

## **Movement and Mindfulness: Personal and Transpersonal Psychosynthesis through Kinesthetic Sensing**

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**B**ody movement is our native language. As anyone who has raised a child knows, our world is full of stretches and arches, twists, turns, rolls, wiggles, and countless other moves, all in a graduating progression from lying to creeping, crawling, standing and walking. And that’s just the first year. From that point, we gain increasing mastery of our movement, venturing ever outward into our environment, curious about all that is within our grasp.

Our trip outward continues through our childhood and teenage years, and into adulthood. It takes on a bittersweet aspect, however, as the moving child is transformed into the thinking adult, often leaving the immediacy of bodily experience behind. It is at the tips of our fingers, so to speak, and yet increasingly out of our experience, replaced quite ironically by figures of speech: “I can’t quite put my finger on it,” “I’m getting a leg up on the competition,” “I just did a complete 180 on that one.”



Our return to our native language and our childhood world of movement beckons, and brings great joy to the adult long removed from its pleasures. It can also bring pain, for those who were abused, traumatized, or in other ways wounded in body or feelings in their early years. It is a necessary trip, still, in order to reclaim our birthright of a life in and with our bodies.

Psychosynthesis offers a wise and welcoming context for this journey. (See the Editor's Introduction for a discussion of aspects of Psychosynthesis theory that particularly invite the integration of body and movement awareness with other aspects of our being.) We need such a context if we are to imagine and then fashion ourselves into our true, holistic potential of body-feelings-mind-spirit. It is not enough to take up a sport, "hit the gym" regularly, or even dance. These activities can heighten our sensory awareness, but more is required: our body life must connect to our sense of self, our will, our presence, and our growth into the transpersonal aspects of being.

I see an opportunity for such an integration of body and Self in the purposeful awakening and use of the *kinesthetic sense*, our sense of body position and motion. In what follows, I will guide you on a kinesthetic journey into subtleties of inward and outward movement, with a purpose of encouraging your moment-to-moment "movement mindfulness." This is a journey that I have taken myself, first as a moving child with an insatiable appetite for action, and then on to college with desks and libraries and the "life of the mind." From there, it was into the world of dance to reawaken my daily contact with learning, refining, and performing movements, and then to Psychosynthesis, to bring balance, perspective, self-knowledge and connection with my spiritual nature, and to place my kinesthetic awareness in a context of personal and spiritual growth and presence with others.

Part of this journey will be informed by the system of movement analysis and notation developed by Rudolf Laban, currently in use worldwide in a variety of contexts in which movement can play a primary role: dance, nonverbal communication, cross-cultural studies, counseling psychology, dance therapy, and spiritual practice, to name just a few. Laban, a contemporary of Assagioli, saw movement as the province of all people, and encouraged the celebration of everyday and work movement in large pageants called "movement choirs" (Laban, 1975, pp.154-156). His theories also form a foundational element of the curriculum for certification as a Dance Therapist through the American Dance Therapy Association ([adta.org](http://adta.org)).



As a choreographer, I have a keen interest in form as well as content (for example, the dance steps, or "content," could be hip hop or ballet, while the form is a circle.) The form I have chosen for this essay is "inside to outside and bottom to top." Thus we will start with our breathing, and then move our awareness to the motion in our surrounding space. From there we will look to our feet, and work our way up the legs, torso, and head, and lastly the hands. This will be a trip of bones, rather than muscles, energy centers, fluids or other bodily systems (Cohen, 1993), and the reader should know that there are many ways to do this, to develop a present-time body practice that connects us more closely to our *Self*. I have enlisted the help of several other psychosynthesists in the exercises that follow, and encourage you to make a regular practice of those exercises that appeal to you.

After becoming fully present through the following series of movement meditations and activities, we will turn to the use of movement in a psychosynthesis counseling session, and I offer a "template" for working with movement cues that arise spontaneously as a part of a client's process. A brief case study on movement work with a persistent subpersonality will follow, and then concluding remarks.

