

eT Totempole

October 2003



A Newsletter for the Animalwork Community and those interested in The PTPP® and Deep Imagery



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Deep Imagery and Neurobiology of Emotional Trauma

Debra Vickroy

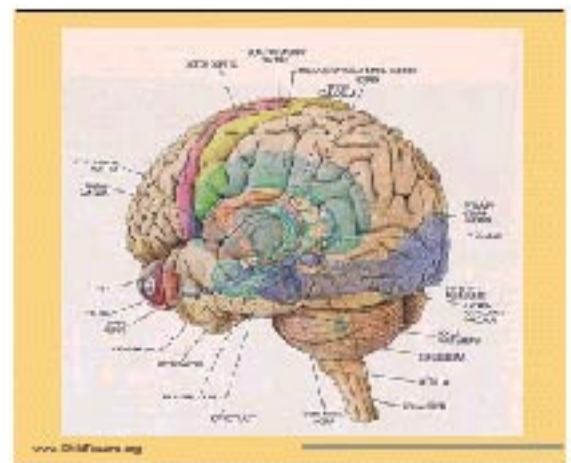
In May I attended a conference called “The Neurobiology of Emotional Trauma” and found it to be enlightening as to recent research into brain functioning as well as how alternative therapies like deep imagery actually help heal the effects of trauma better than more traditional talk therapies. The goal of the conference planners was to bring together practitioners of a variety of non-traditional therapies with researchers who study the brain.

I would like to summarize some of the information about brain functioning because I found that it accounted for the long lasting effect of trauma in a manner consistent with my experience of deep imagery. This research has provided a way for me to present deep imagery to people who might have found it a strange approach in psychotherapy.

The neurobiological research presented was based in experience and focused on experience (just like the Personal Totem Pole Process). The research began at the beginnings of the brain, in utero, and tracked the development and organization of the human brain through experience. Relationship literally shaped our brains. Early life experience between zero to five years of age formed the foundation or templates of neural structures. These templates developed through somatic experience. It can be said that at this stage of life, love was behavior. To develop a foundation of trust, humans must have experienced consistent and pleasing caregiving. As newborns we have moved from a existence in which we did not have to breathe or eat. It was fluid and warm. The constant sound that permeated this environment was a maternal heartbeat. At birth, we were thrust into a world of chaos in which we had to breathe, regulate our own body temperature and eat among all the other functions that our bodies began to assume. When we were held close to our mother’s heart, we once again heard a familiar beat and this calmed us with it’s familiarity. When we were swaddled, we felt securely held as we had been prior to birth. When we needed our diaper changed for the first time, this came as a new set of sensory experiences and our brain’s system of arousal increased and we felt afraid. But when this new experience was followed by relief and closeness to our mother, we began to associate this new experience with pleasure. The next diaper change was less alarming and our brain began to learn what to expect. Our brains have been exquisitely designed to be organized around pleasure and alarm.

The brain, in simplistic terms, can be viewed as having three integral systems; referred to as the triune brain. The three systems are the brainstem, the limbic brain and the neocortex. The brainstem (reptilian brain) manages autonomic functioning and self preservation. Novel stimuli are treated as potentially threatening, unless proven otherwise. This is the alarm system of the brain. It has a great deal of sensitivity to our experience to promote our survival. When activated, it will prompt us to act in one of three ways; fight, flight or freeze. The limbic brain (emotional brain) regulates the autonomic nervous system, mood, memory, motivation, gratification, aggression and general behavior. The neocortex (thinking brain) manages rational functions, provides the ability to comprehend and analyze events, decision making and learning.

Memory was defined as the sequential acquisition of experience; a gestalt of images, feelings, thoughts and sensations. The brain has the capacity to bring elements of an experience from one moment in time to another moment. Pattern and repetition, sequencing in experience, fosters the creation of a neural network of memory. Systematic exposure to stimuli thus allows for the development of cognitive potential. As we gain experience, new experiences are compared to older experiences or templates. If the new experience matches a template the brain does not create a new memory. Only new experiences are stored as new memory or a new gestalt of the experience. Memories can be stored at every level of the brain because an event will be experienced by every



level of the brain. Memory is also “state specific;” meaning that the gestalt of experience the human being was in at the time the memory was created must be re-created for memory to be re-activated. In other words, “state” involves the sensation, emotions, thoughts and imagery that became active during a given experience.

