

WORKING WITH MOVEMENT IN PROCESS-ORIENTED PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

This paper introduces and extends process-oriented psychology, exploring its application to the field of dance therapy. Process work provides exact observational tools and practical techniques for working deeply with movement processes through their interconnection with visual, auditory and proprioceptive experience, relationship situations and events in the environment. In this unified body of theory and practice, movement is viewed as an integral aspect of all human processes, thereby creating one possible bridge between dance therapy and other forms of psychotherapy.

Process work, developed by Dr. Arnold Mindell in Zurich, Switzerland, provides a unified theory and practice for discovering the spontaneous events that happen in our lives and allowing the meaning behind them to unfold. Mindell (1985.2, p.60) states that these events are not haphazard, random incidents but aspects of a "dreaming field" which expresses itself spontaneously through many pathways or channels. Movement is one of the channels in which we may discover the dreaming messages; others are visual, auditory, proprioceptive, relationship and world events. This paper will first present a brief literature review of the roots of process work in ancient and modern science, a discussion of its connections with other modern therapies, its philosophy and terminology, and case examples of applications focusing on movement work.

Literature Review

Ancient and Modern Science

The methods and goals of process work have many ancient and modern roots which are too numerous to mention here in detail. The reader is referred to the literature at this point. (1) The idea of process is already embedded in the alchemical concept of

the transformation of the 'prima materia' (Jung, 1967) in the 'Tao' of the I Ching (Wilhelm, 1973) and in ideas of causality and field theory of modern physics (Bohm, 1981).

Development of Process Work

and Connections with Modern Psychology

Process work evolved out of Mindell's work as a Jungian analyst. The Jungian approach emphasizes following the nature and inherent wisdom of the individual client's total personality, conscious and unconscious. Process ideas mirror Jung's teleological philosophy: people's behavior and what happens to them, no matter how pathological it may appear, has a purpose and thus is meaningful. By including concepts from information theory, process work incorporates some of the same channel and signal ideas popularized by Neurolinguistic Programming (Bandler and Grinder, 1975). However, although process work like NLP takes the client's conscious goals into account, it does not aim to reprogram problems, but rather to discover through them the individual's rich inner variety and creative potential.

Through Mindell's early psychotherapeutic work with dying patients (1985.1, pp.6-8), he began to expand Jung's ideas. Mindell noticed that when he helped these patients slightly amplify the somatic feelings and sensations they experienced, the processes which evolved always mirrored the patient's recent dreams. In other words, the body symptoms and body experiences were mirror images of dream contents. From this discovery Mindell developed the idea of the "dreambody" (Mindell, 1981), the interconnected nature of our body and dream experiences. The "living unconscious" manifests not only in dreams but also from

moment to moment in our body experiences.

From his studies in physics and information theory, Mindell utilized the term channels to indicate pathways through which unconscious information manifests (1985.2, pp.14-15). While Jung focused upon dreams as the main manifestation of the unconscious, Mindell focused on a number of channels of perception which seem to arise most often in therapy. (1) Body symptoms which disturb us are the expression of the unconscious through the proprioceptive or inner body feeling channel. Dream material can also manifest in our unconscious tone of voice or inner wise or critical voices, that is, our process is expressing itself in that moment in the auditory channel. Dreams and spontaneous visions belong to the visual channel. When we make spontaneous motions or experience movement happening in our environment this indicates that our process is momentarily flowing in the kinesthetic or movement channel. (2) There is also a relationship channel, a composite channel in which we find ourselves involved in relationship issues, and the world channel in which we experience part of ourselves in the world, perhaps through synchronistic events (Mindell 1985.2 pp.14-24).

The channel idea and certain process applications can be found in a number of psychotherapeutic realms. Neurolinguistic Programming (Bandler and Grinder, 1981, pp.44-49), for example, emphasizes exact observation of signals in three of the channels ('representational systems') identified in process-oriented psychology (visual, auditory, and what NLP calls kinesthetic, which as described is mostly proprioception). Theory of nonverbal communication can be found, for example, in Watzlawick (1967), Birdwhistell (1970), and Ruesch and Kees (1956).

When body feelings are amplified in process work, the client often spontaneously performs archetypal yoga asanas (Iyengar, 1979). Or the work may at times resemble the slow and concentrated focus of the Feldenkrais method (Feldenkrais, 1972). When process work focuses on proprioceptive experiences it may seem to resemble Gendlin's "Focusing" technique (Gendlin, 1982) or other body oriented therapies such as the Alexander technique, (Barlow, 1975) Bioenergetics (Lowen, 1975) or Trager massage (Juhan, 1984).

