



**Resource Oriented Skill Training
as a Psychotherapeutic Method**

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Preface

This present article was written for a new workshop: "Muscular Intelligence - Coping and Resonance".

By introducing this workshop, I express my wish to focus on resource oriented skill training as a specific psychotherapeutic method. I realize that my specialization towards resource oriented skill training reaches all the way back into my training as a psychomotor trainer from 1975 through 1978. I have worked with this method ever since, as a path of development and healing for myself and as a primary method initially in psychomotor training and later in my psychotherapeutic work.

Initially I thought of writing 10-15 pages. Once I got into it the material unfolded. It has proven to be profoundly meaningful for me to name the details and principles that makes resource oriented skill training an advanced psychotherapeutic method with the ability of supporting complex maturing and healing processes in the personality.

Thank you to my principal teachers in psychomotor training Ruth Ryborg and Lisbeth Marcher who first introduced me to this bodily approach. Thank you for your developing work preceding the teachings I received.

Thank you to Bente Mørup for our cooperation around the first weekend workshops we put together in 1980-82. For me they signified the beginning of using bodily skill training as a core tool in more extensive teaching formats.

Thank you also to Marianne Bentzen for our collaboration during the years we developed workshops together, 1981 through 1987. Together we used the methods we both learned in Skolen for Kropsdynamik (the psychomotorschool) as a basis for developing creative workshops about body awareness and spirituality, body and sexuality, and creation and destruction, to name a few. These workshops carried seeds reaching far ahead into my professional development, founding part of my future style of creating thematic workshops with resource oriented skill training as the leading principle. Since 1995 I have cultivated this style in workshops such as "Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others", "Stress Management", "Coping with Instincts, Emotions and Feelings" and many more.

An additional thank you to Marianne for our conversations about the similarities and differences in our professional and personal approaches today.

Thank you to my colleagues in the Bodydynamic trainer group 1985-2003, Lisbeth Marcher, Lennart Ollars, Ellen Ollars, Erik Jarlnæs, Steen Jørgensen, Sonja Fich, Marianne Bentzen (until 1997) and Ditte Marcher (since 1994). Thank you for our collaboration in conceptualizing and developing the method through many years of teaching together.

A special thank you to Steen Jørgensen for your involvement and willingness to participate in further development and clarification of the method this past year. Your help has been invaluable to me both conceptually and emotionally.

Thank you also to Ingerid Heyerdahl, Veslemøy Merton, Espen Andli and Kolbjørn Vårdal. Throughout these last years you have, as trainers and organizers in Norway, taken part in many conversations and developmental processes thus helping me clarify my professional approach. Thank you to Lene Vedfelt whose ability to cooperate with my capacity and skills, whilst keeping your own style, has helped me open up to see strengths and weaknesses in all psychotherapeutic methods.

And last but not least a big thank you to Flemming Brantbjerg, my husband and partner. Thank you for your continuing support and faith in my ability to crystalize my own professional viewpoint - and to bring it to the fore through writing. Thank you for a creative and evolving collaboration in building our company from 2003 till this day.

In finishing this writing process I see this present article as something more than simply teaching material for the workshop "Muscular Intelligence - Coping and Resonance".

The material unfolded as I wrote. The framework came into being organically. I have used my writing as a means to delve into connections, to understand both my personal development and the method's potential, all I had not put into words before.

In this article I communicate my process of owning the method of resource oriented skill training as my specialty - thereby clarifying the approach I developed within Bodydynamic Analysis and which I now carry with me onwards onto my own path. A path that is now framed by the new name *Moaiku*. *Moaiku* is a soundword comprised of the words *motor function* and *haiku*. *Motoric Haiku* is a poetic name for 'resource oriented skill training'. A method that, like haiku poems, focuses on a sensory based presence here-and-now and on bridge building between body and language. A presence obtained through precise dosing, repetition and resonance with myself, the other, and a greater field around us.

Resource oriented skill training as a psychotherapeutic method

Historical background

Resource oriented skill training was formed as a method within Bodydynamic Analysis, a body-oriented form of psychotherapy, developed in Denmark since the late 1960's. The system was developed by a varied group of professionals - with the common trait of being psychomotor trainers.¹

Founded in psychomotor training, Bodydynamic Analysis has from day one based its methods in an educational way of thinking - and from this offset developed psychotherapeutic methods which in a unique way blends training and psychotherapy.

Resource oriented skill training is based on the knowledge of psychomotor development and the role our muscle controlled movements play in this development.

Each muscle is seen as being connected to a specific psychosocial potential, which ideally begins its integration in the child during specific developmental phases or sensitive periods.²

Body training methods for strengthening inner sensing of the body were linked to the knowledge of each muscle's psychosocial potential. Out of this interaction between practice and theory emerged a method focusing on activation of motor function and related psychosocial skills either through touch or movement. The aim of this method is to stimulate and awaken the psychosocial potential which in turn can be integrated in the personality as conscious skills.

Understanding how muscular states constitute a component in psychological defence is an integral part of Bodydynamic Analysis and of resource oriented skill training.

Inspiration for this understanding has been drawn partly from the traditional psychomotor methods and partly from Lillemor Johnsen's work with hypo-tonic states. Psychomotor training approaches (or "relaxation therapy" as it is also called) primarily work with muscle tension or armouring, using a term from Reichian bodypsychotherapy, and corresponds with the Bodydynamic term *hyper-responsiveness*. Muscles in this state tighten, control, and hold back emotions and impulses.

¹ Psychomotor training holds some parallels to psychomotoric physiotherapy. Lisbeth Marcher, who for a number of years was a principal teacher at Afspændingspædagogisk Institut/Skolen for Kropsdynamik, initiated and led the process of creating Bodydynamic Analysis.

Specialties in Bodydynamic Analysis are:

- Psychomotor muscle function - the system includes naming which developmental phase and which psychosocial act is connected to each muscle in the body
- Body-oriented character theory - based on knowledge about children's healthy psycho-motor development
- Training oriented therapeutic methods
- Shock trauma therapy - including coping with high energy states such as stress, high stress, peak experiences and trauma

² Introduction to this linkage between muscles and developmental phases is found in Brantbjerg (2005), Brantbjerg & Ollars (2006) and Fich & Marcher (1997).

Another - and in many ways more important inspiration - was derived from Norwegian physiotherapist and psychotherapist, Lillemor Johnsen, who worked with hypo-tonic states in the body. She developed a treatment system built on activation of hypotonic muscles through touch, thus making contact with lost resources or "the key to the source of happiness" as she called it (Johnsen 1976). The term *hypotonia* inspired Lisbeth Marcher to formulate the term *hypo-responsiveness*. Hypo-response names a muscle state characterized by giving up, lethargy, loss of energy and fullness, which in consciousness corresponds with a loss of movement impulse and emotion. They are no longer felt - or are felt faintly.

At Afspændingspædagogisk Institut/Skolen for Kroppsdynamik, a school for psychomotor training, Lisbeth Marcher led the development of a treatment system focusing on connection and cooperation between hyper- and hypo-responsive defence strategies. These principles of treatment became a foundation of the theory of Bodydynamic Analysis and working with both hyper- and hypo-response in the client's muscles continues to be a major praxis of the method today.³

At the same time as waking the original psychosocial potential through muscle activation, personal experiences connected to that potential are also awakened. To use this kind of body based skill training to actually gain access to resources requires an understanding of the defence patterns that are touched when muscles are activated and an ability to control a given level of activation of biographical material. It is this control that is supported by understanding both hyper- and hypo-responsive defence strategies, making it possible to use psychomotor skill training to build resources by adapting training to whatever level of energy is present in the muscles in question - and to the individual's cognitive and emotional capacity.

³ For elaboration on the history behind Bodydynamic Analysis see Marcher, Jarlnæs & Ollars (1995)

My personal background and approach to the method

I trained to be a psychomotor trainer 1975-1978 at Afspændingspædagogisk Institut/Skolen for Kropsdynamik with Lisbeth Marcher and Ruth Ryborg as principal teachers.

From early on in my studies I was interested in and attracted to the concrete skill training exercises that were part of the education in "Movement". Skills such as grounding, centering, boundaries, balance, contact regulation etc. I was also attracted to the exercises or training that encouraged an inner sensory based presence. I experienced "finding myself" - finding joy, presence and curiosity. I experienced a greater connection within. At the same time I found this process to be a rollercoaster ride. I became present by means of these bodily exercises and yet I easily lost my presence again. I found my centering, and I lost it, I found it again, and so on. I was only partially able to integrate the resources as a stable part of my personality.

This process left me with a profound curiosity and an urge to understand these mechanisms: How is it possible that a resource in our personality is available one moment and gone from consciousness the next? How do these shifts occur in the body, muscles and mind? How was it possible for me to lose the resources again, when I had just found them the minute before? And what specifically did I do to retrieve them? What triggered these shifts? And can this form of body work become more accurate, increasing the chance of a lasting effect to support integration in body and mind?

My quest for answers to these questions has been the driving force of my professional development through these past 30 years.

Since 1977 I taught groups - first at evening school ⁴, and later (1985 through 2003) at workshops offered through my own business as part of the trainer group in Bodydynamic Analysis. Since 2003 I have been organizing workshops and trainings through my own company. Parallel to the teaching I have always worked with people in individual therapy.

Through all this teaching practice, resource oriented skill training has been the core method. Regardless of context and theme for the class, I have always included training of basic skills such as centering, flexibility, grounding, boundaries, containment, regulation of contact etc. I have used skill training as a path to here-and-now presence, supporting people to cope with emotions and high intensity, and supporting cognitive clarity.

My personal drive - spurred from the questions I formed earlier - has led me to teach the same exercises over and over. Building series of exercises for specific workshops and performing them again and again.

⁴ "Evening school" in Denmark is a very open organisation offering classes in lots of disciplines. Everybody can participate. The classes are partly financed by the state - or they were at the time I was teaching. There is no connection between the normal educational system and the "evening school".

I have polished, deepened, simplified, selected and cultivated the basic exercises I learned as a psychomotortrainer, and have complemented them ever since. Always searching for the simplest and most precise way of communicating this skill training so as to be inclusive and help each participant, client or myself discover and begin to integrate the wakened resources. I have also searched for ways to raise consciousness of how these skills work in the body, so we can feel exactly how we can support a skill - and how we lose it.

Some 10 years ago I began using the term "dosing" when communicating bodily exercises. This term arose from a need to be able to meet and ease the difficulties I saw in some participants regarding their ability to experience satisfaction and meaning with an exercise. I saw people perform movements in a way in which they were not present. I saw people performing movements with an amount of power that left them exhausted, making it joyless to use their body. I saw people afraid of using their power in the exercises. I noticed that the way I demonstrated an exercise - the level of power I used - had a great impact on who among the group benefitted from the exercises, and who did not seem to succeed, and which norms were created as to what was "right".

To dose an exercise means to me, adapting the exercise precisely to each individual. Dosing is based on an individual's own inner sensing. How big or small does my movement have to be? How much power feels good to use? How slow or fast should I perform an exercise? Is this an exercise for me - or do I want to let it go and not do it? When dosing is precise, I become more present. I feel myself more clearly from within.

The principle of dosing relates to Bodydynamic Analysis' understanding of hypo- and hyper-responsive muscle states. A given-up, hypo-responsive muscle state requires low dosing when performing exercises in order for energy to accumulate in the muscle and optimize presence. A hyper-responsive, controlled muscle state generally needs a higher dosing so the accumulated impulses and emotions can release or let go and a more restful presence can emerge.

Today, dosing for me is a key element of resource oriented skill training. Focusing on individual dosing makes the teaching of exercises inclusive to both given-up and held back strategies, both of which are always represented in a group or in different parts of the body. The "right" thing is not to perform an exercise as the teacher or other group members do it. Optimum dosing is found only through experiencing inner success. Skill training thus expands to include both training of specific skills presented by a teacher/therapist and a focus on finding inner sensing, inner direction and authority, inner success and acceptance of myself as I am - with the energy level I have. Working with precise dosing impacts, challenges, and can potentially change your self image.

An example of the effect of successful dosing:

A participant is doing a standing cross-crawl movement (right knee and left elbow are moved towards each other - alternately left knee and right elbow and so on). This movement activates a deep hip flexor, Psoas Major, supporting muscular sensing of the area surrounding the physical balance point. The exercise thus supports centering. I observe how the participant performs the exercise mechanically with no visible inner direction. The participant herself thinks it feels pointless to do the movement and soon gets tired. She has difficulty feeling anything. I suggest decreasing the movement. It takes 4-5 attempts where the participant follows my suggestions of lower and lower dosing, until the movement is barely visible but still there - an intention felt from within. Right knee to left elbow, left knee to right elbow ever so slightly - as small as it is almost possible to do. And then the magical thing happens when she suddenly starts to feel something way inside. Something awakens, becomes noticeable, becomes conscious. A delicate presence and a possibility of beginning to taste and own her presence in the center of her body as a resource.

Without the help in dosing, this participant probably would have felt like a failure after this exercise and would not have benefitted from it because the muscles close to the physical balance point (Psoas Major amongst others) probably were characterized by giving up (hypo-response). A too high level of dosing in this exercise would typically lead to even more giving up instead of an awakening of sensing and presence.

