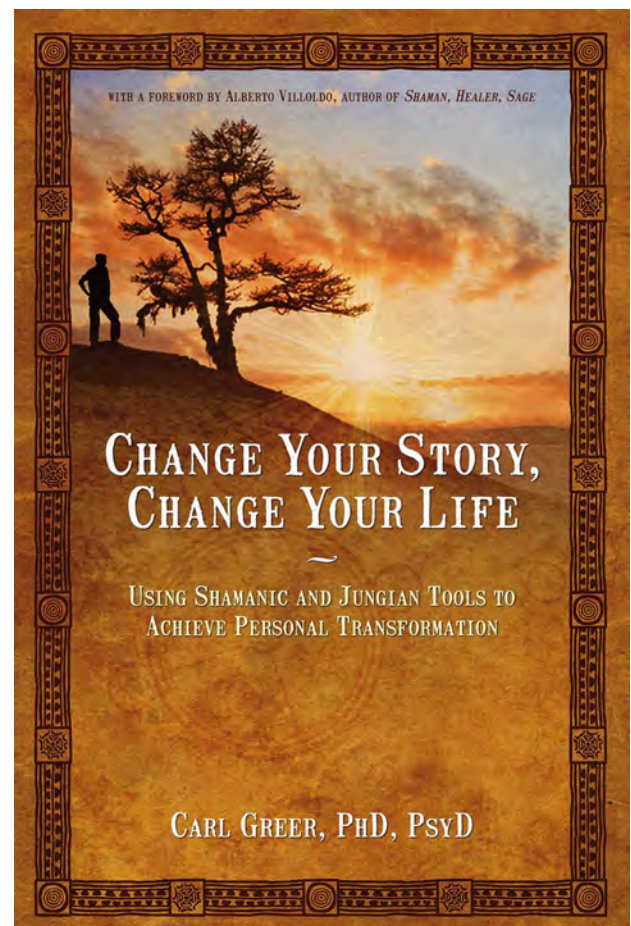
- Improving health and well-being
- Maintaining wellness as you age
- Managing chronic conditions
- Dealing with having your health story suddenly rewritten by events you did not expect, such as accidents and diagnoses of conditions or diseases (pg. 18).

Greer uses the language of “story” as a frame for discussion. He talks about chapters, themes, characters, settings, plotlines, conflicts and resolutions, as well as conclusions. The act of, or perhaps the art of, storytelling is ancient. Narratives carry our past forward and set a pretense for our future. Stories, he says, are fashioned from events in our lives, and they are created from our perceptions and interpretations of those events.

Greer maintains that you can change your “story”—the story of yourself, your health, your emotional well-being—by delving deeply into the roots of those stories, exploring the story lines and the characters

involved, having dialogues with your inner healer—that wise inner self that has insights into your healing—and more. If you change your beliefs, revise the stories you tell yourself, and review and assess the stories you carry (perhaps those told verbally and/or passed on as a legacy via genetics and cellular encoding), you can live a new story.

Storylines, a/k/a themes, are ancestral, both within our specific family line and in a global more genetic sense—as humans we are all ultimately connected, and all beings and life energy are connected. Common themes that Greer says arise in Jungian archetypes and in shamanic journeys often



involve heroism, companionship, collaboration, and courage. He sees battling/ the warrior, healing/the inner healer, and innocence/the inner child along with generic stock characters such as a wise king and a foolish prince, or a comeback kid. Archetypes are considered symbolic embodiments of experiences and ideas common to people around the world and across time, Greer says.

Once you have a firm grasp of your current story, you can then work to write a new one. To gain understanding, to create a comprehensive outline of our story, he suggests four beginning chapters:

- Eating, drinking and weight
- Movement and exercise, flexibility, balance, stamina, and strength
- Sexuality, body image and acceptance, and changes due to midlife hormonal shifts
- Management of symptoms of an acute or chronic condition (pg. 45).

He offers expanded awareness practices that are designed to engage the non-rational part of the brain that is involved in the experience of the unconscious (pg. 47) so that intuition can guide you as you interpret what happened when using the practices.