Visual techniques akin to Jung's active imagination (Hannah 1981) may arise out of concentration on dream images or focus on spontaneous visions.

Process work with relationships may occasionally resemble certain forms of family or couple therapy which stress the system aspect of relationship or family work (Minuchin, 1974). One important difference is that family therapies do not see family members as behaving like parts of an individual member's psyche - a viewpoint that proves fruitful in doing process work.

The process approach to movement often facilitates the spontaneous emergence of archetypal movement patterns such as various martial arts forms, whirling Dervish dancing, or African dance. Mary Whitehouse's "authentic movement" (which also originated in Jungian psychology) is similar to the process approach to movement in its teleological philosophy and some of its techniques (Whitehouse, 1979, 1958, 1963). Movement oriented amplification methods are found in every area of dance therapy (Chaikon/Schmais, 1979, p.18). Many dance therapy tenets, mirror

process concepts: movement is a universal form of communication (Chaiklin\Schmais, 1979, p.16); moving clients need to be related to in movement (Chaiklin\Schmais, 1979, p.18, Bernstein, 1984 pp.70-71); mind and body are connected (Schoop, 1974, p.44, Whitehouse, 1958 p.3). Chodorow (1982, p.198), Whitehouse (1963, p.8), and Alperson (1984, pp. 264-266) suggest connections between various channel experiences.

Unification in Process Work

What process work seems to offer that has been missing until this point in the field of psychotherapy is a unified theory in which any of the above methods and techniques can develop by following the spontaneous flow of signals and processes. As the field of psychotherapy stands now, each area contains some process experiences without a comprehensive theory which integrates or generates other approaches.

Certain forms of process work may, for instance, superficially resemble NLP techniques, and yet NLP does not work with movement (or with relationship or world-channel events as reflecting the client's internal process). NLP assumes that the personality part generating the symptom or problem is doing so with the intention of benefitting the person; in this respect its philosophy is similar to that of process work. However, NLP does not see the symptom itself as intrinsically meaningful and so it tends rather to program the individual into a particular pattern desired by the client. Aspects of Gendlin's "Focusing" contain process-oriented channel theory, especially in respect to proprioceptive and visual imagery. Whereas "Focusing" applies a a specific program which elicits specific channel experiences, process work discovers the channel in which signals are emerging at a given

moment and follows the natural channel changes as they occur. Many body oriented therapists work with proprioceptive material (body symptoms and feelings) and yet do not have a theory which encompasses verbal information or movement work. Most dance therapy directions do not work with relationship issues. Relationship and family therapies will often not focus on individual psychology.

Process work trusts the natural flow of signals to determine the methods and goals of therapy and works with the coupled nature of all channels.

Channel Changing

The psyche has a mysterious way of changing channels (Mindell, 1985.1 pp.37-47). For example, let's focus on one particular channel experience - like a pressure headache. Pressure is a proprioceptive experience. In process work, amplifying this experience creates a mercurial evolution in which channels will suddenly change spontaneously. What used to be a headache will now suddenly appear to the client as a vision, or the vision switches to the memory of a relationship problem. Some clients will move while focusing on the pressure.

Here is an example. A client of the author's, Sally (age 34), came to her with a stomach problem. When asked to describe the pain, Sally put her hand on her abdomen and closed her eyes. So the work began here, focused upon and amplified her proprioceptive experience. The author put her hand on the woman's stomach in just the same spot in order to help the woman feel this spot more completely.

After focusing on the pain for a few minutes the woman spontaneously began to hear a sound (a channel change from the proprioceptive to the auditory channel). In order to amplify the auditory experience the author asked the client to listen in great detail to the sounds she was hearing and even to try to vocalize the sounds.

After concentrating on the quality of the sound for a few minutes the woman began to make a yearning, wailing sort of call over and over again. As she made the sounds she started to cry. Shortly thereafter she stopped crying and said that this was ridiculous, that she had nothing to cry about. (see "edge" below)

Upon encouragement, she went back into her experience of crying and as she cried she began to rock slowly back and forth (another change, this time from the auditory to the kinesthetic channel). The author amplified the kinesthetic experience by touching her and propelling her slightly back and forth. The author was aware of feeling very motherly towards Sally at this point.

