



To Become Who We Really Are: an Introduction to Pesso Boyden System Psychomotor

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lecture available on audio

The goal of Pesso Boyden System Psychomotor therapy

The goal of this work is to help people become more truly who they are. That addresses the topic of change. Because people ask: "Do you really change from this work?" At first I thought, 'Of course we change.' I thought the question was about whether the work is effective. But the question was deeper: 'Are we changing? Or are we simply improving who we are?' The question really addresses: 'Do we have an essential self that is perhaps not being lived fully?' And it implies: "We do not want to *change* that essential self; we want to *be* that essential self.'

So I would like us to think of that topic of how to discover who we really are and then to become it.

Who we are is a result of our history

But there's that question who we *really* are and then: who we *are*. And who we are is a product of our history. Everything that we are now is on account of everything that happened to us. But everything that happened to us perhaps did not help us to be who we really are. Perhaps it taught us to be like the world wants you to be and not how you really are. So there is that thing of *memory* influencing how we are now. The greatest focus I am making these days is the relationship between consciousness of the present, which means how we are, the way we are now, and the influence of memory on consciousness.

The act of experiencing is an act of remembering

Just to emphasise that a bit more, because it sounds so abstract when you say, "Of course our past is influencing our present," we know that – psycho-dynamic theory - we know that the past influences the present. But it is really more profound than that: that the very act of experiencing – and I said this last night [during a demonstration of a structure] – is mostly an act of remembering. Do you know that? As I have been reading neuro-anatomy, I am getting so impacted by that, that we experience via our memory and not just 'what is there.' We are seeing what is there on our retina, it goes to our visual cortex which is the history of everything we have seen before, and that comes up unwittingly, and we are presented with that amalgam, that mix, and we think we are seeing the present.

Just to highlight that a bit more, I am reading Damasio's latest book, *The Feeling of What Happens*; it is about consciousness, and he describes a woman who had lesions in her brain - you know what lesions are? Wounds in the brain – in certain parts of the visual cortex where memory of faces, specific memory rather than general memory, is located. Now, she could not remember any face including her own. She would look in a mirror and say: "I know it must be me, because there is nobody else standing in front of that mirror but me and when I speak I hear the voice is coming from me." She has perfect recognition that it is a woman, and a woman of a certain age, so she is seeing what is on her retina, but it has no relevance to any history. So her seeing then does not include herself because she has no memory – no visual memory – of herself. And only when you see such lesions, do you realise that what we see now is so much what we *have* seen. Do you get that picture?

And we do not remember that, we do not know that, we think perception is absolutely here and now. And not only that our perception is memory. But our personality is memory. What happens when an Alzheimer's patient loses memory? They lose their personality. They are no longer anybody you recognise and they do not recognise you. So, just to know how much our memory is driving or running our present consciousness, which we take so for granted. As if that is what is actually out there; whereas we are remembering *as* we are perceiving.

Developmental and genetic memory

So memory is running the show. And the show is: how we live well in the present, who we are now, and our memory is running who we are now. And it may be at great variance to who we *really* are. Do you hear that? Who we are now: I can see, the memory comes up. I react according to memory – that's who I am now. And I am discontent. OK, I am in the here and now and I don't *like* it. Why don't I like it? Because who I really am is still banging at the door and saying: "Let me in, let me in." You remember like the Tin Man in the Wizard of Oz: "Oil me, oil me." He is frozen, you know. And the real self is frozen inside: "Let me in!" And I say: "What's that noise inside me?"

So where is that located, the true self? It is also a kind of memory and I would like to posit for you that there are two kinds of memory. There is our *personal memory* of what has actually happened to us. That is: we are born *tabula rasa*, a blank slate. Then what happened: boop, boop, boop, boop . . . That's our memory, that is who we become. But that is not all that influences us. Maybe we have no memory when we are born but we are

loaded with information and with passions and with drives and that is what I tend to call *evolutionary memory*.

We are born with a kind of genetic soul, if you will. We have this incredible archive, a treasure of being that wants to desperately live and fulfill itself and become itself. And then we have the privilege of putting our name on the door of that self that is trying to come out, and that thing not only wants to live, it has a passion to add to life. Because there are two fundamental organismic drives: the survival of the *self* and the survival of the *species*. If there was not a survival of the species, the whole system would die after our individual deaths. So there has to be some interest in what happens after our individual deaths. And that has to do with family bonding, sexuality, social organization, etc.