### **The Moment of Movement**

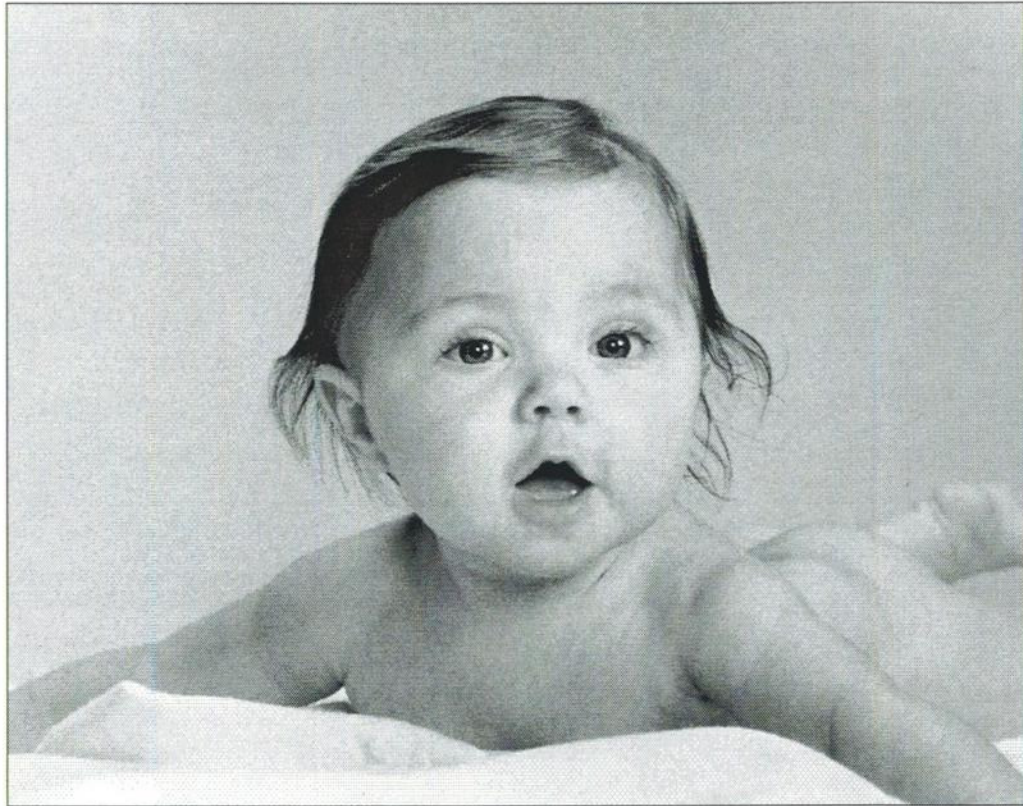
The following suggestions are meant to activate your *kinesthetic sense*, both as an observer and as a participant. Please get a movement sense of these images:

- A leaf spiraling downward from a tree.
- A feather on the surface of a pond.
- A cirrus cloud drifting by.

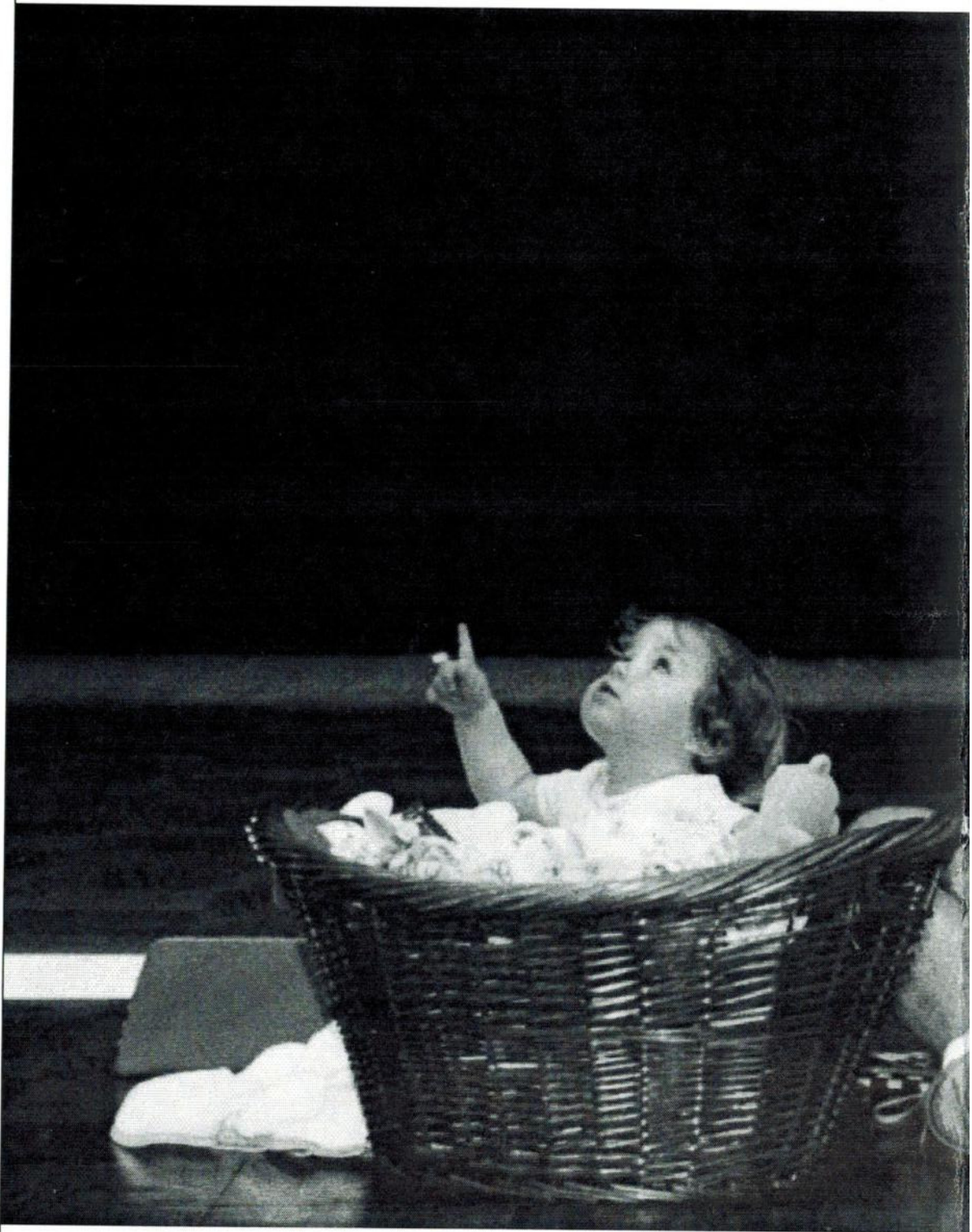
If you are *seeing* these images, take a moment to also *feel* and *sense* them in your *kinesthetic sense*. For example:

- The leaf moves somewhat capriciously, darting and then floating, making three repeated turns, and then a sudden change of direction.
- The feather rests, so lightly, that it barely disturbs the surface of the water.
- The cloud, a delicate wisp, drifts across the sky almost imperceptibly slowly.