Sally then suddenly saw the picture of a young child who had been abandoned by her mother (a change from the kinesthetic to the visual channel). As she focused on this picture, the scene abruptly changed and she saw an older adolescent who had become independent and went off into the world on her own.

Sally realized that this was exactly what she had done. She had not gotten the love that she needed and had decided to "grow up," cut off her feelings and go out into the world. While this had been a useful tactic at the time, she suffered from the fact that

her feelings were still looking for attention. One notices that the past is happening now, that now she acts like her own mother by cutting off and abandoning her feeling.

Upon realizing this, Sally asked how she could support her own feelings. When the author posed this question back to her, Sally said "Uh..." and spontaneously began to rock back and forth. Taking this as the answer Sally's body was giving to her question, the author said "Well, that is your answer!" Try rocking back and forth for a bit and now try to rock me." The client rocked for a bit and then rocked the therapist and said that for the first time she felt very motherly and warm and realized that she had the potential to support the child in herself and her own feelings.

Thus, following this woman's process in detail as it switched from channel to channel unfolded a meaningful chain of events yielding its own solutions.

Process Concepts

Now let's look at some process concepts in detail.

Signals are bits of information which manifest in different channels - a stomach pain, a gesture, a relationship situation.

Channels are modes of experience, neutral or empty vessels through which information manifests. The channels most commonly found in the therapeutic setting are the visual, auditory, proprioceptive, kinesthetic, relationship and world channels. So, for instance, a stomach pain represents a personality component which, for the moment, is expressing itself through the proprioceptive channel.

Process as Mindell uses the term refers to the evolving flow of signals as they appear and move through the various channels. The art of process work is to follow and aid the natural flow or movement of process as it winds its own unique path of development.

A state can be thought of as a frozen piece of process. This woman's stomach pain was a state which was not yet processed. Therapeutic modes which rely on a state-oriented approach look at such phenomena as stomach aches, strange motions, or odd postures as states which have been caused by past events. These therapies then have specific programs which help the person reach one of any number of more preferable states called such things as "health," "good posture," or "freedom of movement." State-oriented approaches then follow from a causal philosophy.

A process oriented approach to a strange posture, stomach pain, or motion would be to help these states develop and unfold their own meaning. As stated before, the basis of process thinking is teleological: the therapist helps the client discover what his/her interesting or unusual body postures, symptoms like stomach aches, habitual movements, spontaneous visions or relationship conflicts are tending towards or trying to achieve. The meaning of the symptom is then seen in these terms rather than as a function of what events or conditions have caused it.

Therefore, one of the goals of process work is to discover and allow nature to unfold its own messages without interpreting or judging ahead of time what the signal means. There is no need for programs or attempts to achieve desired states, since the

individual process points toward its own goals and development.

Amplification discovers the channel in which an experience is occurring and strengthens the signal in that particular channel so that the signal can unfold and convey all the information it contains. Amplifying a vision, for example, could consist of looking more closely at the details of the picture. Movement amplification will be discussed later on.

Processes are structured by their relative distance from one's awareness (Mindell 1985.2, pp.12-13). The term primary process refers to those aspects of our process which are close to our awareness with which we identify in a given moment. Sally, for example, identifies herself as a grown up woman who believes that feelings are unimportant. Secondary processes refers to all those events which we experience as "happening to us," which are farther away from our awareness and with which we do not identify. In the above example, the stomach pain "happened to" Sally and she did not identify with all the needs and feelings which that stomach ache was expressing.

The reader will notice that the terms primary and secondary are different from the depth-psychological terms "conscious" and "unconscious." This difference is due to several factors. 1) Our primary process is normally not completely conscious or under our conscious control. It is a particular identity which we have adopted and which may be hard to change even if we want to. 2) Also, primary and secondary processes can flip back and forth, depending upon what we are identifying with in a given moment. 3) When working with extreme states, processes flip so rapidly that what is unconscious one moment is the only content of

consciousness in the next, so that the terms as classically used have no meaning (Mindell, 1985.2, pp.13-14).

Occupied and Unoccupied Channels

There are specific channels which go hand and hand with our individual primary and secondary processes. The channels that we use in conjunction with our primary process are called occupied channels; these are the channels we use with some degree of awareness. Occupied channels can be determined by our language structure, mainly by the use of the active verb form. Sentences like "I see myself as a business person" indicate an occupied visual channel. Occupied movement would be indicated by such statements as "I jump" or "I run to work in the morning." Occupied movement would also be indicated by the use of congruent and complete movements which mirror our primary verbal content.