Within these practices there are journaling activities. He suggests for starters that you spend several hours with the first journaling guide in Chapter 3 to get your “health story” down. He invites readers to journal about their earliest memories of experiencing their body, looking for positive aspects of one’s health as well.

He offers that the more details you include when journaling about experiences, the easier it may be to determine patterns that may flesh out themes. He also recommends journaling when using the guided prompts in the book. He offers dialoguing (a practice based on the Jungian technique of active imagination) as well as chakra clearing and engaging and partnering with the earth, air, water, and fire to release old, worn-out

stories.

“The overall goals of the practices are to help you make and maintain healthy lifestyle changes through enhancing your connections to the invisible energetic realms that surround and infuse the material world” (pg. 19). The notion of energy is important. Greer explains that, “. . . the idea of a universal, interconnected grid composed of energy, where we can access insights and energies that affect the physical body as well as the psyche, is a part of many healing traditions” (pg. 23).

According to Greer, “the essence of shamanic healing is to work with our past so that it lives within us differently and we no longer are caught in old habits—and to align with a future that is more desirable for us and Spirit” (pg. 24); “shamanic work awakens a person to greater awareness of the interconnectedness of all that is seen and unseen” (pg. 24). And, “Shamans believe that energetic and spiritual imbalances are at the root of all physical ailments” (pg. 24).

The book is not meant to replace professional care—doctors, therapists, etc. It is meant to be a tool for self-empowerment through knowledge and experience. Greer is clear that you have inner wisdom about what your body needs and that often, your body can heal itself when given the right support. To start, you need to look within and sense what feels right for you—and you need to be honest with yourself about your story and about your intentions.

While this is a “quick” review, the book itself moves slowly, deliberately, allowing pauses to breathe, to take in and to consider when you feel resistance. The book is not meant to be read and then considered done. It is not written to sit on a shelf but rather to be part of your day, part of your awareness as your own storylines—the themes—about your health move into your awareness, allowing you options to embrace them and then accept and/or change them. This is about taking the time to heal inside and out.

“The essence of shamanic healing is to work with our past so that it lives within us differently and we no longer are caught in old habits—and to align with a future that is more desirable for us and Spirit.”

# iLS INTEGRATED LISTENING SYSTEMS



In recent years, researchers and clinicians have supported advances in understanding the effects of trauma on both mind and body that have greatly expanded our range of clinical tools and opened new possibilities for dramatically improved outcomes and deeper healing.

One of these tools is Dr Stephen W. Porges' [Safe and Sound Protocol](#) (SSP) a five-day intervention designed to improve social communication by regulating physiological state and enhancing our ability to process human speech.

"Based on Dr. Porges' Polyvagal Theory, the program is derived from nearly four decades of research on the relationship between the autonomic nervous system and social-emotional processes. It is designed to reduce stress and auditory sensitivity while enhancing social engagement and resilience. It stimulates nervous system regulation by exercising and systematically challenging the auditory system with specifically processed music to retune the nervous system (regulating state) to introduce a sense of safety and the ability to socially engage" (Associate Manual Safe & Sound Protocol, 2017, page 1).

Initially, the program was called the Sound Sensitivity Program and was recommended as a tool for clinicians working with clients having auditory sensitivities (hypersensitivity), social/communication difficulties and/or problems with regulating behavioral state (inattention, behavioral dysregulation).

With case studies and research in hand, Porges changed the name when he realized the autonomic system impact beyond auditory sensitivity—he saw SSP's impact on anxiety, trauma and social communication. When done in the right context, SSP can enable trauma survivors to socially engage in and benefit from psychotherapy (experiencing attunement, co-regulation, etc.)

## A clinical view

Imagine a client comes to you with a trauma story. You notice a lack of prosody, poor eye contact, blunted facial expressivity, dysfunctional behavioral state regulations (perhaps said client is hypervigilant, anxious, distracted, able, impulsive). You can most likely assume compromised autonomic nervous system and vagal regulation. Said client cannot support cues of safety and social communication—they were turned off during threat and danger.