Trauma or wounding happens when humans are faced with a “threat” of some kind and are not able to completely resolve it through fight, flight or freeze behaviors. A threatened human mobilizes a great deal of energy to negotiate the threat. If the energy is not completely discharged, this residue of energy remains trapped in the nervous system where it can wreck havoc with body and spirit. The energy can only be discharged by completing the survival action chosen by the brainstem, in other words by resolving the threat. The neocortex or thinking brain is not involved in reacting to threat, in fact the brainstem and limbic system cut off the neocortex from taking action because it would react too slowly.

Much of the trauma that seems to surface in deep imagery occurred during childhood. Children have few viable ways to fight or flee a threat and often survive through freezing. Unlike animals who use freezing as a final avenue of escape from predators, human children most often have this as their only course of action. Animals in the wild appear to have died when they freeze. They often move from a state of running at high speed to immobility in a few seconds. When the predator reaches them, the animal will be able to die without a great deal of pain because the immobility produces a numbing paralysis. If the predator is fooled by the

immobility and moves away, the animal’s senses return. The animal will move quickly to reach a safe place. Then, the animal will shake uncontrollably from head to tail. The shaking discharges the residual energy. The animal returns to the herd or activity without any lasting trauma. Human children are not usually that fortunate. They survive the original threat, whether physical, sexual or emotional, but are seldom able to resolve the threatening situation. Most often, children must live with the threat and adapt to it. In the brain this prolonged alarm reaction means an altered nervous system. The brain begins to operate at a level of hypervigilance or dissociation in order to promote the survival of the human organism (see chart). This is often experienced as fear, anxiety, anger, numbness, fainting and disengagement.

Adaptive Response	Rest (Adult Male)	Vigilance	Freeze	Flight	Fight
Hypersocial/Geofiniam	Rest (Male Child)	Vigilance	Resistance	Defiance	Aggression
Dissociative/Confinitas	Rest (Female Child)	Avoidance	Compliance	Dissociation	Fainting
Primary secondary Brain Areas	NEOCORTEX Subcortex	SUBCORTICAL Limbic	LIMBIC Midbrain	NEURON Brainstem	BRANSTEM Asteronomic
Cognition	Abstract	Concrete	Emotional	Reactive	Reflex
Mental State	CALM	AROUSAL	ALARM	FEAR	TERROR

www.OntoTrauma.org

Healing, from the point of view of the brain, is simply the creation of new memory. When the old gestalt and old neural pattern is replaced by a new one, the trauma reaction changes because the neural pattern changes. Therapies that focus on reliving the traumatic experiences or encourage catharsis often end up reinforcing the old memory and the old neural pattern, instead of replacing it with a new one. There were a variety of alternative therapies represented at the conference including somatherapy, EMDR, neurofeedback, music, art and play therapy, but not deep imagery.

It seems to me that the Personal Totem Pole Process is an exquisitely sensitive process for the creation of new memories and thus, new neural patterns. Deep imagery trusts the knowing of the individual, their nervous system, body and spirit by allowing the inner guides to lead the healing process. Inner guides know what needs to be handled first and in what manner. They know what “state” needs to be experienced in order to bring about the healing. Old emotions, sensations and images are gently changed. The animal guides are constantly inviting us to create new memories, new gestalts and new templates out of old, wounding experiences. It seems to me that deep imagery also works in all the levels of the brain. Also, since memories contain a gestalt of sensation, emotion, imagery and thought, they mirror our use of the four windows. If we were able to track our healing processes in some way, I wonder if we would end up with a web of healing that weaves in and out and through all of the four windows as well as all of the chakras.

