

bernhard schlage

bodypsychotherapist, author



Touch is one of the most forgotten languages

"Massage is something that you can start learning, but you never finish. it goes on and on, and the experience becomes continuously deeper and deeper, and higher and higher. massage is one of the most subtle arts. and it is not only a question of expertise; it is more a question of love.

First learn the technique, then forget it. then just feel, and move by feeling. when you learn deeply, ninety percent of the work is done by love, ten percent by the technique. just through the very touch, a loving touch, something relaxes in the body.

If you love and feel compassion for the other person and you feel the ultimate value of him, if you don't treat him as if he is a mechanism to be put right but an energy of tremendous value, if you are grateful that he trusts you and allows you to play with his energy, then by and by you will feel as if you are playing on an organ. the whole body becomes the key of the organ and you can feel that a harmony is created inside the body. not only will the person be helped, but you also.

Massage is needed in the world because love has disappeared. Once, the very touch of lovers was enough. A mother touched the child, played with his body, and it was massage. The husband played with the body of his woman and it was massage; it was enough, more than enough. It was deep relaxation and part of love.

But that has disappeared from the world. By and by, we have forgotten where to touch, how to touch, how deep to touch. In fact, touch is one of most forgotten languages. We have become almost awkward in touching, because the very world has been corrupted by so-called religious people. They have given it a sexual colour. The word has become sexual and people have become afraid. Everybody is on guard not to be touched unless he allows it.

Now in the west, the other extreme has come. Touch and massage have become sexual. Now massage is just a cover, a blanket, for sexuality. In fact, neither touch nor massages are sexual; they are functions of love. When love falls from its height it becomes sex, and then it becomes ugly.

So be prayerful. When you touch the body of a person be prayerful - as if god himself is there, and you are just serving him. Flow with total energy. And whenever you see the body flowing and the energy creating a new pattern of harmony, you feel a delight that you have never felt before. You will fall into deep meditation.

While massaging, just massage. Don't think of other things, because those are distractions. Be in your fingers and your hands as if your whole being, your whole soul, were there. Don't let it be just a touch of the body. Your whole soul enters into the body of the other, penetrates it, relaxed the deepest complexes.

And make it a play. Don't do it as a job; make it a game and take it as fun. Laugh and let the other laugh too." (1)

What am i going to talk about in this article? Let me first give you some examples for touch so that he is getting a goose-skin

- The masseur massages his client with strong grasping grips.
- The timid spreads out his little finger while timorously touching his friend's nipple.
- The mother creaming the baby with caring hands.
- The visitor of the beer garden strongly grasps the waitress's ass.

- The doctor palpates her patient's body with examining fingers.
- The mannequin is oiling her skin with patiently circling movements of her hands.
- The weight-lifter grasps the muscles of his arms to measure their power.
- The nurse softly massages a cream on to the hurting part of a patient.
- The father gently rubs the child's belly while feeling it.
- The baby reaches for her mother's breast while being fed from it.
- The loving couple tickle each other wherever they can reach.
- The torturer beats the tortured with a whip.
- In a silent embrace the lovers' hands are lying on each others backs.
- The timid is yanking every time he is being touched.
- The butcher grasps the piece of meat to cut it.
- The drowning desperately clings to the flesh of his rescuer.
- The mother is holding her child's hand while tearing a splinter from it's finger with her fingernails.
- The dentist reaches into the mouth to examine the position of a crown.
- The father slaps the child on the face.

These examples express possibilities of touch between people. Without having to say **what** is being touched and **how** i categorise these examples into brutal, tender, caring or conscientious, considering that these valuations might differ between me and others. In my practise as a bodypsychotherapist, beyond this i **experience touch more differenciated**: some tissue areas easily yielding under the pressure of my hands other tissue areas resisting my pressure or feeling cool; others warm. Some tissue areas allow themselves to be moved away from underlying layers; or while touching you get the impression as if they were equally structured on the surface as in deeper layers. Some tissue areas feel firm almost string-like and i can palpate hyperelastic almost rubber-like tissue. Some tissue areas while touching them, feel aged or empty or numb; whereas others are so strongly loaded with emotions that just the hint of a touch will irritate the client. Some tissue areas contract with touch, others loosen and open up.