If their autonomic nervous system is “on”, clients will view their world as dangerous, they will determine that situations/people are unsafe, perhaps sense “life threat”. This may not be merely a state of flight or fight, especially if talking about chronic abuse, molestation, or otherwise bullied bodies. Our bodies react, may sense a state of “I don’t want to be here” and shut down. Some people pass out, some defecate. Their body adjusts and while it doesn’t disappear physically, it dissociates. Life threat is a profound powerful experience. Trauma is not necessarily limited to an “event” but rather is better viewed as an individualized response to a situation (one time or ongoing). Trauma survivors typically are not choosing to collapse, their nervous system made an evaluation of life threat and reacted—this is not voluntary, not conscious, not learned.

When working with said client, many therapists know this is not the time to power through the experience, you cannot operantly condition pain, suffering, and so on. If clients are in an autonomic state that supports fight/flight/freeze/collapse, their system cannot support listening, auditory processing, or social engagement. When treating deep-rooted trauma, shame, and attachment wounds, it's crucial to go beyond the limits of just talk therapy. SSP is an effective portal of treatment for adult trauma survivors. It has can potentially support a shift in one’s perception of the world from dangerous and filled with disturbances to a sense of safety, openness, and a fuller connection with others.

## But why music?

For clarity, I’m quoting directly from the Associate Manual Safe & Sound Protocol, copyrighted by Stephen Porges, 2017:

“An overlap exists in acoustic features of speech and music. Not all speech provides signals of safety. Speech as well as music can signal danger and life threat. Our nervous system universally detects high frequency shrill cries as alerts for danger and this is mimicked in music. In addition, our nervous system detects monotonic low frequencies as sounds of threat. A segment of the frequencies of human speech defined as the band of perceptual advantage is capable of triggering bodily states of safety when modulated to mimic the prosodic features of a mother’s calming voice.”

SSP is “theoretically driven by scientific evidence relating the regulation of the middle ear muscles to: (1) dampen background sounds and improve perception of human speech; (2) *be involved with* “neuroanatomical and neurophysiological circuits controlling facial expressions, vocal intonations and gestures”; (3) *be associated with* ‘neural circuits regulating behavioral state.”

“The middle ear muscles actively dampen low frequency background sounds and facilitate the ability to hear and to understand human speech. When the middle ear muscles do not contract appropriately, individuals tend to have sound sensitivities and difficulties in understanding speech in noisy environments. This apparent problem has an adaptive advantage and functionally

*Continue on page 88*

*“The SSP, informed by the Polyvagal Theory, was developed to use a complex program of acoustic stimulation to exercise and systematically challenge the neural regulation of the middle ear muscles.”*

*It is an “exercise model that uses computer altered acoustic stimulation to modulate the frequency band passed to the participant.”*

amplifies the ability to hear very low frequency sounds, which through the evolutionary history of mammals has been associated with danger and predators. Thus, if middle ear muscles do not appropriately contract, low frequency sounds (below the level of human speech) will be perceived as loud, even when others whose middle ear muscles contract, can barely hear them. Psychological states of fear adaptively shift the function of the middle ear muscles to promote states of hypervigilance in anticipation of a predator, while compromising the ability to process the meaning of human speech. Thus, under stressful conditions, we have difficulty in listening to the specific words of others but focus on low frequency sounds that may accompany an intruder or a potential threat. When in an 'unsafe' environment, i.e., walking in a strange and potentially dangerous neighborhood, listening shifts from our companion's stories to the low frequency sounds of footsteps and traffic."

"Very low frequency sounds are difficult to ignore (i.e. actively filter), mask human speech, elicit emotional responses (i.e., defensive and survival related), and drive specific physiological systems that interfere with calm, attentive, prosocial behaviors and even the ingestion and digestion of food. Tensing the middle ear muscles provides an effective filter to dampen the low frequency sounds that characterize background noises in our environment."

"As a function of evolution, humans and other mammals have a 'new' vagal pathway that links the regulation of bodily state to the control of the muscles of the face and head including the middle ear muscles. These pathways regulating body state, facial gesture, listening and vocal communication function collectively as a social engagement system. Because it is an integrated system, interventions influencing one component of this system may impact on the other."