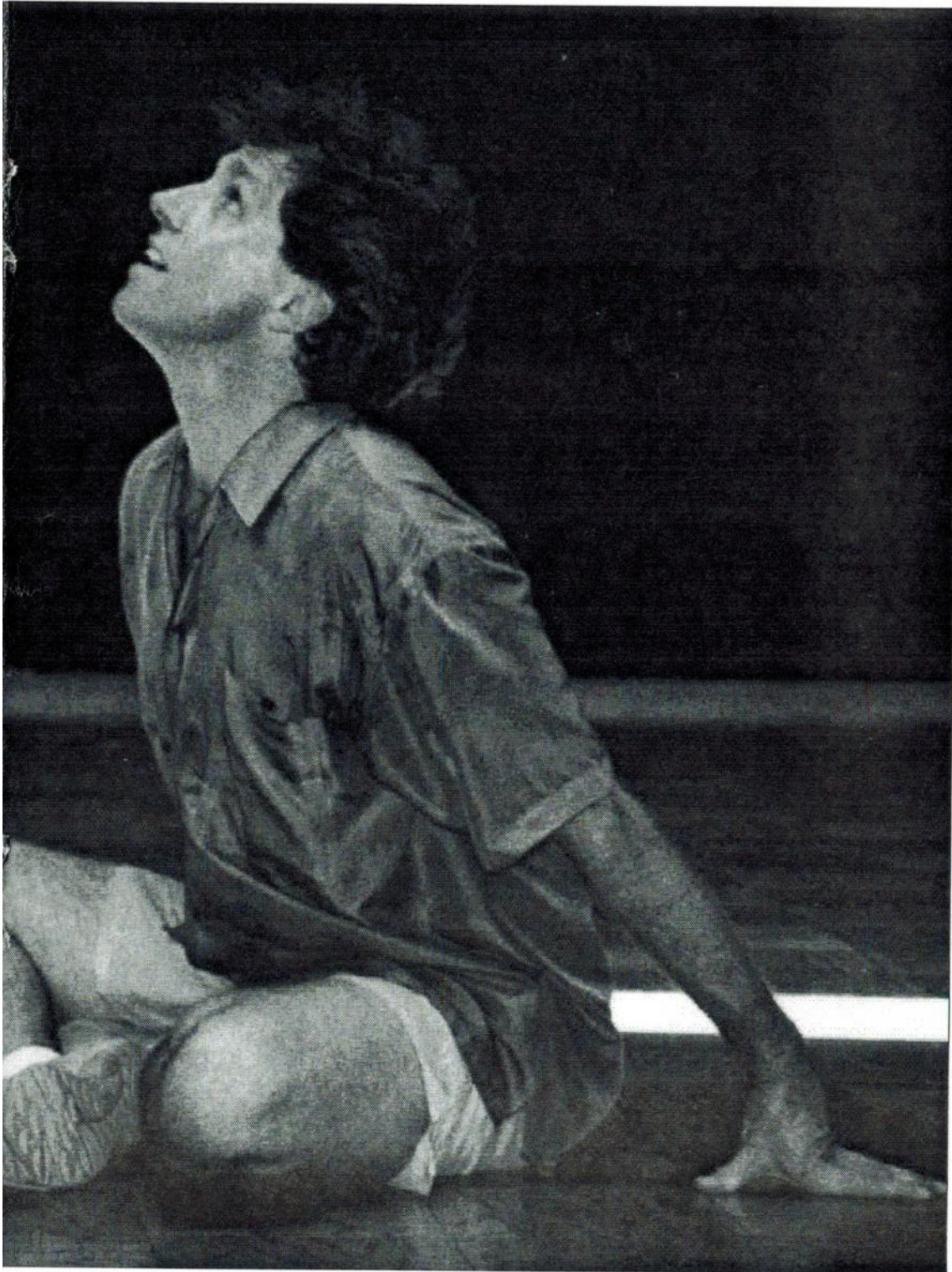


















All three—leaf, feather, and cloud—share a light quality or character, and yet vary in their timing: the leaf is alternately fast and slow, the feather is lying in apparent stillness, and the cloud floats along in a glacial drift.

Now, let us consider human movement:

- A child swings on a swing, higher and higher, finally reaching the maximum pendulum arc possible.
- Two joggers pass in opposite directions, acknowledging each other with a small lift of the hand.
- An older man pedals by on a bicycle.