I will at first categorise these examples without thinking about what is touched and how it is touched: the tissue is simply not sufficiently supplied with energy, is charged, is flabby, tense, blocked etc. And in bodypsychotherapy i draw conclusions about the individuality of a client, from these sensations.

Thirdly i want to describe **the way in which clients experience touch**: for one person tickling is painful; another person will laugh when she is tickled, one person will not notice the pressure of her sitting bones on the chair and the other person for this reason will sit on a more comfortable chair; for one person being caressed is an nice feeling for somebody else it is an annoyance. One person loves the touch of her lover's lips but distastes the touch of her father's lips. The other person let herself be kneaded by a masseur but feels it is chauvinistic when her lover pinches her ass. One will find a tension in his body to be a support for himself for the other it is a limitation. One person will feel her power and energy express her capacity for freedom, for somebody else this power is a burden bringing her out of balance emotionally. One will feel a grip in the neck like being throttled, the other feels how by this gesture he can let go of responsibility. So i can see that touch and touch are not alike. Therefore in this chapter i want to take a deeper look and deal with the following questions:

- Which structures are influenced (most) by touch between people?
- What are the physical and structural bases of these touches and how do they relate to each other?
- Which physiological characteristics of the connecting tissue determine durance and speed of changes brought about by bodypsychotherapy?
- Does the mental and emotional condition have an effect on touch and how does it effect touch?
- What would be an adequate mental attitude for the bodypsychotherapist and the client during the work?

Phenomenology of touch

As i have described in another article, our existence originates from a very intimate, a cellular touch: semen and ovular cell touch each other and as a consequence of this touch three functional systems form: ectoderm, endoderm and mesoderm in this chronological order. From these three different biological basic structures, those organ systems which later on form the human being develop. And from a subdivision of the mesoderm, the mesenchym, those elements that form the three dimensional reality of the human being in space also develops: skin, fascia, tendons, ligaments, muscles, periosteum, and bones.

"The primary elements like bones, ligaments and tendons develop from the cells as soon as cellular nuclei are formed in the mesenchym. When these cells have taken their form less differentiated cells developed layers of loose, aeorolar tissue coating the developing nuclei. These coatings first seem to have a protective function, later on developing into supportive function. These are the fascia." (2)

Looking at touch between people i see at first sight that these structures originating from the mesenchym taking place in every movement: if it is the lips, the fingers of a hand, leaning against somebody's shoulders. First of all it is always these structures that obviously make touch possible. Whether somebody is well cushioned or bony; whether someone has a bony figure or soft hands; whether someone's belly is withdrawn, all these are examples for manifestations of mesenchymal structures.

The cellular awareness of touch

But let me further deepen my view. Let us first agree to extend the term of connective tissue being not only the subcutane tissue. For further reflection i suggest to extend the term connecting tissue to the entire supportive tissue of the body including bones, ligaments and tendons, the tissue, coating the intestines and embedding nerves and vessels. So if i extend my view in this sense i find connective tissue structures of various kinds.

The body keeps changing the composition of the connective tissue throughout our whole life; some of these changes are limited in

duration. For example when connective tissue is thickening around a muscle and our shoulder hurts. Others last longer like for example when we twist our ankle and it is healing slowly with a remaining thickening and torsion of the ankle.

The mechanism of change of the connective tissue consists of - contracting and connecting: to gain stability and fight stress connective tissue will shorten, thicken and attach to neighbouring structures. Movement will become less effective because parts that could as well rest will take part in the movement; - thickening and shifting: thickening of tissue might cause displacement of a body segment or restrict movement possibilities of joints.

From this self-regulating mechanism of connective tissue result two different kinds of connective tissue according to different structural requirements of the body: the aerolar connective tissue is the most flexible, elastic and most widely manifold kind of tissue. Its fibres are connected with each other in all directions. Here the body fat is disposed and stored. This kind of tissue plays a fundamental role in the body fluidal circulation and the mechanics of canalization and distribution of body liquids. It can even function as a mantel between organs.

The jelly-like tissue, for example the umbilical navel-cord is only of minor interest for this article.