I am postulating now that the true you is bound up in that evolutionary memory. That in that coil of passions and drives is not only the history of mankind, but the destiny of who you are going to become by virtue of your genetic organization, the genes you inherited from your parents. And that is driving us. Now there are our personal drives which we take over from that, but those drives are also loaded with sequences, maturational procedures, expectations about life. Because it starts as two cells, fusing into a person and then it is going to go through a cycle and then that thing has to grow and certain things have got to happen to it in order to have it grow optimally. Just like a tree: it is just a seed and if it has the right soil, the right temperature, nutrients, water and sunshine, it grows optimally. But if it does not have the right things coming from the outside, it may not become its true self, it will become the self by virtue of what it managed to get or did not get out of the world. So that – you follow that? – it has a maturational cycle in the seed, and if things are optimum, you have this glorious tree, or whatever.

By the way, the tree what does it do? It produces seeds for the next generation, so it has got not only the survival of the self, but the survival of the species. So it matures and bears fruit. Well, we have a cycle, too, of maturation and bearing fruit, and certain things have got to happen to us. There is an inner timing and an inner rhythm for those things to happen. I put it sometimes as: our maturational needs have to be met according to a template, an interior template that includes it happening at the right time, at the right age, with the right kinship relationship. So that says: at certain times in our lives certain things have got to happen from the outside to allow our lives to fulfill.

And it cannot be just anybody. It has to be certain kinds of figures that fit the inner expectation. We are born with an inner expectation, but we are fairly plastic and variable and we can survive even if things don't happen at all, or don't happen at the right time and with a wrong relationship. So we can manage, but when we get it at optimum, there's an inner feeling of pleasure, satisfaction, meaning and connectedness. And that comes when we fit our organisational or our organismic expectation. There is a wonderful pay-off in our endorphins and encephalins: pleasure, satisfaction meaning and connectedness. But when they don't absolutely fit, or the more they are 'off-fitting', then instead of pleasure we are going to have pain, instead of satisfaction we are going to have frustration, instead of meaning we are going to have despair, and instead of connectedness we are going to have alienation.

Genetic demands

So there is that inner push [that needs have to be fulfilled at the] right kinship relationship, with this terrific pay-off. And that pay-off and the pleasure of that is kind of letting us know from the inside when we are having it right or not. Does the world feel right? And when it's wrong, then we have all those other things, and that becomes the history of our lives. We have a memory of frustrations of basic developmental needs and all that kind of thing, and that's the way we are going to see the world: from there and then. And we may still be seeking those needs [as adults].

Let me go more directly to what I think are the pushes, the tropisms, the expectations, the schemes, the tasks of the organismic, genetic, evolutionary true self. I use many different words to describe it. You might say the *tao* of the true self. *The way* to be truly yourself. And that's not in any philosophical abstraction, it is in our genes. So it is a kind of genetic *tao*, so it seems to me. In a lifetime of looking at this stuff, [I think the developmental] tasks to this life are: we have *to have met our basic developmental needs*, as I said, at the right age with the right kinship relationship. That's step *one*, and that is a big task one.

And then the *second* one is the *integration and unification of all of our polarities*. That's just a complicated way of saying: we have to come to the total ownership of the self. All the dimensions of polarities, all the oppositions, all the different parts of ourselves. We have to find them and unify them and become a singular, unitary person. So that's a real push and there is a very complicated thing in there, and I am saying it very simple: but how to take full ownership of all parts of the self.

The *third* thing is the *development of consciousness*, not only to *be* on a concrete level, but also to be conscious of your being, so you have a perspective. And that includes making a narrative of your being, so that you don't only live in a non-verbal universe, but in a verbal universe. Not only do you have images of the world that are internalised (you have an inner world of images), but you have also an inner world of words that translate and transform the world into a verbal universe inside. That is part of the push toward consciousness, to *know* as well as to *be*.

The *fourth* task is to *develop what I call the pilot*. And the pilot is more than simply knowing, it is the executive part of the self. The part of the self that sees, that gets all the information from the inner senses, all the information from our perception and all the emotional reaction to what is seen. So in a sense, it is sitting at the center of information input and then it's getting all the different populations and all the different constituencies of the self, which maybe are in opposition. And then it makes a choice, it says: "This is the part I'm going to be at this particular moment." I make a choice and I am going to implement that part, take responsibility for that part and act on it. So it's an *executive* part of the self. The part that truly takes ownership and acts on that ownership with responsibility and accountability. (I say the pilot. I find in many countries the word pilot is a male term. But I don't see it as male. It's the only word I know how to pick – maybe because I am a male . . .?) But I see it as the president of the united states of consciousness. So we have many different states of consciousness, but there is one owner of it all, and that's the pilot. So that we don't become an amalgam, but a unitary system.