Unoccupied channels accompany our secondary processes. These are channels that we do not use with awareness. They are either occupied by other people or things ("she can stand up to the boss, but I can't"; "the tree was bending in the wind") or we tend to be the victims of experiences which happen in these channels. In language structure we can determine unoccupied channels by the passive use of the verb. Sentences like "People are looking at me" indicate an unoccupied visual channel because of the passive use of the word "look" and because vision is occupied by other "people," not by "me." In the above example, the woman's backache is initially experienced proprioceptively as a pain in the lower part of her back. Since the pain "happens to her", this indicates that the proprioceptive channel is unoccupied. Unoccupied movement would be indicated by such

experiences as recurrent, spontaneous and incompletd gestures, movement-oriented accidents, unintentional motions and such sentences as "I was hit by a car today" or "The children were running around wildly."

As we enter into an unoccupied channel that channel becomes occupied and another channel may then lie further outside of our awareness and become unoccupied.

Knowing which channels are unoccupied gives the therapist fast access to deep and altered states. Mindell (1987) states that it is in our unoccupied channels that the deepest and richest experiences are trying to happen, those experiences just outside of our awareness and identities. In the above example, the woman did not know how to mother herself and yet her capacity to mother herself already existed, kinesthetically, in her rocking motion. Since movement is not one of the central channels of our culture it is a logical conclusion that strong experiences should occur for many people in this channel. Methods for working quickly with unoccupied movement will follow.

Lying between the primary and secondary process and occupied and unoccupied channels is what Mindell calls the edge (1985.2, p.25). Experiences which we do not identify with are split off and become secondary because we have an edge to that particular material. An edge in any channel indicates the limits of what one feels he can do in that particular channel. The edge is often represented by a real or dream figure or half-conscious philosophy which is against a particular secondary form of behavior.

The edge is the growing point, the place where one's old world is confronted and challenged by something new. Working at the edge is the continual focus of the process worker, going back and forth between processes, testing the secondary material, going into it, going over the edge, or staying back and working with the edge figure, depending upon the client's feedback. In the above example, the woman got to an edge visually when the scenes changed and she was suddenly an adult and when she suddenly cut off her feeling experience because it was "ridiculous." As we will see later, the edge is one of the central aspects of process-oriented movement work.

Double signals occur when two incongruous or different signals are occurring at one time (Mindell, 1985.2, pp.25-26). Secondary or double signals are always less conscious than our primary intention. For example, if you back away from someone while talking, it is probable that the backing away will be a double signal implying that you don't want to talk.

The therapist often is dreamed up to react to these unintended double, unconscious signals. The therapist may become suddenly moody, tired, angry, comical or have any other number of reactions if these signals are not picked up consciously. In the above example, the author suddenly felt very warm and loving towards Sally but was unsure why. This mothering feeling was coming from the client's own capacity to mother herself, found in her rocking movements.

Integration in process terms refers to the ability to express a certain process in many channels, not only in one (Mindell, 1987). So a process which occurs in movement, like the rocking in

the above example, will need to be integrated in learning, for example, how to mother herself also when she is in relationships.

The Kinesthetic Channel

In order to delve more deeply into the movement aspect of process-oriented psychology, let us look at four sessions in which movement played a relatively important role. After each example, specific aspects of the theory and practice of process oriented movement work will be examined. The sessions reveal the the capacity for process work to deal with a wide spectrum population.

Case 1. Bill, age 28 came to Mindell (1988) saying that he knew he was crazy, and had been clinically diagnosed as manic/depressive. He said that he was feeling speedy and sort of laid back. As he talked he bopped up and down on his feet, snapped his fingers rhythmically, looked casual and loose-jointed, as if he were dancing to some internal disco music.

If one looked closely at his movements, one could see that at a certain moment as he snapped his fingers, his right hand would jerk out strongly to the right side. As his hand jerked outwards it did so in a direct, strong, flicking manner and then resumed it's usual snapping and bopping rhythm.

In order to amplify this strong movement of the hand, Mindell put his hand out so that the next time Bill's hand jerked it would hit Mindell's hand. Bill was surprised. Mindell then said "Yeah, do that again!" Bill looked confused but then thrust his hand out to the right side again with even more force and concentration.