Fibrous white tissue is always formed where our body is exposed to extended stress. In this contest this type of tissue is necessarily tighter and less flexible. The higher degree of tightness results from the arrangement of fibres that appear parallel bundled. In the retinacula these are rather distinct to balance the highly contractive tensions thicker fascia ligaments can develop attached to the expanding tendons respectively forming pulley blocks thus supporting the power of the working muscles. Such ligaments can be found around bigger joints like for example ankles, knees, hip-joints, shoulder, elbows and wrists. If this type of tissue is connecting muscles and bones, respectively cartilage substance, it is classified as aponeurose or tendon.

Where ever even higher stability is needed like with sclerotic types of tissue (bones and cartilage substance) the organic collagen substance combines with other matter serving for

stability. Thus the kneecap can be regarded not so much as a bone inside the quadriceps-tendon but rather as a functionally required ossification of the tendon.

Connective tissue as a whole is enervated by various nervous fibres whose function is to control the circulation, the fluidal volume and sensitiveness to pain (sensitiveness to touch). Vice versa by intermediation of these nervous connections the connective tissue can thus report to nervous centers triggering self-regulating impulses. Thus connective tissue has a nervous controlled feedback mechanism being able to influence its own structure. For instance a protective posture caused by an accident will entail reduced nervous sensitivity in the injured part. Consequently you will find less movement and therefore even lesser feedback from this part. Thus the circle of increasing tightening of connective tissue is closing until being reversed on the nervous level (e.g. By feldenkrais-work) or on the level of connective tissue (e.g. By postural integration). The golgi-tendon-organ might play an important role in this feedback process (3). Connective tissue thus is a detailed description of those structures taking part in touch.

The biological awareness of touch

If i further extend my view, the general understanding of connective tissue remaining the same, i will find structures with name as follows: osteoplasts - pre-stages of osteocytes, forming the bone substance; the osteocytes - differentiated bone cells and the osteoclasts - these provide for continuous dissolvment of the ground bone substance formed by the osteoplasts. Thus the latter underlay permanent composition and decomposition. These internal correlations form the basic mechanism for the healing capacity of the bones after a fraction; forming a node (exostosis) etc. Depending on locality you will find various muscular cells in the connective tissue. I will talk about these more extensively elsewhere. Moreover a number of cells play an important role in the body's metabolism: histo-, mano-, lympho- and granulo-cytes and plasma cells. Further on the mast cells being located mainly around blood vessels. They consist of 3 active substances (histamines, serotonin, and heparin) that are significant for the consistence of the plasma. Not to forget the fat cells serving as deposits, the fibroplasts being able to form intercellular

substance. With their widely spread out cell pattern fibrocytes form a three-dimensional network helping to construct the ground structures of connective tissue. This can be well seen in the following illustration.

The ground substance of connective tissue is formed by fibroplasts, these simultaneously reacting on their own activity. This mechanism relating with the interaction of bone cells holding in equilibrium is called 'morphocycle' by varela/ frank (4). An older interpretation of changes effected by bodywork states that the chemical condition of intercellular substance changing from gel to sol is caused by mechanical influences (e.g. by pressure) regarded as the physiological basis of changes during bodywork (5). This was later called the thixotropic effect (6). But if the theory of morphocycles should be valid then chemical change by the correlation of fibroplasts and fibrocytes would be compensated. Because within the connective tissue the latter functions like a hormone or neurotransmitter in other areas: they are able to process special changes in connective tissue: for instance they change gel-like tissue into collagen structures which they can further transform into cartilage and bones by varying the chemical composition of the intercellular substance formed by them. The reaction on the nervous cells and connections with the hormone- and glandular system would have to be examined more closely.

Thus we see a whole range of cellular structures being involved in touch and therefore in changes resulting from bodywork as not yet having a complete presentation (giving a complete explanation of the changes) of the interrelationship of all these structures. To find answers to questions regarding changes in tissue resulting from connections between structures and duration and speed we have to further extend our view into the molecular structure of a cell. This shall happen as follows.

Chemical awareness of touch

On the molecular level of touch there is contact between connective tissue mainly consisting of proteoglycans; e.g. Molecular structures consisting of proteins and polysaccharids touching each other. These relatively big molecules are able to bind a large quantity of cellular liquid and salts.