I feel excited to have found this crossroads with neurobiology and brain research. When I talk to my clients about how the brain functions in trauma, their almost universal response has been, “That makes sense, it fits my experience.” I find that I can bridge from exploring brain responses during trauma to presenting deep imagery as one means of healing their trauma. It is almost as if deep imagery makes sense to them even before they have a direct experience of it. Also, since I have to deal with the world of managed health care, this connection to brain functioning has provided a means of explaining deep imagery as an effective healing process to an audience who is only interested in getting results (meaning, remission of symptoms) in the shortest

time possible (meaning, for the least amount of money).

I now find myself wondering what it looks like inside my brain when I am doing deep imagery. If we could watch the brain with a SPECT (single photon emission tomography) scan, what parts would be active when I am guided by my heart animal? What parts would be active when I am guided through the window of sensing? When a novice is guided for the first time, what happens compared to an experienced traveler? Although I do not need to verify the healing potential of deep imagery, I know by my own experience that I have been changed and healed through this process, I am very curious. I wonder if this could be a bridge to engaging new people in healing through deep imagery.

Resources and References

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DER KLEINE FEHLERKÖNIG

Auf der Suche nach dem **Tier für Ganzheit** präsentiert sich ein schwarzes Männchen, es ist der kleine Fehlerkönig. Ich stutze, das Wesen für Ganzheit kann er ja nicht sein, doch ich empfinde Sympathie und Interesse für ihn. Mir fällt sofort mein Bedauern ein, am vorherigen Tag zuviel geredet zu haben, und nicht meinem Inneren gemäß zu sprechen, ich möchte mit offener Kehle kommunizieren, langsam, schwebend, nach innen und außen lauschend. Das ist etwas, womit ich schon ewig hadere, und ein sehr bekanntes Bedauern über einen meiner „Haupt-Fehler.“

Der kleine Fehlerkönig marschiert zackig durch den Raum, er entrüstet sich darüber, wie er allseits behandelt wird. Immer werde versucht, ihn zu verstecken, ihn zu vertuschen, er dürfe nie in seiner Eigenschaft, Fähigkeit und Würde auftreten. Manche verleugnen gar seine Existenz. Falls er auftritt, soll er so schnell wie möglich wieder verschwinden, weg gemacht werden. Man schämt sich für ihn, man hat keine Achtung und am allerwenigsten Respekt. Während dieser Rede marschiert er pyramidenförmige Treppen hoch und setzt sich selbstbewußt auf die Spitze, die als Thron gebaut ist und ruft, dort angekommen: „**Respekt!**“

Er spricht weiter, er sei so wichtig und er biete Kooperation an, doch kaum jemand nimmt sie an. Er sei der Unterschied zwischen Vorstellung und Realität, zwischen Selbstbild und Sein, zwischen Wunsch und Verwirklichung. Wenn man sich genau mit ihm beschäftigen würde, wäre das sehr heilsam für diese Bewegung, er ist ein äußerst wichtiges geistiges Werkzeug.

Er versteht überhaupt nicht, wieso dieser Punkt derart geleugnet und übergangen wird. Es müßte doch jedem Menschen klar sein, daß er sich erst entwickeln muß und daß seine Vorstellung über sich selbst und die Realität erst nicht übereinstimmen. Genau diese Dynamik ist das Hauptgebiet des kleinen Fehlerkönigs, diese Unterschiede wahrzunehmen und zu beachten wäre grundlegend beim Lernprozeß. Er schüttelt entrüstet den Kopf. Diesen wahrhaft interessanten Punkt verstecken die Menschen voreinander und tun so, als wäre es anders als es ist, als wären sie schon weiter in ihrer Verwirklichung als es der Fall ist. Das kostet viel Kraft und irritiert, es vernebelt die Kommunikation und läßt Verbindungen und Gelegenheiten zum Lernen weitgehend ungenutzt. Es müßte doch jedem klar sein, daß er Fehler begeht, da könnte man doch übereinkommen, es zu akzeptieren und sich dem liebevoll und konstruktiv zu widmen. Das wäre doch so einfach! Dagegen wollen die Menschen ihre Fehler nicht ansehen, es ist zum Verzweifeln. Sie erkennen seine kostbare und wichtige Arbeit nicht, er ist außer sich.