Mindell then took a cushion for Bill to hit so that he could complete his motions. Bill began to hit the cushion with a lot of force. At one point, Mindell caught Bill's hand before it landed on the punching bag, looked at him and said "Tell me, are you crazy or are you angry?" Bill looked up, baffled, in a completely normal state at this point and said "I'm angry!" Mindell then asked him who he was angry at and this was the beginning of normal psychotherapeutic work.

Discussion of Case 1. Bill's primary process was being crazy, manic, speedy and laid back - i.e., that is the way he was identifying himself in the moment. One could say that his primary process is being a "psychiatrist" who analyzes himself. His secondary process is all the aggression and anger in the background.

In order to do a complete movement analysis, we will first need to study primary and secondary motions. What we notice from this example is that there are two levels to the movements that Bill was making. Some of the movements are "primary motions" while others are more "secondary" or farther away from his awareness. Let us look more in detail at the analysis of these two types of motions.

When we look at anyone moving we notice that normally there is a primary aspect to the movements which is close to awareness and a secondary aspect which is further away from awareness. This is one of the central and essential differentiations in process oriented movement work.

Primary motions are:

a) Congruent with our primary process or intention. For example, imagine someone who talks at a slow pace and softly says that he/she is tired while his/her body gradually slumps over. The slumping movement in this context is congruent with what the person is saying, and is therefore primary. The whole body, the entire personality is expressing one attitude. The primary movement mirrors the primary process in rhythm, character and meaning.

b) Complete in the sense that the meaning of these motions is readily understood. As observers we can say "Ah yes, that motion means that you are tired." The movement is like a completed sentence which makes sense to us on the outside.

c) Consistent and steady forming a general background against which other events may emerge. They seem to go on and on steadily until something else interrupts them. In Bill's case, the bopping rhythmic movement forms the background for the emergence of new material.

Secondary motions are:

a) Incongruent with the primary process and intentions. A woman, for example, was dancing in a very fluid manner but every once in a while her shoulders raised up in a quick sort of shrugging motion. This shrug was different in character, speed and meaning from her primary movement intention of moving fluidly around the room. The secondary movement then stands out from the overall, steady movement pattern which is occurring and is further away from awareness than the primary movement theme.

b) Incomplete. Secondary movements seem to start and stop in mid air like a sentence that is not finished. A quick shoulder shrug as above, if translated into a verbal expression would be something like "I need to shrug my shoulders right now because ..." without any ending of the sentence.

c) Repetitive. They repeat themselves over and over in this fragmented form. If they are not picked up, they persevere in one form or another until they are picked up and processed. For example, a woman who needed to be more introverted when around other people but who was shy about that, repeatedly lost contact with her therapist as they tried to keep their hands together while dancing around the room. When this detaching process was amplified she went deeply internal and then learned how to bring this into relationships.

d) Happen to us. This means that the motions seem to happen spontaneously without any conscious will on our part. They may appear as incongruent and spontaneous movements, movement habits like tics, or accidents like falling or tripping. They may also be experienced as outer movement disturbances such as being irritated with the motion of people around you while trying to meditate.

Looking at the above example we would say that Bill's primary motions are his quick and nonchalant bopping up and down on his knees, his loose and relaxed motions which go along with his primary process. These motions are congruent and complete, a mirror of his verbal primary process.

technique of blocking the flicking motion. Using a punching bag is also another means of amplifying strong punching motions of the arms, legs, or head. Mindell verbally amplified his movements by telling the client to go ahead and complete the movements he was trying to make.

There are numerous ways to amplify secondary movements. A very useful and central amplification technique is to slightly inhibit a movement or completely forbid it for a few moments so that the impulse which is behind the movement can become stronger and closer to awareness. Since amplification techniques are well known to dance therapists there will not be a detailed account here. (3)

Secondary motions repeat themselves over and over again because there is an edge to this particular kind of movement. It is therefore split off and comes out in spontaneous and incongruent ways. In the next example, a movement edge is seen more clearly.

Case 2. Mary, 18 years old, began to talk about her problem of being nearsighted and the recent worsening of this condition. In order to work with this problem, Mindell asked her if she would take off her glasses so that they could experiment with her experience of not being able to see clearly. She removed her glasses and sat very still with her feet tucked under her legs, hands in her lap as Mindell experimented with moving closer and farther away. When he was about ten feet away he asked her what it was like for her not to be able to see him clearly.