It is my experience that a strong focus on dosing adds an important element to resource oriented skill training as a method. Focus on dosing shifts the balance in therapist/client and teacher/participant roles towards a greater emphasis on client/participant's own authority. Adapting exercises in this way ensures a greater sense of success for more people. Communication of group norms supporting an acceptance of all levels of hypo- or hyper-responsive strategies are backed up. These changes reflect my own maturing as a person - how I myself have become more tolerant, less authoritative and directing. And they contain actual method development.

My understanding today of what happened for me as a student at the psychomotor school is that I performed many exercises with too high a level of dosing. Faithful to the part of me that is powerful and with a self image that put the powerful part of me first, I put power and liveliness into most exercises. It was fun, enlivening, I maintained a high status within the group - and another part of me was overwhelmed; I could not contain the emotions and liveliness arising in me and reestablished dissociative defence mechanisms⁵ related to my unreleased trauma. And then my liveliness was unavailable again.

⁵ Dissociative defence mechanisms refer to reactions characteristic in coping with trauma. Simply put these reactions entail a splitting in the mind capable of making content, sensing, and memory "disappear" completely. Or a split can happen between different elements of a memory, where visual impressions, bodily sensing, emotions, thoughts etc, no longer are connected but are experienced as completely separate and therefore difficult to make sense of. For further introduction to dissociation related to trauma, see Anstorp, Benum & Jakobsen (2006).

This is how I perceive my own rollercoaster mechanism, shifting between accessing powerful pleasure driven presence and losing it. Perhaps it could not have been any different. Working with the body whilst carrying unresolved trauma will always touch and also naturally promote dissociative defence patterns. And perhaps it would have made a difference during the process if attention to precise dosing had been more prominent. I am thinking that it potentially could have supported me in owning the polarity between my hyper- and my hypo-responsive defence patterns; between the part of me being one-up, strong and alone, and the part being one-down and desperately relying on outside help. A lower level of dosing might have had the potential to support building my own ability to care for the weak part in me, thus being able to receive help in a more integrated way.

Regardless -the help I received from this method was profoundly valuable. I knew from personal experience that resource oriented skill training worked. I actually gained contact to important resources in my personality. I tapped into "me". I also knew that it is no simple task to integrate and contact the awakened resources. It requires more than doing bodily exercises. This way of working touches directly upon potential resources and sometimes upon powerful defence mechanisms.

This process urged me to delve into the method in order to understand it and make it more precise. It is still a project of profound interest to me and the reason I today speak of "resource oriented skill training as psychotherapeutic method" as my specialty.

Core elements and principles of resource oriented skill training as a psychotherapeutic method

Concrete body sensing

The question: "What do you feel in your body?" can be answered in many different ways. Feeling your body is not something straightforward. Several layers of senses and feelings are involved and usually intertwined when we verbalize what we feel. At Afspændingspædagogisk Institut/Skolen for Kropsdynamik Ruth Ryborg formulated a distinction between two key terms in relation to bodily sensing: Body consciousness and body experience.

Ryborg (1977) defined these terms as follows:

- *"As a method I chose to "split" the whole into two terms - body consciousness and body experience - and to conceptualize them like this:*
- *Body consciousness is objective knowledge of your own body, its state and potential - for instance knowledge of the body's dimensions, tension levels, weight, mobility options and strength, its temperature and skin. In short a biological and physiological insight; your physical body object to the experience.*
- *Body experience is the integrated and thereby actualized body consciousness "made alive" in every human being. Meaning body consciousness colored by feelings, passions and moods, processed, repressed, distorted or maybe enhanced by earlier experience from visual, auditory or motor functional memory, which in turn are influenced by abstract thoughts, dreams and fantasies.*
- *Definition of body consciousness is a theoretical one, meaning that it does not accept actual state or recognition, influenced by experiences and norms. Thus making it seem as an abstract frame of reference.*
- *It is my experience that this distinction between an objective (body consciousness) and a subjective (body experience) knowledge is a practical necessity, for instance to be able to differentiate between fantasy and reality, between what is me by virtue of my special qualities/abilities and what is attributed me by my surroundings. And what I attribute my surroundings.*
- *By using these two definitions (terms!) in parallel and working with them individually when teaching, we may reach a point where we are able to experience and analyze the sources of our frustration, of our confusion and of our current identity. Meaning: Body consciousness offers me acting potential in relation to body experience, in relation to my immediate surroundings and to the society I live in."*

Bodydynamic Analysis has continued working with this distinction between the two terms - at one point changing the word "body consciousness" to "body sensing". The word body sensing emphasizes concrete sensing of the physical body as opposed to the emotionally angled body experience.

So to the question: "What do you feel in your body?" you can answer with body sensing words: My hands are cold, I detect movement in my bowels, my heart is beating fast, I feel the pressure of my heels against the floor, I feel my right leg more clearly than my left - it is warmer, more full etc. Or you can answer with body experience language such as: My hands are completely gone. Everything is swirling around inside me. I am dissolving, I am falling backwards, my one leg is much bigger than the other etc.

How do these two statements affect you right now?

Differentiating between these two ways of feeling the body and training people how to verbally differentiate between them is a powerful and astonishingly effective psychotherapeutic method. Both languages name sides of reality as it is experienced. The difference between the two is that pure body sensing is neutral and focuses on presence here-and-now. Body experience does not differentiate between past and present. Emotional charge takes over and dominates. This often times is the active dynamic when a person is overwhelmed. Maintaining attention to precise body sensing supports here-and-now presence. It supports containment of emotions and other forms of high intensity, which can be helpful in helping people to get out of being overwhelmed.

Distinction between body sensing and body experience is key in resource oriented skill training. Naming concrete body sensing awakened through bodily exercises keeps the process in the present. This diminishes the risk of "drowning" in emotional states, that might be awakened when activating muscles. If for instance an exercise wakes an uneasy feeling, the precise body sensing can be named, for instance: "I feel faint, this exercise affects my balance, I feel a physical weakness in the back of my knees, I feel like sitting down." From here the principle of dosing can help explore whether the exercise accesses other more resourceful sensing, if performed in a lower dosing - or if this is an exercise this individual should let go of and go with the impulse to sit down.

Naming body sensing is just as important in relation to positively charged experience. If a centering exercise for instance releases a feeling of "coming home" or "finding myself", it can be verbalized which exact sensations belong to this experience. For instance: "I feel and visualize the front of my lumbar vertebrae. I can contact the area with my breath. I feel warmth and flow deep within my abdomen, and it feels like coming home."

Naming concrete body sensing can build consciousness of the actual bodily experience behind any experience you might have. It supports ownership of resources awakened. When I know exactly how it feels and where it is in my body when in contact with a specific resource, it gets easier to take ownership of the resource. It becomes a skill.

Naming body sensations is not a bodily skill. It is a skill stimulating the connection between subcortical parts of the brain and language which is activated from language centers in the cortex. The subcortical parts continuously inform us about the state our body is in. Verbalizing builds a bridge between these parts of the brain that often - in relation to body sensing - work independantly from each other. Language is connected to consciousness. Describing body sensing in words makes it part of our conscious knowledge of ourselves in the world, taking it to a higher level - especially within a culture, where language usually is generally ranked much higher than body sensing.

To most people it is unusual to verbalize body sensing. It is a language untrained or never formed.

What language have we heard used of bodily phenomena growing up and later in life? Have we heard others name body sensations? How have we been met when we said something about how it feels in the body? What impact do we carry with us language wise and cognitively, in relation to sensing the body and putting these sensations into language?

Answers to these questions will impact the level of ease or difficulty we have in finding a language for body sensations. To some people this language is simply untrained and with outside suggestions the ability wakens and immediately becomes a resource.

To others, conscious or unconscious defence strategies will negatively charge language about body sensations. "You don't talk about that sort of thing. It is embarrassing. It is childish. Selfish. Private. You don't share those things with others. Nobody is interested in what I feel. It is dangerous to feel things in the body. What I feel does not correspond with what everybody else says. I keep it to myself - or forget it, separate myself from it etc, etc."

These examples for me point to the fact that working with resource oriented skill training and naming body sensations is not just a bodily method. This method trains the observing ego. It trains the ability to differentiate factual, concrete perception of reality from emotional charge. It trains language and the integration between language and body. It impacts both bodily, emotional and cognitive aspects of the potential and the patterns connected to psychomotor function.

All of the above might leave the impression that somehow "body sensing is good and body experience is bad". This is by no means the intention.

Body experiences, passions, feelings, and emotions give life and color to our experiential world. They comprise an important part of how we form experience of meaning. Without activity in the brain's limbic system, which is especially active in activating feelings, we lose the ability to act in social resonance. We lose the ability to read social signals, interpret facial expressions and so on (Hart 2006). Our ability to feel is a deeply valuable part of our capacity as human beings and an important part of our ability to regulate social interaction.

To some people it is just as important to train a language for body experience as one for body sensing. What feelings, moods or experiential qualities are connected to what I factually feel in my body? Do my sensations have colors, images, sounds connected to them? Questions like these can deepen contact to body experiences and help clarify and separate what is actual body sensing and what is emotional and an experiential quality.

The challenge regarding emotions is how we manage them, contain them and express them. Our limbic system has strong neural connections to both brain stem and prefrontal cortex. If emotional activation is handled only through cooperation between brain stem and limbic system, we are literally caught up in our emotions. We react automatically, quick as lightning and with great intensity. We react before we have time to think. This is a suitable survival mechanism when we are in actual danger, and it is a challenging and often times problematic mechanism, when we are in our normal everyday consciousness and must relate to the challenges of everyday life.

When there is a cooperation between prefrontal cortex and limbic system/brain stem, we are able to inhibit instinctive impulses. We are able to consciously relate to the feeling and we have options as to how we want to express it. Daniel Siegel refers to these two different ways of acting with emotions as "the low road" and "the high road" (Siegel 2006).

Training how to sense the body and naming body sensations is a way of strengthening the ability to contain high emotional charge. This training probably supports building and maintaining the neural connections between the limbic system and prefrontal cortex.

When we are present here-and-now and our prefrontal control is available, we can access the enlivening quality of the emotions instead of becoming overwhelmed by them. It becomes easier to distinguish which emotions are related to the past and which are connected to what happens right now.

Working with body sensing and body experience support these skills.

Presence in the here-and-now

Resource oriented skill training is a method focusing on presence in the here-and-now. No matter what pleasant or unpleasant states are awakened through body activation, focus is on containment and contact in the here-and-now and on discovering potential in the skills in the present moment.

Activating muscles through training psychosocial skills will always impact two layers of consciousness: Potential linked to the activated psychomotor function at the same time as biographical imprints linked to this potential.

It requires active direction to keep the process in a here-and-now awareness. The same exercises can work as a gateway to regressions and flashbacks. It is up to the therapist or teacher to introduce skills that helps to keep the process in the here-and-now, thereby teaching client/participant to do this themselves (for instance by focusing on body sensing and individual dosing).

Presence in the here-and-now offers an opportunity for new imprints; for producing new neural networks. In a flashback or when impacted by past negatively loaded memories you automatically fall into patterns that were created in the original experience as necessary and intelligent survival strategies. Healing is about breaking this automatic response, making it possible to touch the same material, the same feeling, state, memory and potential and discovering that it is

possible to relate to it in a new way being in contact with yourself and with others. This kind of new imprinting happens in the here-and-now. It does not happen inside traumatic memory. It happens when there are skills enough to stay in here-and-now contact with yourself and at least one other person, conscious of sensations, emotions and thoughts rooted in earlier events. Resource oriented skill training focuses on building coping skills supporting and enabling this kind of new imprinting.

For new imprinting to be integrated as a lasting track in consciousness, repetition is required. A single experience can introduce a new track. Repeated experiences can deepen this track to a point where it is capable of competing with old survival strategies. A new neural network is probably formed and becomes automatic. This leaves us with a new choice of options.

An example:

A participant is anxious following a grounding exercise focusing on sensing the feet in contact with the floor. The feeling of anxiety is triggered by concrete sensations in the feet. I ask her to verbalize precisely what she feels in her body. Her heart is beating fast, her palms are sweaty, her feet are cold. Just naming these sensations make her more present. She is here and feeling the uncomfortable sensations connected to her anxiety. I ask about sensations in her abdomen and her center (based on a visual observation of a lack of energy in this area). She answers that this area is distant, sort of gone. I ask her to recall which of the centering exercises worked best for her. She recalls thinking of the front of her lumbar vertebrae. She does this and feels how it gets easier for her to cope with the anxiety. She is afraid and she is right here-and-now in the anxiety, in contact with herself, with me and to a lesser degree with the group. I ask about her connection down into her legs. She feels unsettled in her legs and realizes that her legs feel like running. I ask her to feel this impulse, feel a connection from the center of gravity down to her feet, and she discovers that she can be present right now with the urge to run. Her feet are getting warmer, she feels more powerful and present and the physiological state of alarm diminishes. She returns to full presence with the rest of the group.

This type of process does, in a small way, process traumatic anxiety contained in a here-and-now contact. A new imprint is introduced in relation to old automatic patterns without focusing on whatever events made these patterns necessary.

This new imprint contains the experience that it is possible to feel anxiety in contact; that bodily skills strengthen the ability to contain the energy of anxiety, and that it is possible to get through anxiety -it does not last forever. In healing traumatic experiences these experiences and skills are vital. Feeling able to manage the states the traumatic events triggered in you is one component in establishing or recovering safety.

