

Being Present

“Being Present” by Esther Veltheim

Each action precipitates a reaction and, as you know, and we call this cause and effect. Unfortunately, as long as the word cause is personalized we believe we can, by our own volition or will, make things happen in life. When a practitioner abides by this kind of thinking it is impossible to avoid personal involvement when “treating” a patient. Much of the terminology practitioners use serves to rigidify the belief that apparent results that take place in a body are due to personal actions. Practitioners use such words as “treating” and “healing” and this immediately conjures up the connotation of some-one doing something to another person. This may seem to be the case, and the operative word is “seem”.

When Reiki, BodyTalk, or any other modality is used, specific actions appear to result in an effect on the patient. If a practitioner believes actions are effected by personal will and intent, she simultaneously believes that she is the cause of any results that occur. When this is the case, the practitioner can only act from a place of involvement.

There is a big difference between being involved and being present.

For example, if you have a small child who is having problems at school there are various ways of addressing the situation. You can worry about him or you can admonish him. If your stance is either of these you are involved, and any resulting action will be from the premise of your relationship with the child.

“How can I help him feel better?”

“Why can’t he be more like other children?”

“What have I done to cause this?”

“How can I help him?” etc.

Either way you will appear to fuss over the child and your interaction is one that is fuelled by the need to attain a specific result. As soon as need is combined with intent, focus is lost. This is because your mind is split between personal fears (over-reactions) and personal expectations.

An alternative way of dealing with a child’s problem is to remain present to the situation, consulting the child as to his feelings. Then you may offer the child various options as to how to resolve the issue. The child may ask you to intervene, or may discover a way of dealing with things on his own. Either way, the interaction between parent and child has been exactly that—an interaction. Not two over-reactions. The child has participated in decision-making with the parent. Whatever the outcome, it is more likely to be one that occurs via mutual, focused, practical steps rather than involved over-reaction.

If, as a practitioner, you believe your role is to “fix” your patients this will be your intent.

Which means you cannot be focused on the practitioner/patient interaction. You can only be “focused” on what “you” seem to be doing to the “other” person.

When we use Reiki we have come to understand that the practitioner receives a treatment whilst “treating” another person. In BodyTalk it is evident that the practitioner’s body receives benefits while the person is on the table.

If you close your eyes for a moment and focus on BEING you will discover that the experience is not confined within your body and does not stop at the person next to you, or anywhere beyond your body. Every-one has the same experience when doing this exercise. This tells us that Experiencing is all there is. It is only the idea that experiences are personal that causes the idea of limited experiencing.

When a patient appears to experience disharmony, the practitioner sets about trying to harmonize him or her. As long as the practitioner believes “I Am causing” results they are acting from the standpoint of personal limitation. You may feel you have the power to cause healing. If this is your belief, you cannot be free of the belief; “what happens to the patient is “my” responsibility.”

When you practice from this premise, actions are involved. When you personalize the “treatment” process in this way, you are more likely to feel drained as the result of treating. When you personalize any action, it requires increased energy on your part because your personal identity is at stake. “I must do this,” “I should have done that.”

Where BodyTalk is concerned, the innate wisdom directs all actions and it is easy to realize that you, the practitioner, are simply acting as a medium for healing to take place.

Where Reiki is concerned, the energy goes to where it is needed, despite any intent you may have. This makes these two modalities wonderful examples of the power of simple interaction. Treating is happening, rather than some-one is treating some-body else.

Whatever your modality, if you have been practicing for a while, you will know that specific results are never guaranteed. This tells you that the precise effect of any action is un-assured. If you believe you can, and should, obtain specific results, your mind is forward focused. Your mind is split between your identity (as a practitioner) and your

goal for the patient. In other words, the process of 'treating' is far from focused. The desire to feel 'One' with the world and others is simply a sign that you intuit your sense of separateness to be unnatural. From a philosophical standpoint the sense of separateness is a dis-ease—a misperception. The instinct to feel at one with life, consciously or unconsciously, fuels all actions. We are constantly trying to bridge the gap between the world and ourselves.

This dilemma precipitates the mind's focus outward, towards others. This rigidity of focus solidifies the belief that there is external separation that needs to be healed. From this belief arises the desire to fall in love, to bond, and to heal others—that which appears external to the self. When this desire presents itself as a high impossible one, we blame ourselves and, or, blame others. This is why the world appears to be made up of 'fixers' and 'blamers.' Some may appear to embrace, others to reject, but all have the same inner urge—to dissolve the sense of separation.