The fifth and final task of life is *to find one's personal uniqueness and potentiality*. Another way of putting it is: to bear fruit, which is like the seeds. It does not necessarily mean children, it means to produce something that will outlast you, not for narcissistic reasons, but that is the second push in life. Not to have only personal survival, but to add to the value of life. To bring to the 'marketplace of life' your personal gift. And we all are born with unique gifts: potentiality, and that is a pressure inside. And if you think it is not a pressure, wait until you will get older, and then you ask yourself: have I done my thing? Have I followed my calling? Is this all there is? And the pressure behind that is we feel we have to do it, from the inside, to produce that thing. And I think it is a spiritual push. I say that for complicated reasons, and I will say it briefly. I will do it 'mathematically.'

My personal definition of God is 'All that is.' I think in a singular way, that way. And I mean that 'All that is,' the whole cosmos, all that together is God. And I put it that way, because I cannot imagine anything not being divine. So there is no 'divine' and 'not divine' – that is an impossible thought for me. And when you think of all the material in the universe being God, then you have to know something about physics, astronomy and the 'Big Bang Theory.' All that is once was a singular ball, then in some moment expanded or exploded or added the dimension of space, and then the world is becoming. Not only the world is becoming, but by that definition God is becoming. I like that notion. Rather than a God that always was and always is – 'Amen,' and then everything is predictable and laid out – this is an act of evolution, and then our own personal contribution, where we find our personal uniqueness and potentiality is our local contribution to the becoming of God. And that has a nice spiritual sound to it, rather than "I am going to be a big shot and make my fame." I think the real push is a biological, spiritual push, to do the endless act of becoming. And I think that is what life is about.

Those are the tasks of existence: 1. Basic developmental needs, 2. Integration of polarities (and there are lots of complexities in there), 3. Consciousness, 4. Pilot, 5. Fulfillment of personal uniqueness.

Basic developmental needs

Now I didn't list the basic developmental needs and I like to do that now. They are, maybe in an order: the notion of place – we have to have a sense of having a place in this world; nurture, to be fed; support, to be carried; protection, to be shielded; and limits, to be defined. They have to be met in a kind of sequence, first literally and concretely as physical facts. Then symbolically or metaphorically, through symbolic relationships. And then finally, they are met autonomously by ourselves. And my notion is: we really can't become autonomous until we have gone through stages of benign dependency. That somebody first has got to do it for us, outside concretely, then symbolically, then we internalise that experience and we do it for ourselves. A lot of times we learned to do things ourselves precisely because nobody was out there doing it. So we develop a self in a non-interactive form, and we don't develop bonds and trusts and social glue because of that.

Elaboration of the first basic need, place

Let me give you an example of concrete, symbolic (need fulfilment) and then self-reliance or autonomy. And I will do it around the idea of place. The concrete notion of place is that there is a place centre – ‘pla-centa’ if you will – and there is the thing to be born inside the placenta which is the foetus in the place centre. So in order to have a place, you have to enter the world inside the body of a host of some kind. So you have to be concretely inside something and experience that inside. And we all do, inside the mother. So you would assume, ‘Well, all of us have had a concrete place, so why do you say we have to have a concrete symbol. We always have a concrete place.’

But some of us have had the misfortune of having a concrete place in a host, *i.e.*, a mother who didn’t want you there in the first place. I mean that happens, and you can be sure the foetus inside is communicated that message. Let’s say this person was raped, let’s say this person didn’t want a child. Let’s say the child was conceived during wartime or conceived with a husband who became brutal and then this person didn’t want the child. So how does the child get communicated that? Maybe by the mother’s attempts at aborting and the blows and the shift in the chemistry; maybe by the mother’s disaffection and dissatisfaction and the way she breathes and her heart-rate and her whole blood chemistry is now somehow communicated to the child. Maybe there are fights and blows and the child hears those fights – children do hear sounds and react inside. And maybe there are bombs falling, etc. So one should not assume that simply because we were born inside something that we all have a well experienced sense of concrete place. We may not have.

Then what is *symbolic* place, or metaphoric place? The child comes out and then it has to be again inside something. So you need metaphors which include the ‘insideness’ of something. And what are the metaphors of place? We all know. The parent says ‘you have a place in my heart.’ And that’s a lovely metaphor: my squishy, squishy heart, my warm, juicy heart, you are inside it. It’s a lovely metaphor of being inside. Or if not so squishy, squishy, maybe ‘you have a place in our life.’ Kids have got to know that, but that one perhaps is for an older child. But little kids gain the place – of course they are in the arms, but that’s not really where they gain the place – they gain the place by living in the sight-field of the mothers’ gaze. They live in the mother’s eye. What does that mean? There is a little clue in it when I told you there’s a difference between retinal image and an image in our visual cortex.