These three activities share a steady and *repetitive rhythm* as a baseline, an even da, da, da, da, at different *speeds*. The child's rhythm is the slowest—swing . . . swing . . . swing; the rhythm of the man on the bicycle is a little faster—peddle..peddle..peddle..peddle; and the joggers' rhythm is faster still—foot..foot..foot..foot. The child's movement has the most *force* or power, this being at its maximum impact at the bottom of the swing arc, while the joggers have a lesser force, the impact of their footfalls; and the cyclist has lesser still, but his force is more even, throughout the pedal stroke.

Having sensed the movements of these three activities, try *sensing yourself into them*, not as spectators, but as the movers. Feel the swinging, the jogging, and the pedaling, *one at a time* and in *real-time*, the time it would actually take to do them, rather than a condensed or “fast forward” of them. If you experience images along with the movement sensations, have them be from the *inside looking out*, as it were, out past your nose, down at your arms, and so on. As you play with your kinesthetic imagination in this way, projecting your movement sensibilities into the three actions, and others that will follow, feel free to reject any suggestion from me that doesn't feel right. For example, you may not feel like swinging high right now. We all have our preferences and our limits. Thus, the “extreme sports” subpersonality may want to experience a virtual bungee jump, while the “people person” may enjoy the sensation of holding hands in a circle with a group of friends. Additionally, each subpersonality may have momentary preferences for action or repose. As it feels right, now try these three actions as the mover, in real time. . .



There are almost no limits on our possible movement experiences when using our *kinesthetic imagination*. We also have a lifelong record of actual movement experiences, which is our *kinesthetic memory*. These recede from us like water heading downstream, with our last breath being the closest to our recall, and perhaps some outstanding movement event years back still fresh in our body's memory. Also, our movement skills—knitting, shoveling snow, dicing carrots, riding bicycles—retain a freshness from their repeated use and from their rhythmic character, enhanced by our ability to “rehearse” them even while our body is in repose.

This area of movement recall represents a fertile ground for study when approached from a psychosynthetic perspective. In the above examples, we focused on lightness and strength, as well as timing, examples of what Laban calls dynamics or “effort,” a translation of the original “antrieben,” which means shifting or changing. These variations in timing and force, along with other dynamic elements of focus and flow, combine in distinct and decipherable patterns to give these repetitive movements their rhythmic sense and particular character. In the Laban system, we call this the “phrasing” of a sequence of movement. (Bartenieff, 1980), and these can be notated in full detail, like a passage of music. Such phrases can constitute our personal movement signature, revealing “characteristic routes of mental and emotional activity” (North, 1975) through our repeated daily movement patterns. These can be observed and notated by a movement-trained therapist. Imagine the power of recognizing the presence of subpersonalities through their movement signatures. Along with future (imagined) and past (recalled) movement experiences, we are in such a way invited to consider our movement in the *present*, registered in an on-going movement stream by our real-time kinesthetic sense. After all, there's no time like the present.

According to the Zen masters, there's actually no time *but* the present. As the Zen story goes, there are three great breaths in life: our first breath, our last breath, and *this* breath. What does our attention to *this* breath provide for us? Well, to begin, it brings us into the *present moment*. Being present with the movement and sensations of our breathing provides us sensory contact with our bodies in the moment, and, in a simple expansion of awareness, with our surroundings. In fact, all movement brings us into the present moment and invites us to connect with our surroundings as well. This is not such a difficult shift of our awareness, to shift, say, from our thoughts to our breath and bodily motions, and on into an awareness of the surrounding space. We can perform this



shift in awareness like the flick of a switch. It is more difficult, however, *staying* present, and this is the task and goal—the *practice*—of many body/mind disciplines: to be in the present and aware of our body, our movement, and our surroundings.

Perhaps it is the very simplicity and immediacy of breathing that makes it so useful as a beginning meditation device, allowing us to *center* ourselves and come into the present, to *disidentify* with our thoughts, or to become present with another person. The following exercise will allow you to connect first within your body, and then with your surrounding space:

I

Like to

Begin with this:

Make yourself comfortable,

And bring yourself into the present.

Take several normal, attentive breaths, then

Breathe TALL, up and down, like a flower growing.

Breathe WIDE, side to side, like arms spreading to hug.

Breathe DEEP, front to back, like a handshake, forward and aft.

Breathe into the surrounding sphere, the kinesphere of your movement.

Now, become aware of the movement around you, your “movement field.”

This exercise creates a *synthesis* of inside and outside, and is presented for this reason in the form of a synthesis triangle, a basic model of psychosynthesis, where two opposites (bottom corners) synthesize into something new (apex.) Here, our perception of the movement in our surroundings (outer), and our sensory awareness of our own body (inner) synthesize into a new experience of self-in-movement, where inner and outer blend in our present movement field. We now can respond to our surroundings from a well-established contact with our breathing and our body sensations. From a movement perspective, we may even ask where self ends and the surrounding movement begins. Do not our movements reverberate into our surroundings, and our surroundings into us? A caterpillar's question. . . a movement koan.

Having moved from inside to outside, let us continue our journey, from the bottom up. Centered in our breath and in our sense of the space surrounding us, let's take a walk, starting slowly. Slow walking, like breathing, can be used as a *centering meditation*. Dr. Phyllis Clay, a psy-



chosynthesist and amateur competitive ballroom dancer, offers these suggestions in her Slow Walk exercise:

Preparation: This can be done indoors or out—doing it on the earth is nice. Standing comfortably, take two or three deep breaths, letting each exhale take you closer to center.