If you had asked the same client what she felt in her body and had accepted body experience answers the process would have gone in another direction, probably further into the memory that triggered anxiety and thereby into having no option but to activate old automatic strategies. The possibility of a new imprint would have moved further away.

Accepting what is

Resource oriented skill training is based on the idea that it is possible to change locked patterns through building new paths, training skills, enabling development, and integrating new behaviour. Activating the psychosocial potential connected to the muscles is a method that often raises hope.

Experiencing that my center is still in me even though it felt like I had lost it; sensing that it is possible to move my arms and be curious as to what impulses they have after years and years of having felt a passivity in the arms, a deadness, or intense control - experiences like these often raise hope.

And yet so many people have experienced as I did as a young student and since then many times over, a hope is raised when establishing contact to a resource, but it is not a simple thing to integrate and maintain contact to this awakened resource. And that hurts.

Automatic defence strategies, those relating to unresolved trauma as well as those relating to personality development, do not give way easily. We manage our everyday life with them, they are an important part of our known world, and we know they work. In spite of the costs they also have for us, they constitute our safe platform.

New paths must be experienced many times over before they can be felt as a profound alternative to our defence patterns. This means that when you are in a developmental process you are always working in the balance between a wish for and a potential for change, and a confrontation with reality as it is, including automatic defence strategies.

In this balance the ability to accept what is, whatever it is, is vital.

For many years gestalt therapy has worked on the assumption that change happens when you become what you are.

Swedish DBT therapists express it like this:

*"In focus are the dialectics between acceptance and transformational work."*⁶

A wish to find your centering does not in itself lead to improved centering. It offers a valuable sense of motivation and drive but when actually working with the exercises, acceptance of what specific sensation is available in your body is the first and vital step.

Finding your centering, could for example, start out in your sensing or feeling a void in your abdomen, or feeling nauseous and uneasy contacting your body's center area. Accepting these states and the ability to describe concrete body sensations associated with them, can lead you to more discoveries. Perhaps you discover that one of the centering exercises accesses a more resourceful sensation. Or that it feels better to let go of centering work altogether and work with grounding instead - only to discover that when connection to the floor is increased it lessens the discomfort of contacting your center, or it becomes easier to endure this discomfort and be curious about it. These processes have these inherent dialectics between acceptance of states and patterns as they are and the potential of forming new paths.

⁶ Kåver & Nilsson (2007), DBT stands for Dialectical Behavioural Therapy founded by Marsha Linehan.

Being able to switch between these two angles, or to hold them in consciousness simultaneously, is one of the challenges in using this method as client/participant as well as therapist/teacher.

For the therapist the challenge is being able to invite people to discover and take ownership of the resources that are potentially associated with each instructed exercise whilst passing on a positive acceptance of whatever people might sense and experience in an exercise. There is no "correct" result. There is a potential and different people have unbelievably different relationships to this potential, which reveal themselves in the large variety of experiences triggered by the exercises.

Accepting the sensations and experiences that you discover in skill training impacts your ability to accept yourself as you are: It impacts your self image. Just as naming body sensations can be influenced by negatively loaded cognition so indeed can your self image.

A feeling of distance or giving up somewhere in your body can be linked to selfblame: "I am such a weak person". Feeling anger can be linked to not feeling socially acceptable. Feeling power can be incompatible with being a "good girl" and so on.

My own process encountering resource oriented skill training exemplified just this. My norms offered a higher status to the strong and capable parts of me. I would rather feel strong in an exercise than weak. My powerlessness, helplessness, feeling overwhelmed and anxious, were hidden under my strength which in turn had to be held with a great deal of control to maintain the pattern. Regarding hypo- and hyper-response, I had a polarized pattern of both giving up and control.

Such a pattern will make it complicated to accept all the different sensations that will show up in bodily skill training. Those sensations that fit your self image are welcomed, other sensations might raise a curiosity and yet others are automatically sorted out - bypassing conscious control. They are simply too scary if there is not enough capacity emotionally and cognitively for the expansion of your self image.

This automatic process is obviously often times not conscious. Once you are conscious of what you accept and what you would rather sort out, you start to have a choice.

This dynamic will be active regardless of what self image and norms you have. To some it will be dangerous to feel their own strength. They might feel the most safe with sensations that support the image of being weak. Others will recognize the pattern I described earlier.

Changing these patterns takes time and is not solely done by training skills.

Skill training offers an opportunity to spot the imprints gently and bit by bit. How do I react to the exercises? What kind of sensations come easily to me? Are there types of sensation that I hear others in the group are having that I never get, and would perhaps rather not acquaint myself with? Do I have certain ideas of how to react to an exercise, what is "best" or "more correct" to feel? Are there any of my own sensations or experiences I am ashamed of and would rather not say out loud? ...and so on.

Having curiosity to these questions can help us accept the answers. Accepting what is, is therefore not only a matter of accepting the actual sensations and experiences that are released, but just as much a matter of accepting the way I relate to them.

Acceptance cannot be forced. Acceptance can be invited. Accepting group norms can be presented as making all reactions and patterns okay. In the end acceptance will come from within when a person is ready to acknowledge and begins integrating the sensations, feelings or experiences that have been excluded up until now.

Knowledge supports acceptance. Gaining knowledge about trauma reactions, dissociation, instinctual reactions and peak experiences has proven to be a vital factor in changing my own locked self image. Through this knowledge I have been able to understand how the frightening sensations I had difficulty accepting were natural reactions to extreme stress; that I am normal; that my reactions can be understood and described as part of being human.

Gaining knowledge of psychomotor development, of developmental phases in childhood, of existential themes and challenges, of healthy potential and defence strategies, of hypo- and hyper-responsive reaction patterns in muscles - all this knowledge has provided me with huge support in being able to be curious of sensations and reactions and accepting them as they are - my own as well as others'.

Knowledge of spiritual states of consciousness and gaining a map to navigate in experiences that transcend personality has supported acceptance of my own states, also making way for meeting states of others with acceptance.

Communicating knowledge or psycho-education, as is the term in cognitive therapy, is an important component in supporting development of acceptance and thereby supporting the potential of being able to keep an open and curious frame of mind in relation to all the phenomena that will emerge in consciousness when working with body based skill training. This is why teaching resource oriented skill training always contains a mixture of knowledge communication and work with bodily, sensory based exercises supporting access to personal experience.

Being able to gain full acceptance of sensations and experiences and integrate them into the personality radically transforms your self image; you need to come to terms with the history attached to these experiences. We do not separate parts of ourselves from our self image for fun. There are always stories, actual circumstances, events, family dynamic patterns etc. hiding behinds such a separation.

Skill training offers a way of gradually, step by step, accessing the separated parts by naming and accepting sensations and experiences whilst respecting whatever dosing the individual is ready for, and by strengthening the ability to manage and contain.

In some healing processes this way of working is, in itself, enough to create the desired transformation. New imprinting happens in the here-and-now whereas a focus on biographical events would divert attention from the transformation potential. For others, direct attention to the actual biographical context causing the locked self image is an important part of reaching full integration and acceptance.

Dosing

As I said earlier, I see dosing as a vital part of resource oriented skill training. Attention to what level of dosing feels optimum to each individual in any exercise, supports acceptance of any kind of reaction to an exercise. There are no wrong reactions, there are only individual answers to the impact - every exercise is.

Attention to dosing supports the fact that there are many ways of gaining success in an exercise. Even letting go of an exercise can give an inner feeling of success, when this choice is based on a precise sensing of what will be optimal dosing for me right now.

The principle of dosing integrates respect for defence patterns, for readiness for transformation of self image and norms. Searching for optimal dosing in an exercise is about being curious as to what moves me towards a level of presence in the present- one that I can contain and carry myself in.

Finding optimal dosing in an exercise often releases a profound feeling of satisfaction or inner success. I reach an authentic presence within myself in the span between my resources and my defence strategies.

An example:

I take part in a couple-exercise, moving my spine up against another person's hand. The hand stays a while on every part of my spine starting out at the transition between neck and chest vertebrae all the way down to the sacrum. Initially I note my old tendency to search for powerful resistance from the hand that would make me push forcefully with all parts of my spine. I choose to listen for the differences I know there is in different parts of my spine. I find many grades. I ask for different dosing from my partner's hand and get it. The upper part of my back has a kind of neutral presence, no need for pushing hard or carefully. Then suddenly there is an area in the transition between chest vertebrae and lumbar vertebrae that feels vulnerable. I minimize my movements and ask for lower resistance. I get it and find an optimal size and power of movement making me really feel the area and a delicate sensing of life in it arises. This way my vulnerability is contained. I take ownership of it. Further down my loin there is a need for powerful and very firm resistance making it safe for me to push with great power and enjoy it. I am supported in a nuanced self image.

Another example:

A person participates in a couple-exercise where another person offers him resistance in pushing from his center out to the hands in different directions. The person offering resistance is significantly smaller physically with a slighter frame. I perceive from my observations that this cooperation is not really working out. It looks as if the one pushing is holding back his power and therefore does not find his optimal dosing.

I examine their experiences with them both and it is confirmed that the one pushing feels as if he has to be careful with his partner. And the one offering resistance feels as if he is too weak and because of that, "not good enough".

I normalize the experience by talking about the factual differences in strength and how optimal dosing is not necessarily always met in contact. I suggest that they switch partners and look for someone they imagine would be able to match their dosing.

This leads to both of them ending up with a feeling of success. The physically stronger one receives a level of resistance where he dares to let go of his holding back and experiences that he is met in a power that matches his own. The person with lesser physical strength is released from giving up by offering and receiving resistance with a person who needs a somewhat similar level of dosing. Both parties end up experiencing a stronger centering and discovering that the feeling of success is associated with precise dosing - not to whoever is stronger.

This kind of process creates a stir in both individual's norms and self images and can potentially access a greater acceptance of yourself and the other. This shows how benefits from this exercise go far beyond mere skill training.

Third example:

A group is instructed to move their arms and examine what the arms feel like doing. Several participants move their arms but show no visible enjoyment or ownership of movement. I instruct further, encouraging everyone to pay attention to what dosing fits them, especially if they get tired really quickly or feel it is pointless to move the arms. This urges some participants to lower their dosing, doing smaller movements. I even encourage the possibility of making the movements very small and close to the body. This leads to a feeling of success for some: "My arms are energized. They somehow become mine. I can move them without getting tired". Others stop moving. Contacting the arms in particular with more precise dosing might trigger feelings that the person is not ready to experience and integrate. Precise dosing in this case means quitting the exercise and perhaps acknowledging a precise inner regulating mechanism: I control access to my feelings by dosing contact to my arms." An important insight.

This final example points to the fact that precise dosing can be provoking. Precise dosing accesses an authentic presence from within, with whatever is inside of us at that given moment. That means that precise dosing can slip under defence patterns and establish contact to parts of the person that the self image might or might not be ready to include. In other words, dosing is not just about how to dose when doing an exercise, but also about dosing in accordance with readiness and ability to integrate what is triggered by the exercise. This is the point where balance between acceptance of both authentic presence and defence patterns is key.

In hypo- and hyper-responsive defence patterns we need very different levels of dosing. A hypo-responsive pattern has a tendency towards a loss of energy, difficulty accumulating energy and keeping it. You have difficulty feeling the muscles impacted by this pattern. It is as if your sensation of the muscle has "disappeared". It does not draw attention to itself. Low dosing makes it possible to reestablish contact to the muscle. Low dosing in muscle activation supports the ability to contain energy, thus increasing your presence and in the long view your connection with impulses and feelings.

Hyper-responsive patterns have a tendency to accumulate energy. You hold back emotions and impulses and often feel like a pressure cooker. Muscles involved in such a pattern often draw attention to themselves through pain or mere tension. In a hyper-responsive pattern you need to be met by a power that matches this accumulated energy to an extent that it feels safe to let some of it go. This requires quite a high level of dosing - the use of quite some power.

Skills that are available to us whenever we wish, without complications, will link to a neutral presence in the muscles related to the skill. Depending on context, by natural tiredness, awakeness, energy level and factual physical strength I can choose different dosing in my activities. Sometimes it feels good to use a lot of power. Other times it feels good to be more quiet in my display and both can be part of an authentic presence. When neither hypo- or hyper-responsive patterns are dominating we have access to flexibility in dosing.

Attention to dosing can strengthen contact to both hypo-, hyper-responsive and healthy/neutral parts of our reaction patterns. Including all these parts in our self image will for most people result in greater self acceptance and a deeper knowledge of, as well as containment of, the polarity between giving up and control.

Any bodily exercise or activation of specific muscles can be dosed.

Any activity, bodily, emotional or cognitive can be dosed.

The principle of dosing is usable in other processes than concrete skill training.

An important part of skill training is about authority and being in charge.

In skill training we are presented with defined skills with a defined potential. There is an acceptance of infinite variations of individual reactions to training, so your personal experience is not defined by teacher/therapist. Yet training presents quite a clear definition of reality as to what skills are presented as relevant and express authentic potential. This way of defining reality always carries a risk of making people relate to it as an external authority, providing the answer to what they need. This can be relevant and helpful in one phase of development, but if authority is permanently parked in an external definition of reality, personal growth will stall. Dosing to some extent cushions this effect. The answer as to the level of dosing that would be optimal can only be sensed precisely from within. Encouraging a person to find their personal optimal dosing thus speaks to each individual's inner authority and control. Training a skill successfully is not obtained by learning the skill a teacher defines as important. Success is obtained by me finding my exact way of relating to this potential presence; the presence that training this skill has presented to me. The measure of success lies in my personal inner authority, in meeting the perception of the reality presented to me.