When a child looks at its mother, and the mother is smiling at it, that child intuits that that mother is not only seeing it on her retina, but the mother has a simultaneous memory of seeing that child and loving the child. So that child is now living in the mother’s brain, in the mother’s consciousness. That child has a place in the mother’s mind, literally, and the child can see that by the smile on the mother’s face. She recognises it and by seeing it, all the love comes up and all the remembered love and the kid has an absolute sense of that. Bowlby talks about that in attachment theory. And that’s symbolic, metaphoric, it’s hardly metaphoric it’s so neurological. But it is a metaphor. And the child lives in the sight-field of his mother, and if the mother refuses to see the child and says, “Get out of my sight!”, it’s a nasty thing. That child is now in the void. It doesn’t exist, it does not exist in the mother’s mind. So being in the *gezichtsveld* – I like that term. In the sight-field of the mother means that you have a location for your existence, not merely inside her body but in her mind. But again, just to highlight the fact that it is a memory of the child where the child is existing, not simply the retina. Because if

all you needed was something looking, all you had to have is a camera with a thing on it, the kid wouldn't feel a thing. It wouldn't get the affective response.

Now we see the concrete experience of place, the metaphoric experience of place. Concrete experience of place leaves the child feeling at home in their own body, having been at home in the body of the mother. Having a metaphoric place in the mind of the mother, the child then can make an image of its self in its own mind. It has to internalise that, and feel at home by having an identity in its mind. Such a child grows up to be an individual who feels at home and has a rooted sense of place no matter where they are. They have established a sense of place: I belong, I fit, I'm wanted, I'm home. But if people haven't had that sense of place, there are definite indications. There are consequences for that deficit.

I'll just go little bit in detail in that. The child who has not had sufficient place becomes a wanderer; a wanderer not as a nomad who is always at home, but as a seeker for the homeland where they can put down roots. They are rootless. And I think of the roots, digging into the earth, is very much the same as the placenta digging into the uterine wall; it's embedded. And people who are rootless are constantly looking for a place to sink down. They never find it because they never had it externally. So they are homeless and wanderers for that in that way.

And if it is a more profound deficit, they are not simply wanderers on earth. They become wanderers in a sense of 'off the earth' and they don't feel they belong on the earth. They think 'I don't belong on this planet. I think I came from another planet.'" And they are a little bit 'up here' instead of 'horizontal,' a more ordinary way of living. Everything is out there. They are a little bit 'up here' and they think, 'I came from the planet Mars because I don't belong here. There are all these are strangers; I just don't fit.' Or there are other dimensions where they think 'Why, I should been born in the 15th century. This is the wrong century: I am not at my place.' Or they leave that notion and they go right up to God and say: "I'm not home here. I'm home with God and that's my only haven." And they get a kind of spirituality that I think is an unhealthy spirituality, an escape from living, and seeing God and perhaps death as the true home where they will be embraced.

And some people who have severe place issues become suicidal, in a kind of quiet way, because 'there is always room at the inn of death.' You know, 'Nobody gets turned away.' So it is the final haven where people can imagine 'Here I will be accepted, here I belong.' Instead of positing and anticipating 'Huff . . . relieve!' on earth in the future, they think relieve in death. A kind of in the past: 'I will go back home where I was before I came down on this earth and felt good.'

So those are the predictable outcomes for deficits of place and I can do the very same kind of thing with the other four basic needs: nurture, support, protection and limits. They have to be done on the three stages [concrete, symbolic, internalised] and there are predictable outcomes when they are not provided. And the history of those deficits becomes the memory we live with, which influences the consciousness we have as we exist in the present. I just want to link that up with you.

So our memory and our history becomes our destiny in a way. And that sounds pretty lousy, because you say, "Well, that's my history and I can't change it. So what do I do?" And that's with what everybody comes into therapy with, those troubles.

Other therapeutic possibilities

We got all these patterns that are we repeating endlessly and you go into therapy. And there are many different attitudes about that. They may say, 'Well in spite of that history, in fact, let's go back and look over your history. It was pretty crummy, wasn't it? We'll go through all the grief of that. That is the therapy. You've got to grieve all those things you missed. And when you finish grieving, you have a bit of corrective experience and that will make you feel better.' So the notion there is that we will help you feel better *in spite* of your bad history. And a lot of therapies are attempting to do that. You get a lot of stoic solutions. "Yeah, I was lousy, but boy, look at me: I found a way to overcome this." Or other solutions are you go into your history and you say, "You know, you think your history was so bad. But you know, you just read it wrong! Look back there, your mother wasn't as bad as you thought, your father wasn't as bad as you thought. In fact, I will show you there are memories back there that were really gold. You thought that it was just manure, but there are roses back there, you know". And how to dig in the history of the past and find the gems and the jewels we overlooked so stupidly. And then we find we really had a better past than we thought.