### **Training for use with a trauma focus**

Professionals must complete a comprehensive online training program with Dr. Porges and Dr Keri Heilman (video tapes so you can learn at your own pace). It includes a recap of the polyvagal theory and social engagement, administering the protocol and integrating it into clinical practice. The program includes client and

**Once clients realize that acoustic cues trigger physiological states that are not associated with predators/ threat, the trigger will lose its potency. Clients learn that lower neural level cues do not necessarily mean danger and they can start to dismiss the power those cues had to trigger fear and its physiological response. It becomes a profound visceral reaction.**

practitioner manuals, the SSP device with music preloaded (you can order sound tracks for adults as well as for children) and the correct headset. Therapists can also attend live (online) question and answer sessions.

A core component is learning to be sensitive/aware of the client's physiological state. For SSP to be effective it is necessary to maintain the client's nervous system in a state of safety. When clients feel safe, calm, relaxed, their nervous system will be receptive to new acoustic stimuli within the frequency band of human communication, which maximizes the effectiveness. Therapists watch for shifts because they overlap with reactions, i.e., a calm state may historically mean vulnerability, immobilizing and calming down have become coupled with past defenses triggering agitation, the desire to run. When sensations arise that lead to past cues, it's important to empower the client to regulate—co-regulation is necessary as well.

Therapists empower their clients by letting them know that when they sense discomfort (physical and or emotional responses), they can pause the intervention and allow their body to re-stabilize and re-engage. While the original intent of the protocol was one hour a day for five days in a row (still the



spectrum, dealing with ADD or ADHD, auditory dysfunction etc.), the window of intervention is typically shorter for trauma survivors. One hour a day may be too much initially. Less is better, as it enables the client's nervous system to catch up.

Once clients realize that acoustic cues trigger physiological states that are not associated with predators/threat, the trigger will lose its potency. Clients learn that lower neural level cues do not necessarily mean danger and they can start to dismiss the power those cues had to trigger fear and its physiological response. It becomes a profound visceral reaction.

Therapists learn to work at the clients' pace. It is not a fixed protocol, but rather an interactive protocol. Therapists are there to empower clients: to listen and help them become aware of their own body reactions, sensations. Most are numb, have lost contact. Clients learn that physical acoustical sounds may be a trigger but with this process it becomes a trigger without power.

### **What's it like?**

After successfully completing the training course, I received the SSP device. And yes, I have a trauma history (who doesn't), and I have sound sensitivities etc. I was curious if it would "really" work. The manual and training information is clear that the protocol cannot "fix" you, it is one tool to be used in conjunction with other therapeutic interventions and still, being me, I hoped it would effect some changes.

The headset was comfortable, and it blocked out most outside noise. I sat in my favorite chair with my feet on an ottoman (it's a gliding/rocking chair and ottoman) with a comfy throw blanket covering my legs and feet. I had a meditation coloring book and colored pencils beside me (you are not supposed to sing, dance, move etc. you may color or do other things if you feel antsy—and remember that with trauma survivors in a therapy session, you titrate, you stop, pause—there's power in the pause—re-stabilize and re-engage). My curtains were drawn, a fan was on low to also block external noise. I created a warm, cozy, safe container.

The first day I felt as if I entered into a daze state, like I was pulled under a cover. I sat

so still my joints ached. I came in and out, as if under a spell. The music sounded strange at times and other times I strained to hear it because it was quiet/silent. At times I heard strange noises in the background of the music that jostled me—a clank of chains, a roar, someone clearing their throat with a low deep sound—they all sounded menacing. I lost my sense of peace, felt my heart race. I opened my eyes and looked around. I saw that I was indeed safe in my chair. I started to rock (ottoman and chair rock in same motion, physiologically soothing). My heart rate slowed, my breathing deepened. When the hour was over, I felt the veil being lifted and I returned to full consciousness. That night, I slept soundly (first time in a long while).