Resource orientation

The principle of resource orientation is part of the method.

As presented earlier, activating psychosocial presence and coping skills through bodily exercises awakens both a resourceful potential and biographical experiences, and patterns connected to them.

How do you control this process and ensure it is actually resource oriented as claimed?

This is part of the art and balancing of the method.

Without conscious direction the exercises could very quickly lead participants/students into regressive or defensive states.

One tool of direction is dosing. If you teach people to go for a level of dosing that feels good to them they often contact states or qualities that are felt as a resource.

Another method is teaching people to consciously sort between the exercises: Notice which exercises immediately offer you something, something you feel is a resource. Remember those exercises.

Such exercises place a responsibility for resource orientation on the participants/clients themselves. It is interesting to watch how challenging this task can be at times. Going straight for resources, for what feels good, for the thing that gives me something, is an intention not always included in people's self image or perceptions of what it is like to work with the body or to work with yourself.

A lot of people have the conscious or unconscious perception that working with the body has to be strenuous for it to work. The same goes for perceptions of what is needed for creating a change. It can feel unusual to go for something that feels good from within, something that feels easy, accessible and giving. For some it can feel forbidden.

What is the strategy behind teaching people to go for exercises that immediately gives them something that feels like a resource and to let go of the exercises that feel uncomfortable?

The strategy is to consciously move toward building and strengthening resources and action skills first, before you deal with challenging sensations or issues. Experience shows that the more resources and coping skills become accessible to a person, the easier it becomes to deal with complicated issues without drowning in them; without getting stuck or regressing. The opportunity to be able to handle issues in a new way increases as you now have skills available to you that you did not have before. The chance of succeeding is optimized.

Choosing those exercises that awaken resources supports the possibility for bringing the skill training with you into your life. In everyday life those exercises that are most likely to raise something that can be experienced as resources, will be the ones able to offer the most readily available support. Through this I learn how to reach for support in my own body. I learn that there is support to be found from bodily skills. This has the potential of having far reaching consequences for my self image and my relationship to my body. To a lot of people this is a new way of thinking - relating to the body as a place where you can get immediate support. This in itself can be an important element in integrating a new skill and thereby in building a new pattern of experience.

Then what to do when an exercise triggers physical discomfort; feelings you are not comfortable feeling, or other states that cannot be felt as resources?

The art in the method is, at the same time, to both communicate an acceptance of these reactions as being quite okay as well as normal. For everyone there will be exercises that feel uncomfortable. These reactions are welcomed; they can be named and spoken about; they are allowed to be there, and at the same time you can choose to release them. To let them go at this time and instead choose to focus on exercises that immediately provide access to something that is felt as resourceful.

This is an important skill. At one time being able to accept the state I feel, for instance for nausea, pain, overwhelm, confusion, and diffusion, welcoming it into knowledge of myself and at the same time taking ownership of my freedom to be in charge of when I want to approach it. This skill is crucial for the ability to choose a resource oriented therapeutic path.

For many this is a new strategy. Moving into what is hard can be seen as attractive and sometimes almost associated with a sense of obligation. It also can carry a perception of it being necessary for change to happen.

Going for resources and being able to choose to let the difficult states wait, turns this belief system upside down.

I use the phrase: "Remember the exercises that awaken **something you feel as a resource**" instead of: "Remember the exercises that awaken resources in you".

The first phrase lays responsibility for deciding which reactions, experiences and sensations fall under the category "resources", into the hands of the person herself. I know where my boundaries are between sensations and reactions and which ones offer me resources and also when discomfort becomes such that they do not offer me anything. These boundaries are personal. For some people they might experience a resource connected to encountering sorrow or other feelings in an exercise. If I notice that sensing my abdominal muscles gives me a feeling of a bounded space in my stomach and inside this space I start to feel that I am sad, this can clearly be felt as a resource. That is, if my self image can embrace this sorrow.

If not, it will feel threatening to feel this emotion and I would not consider this exercise to be a resource.

Another reason for choosing a resource oriented strategy is that learning is at it's best when you feel safe and are having fun. (Siegel 2006, Hart 2006, Maurer 2006). When your nervous system is in high alert, it is preoccupied by surviving or defending itself and during this kind of mobilisation we use neural networks that are already automatic. We have no time or resources for discovering new strategies.

Choosing to go for the exercises that immediately offer you something that feels like a resource makes learning joyful. It allows you to feel good, allows you to go for something easy instead of having to fight to learn. This atmosphere stimulates a potential for integrating new experiences and thereby paving the way for new neural networks.

Resource oriented skill training used in working with personality development and trauma management and healing

The psychosocial potential that resource oriented skill training reaches into, is impacted by all our biographical experiences - whether positively or negatively charged. We carry our biography in our body and at the muscular level we encounter this biography in the balance between hypo- hyper- and healthy response.

When working with skill training, reactions and patterns from our biography are awakened that can be related to two different aspects of our life; existential themes from personality development or trauma - or an intertwining of both.

It has been very helpful for me to gain enough knowledge to be able to understand the differences between these two aspects of my own and other's biography, thereby becoming better at meeting particular states that might appear in skill training, both in myself and in people I work with.

It goes beyond the realms of this article to describe these two aspects in any depth. There are many relevant sources available from which one can gain knowledge and inspiration about them both.⁷

Bodydynamic Analysis' theory of personality development is described in Bentzen, Bernhardt and Isaacs (1997), Fich & Marcher (1997), and working with trauma in Brantbjerg, Kristiansen & Marcher (2004).

I will, in the following sections, offer examples of how resource oriented skill training may be used as a method, both in working with personality development and trauma healing, and in drawing inspiration from them both.

First a general reflection:

Transformation and healing processes both in relation to personality themes and trauma, in my experience, happen in the span between two essential components:

- developing functional skills to support the person's ability to manage life - meaning skill training, and
- a human encounter and building an attachment relationship

Different psychotherapeutic methods weight these two basic principles differently.

Psychodynamic tradition has emphasized the transference relationship and thereby the attachment field between client and therapist as the strongest transformational principle.

⁷ For knowledge about trauma I have among others consulted the following: Rothschild (2004), Sørensen (2005), Anstorp, Benum & Jakobsen (2006), Levine (1998).

For knowledge about personality development the recent discourse on neuro-affective developmental psychology offers very relevant input to the expansion of developmental psychology. Hart (2006) and Hart (2006a), Siegel (2006) and Siegel (2002).

Cognitive tradition has emphasized the development of skills and thereby emphasizes skill training the most. Today, methods are evolving within both traditions to include both principles.⁸ Bodydynamic Analysis has always emphasized both elements and thereby mixed principles from both the psychodynamic and the cognitive as well as the educational tradition.

The description of resource oriented skill training in this article, more than anything, hones in on the skill training principle and holds the potential of supporting transformation processes by training specific psychosocial skills. Lesser attention is paid to describing the method's relational aspect.

Transforming severely locked patterns in the personality, whether the locking is related to developmental themes or to trauma, needs a human encounter, an attachment relationship capable of stimulating development of new experience in a contact field. This is both my position and my experience.

Exploring this aspect of resource oriented skill training will be the aim of a later article.

Personality development

In psychology two different traditions exist to describe personality development. One tradition is engaged in describing development through distinctive developmental phases or sensitive periods.⁹ Another is engaged in describing themes, "developmental paths," weaving through the entire personality development, including teens and adulthood.¹⁰

A phase theory typically describes age phases and related existential themes. One could add knowledge of psychomotor function and the way that specific muscles become active in each developmental phase and remain connected to that exact potential all through life. This is what Bodydynamic Analysis has done.

Developmental paths describe key themes and skills maturing through the course of personality development, all through life. Themes such as attachment, regulation of contact, boundaries, coping with emotions, balance between you and others, centering and so on.

This perception of developmental themes lies behind the model of Bodydynamic Ego-functions, which describes 11 basic functions associated with different specific muscle groups. (Brantbjerg & Ollars 2006).

Resource oriented skill training is very much fuelled by the Ego-function model. The model names a long line of psychosocial skills related to specific muscles. When linked to the knowledge of which muscles are activated during psychomotor development, a potential for adapting skill training to specific existential themes is created.

⁸ Cognitive behavioural therapy is beginning to include terms like *validation* and *acceptance* - terms that necessarily will open up to a greater awareness of the contact field between client and therapist (Kåver & Nilsson 2004). Peter Fonagy continues to work within the psychodynamic tradition with interaction as a focal point and also includes the importance of developing the ability to mentalize, empathize and so on.

⁹ Freud and Erik H. Erikson, and Alexander Lowen in the field of bodypsychotherapy, are examples of this tradition.

¹⁰ The term *developmental paths*, is used in attachment theory by John Bowlby and later by Daniel Stern, (Bowlby 1994, Stern 1991).

An example:

Centering is a skill we potentially carry with us throughout personality development and life. The feeling of being centered is supported in different developmental phases by sensing different connective tissues and muscles.¹¹

A centering exercise can be phrased as follows:

Bring your attention to the connective tissue of your body, visualize it or sense it kinaesthetically - whatever may be easiest for you.¹² Connective tissue consists, amongst other things, of fascia - thin membranes wrapping around everything, connecting everything, organs, muscles, bones and so on. Fascia meets in junctions in different parts of the body. Right in front of L4-5 lumbar vertebrae there is such a junction. Try sensing or visualizing that thin membranes from all directions meet in this area and then continue on in every direction. Find movements starting from these sensations or visualisations and explore if you can sense the area in front of L4-5 lumbar vertebrae as the center of your movements.

Another centering exercise:

Standing cross-crawl: Bring the right knee and left elbow towards each other. Shift to the left knee and right elbow. Continue alternating. Mark the finish of every move, perhaps with a sound. Feel how your abdominal muscles are activated when you do this - both on the surface and the deeper layers. This movement in particular activates the muscle Psoas Major, located deep within the abdominal region. It originates in the front and to the sides of L4-5 lumbar vertebrae, located right behind the physical balance point. Find the dosing that feels right for you. The movement can be big or very small. Fast or slow. Using a lot of power or almost none. Find your version right now. Notice how you sense and experience the area around your physical balance point after this exercise.

¹¹ The term centering is defined differently within different traditions. The following quotation from Brantbjerg & Ollars (2006): *Muscular Intelligence - 11 Bodydynamic Ego-functions*, communicates the definition of the term which I relate to: "Centering is being able to keep a focus in the center of your body, being able to hold and sense a concentration of energy in your center. And being able to feel this center point no matter what situation you might find yourself in in life. If you are happy, stressed, quiet, furious - your center is there. Able to support your ability to keep focused, able to offer a sense of anchor from which the waves can rise and fall.

Centering can refer to different parts of the body. Some traditions base centering in the spine, others in the solar plexus (Roxendahl 1995) and yet others on the area in front of the spine just below the belly button.

It is this last tradition the Bodydynamic system is linked with. In our perception centering is based in a point in the center of the body in front of L5 vertebra right in front of the front side of the spine. This point also constitutes the physical point of gravity in the adult body. Sensing this area relates to experiencing your personal center, sensing your core."

¹² Kinaesthetic sensing of fascia is subtle, as the tissue in question is very thin. It is a very small physical substance to feel. Experientially sensing fascia is often experienced and phrased as energy sensations, currents, vibrations or the like - a language different from what is usually used to describe sensing of muscles; they have a much larger physical substance.

Do both exercises and compare for yourself what reactions they each trigger in you. Do you contact your physical balance point? Do you sense a center point deep inside your belly? Do you have different sensations and experiential qualities connected to these two exercises?

Both exercises train the skill centering. Both have the potential to stimulate presence in and around the physical balance point. And they each relate to a different developmental phase and thereby to different existential themes.

Fascia, like skin and skeleton, is a bodily structure that involves the whole body and thus provides the potential to sense coherence in the body. This kind of general sensing of the body is, according to Bodydynamic character theory, related to the earliest stage of life, where very few muscles are active as bearers of conscious act i.e. the foetal stage and early infant stage. (Bentzen, Bernhardt & Isaacs 1997 and Fich & Marcher 1997). The existential themes, which in several theories are related to this age, are, "to come into existence, to arrive in the world, to exist, to be, to be in resonance with everything."¹³

The centering exercise that guides people into visualizing or sensing the fascial junction in front of L4-5 lumbar vertebrae, holds the potential to raise resources linked to this existential theme, a feeling of existential being. Fascia has much less physical substance than muscles. Sensing them is characterized by light sensations of energy rather than physical fullness.

The other centering exercise mentioned above activates several muscles in the pelvis and abdomen. Psoas Major in particular is activated - a muscle originating from the spine close to the physical balance point. It lifts the leg towards the torso. It becomes active in psychomotor development when the child starts creeping, crawling and later walking, in other words from eight months old onwards. When this muscle (and others in the same area) becomes active, the sensing and experiencing of the area around the physical balance point changes. Muscle activity increases blood flow, increases accumulation of energy and thereby increases a sense of fullness. Experiencing having a bodily center, a bodily starting point for my impulses, my curiosity, my exploration of the world around me and for my inner states, is physically and muscularly supported. The themes detailed in Bodydynamic character theory that are linked to this kind of centering are autonomy; being in charge from within, acquiring ownership of emotions, personal integrity and so on.