Connective tissue feels softer if the molecular structure is more open and it feels tighter if the molecular structure is denser. In the latter case for instance less fluid is being stored. All organic connections decompose into carbon when being burnt. These circumstances led wilhelm reich (7) to watch the molecular movements of these carbon structures. Thereby he came to the conclusion that the observable movements could not be explained by the previous interpretation of the so called brown'sche molecular movement. According to this theory those movements would have to

- a) have a continuous effect
- b) be observable with all particles of equal size at the same time and
- c) only happen in space.

You should not be able to detect contractions or expansions of particles because these could not be explained by mutual collision of particles.

But reich did not find these conditions in his observations. On the contrary sometimes these movements were existent sometimes not. They appeared and disappeared. The particles could expand and contract again. They were vibrating or glimmering they also performed movements that could not be explained by the recent model therefore reich developed the thesis that movability, for instance of red blood cells could not originate from external collisions of cells with each other but could be explained by the membrane's energetic charge of these organelles (he called them biones). The internal movements can be explained much more easily by the model of a changing energetic load of cells. Reich asked where this biologically effective energy originated from and found in experiments: as mortified cells did not have these movements any more, the energy had to be gained from the activity of the metabolism of the cell itself. He called this energy "orgon". It had to be developed in a subtler area as in the biological one. We will get to this in the next paragraph.

Reich could see that the biological functions of the complex human organism (charge, discharge, building up etc.) Is already perceivable in the movements of the plasma and of the smallest particles. The basic functions of highly developed organisms are exactly the same as in the smallest contractile plasma particle.

Mechanistic explanations like the brown'sche molecular movement or merely chemical reflections will fail in this case because it is not a matter of substance but a matter of functions of energy. By trying to explain the origin of the energy of life from the biological functions of the organism itself reich developed a connection between biological knowledge and einstein's energy/matter equation in physics.

His contribution for explaining changes obtained by bodywork is as follows: by manipulations of tissue it leads to a balance of bioelectric e.g. Orgonotic energies within intercellular/molecular structures.

Here i want to make a small diversion to present different treatment strategies resulting from different approaches to bodywork. I will start with the question:

How are shortenings of muscles balanced according to these different systems?

If we want to balance the shortening of a muscle neurologically this is possible by obtaining a stretch-reflex of the shortened muscle via a shortening of the antagonist. Another possibility would be to momentarily increase the shortening thus provoking relaxation. Or if i exercise stretching with another muscle of the same structure and then have it shift to the effected muscle by visualisation - thus via the nervous system. As a last variation on this level could be mentioned: letting the owner of the muscle understand its function and then train him in a movement sequence that is more effective in this function. These and similar approaches correspond to present movement schools like grinder, jacobsen, alexander or feldenkrais-work.

If we want to balance the shortening on the level of connective tissue this can happen by direct manipulation: separating brushes between single groups of muscles or subtly influencing the lamella-like structure of muscles. Operative cross section (prolonging, shortening) of muscles should also be mentioned here. We can find these approaches in classical massage as well as in various body orientated therapy models: hakomi, lomi, rolfing postural integration, structural integration, rebalancing etc. If we work on the energetic level of wilhelm reich it is of central

importance to experience the emotional contents of an area and consciously express emotions that might be blocked (for instance by exercises or manipulation of tissue) thus making it possible to balance the interrelation areas of tension in the respective parts. Changing of diet or temperature treatments of tissue (8) can be associated to this level of possible muscle relaxation. Some schools (for instance yoga) try to reach relaxation by respiration and gymnastic exercises. Especially in rolfing it is possible to change the structure of intercellular substance from gel to sol and thereby softening a muscle.

So i can see that according to the explanatory model for the shortening of muscle different methods can be applied. In the practise of the bodypsychotherapists the various aspects of this description get mixed. Let us further extend our view to explore explanations for changes effected by bodywork. I propose we go to the sub nuclear space.