At this point she said, "Well..." and simultaneously her right

His secondary motions are found in the strong flicking of his right hand. This flicking falls out of the pattern and rhythm of ease and relaxed bopping up and down. The hand flick is of a very different character and speed which surfaces now and again in a repetitive way in counterpoint to the overall movement theme. The hand flick is incongruent with Bill's relaxed, easy manner and is incomplete. We do not readily understand its meaning. It is spontaneous, unintentional and therefore farther away from his awareness than the bopping motions.

If Bill had not talked in the beginning, which is the case in some dance therapy sessions, it would be easy to tell what is primary and what is secondary by noticing what is constant and complete as opposed to incomplete, repetitive gestures which fall out of the overall movement theme. To find out what is secondary it is helpful to ask oneself "What happens spontaneously? What is unexpected? Which movements are not complete? What motion repeats itself?"

The differentiation of primary and secondary motions is vital to movement work as it provides keys to the identification and potential unfolding of the overall process which is occurring. In movement, it seems particularly easy to miss secondary elements and get stuck wandering in the hypnotizing effect of the primary movement process. Knowledge of the details of secondary movements also makes it possible to catch deeply unconscious material as it arises, without having to apply a program to discover it.

In the above example, Mindell uses movement-oriented amplification techniques to help Bill complete the secondary signals which are occurring. In this case, Mindell used the

arm extended out to the side and her hand waved up and down a bit. Mindell asked her to repeat this arm gesture. When she repeated it, her arm moved out to the side and fingers waved in the air. Mindell moved closer to her and put his own fingers near to hers. Her fingers began to touch his and then she began to slightly reach out to him. He moved back just a bit, to help her experiment with and complete this reaching motion. She tentatively came closer to him, started to grab him with her fingers and then pulled back and started to cry.

She said that she suddenly realized how terribly lonely she is. In recent times a few people she loved had left her and she felt it would be childish to try to hold on to them. She felt that grown up adults should let people go their own way.

In order to work on this, Mindell helped Mary by using her primary visual channel. He asked her to step out and watch two people act out her situation: someone leaving while she sits quietly and acts grown up. Stepping out in this way helps her gain an overview, distance herself from what is happening by using her primary channel, and therefore have the capacity to metacommunicate about what is happening.

Mary watched the scene with great interest. Suddenly she told the author, who was playing her part, "Go grab your friend. Don't let him go!" Mindell said "Yes, go take her place and show her how to do it!" Mary got up and grabbed the "friend," telling him not to leave, that she really needed him.

Analysis of Case 2. Mary's primary process was to act like an adult and let people go their own way. Her secondary experience,

first experienced as an eye problem and then manifested in her spontaneous motion of her arm, was being a child and reaching out for people. She had an edge to this behavior because "grown ups do not do such things."

Mindell helped this woman amplify and complete her motion by first simply asking her to repeat it and then going up and testing the motion she was making by putting his hand out to hers.

Amplifying a secondary movement inevitably leads to a movement edge, a spot in movement where one feels that it is not possible to go any farther. In this case, the woman's edge was indicated by her reaching out and then suddenly pulling her arm back. Edges in movement often appear as 1) sudden stops in the motion, 2) a decrease in energy and 3) a resumption of movements typical of the primary process.

Catching edges when they happen requires training and courage to guide the client back to the edge. Edges can be spotted visually or can be felt as some dynamic drop energy. If you feel lost at any point in the work, it is useful to ask "where was the last energetic point?", and then go back to that spot.

Picking up movement edges is one of the central aspects of process-oriented movement work. It is very easy to miss edges and in doing so miss the important growing and energetic point of the work. Here is another typical movement edge. A therapist is working with a client. The two people are moving together in a fluid and soft manner. The client begins to push a bit stronger -

and suddenly begins to dance fluidly and softly around the room again. He/she was getting close to a secondary experience of being more forceful and then gives it up and goes back to his/her original primary process of being fluid and soft.

Another woman began to dance in a very sensual manner and stopped because she was embarrassed about being so sexy. When she was encouraged to continue, the dance evolved into a ritual type of kundalini dance into which the woman drew other people. This was a very sacred, even religious experience for all participants. The edge is often an illusion. When one goes over an edge the previous material which seemed terrible, embarrassing, or stupid often transforms into something numinous which we could never have predicted ahead of time.