Resource oriented skill training can, as illustrated, be used as an access point to contact specific existential themes based on knowledge of psychomotor function and also to understand the diverse reactions released when skill training.

Knowing a variety of exercises that train the same skill makes it easier to stay resource oriented. Once, for instance, an experience of centering can be supported by several muscles, it is easier to support each individual in finding a kind of centering that works for them.

¹³ Examples of references: Neuro-affective developmental psychology describes development of attachment and regulating intensity connected to early childhood. Phenomena of resonance and projection are key elements in this development. (Hart 2006).

For the same reason it is part of skill training to present several different exercises for each skill. If an exercise does not work for a participant, then let it go. Usually everyone will find one that works for them.

The reason for this is that we each carry different imprints with us in relation to a psychosocial skill linked to different existential themes, and thus to different muscles and connective tissues. Perhaps centering related to existential being is inaccessible or linked to anxiety and discomfort, whilst centering related to being physically active in cross-crawl, may awaken a resourced sense of fullness inside - or the other way around.

Or maybe none of them work as a resource. Maybe noticing the big butt muscle, *Gluteus Maximus*, would offer an experience of fullness and foundation that would support a sensation of centering. *Gluteus Maximus* may be activated by standing and lifting one leg at a time backwards. Feel the butt muscle both on contraction and letting go and notice the sensations and experiences that are triggered in you.

Gluteus Maximus is a big powerful muscle. It is active in all the powerful motor functions, running, jumping, leaping and so on, activities not fully integrated functionally before school age. This muscle is thus associated with a completely different kind of self experience, activity and presence in comparison to the two other examples.

Example of another skill - in different variations:

Boundaries can be trained in many different ways - each associated with a different phase of personality development, thereby linking boundaries to different existential themes.¹⁴

1. Boundary exercise: Clap your whole skin surface with your hands. Clap firmly, waking the sensation of your skin everywhere. Clap the clothed areas as well as the ones not clothed. Also pat your head and face. In couples take turns clapping each other's back, particularly the area between the shoulder blades you are not able to reach on your own. What kind of sensations does this leave you with? Feel yourself and look around the room? How do you perceive your own body shape and the shape of others and objects in the room?

¹⁴ Quoting Brantbjerg & Ollars (2006) in order to define the term *boundaries* that I relate to: "*Boundaries are perceived as the ability to differentiate what is me and what is not me. This discrimination is supported by bodily sensing - of skin and muscles [...]*

Development of the Ego's boundary skill is described in the Bodydynamic system in four phases:

The physical boundary is the earliest kind of boundary a child learns to notice - through sensing of the skin.

Boundaries of personal space - also called energetic boundaries - are developed through the first years.

Ability to sense your personal space as separate from the personal space of others is an optimal development occurring from the age of 2-3 onwards.

Boundaries of territorial space are developed from the age of three, when children begin showing their boundaries with objects, physical locations (such as dens), and ownership. These kinds of boundaries are visible - as opposed to energetic boundaries that are invisible.

Boundaries of social space are developed from the age of four or five - and are linked to group membership and the kind of boundaries related to being part of conscious "we".

2. **Boundary exercise: Sensing a personal space¹⁵**

Use your arms and hands to explore and take ownership of the space around your body. We each have a personal space around us. It can vary in size and energy mass. Experiment with which movements of the arms and hands support you in sensing such a space. You can either push outwards with your hands or you can move them inwards in gathering movements. Also experiment with how big the space might be to feel good as you mark it with your hands, either turning hands outwards towards the world or inwards towards your own body. You can imagine laying out a string visualizing the size of your space.

(This exercise also has a variation where you actually do lay out a string to visualize personal space).¹⁶ The size of your personal space can vary. The space can be small, drawn close to the body, or it can be expanded to a larger space of varied size, depending on the context you are in and your inner state. Notice how big your personal space feels right now.
3. **Boundary exercise: Choose a space in the room you like to be in. A place you can establish as yours for the time being and experiment with which actions you want to take to mark this as your area. You can choose if and how you clarify the transition between "your space" and the surrounding world.**

These three exercises all support the skill of boundary formation; the experience that something is me or mine; something else is the surrounding world, and I can feel this differentiation.

The three exercises support skills related to different psychomotor phases. The skin boundary is the earliest boundary sensation we learn. It is a tactile physical sensing of skin creating a boundary between me and the world; contact with the uterine wall, hands touching me, surfaces I lie on and so on. A skin boundary is an actual physical boundary all through life, and is potentially an experience of something being me and something is outside of me.

Developing the personal space is linked to separation and individuation processes, thereby clarifying 'me' as being an individual separate from other individuals. Experiencing an energetic space surrounding the body can support an experience of individuality. And experiencing an ability to fill out this space and meet the world energetically at a certain distance from my body, is supported by an action such as clearly stating 'Yes' and 'No' - clarifying who I am in my social context. Developing these skills potentially starts around the age of two and continues for the rest of our lives. Still, in adulthood, we are able to discover new aspects of who we are as individuals. Sensing the invisible energy field around us and the ability to manage interaction around it, experientially constitutes a vital support to the experience of an outlined identity.

¹⁵ The term personal space is perceived, as mentioned in footnote¹⁴, as an energetic, invisible boundary, optimally fully developed in children's development at the age of two or three. Separating a personal space is linked to psychological development at the same age, often termed separation and individuation.

¹⁶ This exercise, where a string is laid out materializing one's personal space, was originally inspired by Jack Lee Rosenberg.

The third exercise trains the skill of being able to mark a territory, a place I can experience as "mine". Territorial boundaries are physically visible and based on ownership of something outside of body; my space in the room, my space in the house, my office in the workplace, my chair, my things, and so on. This aspect of boundaries children learn from around the age of three. You build dens and forts, speak out loudly about things that are 'mine', and are no longer so flexible when it comes to sharing.

As with the other aspects of boundaries, this is a skill we are continually able to develop all through life.

Some people find it easier to establish an experience of boundaries in their skin and perhaps in their territory, but not in their invisible personal space. Others can feel the other way around, that sensing their skin causes discomfort and diffusion, but sitting within a boundary string gives a feeling of safety. Yet others can find safety and clarity in skin and personal space, but have given up owning and marking their territory. There are numerous variations when it comes to boundary skills. To complete the picture a fourth boundary aspect is mentioned: Social boundaries where the experience of social relationships becomes a component in the individual experience of boundaries between me and the world.¹⁷

Knowledge of these different aspects of boundaries can offer crucial support in resource orientation when working with boundaries. Each participant/student has the potential of finding the kind of boundary that he or she can experience as a resource and from there creating a platform enabling them to be curious about other boundary aspects.

¹⁷ The four aspects of boundaries are described as teaching material in *Bodydynamic Analysis*. Lisbeth Marcher and Steen Jørgensen have been influential contributors to this conceptualization.

Trauma management and healing

Resource oriented skill training has for a number of years been part of Bodydynamic Shock trauma work (Brantbjerg, Kristiansen & Marcher 2004). Skill training has held a position as a key method at the stage of building coping capacity with regards to trauma reactions; supporting management in everyday life, and being able to live with and handle the alertness or paralysis unresolved trauma reactions leave in the body.

My work through these last few years has led me to a more radical point of view. Today I see resource oriented skill training as a method of trauma treatment in itself. The method holds the potential to reach fully into trauma patterns, promote self healing and open up new strategies. Trauma has a level of intensity that everyday coping and defence strategies are not able to handle. Trauma triggers radical reactions and survival strategies and if the energy in these strategies is not released in or after the trauma, these radical strategies stay part of reality in body and mind.

Skills such as centering, grounding, boundaries, regulating contact, sensing direction from within, attachment, and the ability to seek safety are impacted in trauma often to a serious degree. Parts of these skills are "blown apart" or are overwhelmed so you, in the traumatic situation for instance, might no longer connect with sensing your feet- perhaps they go stiff and cold. The ability to sense your physical balance point might somehow "disappear". It is as if this point is no longer held together but rather experienced as having been blown apart.

A great deal of the process of healing after trauma is about finding your way back to these skills or getting help to develop them if they were not available to your personality before the trauma. These skills support and establish the personality's capacity to integrate what you experienced in your trauma. Experiencing centering, grounding, a defined personal space, a bodily presence able to contain strong emotions, and so on, makes it possible to endure recognizing what happened and feel its effects.

This means the work done with centering and boundaries, for example, holds the potential of healing small pieces of a trauma. If I can regain my centering, it might give me a basis for discovering that this trauma is in fact over. My life is no longer in danger. My integrity is no longer in danger of being broken. I am right here, I can feel my body, I survived, my center is intact. And I can start to feel what it did to me, what happened.

My personal roller coaster pattern is based on this dynamic. Working with centering, grounding, and sensing my arms helped me begin my recovery from tonic immobility (paralysis), which is a common pattern following unresolved trauma. I discovered that it felt good to move, I connected with my liveliness, joy and pleasure in my body. I started to feel safe again inside my own body and in contact with others. I began noticing more emotions than before, and thereby my dissociated memory slowly began moving closer to my consciousness. Whenever it became too threatening for my inner balance dissociation set in again, as it was the sole functional survival strategy my system was familiar with in order to cope with this memory.

This description is a reconstruction. I did not know at the time that I was traumatized. I did not understand why I suddenly became rigid and controlled again. I lived with the kind of symptoms you have when serious shock trauma is completely dissociated from consciousness.

How do you heal trauma, you do not know to be there?

How can you reach into dissociated consciousness?

These questions were, without my realizing it, my driving force for keeping on working with the body. Regardless of how many strange, uncomfortable and overwhelming experiences that also arose, from the very first I felt healing taking place within me when training these basic bodily skills. I found a way back to me. I experienced how my body could feel whole, that my pleasure could feel healthy and alive. I experienced being met in both my joy and pleasure and also in my strange, confusing, overwhelming sensations that popped up when I least expected it. I learned to receive and accept the reactions I had, even if I did not understand them and had no idea of where they came from. In this perspective I worked with my trauma for many years, before bits and pieces of memory slowly could be pieced together into a whole story. And I established contact to my self healing powers by keeping on and on and on returning to the bodily skills whenever I lost my grounding or my centering.

This process tells me that skill training had and continues to have a real healing effect on me. Implicit pieces from my dissociated memory have slowly come to me and have been integrated gradually. The platform in my personality became increasingly more competent, gained knowledge in order to understand, gained bodily skills in order to contain, built language in order to describe my inner experiences, and built a more tolerant self image. Skill training has been a key method for me in this healing process.

Implicit memory¹⁸ is sensory based and not linked together in narratives. In implicit memory we remember sensations, experiential qualities, emotions, holistic sensations, and we have no knowledge of what stories they are linked to. In early childhood this is the only memory function we have and following trauma it is the key way the trauma is stored in memory. Explicit memory function, which is linear, verbal and narrative is to a large degree put out of function in traumatization. This explains how my trauma for instance, was completely forgotten in my explicit memory but violently present and often overwhelming and frightening as implicit memory pieces. In other cases part of an event can be available as explicit memory. Perhaps you know you were involved in an accident, you know when in your life it happened, you know the sequencing of events. But reliving the intensity of the event continues to be stored in implicit memory pieces. (Siegel 2006, Sørensen 2005, Rothschild 2004).

¹⁸ Implicit memory as defined by Daniel Siegel: "Implicit memory results in the creation of the particular circuits of the brain that are responsible for generating emotions, behavioral responses, perception and probably the encoding of bodily sensations. Implicit memory is a form of early nonverbal memory that is present at birth and continues throughout the lifespan" (Siegel 2003, p 22) . And relevant to the linkage in this article between implicit memory and trauma, Siegel continues: "The fascinating feature of implicit memory is that when it is retrieved it lacks an internal sensation that something is being "recalled", and the individual is not even aware that this internal experience is being generated from something from the past. Thus, emotions, behaviors, bodily sensations, perceptual interpretations and the bias of particular nonconscious mental models may influence our present experience (both perception and behavior) without our having any realization that we are being shaped by the past. What is particularly amazing is that our brains can encode implicit memory without the route of conscious attention. This means that we can encode elements into implicit memory without ever needing to consciously attend to them." (Siegel 2003, p. 23)

Different skills in our personality are vital for us to be able to grasp and integrate the implicit memory pieces and release the locked arousal (hypo- or hyper) in our nervous system related to unresolved trauma.

Skills supporting here-and-now presence, such as centering, grounding and boundaries, are key in being able to feel safe in your own body.

Skills in the ability to regulate contact, being able to say 'Yes' and 'No' and being able to lead and follow, are key factors in establishing safety when in contact with others.

Skills in being able to meet something coming towards me: Being able to say 'Stop', to meet and match the power that is coming, to go with it and play a part in transforming it, to let go and walk away, are key in transforming patterns of overwhelm and recovering a feeling of mastering our encounter with the world.

All of these skills and more can be trained based on principles of resource oriented skill training and focusing on precise individual dosing. Individual dosing is of vital importance when the material touched in the person is related to trauma patterns. By definition trauma did not respect optimal dosing in the personality.

