

# BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF THE INTRODUCTORY SIX-CLASS SEMINAR IN HUMANISTIC BODYPSYCHOTHERAPY

This outline addresses the modern dilemma variously described as the split between the individual's conscious awareness and the unconscious (Jung), sensation and perception (Reich), between the involuntary autonomic nervous system and the voluntary central nervous system, et al.

1. This is a client-centered and body-centered work which affirms from the beginning what is whole and mature in the individual to heal from within that early childhood woundedness that survives as chronic contraction from the world and armoring against the world.
2. The emphasis of this seminar is the initial work with an armored person.
3. Armoring is an organism-wide response to a chronic collision beginning in early childhood between rising in ate feeling needs seeking expression and satisfaction and descending mentalized controls from the head:
  - early childhood contraction away from a "bad" object: numbing of sensation;
  - constricted minimal blood flow and breathing;
  - lifting off the ground and contracting joints;
  - seeking a reliable alternative to the real ground (parents and earth) such as clinging to the bones and to the body in general;
  - clinging to the head and thought process: premature separation from the parents and turning in upon oneself.
4. Working with armoring means:
  - working towards a sense of safety and relaxation;
  - assisting to develop a sense of a reliable innate underlying structure and function: a feeling organism is sufficient background for the working through of most early woundedness;
  - highlighting the contraction and armored state of the individual;
  - increasing blood flow from within outwards.
5. Two kinds of touch which are more similar than they are different:
  - after the initial gentle contact is made, catalytic touch is indicated to shake up armoring and where possible give a momentary sense of a vegetative organism underneath the armoring; the therapist is constantly teaching the client about the quality of the armoring in the spirit of self-help;
  - nurturing touch provides a sense of unconditional positive regard and safety originally lacking in the client's early childhood; once the armoring is destabilized, the therapist can give a nurturing touch to begin the awakening of the undeveloped feeling capacities of the individual.
6. The psychological story, hidden partially or completely as armoring developed in early childhood, is not solicited until the body has some here-and-now sensation with which to confront the early woundedness. Only then can the trauma be faced with some genuine groundedness and gently integrated.
7. The underlying focus is where growth stopped and can be reawakened, rather than focussing upon the armoring and woundedness. Melting armoring is only the initial work.