It is often useful to utilize other channels to help complete a pattern of behavior which is over the edge. Here, Mindell used the visual channel. If a client, for example, is afraid of making violent motions, you might ask him/her not to move at all but to "see" what he or she is doing, or tell a story about the movements, or just "listen" to the sounds associated with this experience. Another possibility would be to ask the person if he/she knows of a real or dream figure who might be able to go over the edge and create a pattern for the new behavior.

In any case, what you do around an edge, either examining the philosophical system around it, staying behind or going over an edge, depends upon the feedback from the client.

Case 3. In a recent seminar a man of 80 talked about how he wanted to retire from his work as the head of a hospital. John had

trained thousands of students and had developed health care programs around the world. As he talked about his work his eyes glowed with joy. He complained that when he walked he had trouble with his left leg. Since this was a description of a movement difficulty, Mindell and the author started to work with him in movement.

We asked him if he would just walk around the room and notice if there was anything in him that "wasn't just walking." As he did this he noticed that his left leg was slower in recovering its step than his right. He began to give all sorts of medical descriptions as to why this leg was weaker than the other. Upon encouragement, he left his medical description for the moment and focused on and even amplified slightly the exact experience he had with this slow leg by slowing it down even a bit more.

John began to bend even further down on his left knee and then stepped up to his right. Finally he walked up to one seminar participant, bent down deeply in front of her and bowed his head. He repeated this motion several times until he realized its meaning. He said "I am giving respect. I am a servant."

It was soon apparent that even though this man was 80 years old and had naturally decided that it was time to lead a more introverted life, there was something inside of him which urged him to go back to his profession. The weaker leg was the beginning of a dream which attempted to unfold through his body: a dream in which he could continue on his path as a very gifted doctor and servant of the people. In this moment, the dream manifested in the movement channel as a movement disturbance.

Upon realizing this message, John began to glow with excitement about the possibility of continuing the work he had loved so much and he started to consider ways that he could go back to work while satisfying his need for introversion.

Discussion of Case 3. Here we notice that John's difficulties in walking were not merely physical disabilities but were an expression of the desire to return to his work and continue to make a certain kind of impact upon the world. By applying a teleological philosophy to his movement symptoms we see his physical disability not only as pathological but as a process containing potential life and meaning for this man.

If we discover that movement is an unoccupied channel, either from the language structure, from the description of a movement difficulty, or from watching and noticing incompleting motions, there are a number of rapid accessing techniques which help the client get into the movement channel and quickly access material which is secondary. One of these methods is, as above, to ask the client to take a walk around the room. Then ask the client to notice what part of the body is not just walking. The part that "doesn't walk" is a secondary process which is trying to come to awareness. Walking, then, provides a normal, everyday movement pattern upon which secondary material can be discovered with relative ease.

Another possibility is just to ask the client to stand up and you as the therapist wait until you see the client make a spontaneous secondary motion. The work, then, is to amplify this movement and allow the process to unfold. One of the author's clients, a man about 40 years old, said that he wanted to sleep at night but was

agitated and couldn't seem to fall asleep. When he stood up the first spontaneous motion that he made was a tiny sweeping motion with his right hand to the side. When he amplified this motion he discovered that he was pushing his laziness away and wanted to get deepy into his creative work. Asking the person to just stand up is like giving a blank field in which unconscious material which is over the edge, just beyond one's identity, can emerge. The idea is that the solutions to our problems are found in our unoccupied channels.

A third accessing technique is to simply lift the client's arm from the wrist. The client should relax his arm as you move it around slowly in order to discover the dreaming process which is structuring the muscles. At a certain point you or the client will feel a tendency in the arm to want to move in a certain way. This is the dreaming process.

Case 4. Here is a final example where Mindell helped a man to process his epileptic seizures. In this seminar, a very slight, pale and shy man, named Eric, began to walk around the room. One noticed that his steps were very exact, his feet placed almost deliberately on the floor, head never budging from a forward-staring position. His arms moved in an exact and careful manner. Eric noticed that his chest and neck seemed to remain static. Mindell asked him if he could amplify this "lack of movement" by progressively stabilizing his chest, neck, head, shoulders, hips, etc, until his whole body was almost immobilized. The man said he felt like a robot. He suddenly began to sob and said that as a child he began to have grand mal epileptic seizures. He was so afraid of these seizures that he now realized that he had

developed a method for controlling his motions to make sure that such wild and terrifying kinesthetic attacks would not happen again.

Eric's drive for control was extremely important for him and needed to be strengthened. At the same time, process thinking reveals that the wild movements are still another secondary process which, if not picked up and processed consciously, will happen in some form again.

