

WHAT IS INTEGRATED ENERGY PSYCHOTHERAPY (Also called ME-B Therapy) 2003

Our body houses the truth of who we are, who we are not and who we can someday become. When uncovering this fountain of wisdom, the mind's cooperation is necessary yet the mind rarely cooperates easily. It is like a Tiger, protecting its false understanding of itself because it believes to do otherwise would mean certain death.

INTRODUCTION

Integrated Energy Psychotherapy (also called ME-B Therapy) holds the philosophy that each person has a spirit that has been born into this earth plane to learn, to teach and to fulfill its life task. The core of this spirit is whole and god-like. Unfortunately, prenatal and life experience create internal “wounds” that distort our identity or sense of self and thus our ability to manifest our goals.

As mentioned previously, this self-identity in its truest form is whole and god-like. Integrated ME-B Therapy calls this core identity the “true self”. Unfortunately, we develop a false understanding of who we are and interact with the world in a manner that reinforces this false understanding of ourselves. This false identity is held within the muscular and energetic patterns within our body as well as within our thoughts and mind.

Our internal god-like true self is not devoid of challenging emotions and reactions such as anger and hate. It does not hold only light but incorporates and integrates the light and the darkness into a powerful and beautiful whole. We do not become more by denying any one part of ourselves. Yet by meeting angry, hurt or abandoned parts with love, non-judgment and compassion, we claim our whole and can realize our individual greatness.

As a person learns to shift their relationship with their inner workings or identity at the mind, body and energetic levels, it can also result in a shift with their so-called outer workings such as finances, family, relationships and career. This is done through feeling, knowing and experiencing our true identity at both the mind, energetic and body levels while not denying or discounting the parts of us that are linked to the false identity.

Integrated ME-B Therapy believes that at everyone's core, we hold a healed and balanced god-like self that is waiting to be met, discovered and experienced. As we experience our true self or god-like self in both our mind, body and energy systems, we then are better able to re-pattern our thoughts and actions that hold false beliefs and images of who we really are.

For instance, we may feel anger – but we are not anger. Anger is a defensive reaction to an external situation or internal trigger and not a true expression of who we are at our

core. As we meet the part of our self that holds the anger in our body and in our mind – we can understand its source and its cause. We can then allow ourselves to connect to the anger (in our body and our mind). When we do this with the detached understanding that it is only a part of ourselves expressing -- and that it is not our whole identity -- transformation and re-patterning of the false sense of self takes place. By simply connecting to this part (anger, grief, fear...) at the sensation level and mind level in love and understanding – the energetics of the emotion (anger, fear, shame...) eventually can re-pattern and transform to pleasant sensations within the body. At the mind level, the emotion also loses its power. Wisdom, understanding and awareness take its place. Sometimes a client must visit a particular feeling, concept or sensation many, many times until they acquire the detachment necessary for the energetic transformation to take place. This author tells her clients – when you first watch a horror story – you have a strong reaction to it and may even believe it is true – yet if you watch it 100 times, it loses its power over you.

Another way of explaining this is:

Our understanding of who we are – our sense of self – is based on our prenatal and early life experiences. If parts of those experiences were traumatic or resulted in us developing a false sense of who we really are, then we will face challenges in our adult life that reflect and reinforce our misconceptions of who we are. There is a way to re-patterning our internal systems at the mind and body level so they can open to manifesting a reality based on who we really are and not based on an internal false belief.

For instance, if one part of ourselves believes we are a victim, then the pattern of us being a victim will play out again and again in our life until we (1) meet that part, (2) recognize it and its needs (3) re-pattern its false understanding of itself and, (4) reintegrate that part into our whole or our truer sense of self. This does not mean the internal victim does not exist, it just means that our relationship to our internal victim changes and our life choices and experiences are no longer influenced or shaped by its presence. We shift our energetic pattern to a new and deeper understanding of who we are versus our defensive energetic pattern.

Integrated ME-B Therapy believes that everyone has a complete, God-like whole or true self that is healed and balanced and the challenge in therapy is to meet and accept all parts of our self, with love and non-judgment so they can be re-patterned and integrated into a whole, and more complete sense of who we are.

We are not our mistakes, our misplaced choices – they only reflect a small piece of who we are. At the core we are the clear and true expression of God. A God-like self that doesn't negate its mistakes, doesn't wish it were something or someone else because it knows we are both the beauty and the parts of our self that forget who we really are. This profound forgetting or false identification of who we are is the place where ME-B Therapy focuses at the mind, energetic and body levels.