Or it says: "Well, you know, you missed that in your past. Don't worry about it, you can get it in the present. Marry your mother, you know, get a nice woman and she will do the mothering for you which you missed. Or get a nice man and he will give the fathering you missed. So that you can get it in the present." That doesn't fit in with what my notion is. It has to be at the right age with the right kinship relationship. So when it is the wrong age, here I am, I am an adult, I want to get married, but inside is a little baby who says, 'Mama, blah blah . . .' You know. But I'm supposed to be an adult and my baby comes out in the relationship and my wife has got problems. She has a husband and a baby at the same moment and those things just don't work out. Then you get couple therapy and that kind of thing. So it is a kind of a solution, and people are searching for that. And another kind of solution is to say: "Well, OK, you got inside you the unfinished child. Because those needs don't go away, all those developmental needs they stick around, they are a nuisance, they are staying to knock us on the door: 'We still in here, where to move?' And they just rattle around in the dungeons of our mind, and they just don't go away and we try to satisfy them in the here and now."

And another way is: "OK, there is that child inside, get it out here and then you become the parent to it which it has always been waiting for. Hurray, we have an answer! I'm going to be that parent." But isn't that what we had to do all our life, while we were not getting the answers? The parent was not there and we had to be our own parent. So I don't think that is much of an answer, because we are back at the same place where we had to parent ourselves in the absence of a parent.

Constructing a new synthetic memory

So here we are. I'm providing this as an answer. Somewhere in my head I guess I think it is the only answer . . . So, forgive me for that, but you can appreciate that, you know, you create something, it is your 'baby' . . .

But if the problem is that we have memories or a history that was insufficient and did not meet our maturational needs, we came to the conclusion – my wife and I did, a long time ago – that we could make synthetic memories and create an arena where you go back in time – sort of a time machine in a way – feel once again those child needs which are lurking in there all the time and showing up in the present all the time. But instead of satisfying them in terms of the present, have them satisfied through role play of figures who are designated as the right kinship relationship figures [at the right time]. So if we have something where there was a missing sense of place, we are going to feel that missing sense of place, feel as an infant and instead of having just anybody be there, have what we call the *ideal mother* be there. We think there are certain basic behaviors that are connected to certain kinds of kinship relationships.

So that is the answer we have here: the construction of new synthetic memory. Since we say memory is ruling and driving our present consciousness and if the old memory is all we have got, we then find ways to put a new memory beside it - a supplemental memory. We do not eliminate the old memory, heaven forbid. We should not do that because that is our history. But we are going to make a supplementary memory that is more in line with our genetic evolutionary expectations of the maturational sequence that should have taken place during that time [but which did not].

That is an important step, because someone could say: "Why, I don't want to take my *ideal parents* in this experience, because that would be disloyal to my [real] parents and I'd have to throw them out." You do not throw out your old history. You treasure your old history and then you add as a supplement this new symbolic, synthetic piece of history.

Now how do we go about doing this? Do we say: "OK, now I am going to go back and be this age, I am going to make a cognitive decision". One could do that, I suppose, but over the years I have found a way that I think is optimum, maybe because I am accustomed to doing it. Consciousness, as I said before, is driven by memory; another way of saying it is: present consciousness is a tapestry woven with the threads of memory. So what is in the 'now' is mostly memory. And my way, my preferred way, after long years of exploring this, is to 'microtrack' present consciousness, to have people start exactly, (just as we did last night [in the demonstration structure]) where they are, and I'll tell you about the technique of microtracking, just starting precisely where there are, how they are seeing the 'now,' what they are thinking about in the "now" and microtrack it. I'll tell you what I mean by that.

Microtracking the architecture of consciousness

What we are doing in the microtracking is making more visible the architecture and organisation of consciousness. We are going to see what it is made up of because that is going to lead us to the memories that it is made up of, and then we are going to make some

new memories. So we start with the absolute here and now and we track or attempt to track the two basic dimensions of consciousness. One part of consciousness is our emotional reaction, moment to moment to moment to moment . . . And our emotional reaction, again it is really the title of Damasio's book, he calls another word for consciousness – and I like that he does that, it is so clever – he says it is 'the feeling of what happens.' Most people think consciousness is thought. He says it is the feelings, so he makes consciousness imbedded in the viscera, in the experience of something. Because the moment we see something, we react instantly. Our body is endlessly reacting to what we see and being prepared to cope with what we see in the most optimal way. That is what consciousness is there for, to help us cope with external reality, so we perceive, 'Whoof,' the body reacts and in the reaction is an emotional state. And another thing he says is: "There is no such thing as consciousness without an emotion," absolutely linked. Because you think consciousness is cognition, he says, 'No no.' He looks at all the neurological wiring; it is always an emotion. Because emotions are there as an evolutionary device to handle the outside world. That's what emotion is. And that's sort of strange because we say 'emotions get in my way' and evolution says, 'Hey, here is this wonderful gift to handle your life and organise it.' So consciousness is a feeling which includes emotions.