Physical awareness of touch

In the last paragraph i presented the molecular structures being involved in touch. This paragraph is about the components of these molecules, the atoms. I know that in general atoms consist of nucleus, protons, and electrons and according to the number and orbit of the two latter we can distinguish the different atoms; for instance hydrogen from oxygen atoms. The two following phenomena are of interest for our question:

- 1) if the distances between nucleus and his two satellites are so large that i have to state that the smallest components that i know of that are involved in touch, largely consist of the space between them or of nothing. But then how could we explain the objectiveness and diversity of touch i have mentioned in the beginning of this article?
- 2) protons and electrons rotate round the nucleus with such a speed that in front of our eyes we get the impression of something static. The perception of the nuclear situation can be compared with that of a rotor of an airplane which - standing still - shows two wings and with increasing rotation appears as a disc before our eyes.

3) at the divide of the nucleus scientists discovered even smaller units. These units being located within the sub nuclear space of touch either react as matter or as energy. They confront our observations with the question, if i cannot classify it this or that way so then what is it? The munic physicist strzempa-depre (9) describes the powers located in this sub nuclear space as the basis of diverse medical phenomenon like the effectiveness of acupuncture or homöopathy. My professional knowledge of physics does not allow me any insight into possible faults of his argumentation and thus for my work in bodypsychotherapy i have to assume that these powers (quantum) are also responsible for the effected changes. Physicist of various fields in research experienced that these quantum relate to the hypothesis of the scientists experimenting with them. Or to put it differently the powers located in sub nuclear space present themselves as particles to the scientist doing research for further particles whereas an observer concentrated on energetic phenomena will measure a certain frequency.

So in this article i have to consider this as a fact. Which implies that the mental attitude of both client and bodypsychotherapist does influence the sub nuclear and thus molecular and biological basis of change. The powers in sub nuclear space react in relation to the mental attitude of the bodypsychotherapists (10). This thesis implies that a mental attitude will express itself in the frequency of "something in sub nuclear space". So to say a micro-miniaturised physical code or to be more precise this code is the frequence, is a mental attitude identical with the phenomena in sub nuclear space.

Regarding it like this, there in no question of "how" does the emotional state of therapist and client affect the work because on the level of physics of touch, touch is identical with the touches.

Therefore at the end of this article i come to the question of the **adequate mental attitude of client and therapist in bodypsychotherapy.**

Those questions related to the attitude taken by the client are well discussed in the work of manuela brinkmann (11). She makes

clear that a narcotized or sleeping person getting a connective tissue treatment will show only a minor or no effect at all. In chapter 4.2. (12) she describes the "kinesthetic trance" as the adequate state of the client. Hereby the client senses his body more intensively as in every day life. The client's attention resting in the part where he is touched and able to expand to all parts where effects of touch are being experienced. Usually the client in the kinesthetic trance does not only have awareness for single limbs or parts of the body but experiences his body as a whole, from the top of the soles of the feet and into its depths thus three dimensional. In this state a number of reproductive functions will begin in the body giving the client a profoundly relaxed and wholesome feeling.

Before gerda boysen described in her book (13) that a relaxed attitude of her clients could be recognized by a strong feeling of flow. The detailed descriptions of these sensations of flow strongly resemble those of kinesthetic trance from brinkmann. In his work die entdeckung des orgons 1 (see above) wilhelm reich called this sensation the experience of the entire orgiastic potential of a person and drew a connection with the freeing sexual energies.

I mention these three authors at this place to make clear to the reader that there is a certain bodily existence being named differentiated by different schools that is obviously helpful for the success of a treatment. So i can go on thinking about the question of the **adequate mental state of the bodypsychotherapist him/herself:**

Firstly i will give a retrospective summary: in the beginning of this article i prosaically described different kinds of touch and their effects then i presented different levels of touch. An adequate attitude of the bodypsychotherapist, if he wants to be effective, has to be able to differentiate between various levels of touch. To find out which mental state is most adequate. I first of all had to explore various mental states for myself. I examined effects of the following ways of inner thinking:

- I tried the attitude of: i-know-better-and-do-what-i-think-is-right; a way i found with many doctors or masseurs or healers. People who collect information from my speech, body, general