So nearing trauma reactions and being conscious of the possibility of dosing is in itself healing. It supports the feeling of being in charge again, this time it is me running the show - not the trauma.

An example:

As a student/client you participate in training saying 'stop!' when another person or several people walk up to you. 'Stop!' is said, when you notice reactions in the body, as the other walks towards you. Not necessarily unpleasant reactions, just your body's natural response to someone approaching you. This exercise can be dosed in many ways: The other person can walk, run, or sneak towards you. They can come with their hands lifted into a pushing position, or with arms hanging by their side as usual. One or two or several people can come towards you. And so on. These are ways of differentiating the level of external impact and the kind of impact in the exercise. The skill is trained through repeated processes where the person listens for his or her own optimum dosing. How much and what kind of impact or pressure from outside can I handle and feel successful in meeting with my stop?

A woman has good skills in saying stop. She trained this exercise many times. Even so something completely new suddenly happens. Focused on finding the exact right dosing, she starts lowering the amount of impact instead of pressuring herself to endure. She asks only one person to approach her and a quiet stop comes out of her mouth, spoken from an entirely different part of her than she has been in contact with before.

She tries again, and slowly gets familiar with this quiet stop and how it feels in her body. She is deeply moved. This opens up to a part of herself that always is overheard and pushed aside. A part, which later proves to be related to a childhood trauma where a family member became seriously ill and where she, in the following traumatic crisis, lost her access to claiming space and speaking out.

I see this process as a breakthrough in healing an implicit piece of a trauma. The skill training with its focus on precise dosing has a capacity for getting into and behind the locked pattern and opening up to the creation of a new pattern of experience, a new track.

This new experience must be nurtured and trained in everyday life. It probably takes several experiences in a protected therapeutic environment for the pattern to gain strength enough to manifest itself in everyday life. But once the first quiet stop is felt, it gets easier to access it again and again and again. The path is open and from there you can work on it becoming a well used road.

Resonance

"Neural systems develop through stimulation, which consists of resonance and synchronicity phenomena. Resonance means that activated nerve cells initiate coherent oscillations in other nerve cells, increasing activity, while synchronicity means that activity in groups of nerve cells is activated at the same time. As early as the foetal stage the child does movements that synchronize motor function and sensing which is the forerunner of, for instance, running, talking, gesticulation and so on. It is known that creation of synapses in children is improved when the child, through play and contact, enters into a field of resonance with their caretakers through facial expressions, eye contact, speech analysis, body movement and timing. The infant is soon able to imitate her caretaker's facial expressions, vocalisation and so on. The human brain was made for integrating expressive body movement, especially in the face, through hand movement, body posing and vocalisation. Our affective and emotional expression is meant to enter into fields of resonance along with other's expressions and through these fields of resonance we attune with each other. Our nervous system consists of rhythm, resonance and synchronicity phenomena, making the nervous system a living organism in constant change." (Hart 2006, p. 75 my translation.)

My understanding of the above quote is that we have a resonance phenomenon inside ourselves where our nerve cells resonate with each other. At the same time we enter into fields of resonance with other people, where oscillation in my nerve cells impacts and is impacted by oscillation in your nerve cells. Fields of resonance constitute an essential part of attunement in contact, both with ourselves and with the other.

What is it we listen for when listening for that precise individual dosing?

Both in ourselves and in the other?

What is it that tells me that this exact amount of power in the cross-crawl movement gives me an inner experience of something that fits, something being right, something falling into place?

And what is it that tells me, when seeing someone else do an exercise, that something is not precise, dosing is too high or too low - or that it IS precise? How do I know this?

My hypothesis is that I know because I am in contact with my own resonance oscillation and with the field of resonance with the other person. Obviously I also gather concrete information from the use of my senses. I observe how the person carries out the exercise, how he stands on his legs, how he breathes, if his arms are involved in the movement, how much physical power he uses and so on. Based on these concrete observations I make my interpretations of what is going on inside the other person's body.

To me this explanation however, is not enough to describe what this attunement process feels like from within. A part of me literally feels and perceives elements coming from the other person. Current brain research explains this phenomenon as activity in mirror neurons and as contact through resonance. We resonate and feel each other deep inside our neural activity.¹⁹

When I train myself to find my optimum dosing, I believe I am listening for my personal resonance. I listen for a rhythm, a resonance between my nerve cells that is also open for resonating with other fields of resonance.

What sets this oscillation apart from other oscillations, such as the oscillation linked to automatic survival reactions?

When somebody finds the precise dose, something remarkable seems to happen in the contactfield. It is as if the person becomes present from somewhere deep inside herself. An authentic presence emerges, noticeably inwards in the person herself and outwards in the contact field.

From the point of somehow being trapped inside a closed circuit, it feels as if a circuit is opened up and it starts to resonate with the surroundings in a new way.

Moments of precise dosing have a magical quality. I experience this both when I find precise dosing within myself and when I am present with someone else who does. Something happens in the moment, something is called forward, something falls into place and comes into existence.²⁰ It feels like a blessing is happening.

My hypothesis is that there is an ideal rhythm and resonance oscillation for each of us in any given moment which is in resonance with a rhythm and resonance outside ourselves, perhaps a rhythm in the Universe. I believe the term "self healing powers" is related to this oscillation. I think we heal when we can become present in an oscillation that resonates with the oscillation of a greater field around us.

This to me is a link between spirituality, resonance and dosing.

The term resonance is challenging compared to our ordinary understanding of boundaries in our personality. In relation to the resonance phenomenon, the only boundary we have is the fact that

¹⁹ A bodypsychotherapeutic perspective on this kind of oscillation and attunement is presented in Andersen 2007. This article highlights the term *vegetative identification* in naming resonance phenomena in the field of contact between therapist and client.

²⁰ This description of magical moments in the present interaction draws a parallel to Daniel Stern's interest in micro moments in the exchange between a mother and an infant. (Stern 2004)

I have my nerve cells and transmitter substances and you have yours. In the communication between us we perceive ourselves and each other all at once in each of our nervous systems. In personality development, boundary skill strongly supports development of identity. It is crucial to have a clear sensation of something being me and something else being you. Sensing that I am me separated from you by my skin boundary, my personal space, my ability to own things, to express this ownership, and that I mutually respect you in your boundaries. Resonance and boundaries comprise an existential duality in interpersonal contact. It is my experience that people get into serious problems such as identity confusion and states of overwhelm if boundary skills are too weak.

If resonance skills are too weak, we have difficulty establishing contact in the first place. Attachment and the development of contact ability are based on the exchange of resonance (Hart 2006). Resonance skills are developed early in life, long before we learn a spoken language and we carry this nonverbal resonance skill with us for the rest of our life. Regardless of how well we develop our boundary skills in later stages of development, the ability to resonate with other people is still there and also with the greater field around us and with ourselves.

Resonating within myself supports me in recognizing my own rhythm, my own oscillation or frequency. It supports me in knowing how I feel "myself" from within. And to focus on this knowing myself from within can help me manage being in resonance with others without losing myself, losing my identity and feeling of self.

It is my experience that training dosing, supports the skill of listening for resonance inside myself.

Boundaries are part of establishing a safe platform in our personality. Without boundaries I can be invaded, suppressed, dominated and so on. So training boundary skills for some people is a necessary premise before it is safe to relate to a phenomenon such as resonance, that dissolves the boundaries of our personality.

Other people might feel the other way around. That contact by resonance is what offers immediate safety, whereas boundaries in their personality feel foreign and dangerous. Again, individual dosing, timing and sequencing offer keys to directing a developmental process.

Today I use the term resonance when teaching. I choose to define the term and teach people to understand some of the phenomena they experience during skill training as expressions of resonance phenomena, partly within themselves and partly in the field of contact. This has made it easier for me to communicate an understanding of phenomena emerging in contact. It offers acceptance to parts of the field of contact that can not be understood from theory of boundary development in the personality.

Talking about resonance helps to develop the awareness of these phenomena. When attention is directed to this nonverbal form of exchange and attunement with others and the self, the result is an increased sensory perception of the resonance phenomena. The ability to feel and acknowledge resonance within myself and with others grows by repeated listening.

Simplicity-complexity

Resource oriented skill training can be used as a simple method - and as a method of increasing complexity.

On a simple level, the focus is on specific skills in our personality that are rewarding to train and support for coping with everyday life. Increased contact to your feet might for instance increase your ability to hold your concentration and direction when giving a presentation. Increased contact to centering might access a greater sense of calm and ability to rest. Increased flexibility might access heightened creativity, diminish rigidity and so on. Skills are presented by an experienced teacher/therapist that can substantiate how these skills can build resources.

A more complex level arises once the term dosing is included in training. Focus is diverted from only being about the actual skill to being about precision in how I optimize my relationship with the skill; how I reach resonance with myself in this skill; whether this particular skill is at all relevant, and if it is a resource for me at this time. I start to own my own authority in integrating the skill.

A more complex level includes bringing my attention to the norms and self images skill training generally encounters in me. Perhaps I realize that I have an overall tendency of overdosing and can embrace that I have a choice regarding this pattern.

Or I have a value system that tells me it will not be easy to make changes. It has to be hard and heavy. Once my attention is drawn to this pattern, it is possible to notice the early signs and sense whether I am ready to explore another option.

Further complexity is introduced to training when defence patterns emerge that emphasize how much I am not ready to be curious or open to change. I am entering too dangerous terrain. This elevates dosing and the ability to accept what is to a more complex level. It is not merely a question of accepting the emerging sensations, but also of accepting my own stops and limitations. Accepting the dosing that stems from defence patterns - not just that coming from contact to self healing powers.

Exercises used in resource oriented skill training can be repeated an infinite number of times, with the benefit of continued learning and a deepening of integration.

I see this happening in all my workshops with participants of many varied experiences using the method. Some might meet it for the first time, others have attended a series of short workshops, yet others have attended one or more trainings working extensively with the method. It is my experience that everyone benefits from the exercises, regardless of their previous experience level.

The more repetitions, the more depth and complexity is available.

My first experience with centering exercises back at the psychomotor school was that they felt good. In a somewhat diffuse way I became more present in myself. I did not grasp the mechanism in why I lost my centering again. It just happened.

Later I gained a more precise language for the sensations I experienced when connecting with my physical balance point in front of L4-5 lumbar vertebrae. As I sensed the skill more precisely rooted in my physical body I began, with more precision, to be able to trace what happened when I lost the sensation again.

I could embark on the journey of discovery into my own dissociative pattern and gain consciousness of how being centered and losing contact to centering cooperated with my dissociation.

Later I uncovered many ways of being able to be in contact with my centering. I can be centered in different layers of my personality spanning from a deep essential centering opening up to my spiritual connectedness to a greater field, to centering in the pure physical sense when I chop wood, or centering when I acknowledge that I am angry. These sensations share being anchored in the same area of my body and they also have different sounds, different vibrations.

I have not yet reached a point of experiencing that NOW I am done learning about centering. And I think I never will.

There will always be more layers, more nuances, more aspects to discover and integrate in the entirety of who I am in myself and in a greater context.

Repetition is part of the method. Executing a movement many times, training a skill again and again, you get closer to automating a new track and thereby a freedom of choice as opposed to old automatic patterns. Without repetition the new tracks can not compete with the old patterns.

In workshops I always ask participants to choose two or three exercises they feel offer them something they can see as a resource in relation to their everyday life. I encourage people in doing these two or three exercises several times daily, when it feels fun or easy to incorporate them as part of their daily repertoire.

This is a way of working on automating new skills and thereby increasing the potential for transforming their biographical imprint.

Development moves as a spiral. We all have basic issues that are challenging for us and that we need to work on to reach an integration in our personality. We work on an issue at one level, gain more skills to deal with it and something is released. And then suddenly we realize that we have come across it yet again at a new level of complexity.

This is my personal experience and I know I share this experience with many others. Personal development is not about finishing. It is about meeting and dealing with the same issues at an ever increasing complexity level.

This is the principle I see unfolding in resource oriented skill training and it is the principle that lies behind the factual experience of the method always having more to offer.

I continue to uncover nuances in my relationship with centering that I could never have imagined. These discoveries often happen in workshops when for the hundredth time I give the same instruction for an exercise. All of a sudden I phrase something a little bit differently, perhaps because of the resonance field I am in with this particular group, and I discover a new nuance myself.

Increasing complexity is a part of adult evolving. Existential themes take on and are imprinted for the first time in sensitive periods of childhood, but this does not end our involvement with these issues. They are part of our baggage and potential as human beings for the rest of our lives. We meet all the important themes again in our teens and we come across them again and again in the course of our adult life: Being, attachment and resonance - direction, control and coping - gender and sexuality - cognition and opinion making - specialisation, fine tuning and group life - identity and direction of life.²¹ Maturity in my experience, happens through repeated encounters with these themes and developing skills to manage them. With greater ability, our coping capacity grows into a higher complexity.²²

Resource oriented skill training offers a method of supporting adult development, maturing and coping in a higher complexity.

²¹ This naming of existential themes linked to sensitive periods of childhood, teens and adulthood is an adaptation of the existential themes linked to Bodydynamic character theory.

²² Jane Loevinger and Robert Kegan are examples of theorists working with adult development and movement towards ever increasing complexity. Their theories are presented in Kroger (2004).