Witnessing emotions and affective shifts

So what we track then in microtracking is the emotion as it flickers mercurially over the body, particularly over the face. The face is instantly registering emotional, affective shifts. So we set up what we call a *witness figure*, that is, a hypothetical figure who is seeing your face and your total posture and makes – not assumptions – assessment I guess as to what emotion you are feeling from the inside that is now registering on your face. Sometimes people have an emotion and they don't have a name for it, and sometimes they have an emotion that registers on their face but they don't know they have that emotion yet. They could be partially dissociative or maybe a little depersonalised. Just to give you an example of that: Someone said: "I was eating in a restaurant and I thought it was raining, because water was falling on my soup." And I said: "Why was it raining inside the restaurant?" and they realised they were crying, and it was their own tears. People can be such: their soul or their body crying, and their consciousness not knowing a thing about it. I mean, we can be split that way. So it registers on our face and the clue here is tears.

So, a witness would say, if we posit the notion of a witness: "I see how much grief you have, or how sad you feel." So the notion of witnessing is to label the emotion, which then takes it simply from the limbic system, makes it also cortical and then puts it in context as: "I see how sad you are, as you remember or think about . . ." such and such. So the witnessing is labeling the affect and putting it in a context, developing consciousness of it and then knowledge: that's why I am feeling that emotion. Sometimes people feel the emotion and they don't know why it is registering, so this begins to help outline that part of consciousness.

Externalising thoughts

The other side of consciousness is the thoughts that are endlessly running through our head, which is our own inner commentary on life. It is as if we have an inner narrator or historian that is labeling everything and putting it into a verbal context. We can't help it, it just goes on all the time and sometimes in meditation you say, you have to cut out the squawk. But that's part of consciousness: it's naming, it's clarifying, it's defining the events as they come along. So our thoughts are the distillation into the meaning, verbal territory of everything that has happened to us. So while people are in the therapeutic setting and we are doing the microtracking, they may have a feeling, the witness may say, "I see how much grief you have as you think about the death of your father," or something like that, and the person says: "Yes," and the grief comes more fully and then they might say: "But I've been crying about that for ten years. I should stop." And that's a thought. So we take that thought and put it outside then as a voice that says: "You've been crying about that for ten years. You should stop."

Why do we do that? Because our thoughts are responded to inside as if they are hypnotic suggestions. And when we have them, we don't know they rule our life. But they do. We live according to our values which are embedded in our thoughts. And our thoughts and our values came out of behavior. We had certain kinds of events that told us certain kinds of things and then we make an assumption. The reason why these things happen is such and such. You cry too much, or something like that. And then that becomes the thought which rules those behaviors in the future. And then in [Pesso Boyden therapy] we put it outside the self (as a voice). It is no longer embedded in one's brain. It's seemingly a command from the outside [now externalised], and our soul can rebel against it because it is not just inside us.

And it also gives people a chance to see the opposition between feeling states and cognition. In the microtracking we are moment-to-moment tracking all the different shifts, every piece of information that is showing on the body as the client is living now. And that gives people a sense of pattern and order to their consciousness. They begin to see patterns in it. And the moment the patterns come clear, they start sending out – in a way – signals to the archive of experience. They say: "Where have we seen this pattern before?", and it goes 'Whoa' and 'Plop!' Then you get the memory: "That pattern came back from – I remember, I was ten years old and that very same kind of thing was happening . . ." So we find a pattern in the present which becomes a memory of the history in the past, which is now part of our consciousness, although we did not know it before. We just simply thought it or lived it. Do you follow that kind of sequence?

Stages and Screens

Now this brings us to another – if you can bear with me a little bit longer on theory – another interesting dimension of consciousness. A dimension of consciousness and a dimension of action and experience. Consciousness, action and experience.

And that dimension I put in terms of *stages* in the sense of a theater stage or an arena and *screens*. It sounds like theater: 'stages and screens', 'movies and plays'. But that's where

things happen. That's where events happen: on stages and screens. And I'd like to talk about the different stages. The reason I'm putting that out is that when we are tracking all the memory and we are doing all that stuff in microtracking, we are trying to get all the information we can about what is running the show and make it available to the person and there are many different places where that information accumulates and is available. So this is what I will be looking at while I am working with you.