- impression and register them on a - imagined or actual -
diagnose pad in order to get to therapeutically proceedings;
- I trained myself in going through a series of therapeutically steps with the client that had been derived from a previously fixed aim thus leading from the present state to the aim; "so well, you do not want to be this shy any longer. Therefore we should first of all examine your resources and then go through some exercises for creative selfexpression."
 - With the help of general models of psychological and physiological human development i concluded his biographic experiences from a given 10 physiological state. Then i let the client go through this experience and experience its emotional meaning in order to get to an integrated physiological state. "yes, shout, simply cry out your rage. Hate your mama, hate her and simply let these feelings that have always blocked your relationship to women come out."
 - I trained associative, analogous, incoherent thinking optionally combining various information's (theories, use of language, emotional process) to find out the spot around which the personality is moving. "what does it tell me, or what kinds of projections is activated within myself if a client is wearing only black clothes. Her hair being greasy and minor injuries being detectable on her hands and around the right eyebrow?"
 - I visualized inner images about my client and trained in developing emotions connected with these images. With this i learned to differentiate where the main disturbance of the client lies and which psychological or physiological structures are compensations. " i see him as a knight before my eye and his weakest part is at his spine, like in the old saga of siegfried ... Consequently the tense muscles of the belly are just the result of this weak back and maybe they will loosen up if we succeed in strengthening his back or his inner support."
 - I trained (with nlp techniques) to feel and think like my clients feel and think. I imitated their language, pitch of the tone, their respiration movements. The body posture as a whole and noticed their involuntary movements. With these information's i tried to get an impression in which way he or she organized his or her experiences and where possible solutions could to be found.

- I had a check list about what can be analyzed and after this overall analysis i thought over every detail until i could form my opinion.

I found out that each of these mental attitudes can effect a certain level of touch. And i experienced that the beginner in bodywork permanently tends to get confused between these different levels of touch. Today i can deduct from this experience that first of all for the bodypsychotherapist it is important to train himself or herself into a stabel anchoring of his attention within him or herself. This enables him/her to get to know the depth of touch layer for layer. And only after a series of experiences in the different layers will the bodypsychotherapist get to know the level of sub nuclear resonance within him/herself and understand that here the most extensive integration of other levels is possible. According to my own experience in this process he/she will live through times of intensive confusion. I also met some colleagues going through periods of depression before their attention opened up to the physical level of touch.

Summarizing we can say that an adequate attitude for a good bodypsychtherapist can be found in a strongly anchored attention within his/her own body. Out of this anchoring in the course of his/her experience develops a perception of different levels of touch and he/she learn to flexibly adapt his/her attitude to the particular client. Earlier maybe i would have called this prayer or healing. Today i would be able to inform a bodypsychotherapist differentiated about the levels of touch, kind of intention, kind of technique to proceed with, for the integration of their clients.

Thus it has become possible to so-to-say map those powers having an effect on the healing process in a way simplifying their use by the new body oriented forms of treatment the map of healing of traditional medicine has been extended. Without anchoring the attention of the bodypsychotherapist in his/her own body the source of these powers will remain unseen.

Bibliography

- (1) Osho-quotation from darshan diary, chapter 18, series Hammer on the Rocks; with permission of Osho International Foundation, Switzerland
- (2) Rolf; Strukturelle Integration, munich 1987, p. 38
- (3) Sh. Rolf Lines v. Winter 1989, boulder/colorado; p. 19
- (4) In: The organ of Form, london 1987
- (5) J. L. Oschwan; The natural Science of Healing; unpublished manuscript 1986
- (6) Dean Juhan, Körperarbeit, munich 1992
- (7) in: Die Entdeckung des Organs; Frankfurt 1976, p. 49 ff
- (8) Sapega, Quedenfeld and other biophysical Factors in Range of motion Excercises; Physician & Sports Medicine 12/81
- (9) Die Physik der Erleuchtung, Munich 1988
- (10) Compare f. A. Wolf; Der Quantensprung ist keine Hexerei (The quantum Leap is not Witchery); Stuttgart 1986; p. 286; he is talking about a nuclear awareness
- (11) Brinkmann, Manuela; Rolfing und NLP, paderborn 1989
- (12) ibid., p.159 ff
- (13) Über den Körper die Seele heilen; munich 1987; p. 49/50

contact:

bernhard schlage
bodypsychotherapist, author

gemeinschaftspraxis kugel e.v.
in der steinriede 7, hofgebäude
30161 hannover - Germany
telefon & fax 0049 (0)511 / 161 42 11
e-mail: post@bernhardschlage.de
internet: www.bernhardschlage.de