Who can benefit from this method? Who is it created for?

Traditionally in Bodydynamic Analysis the target group has been very diverse. The system's methods are not developed to suit a specific target group.

In my thinking this could be a handing down from psychomotor training having a very wide audience: "People in need of learning how to relax". In reality a selection happened as to who came to seek psychomotor training at evening school or individually, but teaching principles was not, to my knowledge, developed with a certain target group in mind. Selection happened in accordance with who became attracted to the concept. Who felt a need for relaxation.

Bodydynamic Analysis is launched by private companies. That means that the method has not been associated with a certain treatment facility or other professional contexts that would provide guidelines or limitations for method development. Recruiting customers/participants/clients happened very much like it did in psychomotor training in accordance with whomever was attracted to the system, to workshop descriptions, and articles. Some types of workshops have targeted more specific groups, such as workshops for leaders or consultancy for staff in institutions.

This background is the same for resource oriented skill training. The method is not developed with a certain client group in mind.

In my mind this has an upside and downside.

The upside is that the method could be developed without having to be adapted to suit a specific client group or a specific treatment concept. It did not need to be explained or justified to institutions or the like. Its development was organic and in resonance with both the people teaching and creating the system and the groups on the receiving end. The method has been tested on the principle of its efficiency and impact on the actual training/therapy/supervision of students/clients and not of needing to meet a body of external control.

The downside has a different quality. It is not an easy task to do research to prove a method's effect with such a wide client group. This weakens the impact.

It is difficult in a large professional field to present a method that is not focused on a specific target group. It is my understanding that all methods carry a specialisation within them making them better suited for some client groups than for others.

When defining a wide target group, a method risks being characterized by a certain lack of distinction or an idea of being able to, or having to be able to, meet everyone's needs.

I know from my own experience the feeling of vagueness and the need to meet everyone. I know resource oriented skill training to be an impactful method. I know it can help a lot of different kinds of people. And I also know how I become unclear or tend towards being unrealistic in my expectations of myself and the method, if I do not reflect on the limitations of the method.

So who is this method particularly good at helping - and who might it not work for at all?

I will now describe the target groups I have worked with in my practice and the conclusions I reached regarding the target group and strengths and limitations of the method.

In my practice as an individual therapist I have worked with a wide target group -anything from short term therapy, to long-standing character analysis, to series of sessions with a special focus on releasing trauma.

A common trait of my client group has been, and continues to be, people with locked mixtures of unresolved trauma and defence strategies in their personality.

At the beginning of my career I had many clients - 20-30 a week. At this time I worked with a varied clientel including clients with severe borderline symptoms related to their traumatization.²³ During my career I have shifted to working primarily with professionals in the field - fairly resourceful people who through work or studies seek a body based training and personal development. Resource oriented skill training has for me always been one of several methods I have used in individual therapy.

Since the beginning of my teaching career I have taught resourceful groups - evening school classes and workshops linked to Kvindehuset (Women's House) in Copenhagen and to other NGOs. At the time I was working in the original Bodydynamic organisation, the groups primarily came from a wide range of mainly health care professions; physiotherapists, nurses, occupational therapists, psychologists, psychotherapists, teachers, alternative health workers, a few doctors, priests, singers, artists, and others. A wider range of participants with no obvious commonality took part in workshops in personal development. Many people were both clients and workshop participants. Some workshop participants were like clients, impacted by borderline symptoms linked to their trauma patterns.

From 1995 I started specializing in teaching professionals to take care of themselves while caring for others. Developing this short workshop I began outlining who my target audience was. I focused on teaching professional therapists and teachers.

Meanwhile I taught all levels of Bodydynamic Analysis training.

For a period of about five years I also taught workshops for leaders.

In my own company today, my target audience continues to be professionals and teachers with a wider audience including IT consultants, architects, and journalists amongst others, being attracted to my workshop on Stress Management. In fact any professional in danger of burn out can turn up in these workshops, sometimes with severe symptoms.

For many years I have worked from time to time as a consultant at treatment facilities in social psychiatry, and family treatment centers This consultancy primarily focused on the theme "Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others" and in the past ten years also "Stress Management".

²³ The linkage between borderline symptoms and traumatization is today scientifically described and theoretically substantiated. (Sørensen 2005, Anstorp, Benum & Jakobsen 2006.)

Since 1995, resource oriented skill training has been a primary method used in the workshops I developed and a prominent feature in training to become a Bodydynamic Therapist.

From 1999 on, I taught the method as a part of trauma therapy, and since 2003 this path has grown. Today, institutions consult me for resource oriented skill training as a method of trauma treatment. These workshops usually focus on how staff can use skill training to support their own presence and containment when encountering traumatized patients/clients.

As a supervisor I have held second chair in supporting professionals, both in their own practice and in their jobs at many levels of healthcare and in the education system, using body oriented skill training in relation to their clients/users. Children in special schools, patients in psychiatric wards, physiotherapy clients, choir singers, those receiving treatment for alcohol abuse, for eating disorders, and many more. Again it is the range not the specialization that stands out.

To sum up: I have worked with a wide range of clients in individual therapy and in therapy workshops, including people displaying borderline symptoms. Moreover I have taught and supervised therapists, teachers and other professionals. Through supervision I gained experience in adapting the method to client groups that are not as well functioning as those I have worked with myself.

What conclusion do I draw from all of these experiences?

Who is resource oriented skill training suited for - and is there anyone who is not suited for it?

I personally represent a client group who benefits greatly from this method.

Persons with unresolved shock trauma weaved into defence patterns in their personality who gained a reasonably resourceful personality development before traumatizing and who consequently have underlying resources to tap into. This client group will often have a process that resembles mine.

The method raises hope, it helps to gradually reestablish safety and integrity in the personality. This also could go for persons with borderline-like symptoms, if these symptoms are related to traumatization more than personality development.

The method is effective in trauma treatment generally. It works the most easily and effectively with people having resources in their body ego, the part of the personality that bases its perception of reality and experience of self directly on sensing the body. The more resources a person has in this early developed part of the personality, the easier it is to obtain a quick resource mobilization through body oriented skill training.

Regarding complex PTSD where repeated trauma in childhood impacted the personality development severely, I do not think there is a method, that "simply works". I have used resource oriented skill training as one element in long standing individual therapy and it has proved efficient in supporting the client's ability to contain and cope in everyday life. The essential component in these processes was building a relationship between myself and the client. A safe enough attachment is usually a premise for specific skill training to work.

Severe early traumatization and later traumatization involving prolonged passification (for instance prolonged hospitalization) often makes it more difficult to mobilize resources through the body. Working with the body directly sometimes is a too high dose.

On the other hand a bodily approach is necessary to be able to reach into the imprints in consciousness that were formed before a spoken language was available, or where the spoken language was suspended.

When dealing with implicit memory pieces, pure verbal strategies come up short.²⁴ This goes for both pre-verbal patterns and for trauma patterns.

When respecting low dosing and accepting a very slow pace, it is both my and other's experience, that the method is effective in dealing with early traumatized clients - and dealing with patterns created with deep passification of the body.

Understanding hypo-response as a defence strategy, it is possible to adapt the method to people with patterns of low energy level. It is actually one of the method's strongest features that it can be adapted to meeting a diverse range of strategies and patterns in the body - respecting the diversity in dosing, that people with these patterns could feel met by.

The method proves to be very useful as personal support for therapists and teachers, all professionals whose job is very much characterized by contact with other people. Skill training supports presence and coping and has an impact not just on the professional but also on the resonance field with the clients. The stronger the professionals can be there in a bodily based presence, the more support clients are offered when approaching this presence. Thus the impact of the method is very much linked to the professional's skills in bodily based presence.

My experience as a supervisor tells me that the skill training has to be adapted and dosed low in many client/patient groups. The more dysfunctional a person is, the more difficult it often is to mobilize resources in the body. Balance between finding resources, defences and underlying traumatic material is different than in more resourceful people. This makes it harder, and at times impossible, to keep up resource orientation during concrete bodily skill training. In these cases it is about either adapting the method to the client group by extremely low dosing - only very few exercises and extensive freedom of choice in participating in exercises, for example. Or concluding that a body based method is too powerful and must be put on hold until the person or client group has a stronger platform. The method can have an impact that extends the person's capacity for integrating. Sensing the body can be too direct a way into the material a person is trying to keep from consciousness.

Considerations such as these I have shared with supervisees that work with abuse treatment, eating disorder treatment and psychiatric patients.

²⁴ For definition of implicit memory, see note ¹⁹

I have repeatedly supported the development of a series of body exercises to be offered as voluntary training in institutions. Having the option is an important principle in working with the body. It respects a dosing often unable to be described in words, just felt as a powerful resistance against working bodily.

Through the years I have learned to listen when someone strongly resists working with their body. I never go up against this kind of resistance. Perhaps I explore it with the person, but I do not pressure people into doing exercises or feeling their body. I see it as counter indicated. Approaching your body IS approaching both potential resources and biographical imprint. There has to be a readiness in consciousness to receive sensations that are awakened and skills enough in the personality, cognitively and emotionally, to be able to have a selective and integrative attitude to the material awakened, both positively and negatively charged. On the other hand it is surprising how effective the method is if you find just one exercise that mobilizes resources in your body. This can be a turning point, a beginning of finding your footing in inner chaos. So it is worth it to experiment and be creative regarding low dosing.

Working with clients/participants with addiction patterns I have learned that resource oriented skill training will first be an effective method when the addiction itself is confronted, acknowledged and a process of letting it go is well under way. If you are actively abusing and begin building resources, you run the risk of these awakened resources being invested directly in the abuse. I say this from experience as an individual therapist for clients with substance abuse patterns. This experience has since been backed up from what I have learned from other treatment systems about meeting addiction patterns.

Another issue is the method's practicality in relation to people with defence patterns strongly characterized by control - for instance psychopathic or narcissistic patterns. Resource oriented skill training can be too provoking and confronting for this group. The reason for this is because the skills trained support authentic presence in the body ego, a presence that is exactly split from the personality, or was never formed in the defence patterns, which are instead characterized by a kind of "false self". I have experienced people leave my workshops, or maintain strong reservations in training, based on this dynamic. And I understand it as a non-conscious, defensive, and wise setting of boundaries. To some people a method reaching directly into an authentic presence is simply too much - thus contra-indicated. Another difficulty might be skill training supporting the false self image or perhaps even making it stronger. It could prove difficult to reach behind the most controlling defences if resonance skills in a person are too weak. It IS possible to train body based skills in a person with weak resonance skills. But if the method is intended to support a profound transformation process, it is a prerequisite for the person to have resonance skills. These skills should be developed enough to enable her to feel inwards into her own sensations and outwards into resonance with the instructor. Resonance with yourself and with others is broken by very controlling strategies. Resource oriented skill training thus has limited effect in these cases and other approaches are needed.

The method's strong points:

- It can reach into implicit patterns and start a process of raising consciousness and healing. This goes for both pre-verbal patterns and trauma patterns.
- It adapts to working with defence patterns characterized by both high and low energy levels - through knowledge about hypo- and hyper-response and dosing.
- It can support the ability to manage inner chaos through increased ability to tolerate and contain high intensity levels in the body.
- It supports presence, containment and coping here-and-now, while initiating change in earlier automatic patterns.

The method's weak points:

- Not suitable as a primary method in meeting substance abuse patterns.
- Requires very careful dosing when dealing with client groups with weak or absent resources in body ego. This might be relevant also for clients with complex PTSD.
- Not suitable as primary method in meeting persons with severely controlling defence strategies. (In the next section the method's problems in dealing with will powered control will be discussed).

Another weakness of the method has become more clear to me through the last three or four years. There are skills that can be trained with this method, and there are other skills that probably need a completely different approach to evolve.

Resource oriented skill training works within the will powered nervous system. With precise dosing you can reach into an opening in autonomous processes. This is what I think happens when self healing powers are released in the magic moments of a well dosed skill training. The method thus (probably) holds the potential to build a bridge between will powered motor function and processes in the autonomic nervous system.

At the same time it is significant that the skill training always begins in conscious, will powered motor function. The skills that are trained are logical and can be described in words. They can be understood linearly. They cooperate with the part of the brain that holds verbal, linear, logical functions (dorsolateral prefrontal cortex).

In 2000 I started painting, using a technique called wet on wet where you wet watercolor paper and apply liquid color. In this creative process I encountered an entirely different set of skills in myself, another form of direction from within. I cannot decide what the color and paper will do. I can initiate a process through the mixing of colors, choose how liquid I want the colors to be, how much I apply to the paper and so on. But from then on a process starts that I cannot control. I can go with it, I can influence, I can cooperate, I can open myself up to being influenced, become curious and discover potential I would have never imagined. I see colors mixing, I see fractal shapes forming, a world opens inside me and on the paper and I experience a profound resonance in myself and between me and the colors.

This process is not linear and logical. It involves actions on my side where I need my prefrontal structure; cutting paper, buying colors, preparing the practical process. But once I start mixing colors, I feel a significant shift in how my actions are directed. I do things I cannot explain. I follow impulses which clearly stem from other layers of my consciousness and probably involve activating other parts of the brain (probably a strong cooperation between structures in the limbic system and the orbitofrontal cortex (Hart 2006)). It becomes possible for me to be active in creating an expression that communicates deep emotional and collective states in me. I follow an inner flow, I listen for an inner resonance. Entering this state demands that I let go of control from the logical and linear part of me - and that this control submits to an intuitive, nonlinear direction.