Mindell asked Eric if he would be interested in exploring the experiences that he had when he had his seizures and Eric agreed. He described the seizures as uncontrollable and violent motions which would "happen to him" while he was unconscious. So Mindell suggested, "Why don't you walk around again and any time you want just make an unconscious gesture for 2 seconds, and only 2 seconds." Mindell was trying to help him pick up these spontaneous gestures with awareness but with enough control so as not to be overwhelmed by them.

Eric walked around and then made a flinging motion with his arms in the air. Mindell encouraged him to do it again but make it even bigger and use other parts of his body, still limiting the movement to two seconds long. Eric used more of his body this time as his chest, head and arms reached out in a swinging motion forward. The next time, Mindell encouraged him to complete his motions. This time Eric swung his body forward again and suddenly spun into a beautiful sort of martial arts dance: wide sweeping long strokes of the arms, bent legs and an intense internal focus. Mindell then joined the dance by battling with him in the same martial arts-like manner.

As they danced, Eric came closer to Mindell and looked like he was going to throw him to the ground, then backed away. Recognizing this as an edge, Mindell encouraged him to go back to that spot, and to do it again in slow motion. He threw Mindell over in slow motion as Mindell amplified the movement by giving Eric's arms a bit of resistance.

Mindell encouraged Eric to do this once again, this time helping him fill out his experience more completely by adding words to his motions and simultaneously to imagine who it was that he was fighting. Eric said, "You're not going to bully me around anymore!" and he suddenly and proudly walked away.

Eric said that in his childhood, before the seizures occurred, he had been bullied around by a lot of other kids and had always been too small and weak to fight back. Now he was able to process these motions and discover that he too could fight back and then walk away from the situation.

Discussion of Case 4. In this example, Eric was able to combine his need for controlled activity with wild and spontaneous movements. This resulted in a controlled martial arts battle. This combination is a very creative and surprising integration of the formerly separate and polarized states. He does not have to forfeit one in favor of the other but use both in a creative new way.

While very deep and strong experiences can happen in the movement channel, a full experience of a secondary process happens in multiple channels. Mindell, therefore, helped Eric fill out his

fighting experience by connecting with him in relationship, by adding words and visualizations.

Integration also means that experiences can be translated and used in other channels. He is able to be forceful verbally, in relationships and in his dealing with the world and his everyday life. These integration steps are indicative of future steps in his individual work. A one-channeled experience, while very valuable and powerful, is in the long run less useful than a more multi-channeled experience.

Application to Dance Therapy

The process oriented approach to movement offers the field of dance therapy a number of important tools. The differentiation of the kinesthetic channel into primary and secondary movements allows the dance therapist to identify which movements are closer to awareness and which further away, thereby ensuring that one is working with the entire scope of an individual process. This differentiation between primary and secondary motions helps us to not get stuck only in primary process motions but to locate the deeper secondary experiences which are trying to come to our attention. We learn how deep unconscious processes are happening all the time if we are able to observe which movements are secondary. We see how it is unnecessary to develop programs for getting to deep experiences since we can discover them happening all the time, even in the most mundane, ordinary gestures. Amplifying and working with these motions often reveal strong religious experiences, yoga asanas or the solutions to everyday problems.

The concept of the edge and its identification helps us hold on

to the most energetic growing point. The edge is most often skipped over, particularly in movement work; when it is not picked up, the dynamic energy, the point of growth is often lost.

The information concepts of channels and channel changing offer the dance therapist the possibility of connecting movement work in a fluid way with other channel experiences. Process concepts are functional, parsimonious, and close enough to observed reality to make it possible to work with a wide spectrum of clientele regardless of their momentary states, beliefs, or experience of their world.

These ideas facilitate the integration of dance therapy with the mainstream of psychotherapy, demonstrating for therapists of other schools that movement is one of the main information vessels through which unconscious material manifests itself. Movement is no longer a separate "specialized" approach to the individual but an integrated aspect of a larger field of human processes.

Footnotes

1

The reader is referred to Mindell's River's Way for more detailed discussions of channel theory, especially chapters 7,8,9.

2

The difference between the proprioceptive channel and the kinesthetic channel is that proprioceptive information refers to inner body feelings that are not associated with any kind of internal or external movement.

3

See Kaplan's "The Hidden Dance" pp.105-119 for more information about amplification techniques.