There is the stage of the 'apparent' here and now. That's this stage, right in this room, and I call it the apparent here and now, because to all intents and purposes it is just going on here and now. You are out here listening and I am talking and we are having an interaction, I might walk over there, I might shake hands and it looks like it is so obvious, it's concrete, it can't be anything other than that. But remember when before we said whatever is happening on our eye is also awakening memory, so when he has his here and now, he's thinking: "I am the country boy in this big city," and he's going to react according to that 'here and now.' And she's thinking: 'I'm having a baby and all the future of that,' so everybody's here and now is conditioned somewhat by some inner life that is combining with the [apparent] here and now. So the here and now for each one of us has got a lot of 'there and then' in it, but this is the apparent here and now. It seems to be happening, but everybody has got an interior life that is truly coloring how we are going to behave in the here and now. And they may not be aware. Everybody says, "It's only what's there, it's so obvious, it's just there." But it's everybody's individual screens operating, but we don't know that individual screen is operating. It appears to be 'just' reality.

I'll talk about another stage where things happen. And that's the 'stage of our body.' If you want to, think of your body as a 'platform' upon which actors 'emerge' and the actors in this stage are the sensations in our body and all the feelings in our body. Remember when I said, we see things, we get an emotional response. But sometimes the emotional response does not feel like an emotional response, but the body is acting as if it is emotionally responding. The person does not feel the emotion, it's just sensations in the body.

It's like with pain patients: they got a bunch of pain that's running over the body, but it's mostly their emotions. It's not a physiological state. So the thing that's dancing on our body is our emotions before they are felt as emotions and before they get converted into action. There might be trembling in our knees, there might be pain in our fingertips, there might be coldness in our toes, there might be heartbeat. So all those physical sensations are emotions dancing on the 'stage of our body'. And that's one of the stages [the second one]. That was in the session yesterday: she had some feelings in the chest, they were not any emotion, but then there is a way to organise that, to make it become action and then the emotion behind it emerges. That was when the shame popped out.

So I'll be tracking the apparent here and now, and I'll be tracking the 'stage of the body': what's happening on the body, including in the face, the emotions are dancing on your face. Those are two stages. There's also a third stage and that's the stage where the therapy happens. It does not happen in the apparent here and now, it happens in a special stage that I'll define in just a moment. But before we get to that special stage I want to talk about the 'other screen' and that's the 'screen of the mind's eye'. The screen when we consciously recall something. We see it in our mind's eye and, you remember I said before consciousness there is always a reaction to perception. So I am looking out at you and I

react, but I will react to what I see in my mind's eye just as powerfully as I react to what I am actually seeing. So that screen is a powerful screen. And sometimes people are reacting and you think it is to what's out here, but they are reacting to what's in there. So we have to track the screen of the mind's eye, where people are seeing things interiorly. And their body is reacting, as if it was actually present, and we do react to our inner images as if they are actually present. You might almost call it a flashback – if you work with trauma – but it is not a flashback – we're just remembering it but it is under control. I highlighted that yesterday, just so that you know what I'm talking about.

15. Tracking Historical Patterns

I am just going to make a suggestion that you consciously think . . . Think of your mother, just pull your mother's image up in your mind. Can you do that? Or think of whoever you love. Just pop them into your head. What happens when you do that? Do you start to see them and your body reacts according to how you feel about them. Right? Instantly. So that's the screen of your mind's eye. And I'm tracking that in the work. Remember: before, we said that I'm tracking the absolute consciousness and suddenly a pattern emerges and then we say "Oh, my gosh. I remember that happened back in my history." Right? As soon as people remember their history, the face of the mother, the father, the sister, the brother, the uncle, the friend, it pops up and the body reacts. Now where are we going to make that information visible?

We make it visible in what we're now calling - and I'm finding a new name for it – the 'stage of the structure'. We're going to make – the here and now is just here and now – but we're going to make a mythic ritual space, which is sliding through time, and is going to be full of people who are not actually present, so the moment somebody sees their mother and there's a reaction inside, because that's the history we came up with, I'll say to that person: "Have someone in the room represent that mother." So what you are seeing on the screen in your mind's eye is now going to be present in the actual room. We are making the actual room a virtual extension of your neurology and your brain. So that the *screen* here is now on the *stage* here: it's an actual equivalent. And that is what we call 'Going to the historical scene.' We are now putting the history as if it is going on right now, because the person is seeing it and the body is reacting to it and it is relevant to the consciousness that we started with. Remember we tracked the consciousness and patterns, we say "Zoop": history. We bring that history out.