Painting has strengthened other skills than those developed with bodily skill training. Skills such as being able to let go, to surrender myself, to trust a deeper direction from within and from outside myself, to be in flow, to embrace chaos. To me this has led into a new layer of healing. Resource oriented skill training has given me substantial support in being able to contain, cope, tolerate and live with inner pressure and chaos and to release part of the inner stress. It has built a stable and safe container. Without it I would probably never have been able to open up to this other landscape.

The creative process has taught me how to let go of control, let go into chaos and discover that I can navigate in that layer of consciousness. I do not get psychotic. I become vibrantly alive and deeply grateful.

Today these two kinds of skills flow together in me. When I teach resource oriented skill training I am in simultaneous contact with an experience of flow and of surrender, which influences my teaching style.

This describes a healing process in me. To me personally it has proven vital to find a way to complement bodily skill training with a form of expression that invites chaotic processes into consciousness.

My relationship with resource oriented skill training obviously has been influenced by my strong urge to keep chaos at a distance from my consciousness. I used skill training as a means to keep this control at the same time as opening up to presence and life.

Other people with other characteristics and related defence patterns could probably apply skill training in a different way, in the balance between opening to a resourceful presence while respecting the urgency of the defence strategies.

I do believe though that there is something general in my process. Resource oriented skill training IS based in linear cognition. Bodily sensing in itself is not linear, but the way of training it in specific, defined skills, includes sensing and experience in a linearly contained process. This is at one same time a strength and a weakness of the method.

During the past eight years I have worked on bringing bodily skill training closer to chaos processes. This development has been part of a new development in trauma therapy methods.²⁵ I have been especially invested in developing a bodily training that starts out with building sensory based presence in the personality and goes on guiding people into reflex directed motor function. Surrendering yourself to reflex movements for instance, by letting yourself fall and letting your body recover its balance, demands letting go of control. Reflex directed movement is something that happens. It is not something I can control linearly. For elaboration on this method see Brantbjerg, Kristiansen & Marcher (2004).

The process of painting, and this extension of motoric skill training into reflex movements, went hand in hand for me. Both paths, each in their own way, have helped me let go of control and find trust and flow in chaos processes.

Part of my vision for the future is to evolve resource oriented skill training and combine it with other methods, stimulating the cooperation between structured coping and surrender to chaos in healing processes.

²⁵ Through 1999-2003 this happened in cooperation with Ditte Marcher, Erik Jarlnæs, Lisbeth Marcher and Steen Jørgensen. This work is described in Brantbjerg, Kristiansen & Marcher (2004). Since 2003 I have developed this work further in my own workshops and in cooperation with Steen Jørgensen and Kolbjørn Vårdal, who teaches with me in the trauma therapy training I offer.

Parallels to other psychotherapeutic approaches

Resource oriented skill training was initially developed in psychomotor training and later in Bodydynamic Analysis. The method sprung from a psychomotor training practice and is linked to knowledge of psychomotor development and later also knowledge of trauma.

Describing parallels to other approaches does not mean that the method in every case drew direct inspiration from these approaches - rather that different methods have developed in parallel. From each, their standpoint found principles and ways of working that are similar in important elements and different in others. In the following section I will focus mostly on elaborating similarities.

Concentrating on training the observing ego is generally a key element in therapeutic and educational work.²⁶ Without a strong enough observing ego, changing patterns and behaviour is impossible. Within the field of psychotherapy there has been a complete turn around since the 60's and 70's focus on expression, breaking down defences and catharsis. The change has been towards forms of therapy, that each in its own way, concentrates on building containment, coping and integration in the personality.²⁷ Each of the forms of psychotherapy mentioned below works with building the observing ego - just as it is very much at the core in resource oriented skill training.

Gestalt therapy was an essential source of inspiration for a number of years at the school for psychomotor training (ca. 1974-1980). There was a fruitful cooperation between gestalt therapists and the teaching staff at the school.

"A basic principle of gestalt therapy's ideas about transformation is what Beisser (1970) have called the paradoxical transformation theory. In short the idea is that any attempt of transforming yourself towards a preset (definitive) goal is doomed to fail. If you attempt transforming yourself in a certain direction, you often divide into two - one part that tries to transform another part - and as a result you end up with nothing but an inner pretence, where all energy is consumed by the inner conflict between two parts of yourself." (Jørgensen 2007, p.1. My translation) The ideas of the paradoxical transformation theory hold a parallel to the ideas I expressed in the above section, "accepting what is". Skill training works on the foundation of accepting what is, and only on this foundation is profound transformation possible.

Gestalt therapy is to a large extent focused on sensing and on the here-and-now presence. The awareness model of gestalt therapy separates factual sensing and interpretations/fantasies -

²⁶ The term 'observing ego' stems from the psychodynamic tradition. In other traditions (for instance DBT) they do not use this term, but do support the client's understanding and observation of themselves, both alone and when interacting with others, so the client may learn relevant action when dealing with others.

²⁷ I speak here of the field of psychotherapy that I personally and Bodydynamic Analysis are both part of - that is the part outside established psychiatry. This field is comprised by many different schools with the common trait of developing psychotherapeutic methods that are communicated in trainings, which in most countries are separated from established educational systems.

similar to making a separation between body sensing and experience. (Perls, Goodman & Hefferline 1977). The following levels of awareness are described: Awareness of the factual outer world and the factual inner world, both of which we perceive with our senses here-and-now, and awareness of fantasy activity, including all mental activity beyond here-and-now awareness of the continual reality.²⁸

Awareness training in gestalt therapy emphasizes the ability to observe yourself and your reactions, developing acceptance of these and surrendering to what is happening in the present, instead of trying to direct and control (Stevens 1971).²⁹ Resource oriented skill training does, in a similar way, emphasize training the self observation, observing body sensations and body experiences, naming them verbally and accepting what you sense and experience here-and-now. The process of surrendering and letting go of direction and control works differently for the two methods. A training oriented method such as resource oriented skill training is not only process oriented - the process takes place within a frame defined by instruction of exercises.

Cognitive therapy and cognitive behavioral therapy both strongly emphasize establishing a foundation in reality to balance, or replace, distortion and emotional charge. Again the parallel to differentiation between body sensing and experience. Both forms of therapy concentrate on skill training as an important part of psychotherapeutic work. Cognitive therapy speaks of "training social skills" - you hand out home assignments. (Oestrich 1993). This is a close parallel to resource oriented skill training's emphasis on exercises to be trained and integrated in everyday life.

DBT, dialectic behavioral therapy, founded by Marsha Linehan, combines skill training with inspiration from zen buddhism, thus concentrating on sensing what is in the present and accepting it. This combination holds many parallels to resource oriented skill training: Emphasis on here-and-now, on concrete sensing, on accepting what is and on training skills. (Kåver & Nilsson 2004).

²⁸ Gestalt therapy's idea of differentiating awareness zones was a direct source of inspiration for Bodydynamic's communication model called the Body Knot consisting of nine elements: Context, Factual outer sensing, Interpretations, Factual inner sensing, Feelings/emotions, Impulses, Analysis, Choice and Action. (Jarlnæs 1994 and Jarlnæs & Marcher in Macnaughton 2004). This is one example of how inspiration from gestalt therapy was drawn into psychomotor training and thereby also into the Bodydynamic tradition.

²⁹ Stevens (1971) is probably the essential work on awareness in terms and use of a gestalt therapeutic framework. This work contains a long series of practical exercises for absorption of sensing here-and-now phenomena. Relationship with phenomenology awareness training is less prominent in many later works of gestalt therapy. One way of interpreting this progress is that phenomenology awareness training sets the stage for a relatively slow absorption (as ROST does) - which does not go very well with American pace and lifestyle.

Mindfulness, today integrated as part of several psychotherapy approaches (among others DBT), emphasizes neutral observation of thoughts, emotions and sensations in the present - accepting what is. This approach is concerned with training the ability to select and direct attention so as to be able to make choices about inner states as opposed to being controlled by them. This method emphasizes differentiating between the past and the present - and being able to choose to stay present here-and-now. (Kåver 2007 and Nilsson 2007).

Elements all of which are present in resource oriented skill training. Selecting the exercises that are most readily available and are experienced as resourcing demands conscious selection and direction of our attention. Naming body sensations without drowning in body experiences requires directed attention and choosing to stay present here-and-now.

Within **Systems Centered Therapy, SCT** (Agazarian & Gantt 2000) I have in the last few years also found a strong emphasis on training the neutral "researcher"; that part of us capable of observing and describing factual reality and separating it from emotions. Another parallel to differentiation between body sensing and body experience.

SCT works with bodily centering as a method of supporting here-and-now presence, of training specific skills supporting systemic presence, and avoiding or simply arresting regression or acting out.

I recognize many principles from resource oriented skill training in SCT despite distinct differences in the theoretical foundation of the method - developmental psychology and systemic/group analysis.

Principles I recognize are: Emphasis on here-and-now. Body based centering as a means of keeping here-and-now presence and differentiating between past and present. Concrete skill training as part of the method. SCT uses the term "fork in the road" to bring attention to the place of choice you are in when old automatic patterns are activated. Do I want to enter the pattern and explore it? Or do I want to do something new - something different? Staying "on the edge of the unknown" as it is called in SCT. Precise work with dosing brings a similar emphasis on choice in dealing with old automatic patterns. Do I for instance want to keep moving my arms in a way that exhausts me and give up as usual? Or do I want to choose a lower dosing and thereby get closer to a new experience and experience of self.

Another similarity to SCT is the use of repeating the same basic exercises over and over as a means of progressing from simple to complex learning and transformation.

Carl Rogers' client centered psychotherapy worked with accepting 'what is' as its basic principle. Active listening as a method has within Bodydynamic Analysis been further developed into a "active sensing" - based on Rogers' principles (Rogers 1951). Accepting what is is an essential principle of resource oriented skill training especially in finding optimal individual dosing.

Daniel Stern focuses, based on observations of micro interaction between infants and mothers, on "the present moments" (Stern 2004). The magic of presence here-and-now in an inter-subjective field. He explores details of how intensity in a contact field is regulated or not regulated, and how this impacts presence between two parties.

In the section "Resonance" I described the magical moment that can appear when a person finds their exact individual dosing of an exercise. Such a magical moment is probably based on inter-subjectivity between instructor and executor; on resonance with one self, the other and something greater.

Adjusting intensity in contact happens by precise dosing. Or precise dosing leads to adjustment in contact, leading to optimal presence.

My search of references to others working with dosing as a psychotherapeutic method has led me to the discovery of **Kaizen** (Maurer 2006). Kaizen is a transformation principle developed in USA during World War II, at a time when it was necessary to improve industrial production quickly with the very few resources available. The solution they came up with was involving all parts of the chain of production in making small improvements of their individual work processes.³⁰ They discarded an elitist transformation model and invited everyone to take part in creating a creative transformation process based on small steps. To everyone's surprise the result was amazingly effective. Productivity and efficiency rose strongly without any significant economical investments. After the war the strategy however was abandoned in USA, but was transported to Japan during the post-war reconstruction with great success. The Kaizen principle is not elitist - it passes authority to everyone, including those at the bottom of the hierarchy - a thought that probably is not easily combined with the governing principles of American society.

The ruling transformation principle says: Great changes are created by small steps. Components of the method are ask small questions, think small, take small steps and solve small problems. Robert Maurer has, as assistant professor, teacher and therapist, taken this transformation strategy into working with individual transformation processes.

In Kaizen I recognize the experience I have had over and over in working with dosing: "Less is more". Choosing a low dosing in performing bodily exercises often has an amazingly powerful effect and supports a lasting transformation process better than "doing it big".

I also recognize it's impact on authority relations between me and the one/ones I work with, when dosing is incorporated in a transformation process. When each individual is encouraged to and finds a way of feeling and sustaining their personal dosing, the transformation is not carried by me (the leader), but by the person's own ability to integrate my input and use it creatively.

There continues to be many similarities between resource oriented skill training and other psychotherapeutic discourses - along with some differences.

³⁰ W Edwards Deming was a very strong advocate of this transformation strategy. (Maurer 2006)

The clear distinction between body sensing and body experience however I have not come across in any other approach. It has come into existence from a concrete bodily teaching tradition. This distinction leads the training to separate factual perception of reality and emotional charge all the way into body experienced reality. I believe this distinction is vital for resource oriented skill training's success as a psychotherapeutic method - and also for which client groups a body based method is suitable for. Incorporating the body when working with clients impacted by diffuse states (psychoses, borderline, prominent hypo-response, complex PTSD) is possible and potentially healing, if it is possible to work with strengthening the ability to sense the body factually, thus supporting reality foundation whilst respecting optimal dosing. Working with these client groups using a body based approach without this distinction is often contra-indicated. Body experiences can lead straight into regression, flashbacks and intensifying emotional charge. I think the above described dynamic might be responsible for psychiatry's scepticism regarding body based psychotherapy.

Resource oriented skill training offers a valuable supplement to forementioned psychotherapeutic approaches. A supplement offering a potential of opening up to deep layers of nonverbal and implicit elements of consciousness whilst sustaining a here-and-now based presence.

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