On the second day of the protocol I noticed that while chopping a Duraflame log in half (preparing for my fire), I kept my eyes open. I hit the same spot repetitively. I typically close my eyes when doing things like chopping wood, driving through intersections, etc.

Day three signaled a rather significant change. I tend to avoid eye contact. If I feel safe, and I mean a deep sense of safety, I will look into my friends' and family members' eyes, hold contact. But acquaintances and strangers? Nope. On day three, I was looking into all kinds of strangers' eyes, engaging way more. I felt my facial expressions were more animated and that my voice had a lighter lilt to it. I didn't feel so gosh darn serious, and I wasn't constantly surveying my surroundings.

Day four I felt fatigued. I didn't have my normal get-up-and-go energy. I resisted sitting for the session. I had a hard time not singing in my head, silently want to sing, especially when Sarah McLaughlin songs came on. So many songs on this track that I loved but had not been listening to, memories flooded in with the songs. Was it the songs themselves? When I was done with the protocol I had to go upstairs to my computer and find one of the McLaughlin songs on 'utube' and played it over and over. It was associated with my first miscarriage:

I will remember you, will you remember me?  
Don't let your life pass you by  
Weep not for the memories . . .

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Day five I awoke from a dream state and realized I had been dreaming more the past few nights. Full color. I heard the voices of those I was with, felt their presence as if I were truly there with them in my dream. Perhaps lucid dreaming? I was feeling fatigued but read in one of the “frequently asked questions” that this was normal:

“Listening is a neural exercise—it is working the nervous system—middle ear muscles, brain, and the autonomic nervous system—so feeling fatigue is typical.”

### **In Conclusion**

It’s been nine days since I completed the protocol, and I continue to notice shifts in my social engagement patterns. I am hearing a wider range of sounds when I’m outside. I’m registering a much larger assortment of background noises without triggering any response, they are just there. I’m more interactive, talking more, feeling the desire to engage with others more (usually silent and solo). I feel happier in all ways, lighter, safer to reach out and be part of rather than stand back, behind, survey the scene. I typically have a difficult time focusing my attention on one conversation at large gathering (i.e., parties, conferences)—my ears are like radars that automatically pick up all surrounding sounds and conversations. I’m curious about how things will go when I attend my next function.

### **One Last Note**

The manual notes that “aging, illness,

medication, trauma and experience may also compromise the function of the middle ear muscles.”

My 89-year-old dad has been using the protocol for three days as I write this. He has significant hearing loss and had to turn the volume way up. Last night, while listening to a CD from their church affiliate in Africa, Dad excitedly had me come in and listen to the highs and lows, to the wide range of sounds, how the music moved from speaker to speaker and so forth. He shared how it was like the music he heard on the SSP device, how he noticed it moving from ear to ear, how there was lows and so on. He was hearing a much larger range of sound, different frequencies and more. I must admit he has not used it ‘perfectly’ meaning not everyday, not for the full hour. He has missed two days now but wants to continue. We’ll give it a go knowing it is supposed to be used five days consecutively. And then again, with trauma work they do allow titration so perhaps he will experience more changes. Time will tell.

### **SSP and Somatic Experiencing**

As the SSP device continues to evolve, it is now entering the world of therapist training. Somatic Experiencing practitioners are learning how to use the protocol to shift their clients’ physiological state when doing trauma work. The SE work in turn creates a portal more amenable for therapy.

## **The Polyvagal Theory**

By Stephen Porges

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Is part of the parasympathetic nervous system (social engagement/frontal cortex)

Dorsal Vagal System:

Is part of the parasympathetic nervous system (freeze/immobility/brainstem)