As long as the mind is split between 'me' and 'others' we experience the need to control and modify our life experience.

What we do not understand is that the external world of seemingly separate objects is simply a reflection of the split between the personalized self and the impersonal Self. The desire to heal the split between self and 'others' is merely a reflection of what is going on 'between' our true nature (the impersonal Self) and the person we think we should be (the personal self).

The belief we need to become a certain way in relation to others keeps the mind distracted from who we are beneath all the facades.

When it is understood that our seeming 'split from life' (manifestation) mirrors our split from Self, the mind gradually turns its focus away from the need to change 'others' or affect others. We realize self-healing is an inside job that is not dependant on, or limited by, the actions or viewpoints of others.

Like someone looking for their eyeglasses which are on the end of their nose, you may first blame others that you can't find them. Then you may blame yourself for misplacing them. This is how the existential dilemma appears as the Self looks for itself first via the personalized identity of the 'me' body/mind object.

As long as you believe you need to 'fix' and improve how you are, the mind remains involved—split between a limited identity and unattainable goals.

When you recognize that the seeming split from life occurred despite you, you may realize that its healing, likewise, can only happen despite you.

As the belief in personal effort and control incurred this split, it makes no sense to use effort to heal it. This would be similar to someone removing a thorn from their foot and continuing to dig around in the wound.

The 'thorn' is your belief in effort, which keeps you in an involved mode. If you want to remove the 'thorn' of efforting, you simply have to live life as it presents itself. This requires acting 'as if' actions and their results are personal, all the while understanding that everything happens despite you.

What happens, just happens, within experiencing. If you need to alter experiencing with the intent of a specific outcome, you cannot be free of the need to struggle.

The only reason you have needs is because the memory of past experiencing fuels the desire for similar, or different, results. To act out of fear and the need to 'attain' a specific outcome is involvement, and requires emotional and often physical struggle.

Using past experiences to assess your dealings with a present situation is very different. Taking practical steps to deal with a situation and having no rigid needs as to outcome, is to remain present to, and focused on, what is. Anything can result (as is always the case), but you are open and present to whatever happens. When something results, if you deal with it in a similar way, you remain focused and present.

Therapists and practitioners are engaged, perhaps more than most, in apparently 'healing others.' This is indicative of a very strong desire, albeit often unconscious, to heal self.

There is a personalized role of a practitioner wanting to harmonize seeming external imbalances. This simply mirrors the dynamic of the 'me' identity seeking the impersonal Self and thus harmony.

Philosophically, we understand the Self we seek to be impersonal. We understand that realization of the impersonal Self will lead to the falling away of all sense of separateness.

This is why we give lip service to the words 'we are One.' Unfortunately our minds have fixated so long on the idea of 'me' and 'others' that we think Self-realization is an altered state of consciousness wherein duality somehow disappears. Whilst such an understanding remains, we feel fear each time any of our masks fall away.

We want 'oneness,' which, we understand, requires the disappearance of the false self with all its masks. But (if we are honest) the idea of enlightenment is so appealing

because we think it will make us appear special in the eyes of others.

We desire the dissolution of our masks whilst yearning for the masks to beat all masks – specialness. Whilst this tug of war persists in our minds we struggle to be free of struggle.

What is rarely understood is that another word for Self is Experiencing. Duality is the medium of Experiencing. All there is Is Experiencing.

In other words, there Is no experiencer and no-thing to be experienced. No-thingness and thing-ness are merely concepts that serve to describe the indescribable—the non-conceptual. However, as long as the mind is split by the idea of diametrically opposing ideals—nothingness versus thingness—it cannot conceive of life without a personal ‘me’ needing to control it.

From the perspective of each individual with their contradicting ideas about what is ‘good’ and ‘bad,’ it is impossible for only ‘good’ experiencing worldwide. This is the

idealistic paradigm of those who tout the goal of world peace.

Clearly, (and actually not that clearly to many people) world peace is a ridiculous goal.

What is ‘good’ in the eyes of one is seen as ‘bad’ in the eyes of another. Or, as my friend so beautifully illustrated, “in a ‘perfect’ world the goalie would stop all the goals and the shooter would get all the goals in.” This simple imagery shows you that perfection is a ridiculous ideal.

When the Self is ‘realized’ it is clear that all there Is, is Experiencing.

Manifestation does not disappear, and Experiencing continues to contain a richness of apparent changes. The richness of duality continues unfolding within Experiencing. The one difference is that there is no desire to control any happening.