The Walk: Shift your weight entirely to one foot and very slowly move forward with your body, allowing your free leg to move forward (again very slowly), so that it is ready to support the weight of your body as it moves over the free foot. (Hint: try not to stick your free leg out in front of your body. Keeping your knees ever-so-slightly flexed helps.) Be aware of the heel of your foot making contact with the ground. Then continue to move slowly forward so that the middle of your foot, and finally the ball of your foot, is absorbing more of your weight, until your weight is completely transferred and the foot that was free is now your standing leg. Slowly, as you continue to move your body forward, bring the leg that is newly free through so it is ready to support the weight of your body as it moves over the free foot. Repeat this process for five to ten minutes (or longer—you may need to "build up" to it), continually inviting your awareness back to your foot's contact with the ground.

Allow yourself to feel awkward at first (or forever!). It takes intention and patience to develop new skills . . . most of us are used to running through life. The slow walk invites us to develop an entirely new sense of balance. Note that the slow walk can also be used to develop will, as in Assagioli's "useless exercises" (1974/1999, pp. 38-41).

Having experienced this meditative walking, we can now pick up the pace. Returning to the notion of *footfalls* from our joggers above, let us consider what our *feet* can tell us about our inner life, and how we might use our footfalls first to learn about ourselves, and then to have an impact through asserting our will physically. Our intention is to connect our bodily movement to our inner process, through becoming aware of our walking rhythms in the midst of daily activities:

Listen to the rhythm of your footfalls, their phrasing. They will vary in force and tempo if you first pretend to ignore them, and



then become aware of them intentionally, without altering them. Sometimes we step lightly and calmly, and sometimes we press forward resolutely. Our rhythm can be steady and repeating, or erratic and intermittent. We shift directions, come to a “stand still,” move our weight over more onto one foot, pause, start up again with renewed purpose and direction, and so on. Try humming your footfalls as you go: hmm, hmm, h , h, hmm.

This can reveal a lot about our mind states and our temporary identifications with various parts of ourselves. Who is it “pulling the puppet strings” to create this particular rhythm, this amount of force, or these stances? As our sense of identity shifts among *sub-personalities*, our movement shifts as well. Can you recognize a particular subpersonality when their rhythms appear? How might some of your common subpersonalities go about their business, footfall-wise? Accept them. Shhhh. . . here’s one now! Listen and learn.

Now beginning with your kinesthetic sensing, having established your rhythms, you can deliberately alter the way you walk to have a corresponding effect on your inner experience, and to strengthen your will. As Assagioli points out with his second *psychological law*: “Attitudes, movements and actions tend to evoke corresponding images and ideas; these, in turn . . . evoke or intensify corresponding emotions and feelings” (1974/1999, p. 52). Try a direct or a meandering pathway. Try adding power to your step by pushing off the back foot more, or add lightness by increasing the sensitivity of your feet. Try walking with masterful control, or with fluent abandon. Play around! Take a hike!

Sometimes we walk, and sometimes we *are walked*. This can be translated into how we set the table, or how we brush our teeth or dress. One of the elements of grace is to be there, to be *choosing* our movements.

Heading upwards now, let us consider the *knees*. Much maligned when not working properly, our knees patiently serve us. They seem, at times, like little subpersonalities themselves, a set of twins that act older than we really are. Perhaps, then, we should approach them in the classic manner of working with subpersonalities, after Vargiu (1977, pp. 51-90), *to recognize, accept, dialogue, integrate, and synthesize*:



### “Ode to the Knees”

Oh, knees, I **recognize** how patiently you support my travels.  
By flexing, you **accept** the bumps on my path,  
And through extending, you propel me along.  
You are, mostly, an abstraction, a location for physical **dialogue**  
Between femur, tibia, and fibula . . . but you are real enough.  
When I stand, with each of you sharing my weight equally,  
Softly flexing, you allow me to ground my energies, **integrating** my  
Awareness and physical presence, a supreme **synthesis**.

How do your knees dialogue with you, or serve as a barometer of your mind-states? Standing symmetrically, with your knees softening forward an inch or so, grounding your weight through your feet into the earth... this can be like finding your center, returning to the “I.”

Next up, the pelvis. In dance, our pelvis is experienced as the *center of gravity*, to be placed over the supporting foot when balancing, or projected *off the vertical* to gain momentum and risk in movement. The pelvis provides a home for the heads of the femurs, forming with them, in the view of movement educator Irene Dowd, a Gothic arch, with two flying buttresses (femurs) and a chock stone (pelvis) providing an uncanny combination of stability and mobility (1981). We stride across the landscape like some fantastic creatures in a sci-fi movie, but it's just *us*. This is an area of the body that has gotten short shrift in the history of Psychosynthesis, not to mention also in a number of the world's great religions. It is fraught with peril for the high-minded or the mythologically oriented, dating back at least as far as the Garden of Eden and the trouble with that snake. It holds great future interest for psychosynthesists, as we seek to embrace the body and its earthly experience as an aspect of our full humanness. For now, a haiku:

Pubic symphysis  
Ilium and ischium  
Launching life, and love

Continuing north, it's a short hop to the lower belly, the site of the *dan ti'en*, the center of the body in Chinese martial arts. Dr. Janet Messer, a psychosynthesist and T'ai Chi practitioner, offers the following body protocol to allow for a stronger relationship between self and body:



1. Sit quietly and breathe in and out through your nose a little more slowly than you normally do.
2. Rest your hands on your lower belly, a few inches below your navel.
3. Place your attention in your lower belly, in the center of your body. Eyes can be open or closed.
4. Ask your body what it needs and listen for the answer, in whatever form it comes. Answers may come as images, words or phrases, body sensations, or physical impulses. Stay with the conversation with your body, continuing to keep your attention in your center, as long as you like.
5. Check in with your body in this way at intervals throughout the day, asking "What do I need right now?"

Let's now consider the spine, quite a miracle of evolutionary design, connecting lower and upper body in a cascade of small bones, seven curving under the head, twelve reversing the curve to house the thorax, and five reversing once again to join several additional bones that merge to form the sacrum, which becomes part of the pelvic bowl. Add the tailbone, and we have four elegant curves that articulate with each other to shape our uprightness. With the head balancing on top, the shoulders and chest, hips and buttocks below, how expressive this all can be! Psychosynthesist Will Parfitt, in *Psychosynthesis: the Elements and Beyond*, suggests experimenting with the Three Body Weights (2003, from Chapter 17, reprinted here with permission from the author).

The three main body weights, as often used by actors and dancers in their work, are the head, the first weight, which sits upon the thorax, the second body weight, which sits upon the third, the pelvis. We can easily move our focus of attention between these different body weights. Move your body a little, and as you do so get a sense of aligning the three weights. If you imagine a cord that comes out of the top of your head and pulls you up slightly, and another cord that comes out from your perineum—between your legs—and down into the earth, with a weight on it, pulling you down slightly, it helps to align the three weights.

Once you get a sense of these three weights, one resting on the other, you start to notice various things. For a start you can see how comedians do funny walks. You might like to try some for yourself—simply allow different body weights, or combinations of weights, to lead as you walk. Then try holding back one of the



body weights as you walk and notice the different effects, not only on how you walk, but how you feel in yourself. More importantly, you can start to realise where you lead from, and where you hold back.

I often find that when I'm out walking, or after I've done some good strong exercise, my mind seems clearer—I can think better. At these times I am 'thinking on my feet' or doing 'pelvic thinking'. Pelvic-thinking isn't just about being obsessed with sex, any more than heart thinking is just about being all lovey-dovey, or head thinking is all about solving puzzles. When our energies are flowing and our three body weights are aligned, we think more clearly. We don't have to locate our thinking in our head, heart, pelvis, or anywhere else, it just happens where and when it happens.

Lest we overlook one of the most expressive parts of our body, let us focus on the *hands*. Another set of twins, this time more obviously in mirror image of each other, our hands are, like our spine, a marvel of evolutionary engineering. Capable of a range of articulations from shaking a fist to playing a sonata, they amaze further by their range of motion in the kinesphere. Being attached through a flexible wrist to a rotating forearm and hinging elbow, with all this being connected via a pivoting joint at the head of the humerus, and with this connection itself being able to range about the shoulder area, the hands can reach to nearly limitless locations about us, serving our bidding. They can also transcend functionality to help us know our selves, as the following activity suggests:

### **Hand Dance**

Good dancers begin with a warm-up. Start by washing your hands . . . slowly, attentively, like the two friends they've been all these years. Now, try a few gestures with your hands, opening your experience to the emotional resonance or images created by them. Try a gentle clasp. Take this in. Try prayer hands. A high five. A spider doing push-ups on a mirror. One hand placing a pretend wedding band on the other. "Here's the church, here's the steeple. . . " And anything else that comes to you. Now, having finished the warm-up, tune in to some aspect of your psychosynthesis process: a subpersonality, an image, an emerging quality. Let it fill you. Experience this as movement from your kinesthetic sense.



Where is the motion in it? How would it move if it did move? Let your hands begin to express this movement, with eyes open or closed. Stay connected to the aspect you are working with, and let your hands create the movement. If a relationship is implied, you can let each hand take a part. After exploring for a while, condense and shape it so that you can do it in 5 or 10 seconds. Then make an even shorter, more essential version, that you can do in public without being noticed. Use this as grounding for your emerging process.

Having completed our journey from inside to outside and bottom to top, and out to the hands, let us try an extended exercise that reveals and utilizes the dynamic interplay between the psychological functions of thought, feeling, and sensation. Psychosynthesist Abby Seixas, in her book *Finding the Deep River Within*, offers an exploration of feelings that includes a grounding in bodily cues. (© 2006, Abby Seixas. Reprinted here with permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.)

### **Befriend a Feeling**

Take a couple of deep breaths and allow your awareness to move inward. Now, recall a situation in the recent past that evoked mildly difficult or uncomfortable feelings. Don't choose a major fight with a loved one, a very upsetting incident at work, or the hardest time you've had in the last year. Apply the principle of "small steps," ... choosing something relatively easy to work with. For example, being stuck in traffic; waiting for someone who was late to meet you; reading an obituary or a sad news story; noticing a mild but unfamiliar physical sensation or symptom.