„So geht das nie vorwärts!“ ruft er. Die Bestandteile des Bewußtseinsprozesses, Lernens und Entfaltens sind den Menschen nicht klar. Und das ist schade. Seine Arbeitskraft ist ungenutzt und seine Würde wird nicht gewahrt.

Es ist sogar so, wenn er entdeckt wird, entschuldigt sich ein Mensch beim anderen dafür, mit Zerknirschung und Entwürdigung. Das ist eine Unmöglichkeit! schimpft er, es ist mangelnder Respekt.

Ich stimme ihm zu. Vor einiger Zeit forderte der Schwarze Bär (Tier für Zeit und Tod) mich lächelnd auf, Fehler zu machen, ich würde mich wundern, was daraus entsteht. Seitdem frage ich mich am Ende des Tages oft, ob ich heute Fehler gemacht habe und bin befriedigt, wenn mir etwas einfällt (meist mit meinem Partner, aber auch mit Klienten).

Es hat mich sehr entspannt und erleichtert, mich souverän und heiter gemacht, falls mich jemand auf einen Fehler hinweist.

Die Idee des kleinen Fehlerkönigs begeistert mich, ich habe Lust, das zu entwickeln zu den Menschen, mit denen ich zu tun habe.

Ich sage zu ihm, es ist aber nicht so leicht, denn es wird allgemein erwartet, wenn man einen Fehler gemacht hat, daß man sich entschuldigt, Strafe akzeptiert, es wieder gut zu machen versucht, irgendeine Geste tut, dem anderen Energie gibt, irgend etwas, damit der andere eine Art Genugtuung seiner verletzten Gefühle empfindet. Ich sage, ich will mich nicht deswegen erniedrigen, doch es wird eben meist erwartet, daß man für seine Fehler etwas „bezahlt“.

Er ruft: „Damit ist jetzt Schluß! Das muß aufhören!“

Er sagt, es sei im Gegenteil eine Ehre, wenn er sich zeigt, wenn man sich dem anderen Menschen mit dieser Dimension zeigt und den anderen zur Wahrnehmung des eigenen Werdungsprozesses einlädt.

Ich sage, ich sei ja bereit, mich auf das einzulassen, was er sagt, nur glaube ich, daß man damit in der Welt wenig Erfolg hat bzw. das sehr anstrengend ist und man dauernd auf Differenzen stößt. Er sagt nichts mehr dazu. Ich frage ihn, warum er nicht ein bißchen ansprechender und vertrauenserweckender aussieht, er ist ja vollkommen schwarz. Er zuckt die Schultern. Tja.

Er verrät mir, wenn ich ihn akzeptiere und ihm seinen Platz lasse und ihn auftreten lasse, dann kann ich im Spiegel meine Schönheit sehen und mir würden nicht immer auch die von mir als Mangel empfundenen Dinge auffallen. Also die Dinge würden sich trennen und genießbar werden, hier die Fehler in Arbeit, hier die Schönheit. Es wäre nicht weiter in ungehöriger Weise vermischt, wodurch Unklarheit in Empfinden, Selbstgefühl und im Tun ausgelöst würden. Die Dinge sind nicht gemischt! Es sind verschiedene Dimensionen!

Ich bin damit einverstanden. Sein Thron mit ihm spiralt sich höher und höher im Raum, ein Spiegel erscheint, aus dem lieblich-bunte Energie strömt, ich fliege & tanze & rolle freudig in der Luft um die Pyramide herum und schwebe auch spiralg höher. Die Luft wird immer bunter, ich fühle mich immer glücklicher – und da ist es mein bunter Drache, in dem ich mich drehe, sanft und genüßlich. Er lächelt mich aus all seinem Sein an und trägt mich, dreht mich und spielt mit mir. Ich spüre, wie sehr wir uns lieben. Ich freue mich, in ihm zu sein, ich frage mich am Rande, ob er mein Tier für Ganzheit ist - das wäre schön, aber auch sehr fordernd (er ist mein Tier für Poesie) - doch es beschäftigt mich jetzt nur wenig, ich genieße es, in ihm zu sein, in Liebe und Freude. Und da taucht mitten in der Bewegung des Drehens und Spielens die Flosse eines Delphins auf, ich fasse sie, sie zieht mich weiter, ebenso weich, wellenförmig, freundlich, liebevoll und ich schwebe mit ihm im See der Verschwiegenheit. **Er ist mein Tier für Ganzheit.**

Festival of the Animals 2004

Festival of the animals 2004 will be held in Traunstein, Austria.