Practical steps are still taken, for example, to dress warmly when it is cold, to avoid having the body hit by an oncoming truck, but there are no needs with regard obtaining specific outcome. There may still be a requirement to earn a living so that one can eat, but if money problems arise they are dealt with without fear—practically.

Experiencing continues, as before, with so-called ‘good’ and ‘bad’ experiencing, but it is completely uninhibited by personal desires and fears. Everything happens as it happens and the body is the instrument through which practical concerns are acted upon as they present themselves. This describes Being present.

The difference between the common man and the ‘sage’ is simply that the latter is uninvolved and totally present.

The common man is, most of the time totally involved struggling between past feedback and yearned for goals. He is essentially absent, with one foot in the past and one in the future—filling the void. When the need to ‘fill the void’ disappears, the Self, the Now, is realized.

Be as you Are and there you Are! Be as you think you should be, or as you think you want to be, and you will keep on missing the very Self you seek!

The Self is no-thing to be ‘attained,’ because you Are the Self. You know this because you experience ‘I Am.’ It is because you think ‘I Am some-thing’ that should be a certain way or be experiencing only this or that, that you have lost sight of your true nature. In fact, your true nature is, paradoxically, always ‘in sight’ as long as you experience ‘I Am.’ The labels you attribute to ‘I Am’ are what blind you to, and distract you from, the Self.

The self of shoulds and should nots, and goals and involvement, is what prevents you from knowing you Are the goal. That, in fact, there is no goal, because the Self is unlimited and has no location or limitation. All there is, Is Experiencing.

If, intellectually, you understand thus far you, will realize that the mind’s focus towards ‘doing with intent’ is your only ‘problem.’ As a practitioner, realize that the treatment process of another person is a reflection of the impersonal healing that is occurring ‘between’ the ‘me’ object and the Self. The reflection of practitioner and patient arises within the Self, and has given you the idea that ‘you’ are causing something to happen in the ‘other.’

If you deeply understand that essentially there are NOT TWO - that there is no ‘other,’ only impersonal, unlimited Experiencing—then needs and intended outcome will dissipate.

The involvement of practitioner towards patient will dissolve into Presence. When the role of practitioner unfolds in a focused way, anything is possible. When involvement gives way to Being present you will be amazed at the reflection within duality. Then, and only then, do you realize that nothing, absolutely nothing, is as it seems.

If you make a robot, before you wire it up and press the ‘on’ button, the robot does not move. Once electricity flows through it, it will be able to move in various ways—walk, pick things up, maybe even talk. Despite these actions the robot cannot feel anything.

Likewise, the body is an inanimate object that functions only when it is animated by experiencing (Awareness). When experiencing ceases, the body is again inanimate—“dead.” In the same way a television cannot feel the pictures that animate its screen, the body object feels absolutely nothing. This is because no object can feel.

As a practitioner, if you understand this simple logic, your way of treating will change.

You will no longer focus on making the body feel a certain way. You know that your television isn't the generator of the pictures that animate it. So, you adjust the settings and maybe move the aerial so that the “receiver” functions better.

Similarly, when you “treat” the body, a fine-tuning of the physical mechanism is happening, so that it is a clearer medium for experiencing. You cannot make a body feel better because it cannot and never has felt anything.

If you understand this, a paradigm shift will occur in the way in which “treating” happens.

Until now you have been involved in improving the physical body so that the “person” will feel better. Little, if any, differentiation has been made between the object and “who” you are treating. You have thought of the object and its animation as one and the same THING.

While you believe you are the practitioner with personally directed skills, actions are involved—efforted. This dynamic is evidenced by the words so often used by practitioners—focus and intent. To use these two mutually contradicting terms in conjunction with one another makes no sense.

Focus means being present to what is Now. Intent signifies the mind's objective in the future. The use of these two words together is an indication that the mind is “split.”

What has caused this “split” is the belief that “you” and “others” are objects with feelings.

This has led to the thinking that “you,” the object, can control and alter what feelings take place in the “other.” As long as the belief in personal control exists, you are never free of involvement.

When you realize all actions happen despite you, albeit via your body, focusing is the modus operandi. Rather than one object affecting another, there will be “treating happening.” Minus personal involvement, the practitioner's body is a clearer medium for the impersonal functioning of Awareness.

When the practitioner's personalized role is out of the picture, the patient is no longer treated as an object. The sense of one object affecting “another” disappears from the perspective of your body. When this happens you are focused, and it is more likely that the focus of the patient will change accordingly. Then focusing is happening, not merely from the perspective of the practitioner's body, but also from that of the patient. Consequently, the mode of treatment is incidental to the “results.” It may seem as if this or that technique caused specific changes. Relatively speaking, the body object appears affected by certain techniques. However, changes in the body are simply changes that are not felt in any way by this mechanism. The body has simply become a more finely tuned vehicle for the impersonal functioning of Awareness.