Once you have chosen a situation, go back to it and re-live it as best as you can. In your imagination, slow down the experience or the sequence of events, and ask yourself, "What am I feeling?" See if you can name whatever feeling or feelings are present for you in this situation. Anger? Frustration? Resentment? Sadness? Anxiety? Fear? Panic? Disgust? Shame? Guilt? Despair? Is there some combination of two or more feelings? If so, for the purposes of this exercise, choose whichever feeling is the deepest or strongest, most prominent one in your experience.

Notice any thoughts you may have in response to this feeling. Thoughts about a feeling are not the same as the raw energy of the



feeling itself. This step is a chance to become conscious of the thoughts or stories we tell ourselves about what we are feeling. Take your time to become aware of the thoughts that go along with the feeling. For example, "Here I go again, always getting upset over little things." "I hate being angry. It's such an ugly feeling." "This anger feels so good. Why don't I let myself feel this more often?" "Of course I got angry. Anyone would be angry at what he did to me!" With an attitude of curiosity and non-judgmental awareness, just notice and get familiar with the story-line that accompanies this feeling. You can name this "Story-line." Or "Thoughts about anger."

Now turn your attention to your body. Ask yourself, "How do I experience this \_\_\_\_\_ (name the feeling you have identified) in my body?" For example, do you notice: Shallowness or tightness in your breathing? Clenching or tightness, in the hands or chest, shoulders? jaw? stomach? Hollowness in the gut? Shaking or tingling in the arms or legs? Heat or cold in some part or all of your body? Numbness, or deadness in some part or all of your body?

These are just a few possibilities. Bring your awareness to your body and try to listen to it and observe it. Again, as best you can, be curious to notice body sensations with a non-judgmental awareness, not trying to change them, but simply noticing. You can name these sensations as you notice them also: "Tightness," "Heat," "Shakiness," and so on.

Staying with the sensation of this feeling in your body, as best as you can, let it be, allow it, give it space, breathe with it. There are all different ways of saying, make friends with the feeling. Breathing with or breathing into the body sensations that accompany the feeling can help evoke this accepting, spacious attitude. Don't try to make the feeling change or go away. Just allow it and get to know it. As you do this, notice what happens. Does the feeling intensify? Dissipate? Stay the same?

As you allow and breathe with the feeling, you can also let a sentence or gesture or image come that expresses the attitude of befriending this feeling. For example, if the feeling is fear, you can say to yourself, "I can allow fear in my experience," or "This is what fear feels like," or "I can breathe with fear," or simply "Hello, fear." A gesture for befriending fear might be wrapping your arms



around yourself, or stroking yourself in a soothing way. An image for befriending fear might be a mother bear sheltering her cub. Take whatever time you need to stay with what you are noticing as you do this, and when you are ready, you can open your eyes and make some notes if you want to.

This may sound like a long, complex process as you read it, but once you are familiar with the steps, moving through them usually only takes a matter of moments. If it helps, you can use this shorthand to remember the steps:

Notice and name.

Breathe and befriend.

### **Movement in the Counseling Session**

The above exercises focus on working with oneself. As we develop our practice of living in our body, and grounding our psychosynthetic process through body and movement awareness in the present moment, we naturally seek to share this holistic experiencing with others. How can we incorporate the kinesthetic sense into the psychosynthesis counseling session? As guides we can, to begin with, **warm it up**, as you did by “taking in” the movement examples earlier. Do this by connecting with your own body before the session, stretching and breathing, moving about and increasing awareness of your moving. You can also recall or imagine movement: remember movement experiences that enliven you, or imagine some ideal state for your guiding, as in “ideal model” work. When you observe movement, as your client enters the room, do so not just with your eyes, but also **watch with your body**, the way people watch a tennis match, back and forth with the ball. “Take in” the clients movement, into your own kinesthetic sense. The smallest inflection or shadow movement on your part will give you a whole channel of information. Now imagine sitting opposite your client, with your spatial awareness expanded to include him or her. Katya Bloom, in her book *The Embodied Self*, calls this “embodied attentiveness” (2006).

**What in your client’s movement grabs your attention?** Perhaps it is a straightening of the spine when she is talking about a particular thing, or an emphatic gesture that seems to have a charge, or a momentary distant gaze that he returns from with a quick change of focus. It could be the dynamics or phrasing of a gesture, or where the gesture goes in the surrounding space (e.g., forward, upward, sideward), or even which body parts are involved (left arm, head, a shifting of the torso, etc.) Body actions, their spatial directions, and their dynamics form the



foundation of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), and are the basis of both assessment and interventions for the movement-based guide. (Tortora, 2006, pp.145-184) LMA offers training and a theoretical movement framework to support increasingly nuanced observations and discussions. A simple shared vocabulary between client and guide will also suffice in many ways, and it is the psychosynthetic context and the quality of presence on the part of the guide that give the movement exploration its healing power for the client. Still, a synthesis of LMA with psychosynthesis guiding offers tremendous potential for the development of Psychosynthesis as a holistic methodology.