Traunstein is situated on a hill of Ottenschlag in 911m above sea level. It is one of the most beautiful communities in the "stony" part of the Waldviertel. Visitors from near and far attracted by the modern church and the lovely houses typical of this region. The market village of Traunstein was first mentioned in a document in the year 1580, however, there has been a settlement there since the 8th century.

This is the village in which the Austrian Animal Community have held their trainings with Steve Gallegos. During the week of June 9-14, it will be the home of the Animals once more during the 2004 festival of the Animals. If you are interested in attending, offering a workshop or simply wish to find out some more information, please contact Horst lenes at horstlenes@chello.at.

Attractions include a possible boat trip from Vienna to Traunstein on the Danube, the fascinating stones near Traunstein, the sculptures of dean Josef Elter, Herb walks, swimming and of course, the opportunity to spend time before or after the festival in Vienna.



Franzosenstein

Sculptures of dean Josef Elter



Wachtstein

Back to School Imagery

by Jenny Garrison

Sometimes there is the full intention of giving something lots of time and space, and then when it comes down to it, you have just a few minutes and might blow it off because time and space are scarce. That is what happened to me with my children this year.

As the beginning of a new school year approached, I thought about really talking with them about their hopes and fears for the coming school year. They are girls, ages 8 and 11. Their bodies are changing and their lives are unfolding, and I wanted to give them the gift of some inner work to go with these changes. I scheduled some little mini-sessions for them with a friend who is a great body worker. I thought of doing the imagery of grades with them... meeting with the animal of sixth grade and the animal of third grade.

Sooo... the day before school started, unavoidable things came up. I had to cancel the bodywork sessions. It got late. The imagery didn't happen. As I woke early the next morning, I recalled some words that were credited to Annie Dillard when I heard them... it was about not waiting when you have something to say, or a thought or revelation, but letting it out... giving it to others, or to the page, or whatever... not saving it for another time or place but being true to it in the energy of the present. We don't have much time in the morning. The bus comes early and there is breakfast and dressing and hair(!) to tend to. I went into my 11 yr.old to waken her. I said to her, "Close your eyes, and breathe. Invite the animal of 6th grade to come forth." She told me that the animal was there immediately. It was a big elephant. This is what it said to her:

"You are Lyssie.
You are special.
Life will go on".

I then went over to wake my youngest daughter. She does not wake up as easily. I said, "Keep your eyes closed, and breathe. Invite the animal of 3rd grade to come forth. She was quiet. I asked her what was happening. She said, "I am going to the master of grades. I am going down slides to get there." O.K. "I'm there . There is a little panda bear here." She greeted and thanked the bear for coming. Its message to her was this:

"No matter what you do wrong, Mrs. Summers isn't going to mind."

Both mini journeys took less than 10 minutes. It was natural and sweet and sent them off to their first day of school with a message from deep within them that they needed, and that I could not have known they needed.

A few days later, I made 2 postcards for each of them. They had a picture of their grade animals on them, along with the words they had been told. I put one card on each of their mirrors, and laid one on their beds for them to do with what they pleased. They were all smiles when they found them. The sixth grade message is in a school locker now, and the third grade message moves around!

You don't always need a whole lot of time and space for the imagery to happen. It is lovely when you can give it that, but it is also lovely when you just give it what you've got!

