



Presencing Issue 27: Just Enough

Just Enough: “Just enough” is a term that has been used to describe engagement with life that is mutually beneficial to humans and nature. When we take just enough to supply our needs we maintain balance with the rest of life. When we work just enough to provide our sustenance we allow space for others in the workforce and more space for our own amusements. When we save just enough to get us through a fallow period we have less spoilage and more opportunity for sharing with others. When we touch the Earth lightly we are constantly rewarded with the beauties and surprises of co-creation. When we support others in their self-discoveries and expressions of their gifts and skills we create a richness in life that is beyond any other rewards. When we observe and learn from nature we become wiser and much less fearful. Presence and gratitude emerge from all of these choices of living lightly. The primary obstacle to all of these choices is fear. The messengers of fear tell us we will never have enough, be enough, see enough, or make enough. Presencing is the antidote to fear. In our work with touch we can also be aware of using “just enough” physical and sensory information with clients to create powerful changes. We can work in somatic partnership with our clients to support the body’s healing apparatus. We do not have to overwhelm the body’s defenses or create a sympathetic response.

Reaching towards one another: The basis of these two articles is that when client and practitioner both feel into the same part of the client’s body, both become consciously aware of tissue changes. They also can feel one another’s conscious awareness through direct sensory interaction. In this sharing of sensory information each person is brought into presence... because the conscious interaction of awareness is occurring in the present moment. Owing to the mutual presenting, some quite surprising things occur. There is a palpable flow of healing energy back and forth. And when either person uses proprioceptive impulses to modify the interaction the other person feels the results. And surprisingly, the intent to reduce the amount of proprioceptive content produces a much stronger impulse for the other person. For instance the practitioner can feel the client breathing into the practitioner’s hands on a part of the body; when the client changes her attention to just barely touch the practitioners hands from inside her body sensory awareness, the practitioner receives a huge jolt of energy and feels a profound tissue release from the client. We are exploring the internal dynamics of this interaction... there seems to be a felt sense of “just enough” connection between both persons to create an interaction of consciousness in a realm of increased sentience.

Creating a meeting place of shared experience: In order to create such a meeting place between both persons, at least one of them has to be somatically aware of presence in his/her body. This awareness is shared by a calling into presence. When the practitioner asks the client to feel into, breathe into, touch into, expand into a place that is being touched, both persons start to experience the liminal feeling of meeting in presence. The signs of presence start to occur, clear signals of joining or sharing presence: stillness, silence, timelessness, no thought, and mu or emptiness. It is important that the one initiating the exchange use “just enough intent to meet,” so that neither person is overwhelmed by the experience. We can choose a feeling of “reaching towards,” gently and with great willingness to “underwhelm rather than overwhelm.” Consciousness is perfectly capable of such discernment of purpose.

Meeting in presence: It can be a felt sense, or proprioceptive, or interoceptive experience and it can happen in any part of the body. The same can be true of motor nerve interactions. Rather than having a client push through his/her own resistance, we can ask the client to barely feel into places of her own bodily defenses and initiate just enough neuromuscular engagement to match what she feels coming from the practitioner. In such an approach the client is witnessing her own patterns with bare attention. For instance if we feel into the contracted tissue that is protecting a recent injury while the body is repairing the tissue, we barely initiate a muscular action, that may relieve some of the limitation and speed up the repair process by sensing and joining in with sentience or somatic awareness and increasing blood flow and relaxation. We may feel much warmth and softness come into the repair site.

When we engage the client’s somatic awareness very surprising things can happen: We can use gentle tapping, decompression, distraction, verbal coaching, and narration to help clients engage into their own internal sentience. Almost as soon as the client barely engages, we feel great changes in the tissue. When we first palpate the defensive contractures around an injury, we become aware that the client has little sensory awareness in that body part. When we draw client’s conscious awareness into the defensive contractures and support their delving with our own conscious presencing of the area, something changes. The client goes into a parasympathetic response, drawing deeper and deeper breaths, relaxing the tissue and experiencing warmth and pleasance. The more this happens the more the practitioner is able to follow the waves of change in the tissue. The more the practitioner encourages the client to feel into the experience, the more completely the tissue restores itself to the state of tonus prior to the injury.

When we guide and feel a client’s somatic awareness into symptom, we are involved in changing the client’s mind: The symptom becomes a source of curiosity rather than fear. “What are the sensations; can I feel the shape of the lesion; where are the sensations the strongest; what happens when I breathe directly into them; what do I feel when the practitioner taps the painful tissue; can I increase the sensations; can I decrease the sensations; what can I feel when the practitioner decompresses the guarding tissue; what do I notice when the practitioner asks me to describe the sensations?” As the client responds to these interior probings with curiosity the tissue is responding parasympathetically.