

# Understanding PsychoNeuroEnergetics

By Judith Johnson

My own interest in body-oriented therapies for the healing of trauma came from an incident involving my son. He was 5 years old at the time. He was dyslexic, couldn't read, and walked with a limp from a turned-in foot.

One day, instinctually, I began to massage his leg and started holding a tight place. Suddenly he started crying out, "the bees are coming." I remembered that when he was 3 years old, he had come running into the house crying and looking like a ghost. He fell limp in my arms, in deep shock.

So as I worked on that point on his foot some 2 years later, he began to re-experience that time, cried out "the bees are coming," and started trembling, sweating and shaking. I didn't understand it yet then, but his body was releasing the energy held in for those years, and naturally going back into balance. He was doing the trembling he couldn't do then. Within days he was starting to read normally and walking without a limp.

Of course I wanted to better understand what had happened, and so began my study.

## **Locked-in Energy Patterns**

Energy can be blocked by a reaction to any sort of extreme stress—whether emotional, physical, spiritual, or in the area of thoughts and beliefs. The facilitated point-holding methodology of PsychoNeuroEnergetics (PNE) accesses locked-in energy patterns at all of these levels, in a comprehensive, holistic way. It does this through the inroads of the nervous system.

Dr. Peter Levine, founder of the Somatic Experiencing Trauma Institute, has shown that traumatic symptoms are not caused by events themselves, but rather from the lack of release or processing of the intense energy that is mobilized to meet extreme events. Watch a deer face danger by freezing. When the danger has passed, the deer's body will tremble, then run off. That trembling is the release of excess mobilized energy.

We have the same instinctual mechanism. If we're suddenly very frightened, the body will first freeze, then after the threat has passed, we tremble to release the mobilized energy. But if that immobilized energy is not released or gets locked in as unresolved emotion or constricting beliefs, for example, it can create disease in our minds and bodies.

I worked with a boy whose physical growth was stunted. During a session we accessed, through the body, a memory. He was 5 years old, his father was dying, and he said to the boy, "You've got to be the 'little man' around here from now on." So he became the "little" man. Because he locked in that message, his body just couldn't grow normally.

The intense energy of that moment was probably too much for him to release as it came up, so he locked it in. It stunted his growth. After the session, we measured him. He was several inches taller, just from his body unwinding that constriction. Some would call this a miracle. In fact, it is just a matter of restoring one's energy flow to normalcy and health. We have that within us.

People often don't know what overall health feels like; they don't have a memory of vibrant health with which to compare. Like a fish in water, they assume this is all there is. For those who know there's something not right, they just don't know what options are out there. Most are still in the old paradigm of medical doctors for the body ailments, traditional therapists for the emotional and mental conflicts.

Food intake often is part of a pattern of suppression. Eating foods that don't energize or enliven the body is a way to maintain the familiar, comfortable feeling of stuckness carried for countless years. Similarly, any addiction—alcohol, drugs, anger, relationship addictions—acts to suppress the energy.

This is why we work with nutrition, too. As the nervous system is the inroad, we want it to be a clean, healthy “highway,” so the inner healing energy can flow well through it.

### **The Primacy of the Body**

In helping a person re-establish healthy energy flows that have been blocked by stressful or traumatic life experience, be it recent or from years ago, we begin with the body.

The body has a way of “knowing” the pathway to blocked energy. We just need to know how to listen to its messages. The body is the direct inroad to the truth of the heart, the spiritual heart, the source of our deepest personal truth.

Often the mind and emotions are not in alignment with this deeper knowing. Thoughts and feelings can actually be part of the defense mechanism working to maintain the block of energy caused by a traumatic event! Therefore, the sequence I try to establish is to connect from the body directly to the heart's truth, then to align the emotions, and finally the thoughts.

When we experience pain, we know there's something out of alignment. It can come from genetic patterning, from a misbelief arising out of a traumatic incident, or because of cultural programming, for example. The body will take us to the program that created the pain in the first place, where we were out of alignment with our true nature, which is health and happiness.

When we re-experience the original source of that pattern in an PNE session, we do so now in safety, accessing higher cognitive processes, instead of the primitive fight-or flight mechanisms that kicked in at the original moment of trauma. An PNE session accesses the limbic system circuit through sustained pressure on the suboccipital points, which can be found to either side of the spine at the base of the skull. With the stabilization gained from holding the points, the focus on the guidance of the body, and skilled facilitation, traumatization is not an issue.

The nervous system is like a matrix. Tracking sensation through the nervous system of the body first, then accessing associated emotions and thoughts, is very different from processing it through the mind and emotions directly. Once you experience the holographic memory with sensations, emotions, words and beliefs, the possibility of a consciousness shift becomes available. A true consciousness shift is an energy shift at the deepest levels, where healing and healthy change is inevitable, and permanent.

### **The Heart**

I see the heart as our “spiritual brain,” so to speak. It gives us our connection to who we really are, to our path, to God, to our peace within ourselves. That's what we're all really looking for in life—connection and reconnection with the truth that lies deep in our spiritual hearts.

Any stress or conflict has the potential to take us away from all that, because shock causes the body to contract and constrict, and leaves our consciousness separated from that heart energy. Our connection to heart, to God, to Love, becomes broken. War, oppression, abuse, and all the pain, disease and misery that results—these are both causes and effects of patterns of separation from the heart.

For example, heart disease can often be traced to when a person decided to shut their heart down, to close it, to stop the flow of love. Usually, when I work with the points around the heart, it will take them, through the nervous system, to the place where they hold that memory,

thought, and decision to close the heart, to stop the flow of love. When the Love connection is lost, spiritual, emotional, mental and physical disease result.

### **The Inner Healer**

Many healers do the clearing and releasing of energy for a person from the outside, such as someone clearing your auric field. I'm trying to help a person find that pathway into his or her own body and heart to access their own inner-healing forces. As that matrix is rejuvenated within, healing returns to being a natural process. We're working to bring healing to the "inner healer," so to speak, helping the client go inside through his own nervous system, his own sensations, to clear his own energy.

By strengthening and awakening the nervous system, he can then begin to access that healing power for himself. When he can link his physical symptoms and pains to suppressed sensations, emotions and thoughts, that will lead him to shifting the pain and releasing a healing vortex of energy. The trauma pattern, with all its physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual symptoms, is transformed.