Jenny Garrison is a Yoga teacher , Deep Imagery Guide and Workshop leader who lives in PA USA. She has just released her yoga CD "Gentle Yoga" . Jenny can be contacted at <jennyg@ticopa.quik.com>



Poetry:

End of Complain

by Margot Beierwaltes

warm and cold -
pliancy grewed -
silky laughing -
deep blue & near -

here it is
the end of complain
so the stunted arm fell off
and the Divine Stag enters
out of the green shadow
into the green shadow
with me and we
are One Eye

*Margot's book of poetry will be published soon.
See the next eTotempole for details*

Webpage:

The IIVR has a new webpage address: www.deepimagery.org.
The site is currently under construction.

Current and back issues of the etotempole are available there.

The new website will eventually list all practitioners, workshop leaders and trainers as well as ongoing events and workshops.

If you want to find out more or have any suggestions, please email mary Diggin <animalwork@espanola.com>. The site will be developed throughout 2004.

... in Denmark

Workshop Information:

Contacts Please contact Kaare Claudewitz for information on Trainings and Workshops with Steve Gallegos in Denmark. The 2004 training is currently being organized. It will be an English language training, geared for Therapists. kchypno@image.dk

... in Ireland

Workshop Information:

Contact Audrey Dickson for general information on the animalwork in Ireland and workshops, trainings etc. with Margaret Vasington. audic@esatclear.

Margaret's next workshop in Ireland will be in Cork 16/17/18th April 2004.

Dates of Gatherings in Ireland:-

Jan. 9-11 2004 - An Tobar, Navan,

Apr. 23-25 2004 - The Burren Holistic Centre

Sept. 17-19 2004 - The Burren Holistic Centre

Each meeting will be preceded by a FireKeepers Meeting on the Friday afternoon. All are welcome to that meeting.

... in Germany

Workshop Information:

Contacts The following people all organize workshops in Germany for either Steve Gallegos or Margaret Vasington or both..

William and Kiki Larro: totempole@onlinehome.de (München)
www.totempole.de

Corinna Veit: CorinnaVeit@begegnungs-reisen.de (Lindau)

Mona Gimbel-Goepfert, at telephone (Frankfurt) 0049(0)69 - 751 997.

... in Australia

Contact:

Frank Coughlan is the contact for the PTPP® in Australia. Please check with him for forthcoming workshops etc.

email frankacoughlan@bigpond.com

home page <http://www.deepimagery.com>

Address 10 Hampson St.
Kelvin Grove
QLD 4059
Australia

Training:

A training, with Steve Gallegos, is due to start in Australia next year. Please contact Frank Coughlan (above), if you are interested.

Second Australian Festival:

Following the great success of last year's International Festival of the Animals, many attenders suggested the setting up of an annual Australian festival. Thus, the Second Annual Australian Festival of the Animals will be held in early December, 2003.

The venue will be the same: Camp Bornhoffen, 1.5 hours easy driving south of Brisbane. At this stage, it is envisaged that the Festival will run over a weekend with a choice of two workshops on Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon, Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon.

... in The UK

Workshop Information:

Contact Veronica Rock <v.rock@amserve.com>

Workshop: Veronica leads about three one-day workshops a year in Hertfordshire, England with a group of people who either trained with Dianne Timberlake or did workshops with her. The last workshop was in August 2003.
The next workshop will be on January 24th 2004.

Contact Veronica for details.

... in Austria

International Festival of Animals 2004
in Austria
from June 9 to June 14
Costs will be approx EURO 315,00 per person
contact: horstlenes@chello.at



*This is the group who finished their training with Steve in Austria in 2002
and who form the committee for the Festival 2004*

... in the USA

Forth Coming Workshops

July 17-24 **Creativity and Clay**, River Spirit, NM USA
FULL!
If you want to be placed on the waiting list, in case of drop outs apply to Steve at eligios@espanola.com.

Trainings

Ongoing **Jeannette Samanen** continues her training in the Philidelphia area. You can contact her at jsamanen@worldlynx.net .

New **Steve Gallegos** may offer a new training in the NE USA again shortly. Phyllis Brooks is the organizer. Contact her at heartspirit@hotmail.com

Webpage:

New IIVR webpage: www.deepimagery.org