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Is NOT vagal but functions most efficiently when vagal systems are suppressed  
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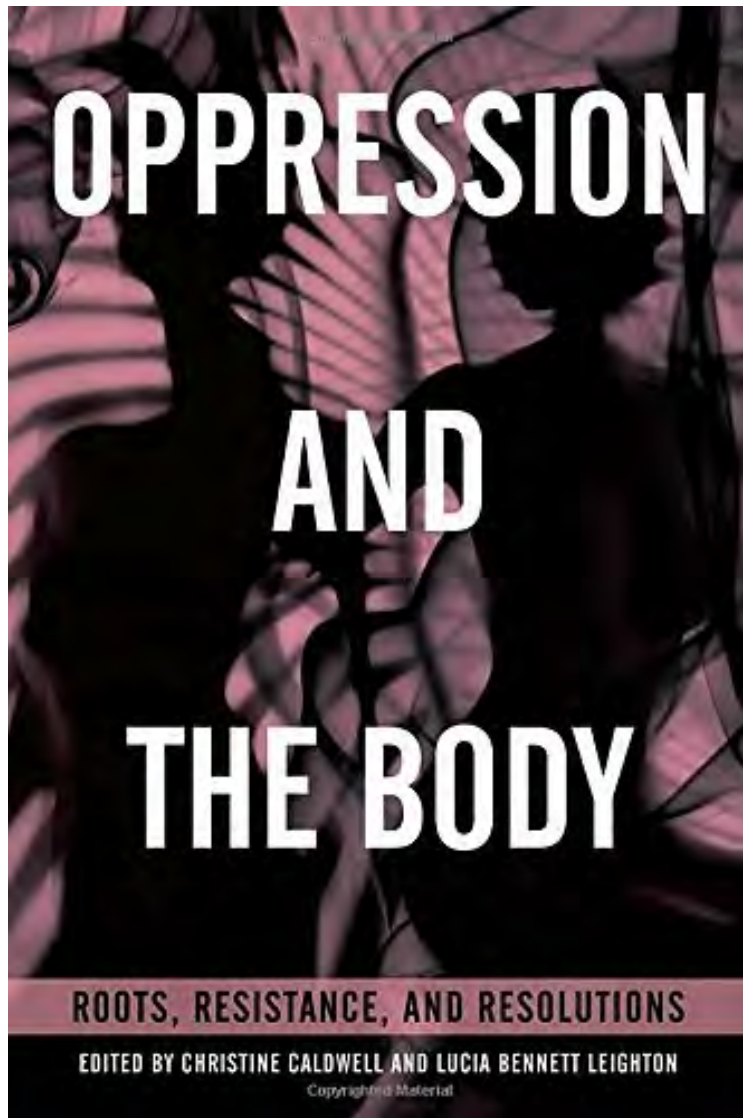
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**Christine Caldwell**



**Lucia Bennett Leighton**



**Reviewed by Kevin Jeffrey Goldwater**

On August 9th, 2014, Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, was shot and killed by Darren Wilson, a white police officer, in Ferguson, Missouri.

On August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014, I walked into the Chicago Cultural Center for one of my triweekly choir rehearsals, completely unaware of the events that occurred the day before.

As I approached my locker, I saw a few friends in a circle, seemingly consoling someone. I asked my locker partner what was going on, and he explained that our friend Alexis was sobbing over the Brown shooting. I quickly googled the event, read up on the facts, and responded to myself, "oh wow, that's really terrible." I understood something bad had happened, but felt no connection or an effect to my world. I looked up from my phone to see Alexis and heard her explain how terrified she was to see her older brother, Julius, simply walk out their front door. She explained that it can be terrifying to be a black person in America.

I stared at this person—a black teenage girl who I have known since she entered middle school; this girl is several years my junior, however from observing her resilience, joy and talent since meeting her I looked up to, admired, and adored her. Alexis is known to all around her for having an immense vocal talent that we haven't seen paralleled, a talent so natural that it brings joy to those around her; she is a close friend of mine who shared a million memories and a million songs. I looked at her, and I became angry.

*Continued on page 94*

A million thoughts swarmed my mind, and I was furious. *It is ridiculous*, I thought, *that this girl, who I look up to, would ever be treated differently from myself, just based on our skin! What the hell is that about?*

I hardly paid attention in rehearsal. I could not fathom someone treating Alexis worse than myself in any situation based on her appearance. I grew up in institutions that prided themselves on diversity, where the administrators were typically women of color and the student body (though majorly higher SES) was filled with students of all races. I had not been confronted by the fact that my peers (and higher ups) could receive different treatment. I had assumed everything “racially” was pretty much solved after the Civil Rights Movement.