As a guide, what are you aware of in your own process? How are you sitting? Opening toward or closing away from your client? Mirroring their rhythms, breathing, energy, gestures? Contrasting them? And what psychological functions are you using? What functions do your interventions stem from or encourage your client to use? To work with a cue, such as a gesture that seems significant, first bring it to your client's attention through *reflection*. If they are willing, you can try *repetition*, with both of you moving in concert, and *exaggeration*, encouraging the client to make it the gesture bigger or more dynamic, or letting it move into other body parts, or standing up with it to allow more range. Invite and encourage your client to remain in their kinesthetic sense. This is not unlike working with the imagination; it is an altered state for many clients, where dominant functions are inhibited to allow a new experience. A light trance is often produced, and the client should be supported in staying in touch with sensations and impulses, with a corresponding modulation of your voice and a kinesthetic attuning on your part. Allow your client to **ride the kinesthetic experience**, as it were, as it unfolds with its own time and logic. Since it is non-verbal, it will often take a client into pre-verbal or transpersonal experiences. And since kinesthetic sensing is often a non-dominant function, the unconscious may often be accessed more easily through it. For this reason, a client's kinesthetic sense is useful in "deepening" a session that seems to be stuck in a particular function, such as the cognitive. Staying attuned will help you to know when to encourage your client to **add in other psychological functions** by, for example, giving the movement a voice, being in touch with feelings, images, or thoughts that are emerging, and so on.

Here are a few other points to consider: **get used to talking about what you see**, putting descriptive words to the movements. It is important to develop a vocabulary to describe movement—what body parts are involved, what dynamics, where in space—and to share it with your client. For the best results, invent this vocabulary with your client, and



the descriptions will be more personal, as when a client names his or her own subpersonalities. In this endeavor, **be mindful when interpreting your client's movement**. Often, a guide's interpretations are a reflection of his or her own movement history, in a kind of movement-based countertransference. The rule of thumb here is to **let your client interpret first**. Learning about your personal interpretive codes can be a source of great insight, also. Further, Bloom refers to "somatic aspects of countertransference" (pp. 65-6), and recommends doing body movement after a client leaves the session, in order to explore "what part of the patient has been left behind, disowned for whatever reason and projected into and absorbed" by the therapist, as material for "hypothesis building" (pp. xv-xvi).

Note that in working with movement and kinesthetic sensing, the client's unfolding process often moves rapidly, and the guide needs to be prepared for this. Also, memories of incest or physical abuse may come to the fore for clients with such a personal history, through connection with the body and the kinesthetic sense, and these experiences need to be supported appropriately.

### **A Case Study in Subpersonality Work**

Melissa (fictitious name), a client in her late twenties, had noticed the regular appearance of a subpersonality she named "the Clown." The Clown appeared when Melissa was around other people, and her purpose was to make them laugh, to make them feel comfortable, to dispel any tension that might be in the air. Like all subpersonalities during the initial phases of work with them, the Clown's activities were out of Melissa's control for the most part. She would "clown" automatically in certain situations. Another aspect of this behavior was that it tended to make light of any serious feelings Melissa might be having in a situation, saying to those around her: "Don't worry about me. . . I'm fine." When I asked her if any other people in her life "clown," she said that her father was a very good one, and that returning home was "like going to clown school," where she could brush up on her technique. The Clown's behavior was limiting for Melissa in that she could not express feelings with people such as her father or her boyfriend that the Clown wanted to keep hidden.

The Clown had a movement style all her own. She was very animated, rolling her eyes and making funny faces, tilting her head this way and that, her eyes gathering the attention of the audience, her body arching back to demonstrate a good belly laugh. I began to mirror these patterns, and for a time we conducted our session as two clowns, shifting



about, trading laughs, making light of any serious intentions. This deliberate clowning had the effect of calling forth its opposite: the need to acknowledge and express deeper feelings, especially fear and sadness. Melissa said that the Clown's emotional range was not big enough for her. It was not capable of expressing all that she felt inside.

Clarifying and rehearsing the movement style of this subpersonality made her presence very obvious, both to myself and to Melissa. This assisted her subsequently in the recognition phase of work with the subpersonality, identifying and disidentifying, in the weeks that followed. The work continued, involving acceptance, dialogue, integration and synthesis, which created a context for her to bring the positive core qualities of the Clown—love, concern for others, humor—into a more complete and fulfilling way of relating.

### **Summary**

It is my hope that these explorations will inspire you, the reader, on a journey of reawakening your vibrant movement life within the healing and spirit-oriented context of Psychosynthesis. I also hope that psychosynthesists everywhere will join in the larger "movement" of embodying Psychosynthesis. Here we have concentrated on our kinesthetic sense, moving our focus from inner to outer, and bottom to top. These meditations and activities are intended to first enhance our sensory awareness in the present moment, and then to broaden our focus into the other psychological functions, linking our bodies more concretely and thoroughly to our psychosynthetic process.

We also explored the use of the kinesthetic sense in the counseling session, working with client gestures and other cues to both deepen and ground the client's process. Melissa's Clown demonstrates a movement basis for understanding and working with subpersonalities. At various points, the Laban system was articulated as a way to refine our movement sense and our observation and intervention skills, enabling us to speak with our clients more precisely and fluently in our shared native language. One last haiku to sum it up:

Feet, knees, pelvis, spine  
Head, hands, body, feelings, mind. . .  
Embodying Self.



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