We bring it out for two reasons. One so that we get a clear picture of what that event was all about. We get more clarity and insight: if there was a mother, was she ill? was she abusive? Whatever it was. You see the whole pattern of it absolutely clear and your body of course, seeing that, is reacting like crazy. If you were afraid of her, fear is going to run and start dancing on your body; if you loved her, embraces are going to come; if you hated her, you want to smash her. All that's going to start running on your body. And we allow that to become active, instead of it just dancing on your body. Then your body does the dance on this stage. The fear and what you did with the aggression – as last night. And then when you arrange that, whatever emotion comes out, the person on the other side responds in a counter-shaping way. That gives credence to that expression and allows it to get some satisfaction. We call that *accommodation*. So that part of the work has an important

cathartic element in it. Cathartic in the sense that sometimes there are things inside which are frozen inside that have to be finally expressed so that they are no longer frozen and they just roll out.

But we want to be careful of thinking of catharsis as the *sine qua non* and the basis for therapy. It is only a small piece of the therapeutic process. It is very easy from an ancient medical model to make catharsis the absolute foundation of healing, because in the old medical thing it was: you had demons or devils or bad spirits or bad whatever in you and it had to be taken out. So you had leeches to get it out and purgatives to get it out and enemas to get it out, the whole notion of eliminating the bad stuff. And some people think that's what therapy is all about. There's a lot of bad stuff in me, I'll get it out and I'll feel better. But then they still have the same history, nothing has changed. They just simply got their emotion out. And those people, when believing that that's the answer, are endlessly trying to empty themselves, and they say, "Oh, I'm not finished yet. I still got more grief inside. Or I still got more hostility inside. I got to get it *out*." And the reason they are not feeling so good is they never got the new memory *IN*. That's where the healing comes from: from the new memory, because the memory is driving the miserable present, not the emptying of the self, making it [less] miserable.

Antidote: creating a new synthetic memory

We will then see in here what is missing when we look at that old stuff. We say there are basic needs maybe missing here, or – I didn't go into all of the complexity and integration and unification of polarities – all the different parts of myself were missing in that, or I wasn't allowed to name things, or know things, or I didn't have a pilot, or there was no fulfillment. So when we look at the old history, we have a lens and a diagnostic schema to look at what was missing back there. And that gives us an opportunity to create the new memory. If there was a mother who was dying, we have an *ideal mother* who is healthy. If the father was killed in the war, the *ideal father* is present and rearing. So we don't say, in spite of this we are going to make you better. We say we are going to make a new history. Because it is your history that has to be shifted, and the history has to fit your evolutionary developmental needs. So it is not just *any* history. We are using as a guideline the pressure of our soul longing for wholeness. Otherwise we would invent some fantastic history, but the history has got to come out of the deep rooted organismic urges for fulfillment. And then we have these ideal figures who fulfill [these yearnings]. But remember we said that they'll have to be at the right age. So in this *timeline* here we can let people go to – it *seems* like the here now but we are going to make it the appropriate there and then. There were different moments when E. was working, she was two, or seven, or thirteen, and at each one of those ages she can feel all the body sensation and what the ministrations from the outside should have been. And it has to be – if there was a missing mother, then the mother has to be present. Because sometimes they say: "My mother wasn't there so I want my father to fill in the mother's stuff." Of course we survive with that, but then there is still no mother. So we always keep a certain kind of symmetry. There has to be an *ideal mother*, and the *ideal mother* is as if we were born again, but this time with a mother who has all the attributes that are needed for mothering.

So in that timeline we go to the appropriate age with each appropriate figure and then it's not just a charade. This is because people are immersed in the real feeling of that and they can then make a memory which they can link absolutely to the deficit memory. We don't throw away the deficit memory, because it's, again, a part of our character. But we link this new memory to it. So that when we look out into the world and it awakens the old memory and then the old patterns come, we got a new memory with it and we have a new way to perceive the present. We noticed again and again: you construct a believable new memory [which has been embodied through interaction] and the appearance of the present shifts, because, again, the present is driven by memories of the past.

And that's the last part of the structure, when we help people to absorb and make it a kinesthetic sensory-motor-auditory-visual image not just of the person, but of us in relationship with the person. So that we have a memory of the interaction and not of just me – but of the interaction itself. And that's how the brain works: we have representations of interactions and we are making a *new representation of an interaction*, which heals those old representations. This shifts the way we see the world now, and makes us more likely to see a world full of possibility, and hope, and pleasure, satisfaction, meaning and connectedness, and not so much the despair, the frustration, and the pain, and alienation of the old memories.

That's it. I think I have come to the end of my story.

[this lecture concluded with questions and discussion not printed here]