While I was as old as a senior in high school, I was not aware of my white privilege, the position of being white in our world and the ways that whiteness creates ‘otherness’ for those who are not. To think of Alexis or her family, or my beloved teachers or my choir directors as ‘others’ in our society, as groups that are already pushed a step behind, became a wake-up call.

In the years following Ferguson, resistance and uprising have increased and become more in the forefront of our world than I had seen before. While institutional and societal structures have been formed against women, people of color, queer, fat, incarcerated, indigenous and disabled (and the various intersections of these) people for for the seventeen years I’d been alive, these atrocities have only recently been exposed to me and, I believe, a recent awareness for many of my white male-appearing counterparts as well.

Movements like Black Live Matters, #MeToo, the Women’s March, Sanctuary Campuses, DAPL, anti-Islamaphobia and trans rights have created a new era that not only identifies and exposes the inherent societal issues that create ‘others,’ but works and reckons with them to end them.

It is in this era that I believe Christine Caldwell and Lucia Bennet Leighton’s co-edited anthology entitled, *Oppression and the Body: Roots, Resistance and Resolutions*, comes right on time. Referenced in their introduction, [academic, journalist and activist Ta-Nehisis Coates](#) says:

“But all our phrasing—*race relations, racial chasm, racial justice, racial profiling, white*

*privilege, even white supremacy*—serves to obscure that racism is a visceral experience, that it dislodges brains, blocks airways, rips muscle, extracts organs, cracks bones, breaks teeth. You must never look away from this. You must always remember that the sociology, the history, the economics, the graphs, the charts, the regressions all land, with great violence, upon the body” (Coates, *Between the World and Me*).

It is in the spirit of Coates’ words that this book was written. Understanding now that not only are institutional and societal structures are damaging to one’s mental state, but also to the body and spirit (and the three combined), we can begin understanding oppression as a physical force, one that regularly dubs bodies as ‘less than’ or ‘other’. Fourteen authors come together in *Bodies* to share their stories, their experiences, and their solutions regarding embodied experience of being ‘other’ in today’s world.

Editors Caldwell and Leighton begin the book with an aptly named preface “Who We Are and Why We’re Here,” discussing their experiences in life and the embodied oppressions they have taken on by simply existing as themselves. Of particular note to myself is something that has become one of my favorite parts of any book—authors sharing their experiences of their experience—Caldwell and Leighton noted: “We questioned if we should do this project. We talked about ‘well-meaning white-lady-syndrome’; we considered the irony of two cisgender white women asking people of color and gender-non-conforming folks to share their stories of oppression with us, which can be in and of itself a reiteration of oppression. In the end, we affirmed that this project needed doing and privilege is reinforced when we stay comfortable silent...” This realization of their place as white, cis women and their relation to others is particularly important, as they are examples of what they are trying to encourage from this.

Reflecting on their place in the world and how that world effects them, these women set the tone for each contributor by sharing raw, honest, and impassioned presentations of self.

The book is divided into three parts, each exploring types of bodies and the different forms of oppression that take over.

The first part, "The Oppression of the Body in Societies," discusses how oppression in general forms into trauma, how one's identity of the body develops, the influences of our body-earth connection, and finally how shame affects the body. This first part allows the reader to understand oppression on a multitude of levels, from development to modern day, and the various ways that oppression has been manifested and manifests itself. Leighton opens the section educating the reader on the forms of trauma delegated to non-normative bodies, with Caldwell then exploring the immense intersection of body and identity and the plays between them. Jeanine Canty is the first contributor introduced after the editors, with a remarkable work discussing the general fear and mistrust of both the biological sphere and the body, and the interplay of the two limiting themselves from freedom. Katie Mathey closes the first section, bravely discussing her own experiences with internalized fat phobia. She shares how she was able to overcome her self phobia to achieve an embodiment of health and happiness, then challenges us to fight our own automatic thoughts and judgments.