In BodyTalk, Consciousness is termed innate wisdom when, via the body, indication is given as to what needs addressing. If a consciousness treatment registers as a priority, it does not mean “you” the practitioner can shift the consciousness of the patient or “other.”

Perhaps you, by now, understand that Consciousness is always expressing through the body object. Even when rigid ideas about personal identity exist, they are an expression of impersonal Consciousness. When rigidity of thinking is ready to fall away, “innate wisdom” indicates this. This means that when a consciousness treatment shows up as a priority, the patient's body is already a clearer vehicle for the expression of Consciousness. Any technique that happens is, yet again, an expression of Consciousness happening by means of the mechanism of the practitioner's body.

Consciousness does not need any-one to “shift” it. There is no-one doing anything to another. There are merely actions happening within Consciousness that are not in any way separate to Consciousness.

In the same way water cannot make itself wet, Consciousness cannot, and does not, need to make itself “more conscious.”

Let us say that while addressing a “problem,” thinking arises with regard “me” (the practitioner) and the “other” (the patient). From a relative (objective) standpoint, this might appear to signify that the practitioner body is, itself, an unclear vehicle for the expression of impersonal Consciousness.

To think in these terms gives the body immense significance. It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that the body object is responsible for that which animates it. If we continue to think in this way, the belief persists that the body must change before Consciousness can.

What needs to be understood is that Consciousness does not need to change and does not

change. When waves appear on the surface of the ocean the ocean is still an ocean. When water freezes it is still water. Changes are only relative from the objective, limited paradigm.

Like an ocean that is one moment still and another turbulent, the expression of Consciousness is rich in nuances. Whatever expression Consciousness takes, from a relative standpoint, it is still Consciousness.

What needs to be understood is that the body is a clear medium for that which animates it, even if that expression arises as a 'misperception';

What then is meant by fine-tuning the body to make it a 'better vehicle' for Expressing? 'What is the point of even bothering?' you may ask.

The point is, that there is no point—no reason. There is also no reason for not 'treating'. Whatever is happening is the expression of impersonal Consciousness. The idea of 'fine-tuning the body' is simply one that has arisen impersonally. The idea of purpose arises in the same way.

Purpose is a relative concept, as are all concepts, of course. As long as it is a concept you believe in, you remain involved, missing what is, thinking about what might or should be.

If you realize that anything that happens via your body is essentially impersonal, the idea of 'getting results' for a certain reason will fall away. If 'fine tuning the body' is happening, it is happening. The mind likes to attribute reasons to what is happening and so it helps to think the body will be a better vehicle for Consciousness. If this gives the mind a better sense of focusing when addressing the body, then the idea is helpful.

Ultimately there is no reason or purpose to any expression of Consciousness; it just is as it is.

'Treating' and apparent 'results' are simply expressions within impersonal Consciousness. When this is understood, questions do not arise as to why this role is engaged in—until they perhaps arise. All actions will continue happening one way or another, despite you, until they cease. All you can do is live life as it presents itself, minus any sense of purpose.

The body is a phenomenal appearance within Consciousness. This means that the body object cannot be affected by other objects. When changes appear to take place in any phenomenal object, it is never because another object has acted upon it. When changes appear to take place in a body after 'treating', it is because Consciousness is animating the body in a different way.

The perception of change happens within Consciousness. No individual practitioner and individual patient are perceiving this change.

It is because Consciousness has identified with the 'me' (practitioner) and the 'other' (patient) that perceiving has become personalized. Despite the phenomenal manifestation of perceiver and perceived, there is merely perceiving happening. The seeming personalization of perceiving is the effect of the impersonal Consciousness.

When this is understood, gradually the idea of the 'me' and 'others' begins to dissolve. Then, that which animates the 'me' and 'other' objects is recognized as the Self.

If your role is one of BodyTalk practitioner, it must be understood that this 'shift in Consciousness' is never the result of any personal action. Self-realization cannot be induced by any treatment or particular personal action. When treating is happening, Consciousness is both the effect and the affect. Consciousness is simply reflecting both the existing appearance and the apparent result.

As your role as practitioner continues to play itself out, within Experiencing, it is helpful to understand this paradigm.

For further articles on consciousness and philosophy by Esther, go to Parama School of Philosophy