The second part, "Marginalized Bodies in Society," focuses on specific types of bodies and the oppression created by that specificity. It is in this section that we see the themes from the first section in action. The first entry by Eli Clare explores the impact of gendering bodies and the variety of issues stemming from our understanding of ability and disability. Rae Johnson then explores being in a queer body and questioning every day habits to reclaim the body. Of a particular note is the release of Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* in 2010, followed by the documentary *13<sup>th</sup>*, which have started a new age of dialogue around the state of prison and prisoners. Lalo Paingco Rivera provides new and expansive information about such in his chapter in *Oppression*. Rivera discusses the impact of being incarcerated on the body, particularly reducing the body as property of the state, or even private prisons. Citing examples like cavity and strip searches, the acts of tattooing and simply being numbered cause the reader to challenge the notions of what a prison may actually be.

*Continued on page 96*

"We questioned if we should do this project. We talked about 'well-meaning white-lady-syndrome'; we considered the irony of two cisgender white women asking people of color and gender-non-conforming folks to share their stories of oppression with us, which can be in and of itself a reiteration of oppression. In the end, we affirmed that this project needed doing and privilege is reinforced when we stay comfortable silent..."

Cara Sherrel continues the entries by discussing ancestry and the various ways that we have rooted discussions and understanding from a white basis. Particularly, Sherrel discusses the effect of white supremacy and the demand to conform to whiteness on her and her family's bodies. Beit Gorski then closes the second part by discussing the medicalization of the bodies, especially trans bodies who have to face an abhorred amount of prejudice, ignorance and embarrassment from medical situations.

The third part, "Embodied Action," is dedicated to solutions and actions. Each author in this section discusses moving forward and challenges readers may face. They write about the myriad ways that bodies can be reclaimed, ranging from resilience to code switching to grieving. Jen LaBarbera discusses her experience as a fem, queer, brown, sexual assault survivor, and the issues stemming from both dealing and *not* dealing with the oppression she experiences. Marcia Warren Edelman introduces her theory of 'embodied code switching,' which I viewed as a valuable tool for any person considering their multiple identities. Leighton and Caldwell team-up to present a model designed to work on and through ongoing bodily oppression. Beit Gorski closes the section with group intervention work for trans people to work through their body dysphoria.

This collection contains an almost overwhelming amount of information that is not only relevant but also challenging for readers on an emotional level. Remarkably, however, the multitude of themes and multilayered groups are allotted space and author reflection that render them digestible and understandable. Because of this, the collection allows the reader to reflect, reckon with, and challenge their own understanding of their body, their identity and their place in

society. Supplemented with poems and works of visual art from activists "whose work often comments on societal structures," the contributions are rendered not only as immensely valuable works to be praised, but as stories of the self that are quite relatable.

I see this collection as an invaluable collection that we, as a society, need. Understanding the ways our siblings, internationally and of different make-up, are experiencing themselves in the world makes room for empathy, resistance, and active change. Personally, after years of work and research, I learned so much about Alexis' experiences, my own experience as a queer person and that of people whose experiences and stories I've yet to hear after reading this book. While I can never truly understand the lived experience of other identities, my understandings have been magnified and challenged, and as a white male presenting person I am thankful for the the chance to reckon and expand my knowledge. This collection serves as a eye-opening intersection of personal experience, somatic science and the psychotherapy of oppression that both educates the reader and earns a center place on the psychological zeitgeist book shelf.

**Kevin Jeffrey Goldwater** studies applied psychology with a minor in music and social & cultural analysis at New York University. He is set to graduate in May of 2019. Born in Chicago, Kevin has done immersive research on psychoanalytic theory and the role of gender in today's media. Most recently, Kevin has been working in cultural psychology, focusing on the impact of colonialism on indigenous and minority patients. In addition to working for *Somatic Psychotherapy Today*, he writes reviews for the *International Psychotherapy Journal*.





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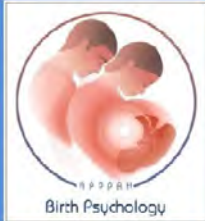
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