Wilhelm Reich was one of Freud's main students. He later rejected some of Freud's principals and developed a more energy and body-centered approach. Many people learned from Reich and built upon his work -- some even combined them with eastern spiritual teachings and developed various energy and mind-body therapies. Integrated Body-Psychotherapy (IBP), Core Energetics, Bioenergetics, Hakomi, The Barbara Brennan School of Healing, Internal Family Systems Therapy and Pathwork are the major systems of body-centered therapy. The Integrative ME-B therapy discussed in this paper evolved from these mind-body approaches to therapy.

KEY CONCEPTS AND THERAPUTIC PROCESS AND APPLICATION

A foundation of ME-B Therapy states that when a person uses their mind's awareness to travel through the body, if they do not feel a positive physical sensation (or aliveness), that place in the body/mind's connection holds a false understanding of one self (often a painful one). The second foundation of ME-B Therapy is that simply by letting the mind connect to that part of the body with love, non-judgment and understanding, one begins the process of therapeutic healing. Yet, if the mind (witness/observer) is not connected to a deeper dimensional understanding of one self, then merely witnessing or observing the body may not be enough.

This is why the search for one's "True Self" or differentiated self is a foundation of ME-B Therapy. The term "aliveness" will be used to describe a healthy sense of self in both the mind, energetic and body levels. Aliveness also relates to the degree of consciousness one has of our whole self.

Parts of ourselves that are unconscious (or in shadow as Jung termed it), keep us from aliveness and from our true self and from being differentiated.

W. Winnicott believes that the issue of aliveness cannot be taken for granted because people who have experienced "severe failure of the early holding environment" (prenatal and early development) feel they have not started to exist (Phillips, 1988). The understanding is held that many people's lives are simply characterized by compliance or non-compliance with others instead of based on a true connection with their true relationship to self.

Integrated M-E Therapy believes that this "false self" or undifferentiated self is developed mostly by the relationship with the primary caretaker during the prenatal and early stages of development. This early unhealthy relational development creates the conditioning for later unhealthy relational development.

As clients learn to change their negative relationship with the various inner parts of themselves, they develop a deeper sense of self and alter limiting life patterns. As a client and therapist understand how these parts interact as healthy or unhealthy internal systems, choices can be made to develop a supportive inner environment.

DEFENSE SYSTEMS

Everyone has emotional, mental, energetic and physical defense systems that protect us from feeling our internal wounding to our sense of self. In essence, our defense systems believe in the illusion of our false sense of self and try to protect us from any contact with the false sense of self or the negative experiences that created the false sense of self.

As a child, this defense system may have shut down physical sensations, thoughts, feelings, and memories that were unpleasant. As an adult, our defense system may use denial, blame, projection, sickness, emotional numbing, physical armoring, and energetic blocking as a means to escape from discomfort. Each person develops numerous and diverse defense systems. Because the defense systems protect us from feeling discomfort, they ironically keep the false sense of self in place and are a major barrier to healing and engaging in the therapeutic process.

For instance, one client's defense system was so strong and sophisticated he managed believing he had no challenges, no problems and had made no mistakes until – when he was retired, he made some bad financial decisions and lost a significant portion of his wealth. Finally, his defense system could no longer protect him. He was hospitalized for depression and had a difficult time recovering because his defense system was so strongly established that he could not find the internal resources to fight against his defense system and experience his true self.

His friends and family knew his self image over the years was inaccurate. They had always been aware of his alcohol abuse and numerous negative behavior patterns yet they also saw his true self and loved him dearly. They couldn't however help him see that he was NOT his mistakes. The hill he had to climb to re-discover himself was very big given the strength of his defense system. Usually, the stronger the defense system, the more established the false identity.

Defense systems want to keep uncomfortable thoughts and body sensations out of consciousness. Feelings of safety and remembering/feeling one's true sense of self, allows one's defenses to rest and sets the foundations for re-patterning the parts that hold negative images and beliefs.

Richard Schwartz notes:

Working with hundreds of clients for more than a decade, some of whom were horribly abused and showing severe symptoms, convinced me that everyone has this untarnished, healing Self despite the fact that some people initially have very little access to it. The goal is to differentiate this Self from the parts and then in the state of self, to relate to one's parts with compassion, (Schwartz 2000).

Another way of explaining this is to look at the concept this author calls the “three rings of awareness.” See attached diagram. For instance, if there were three circles, each inside of the other, the larger exterior circle would be a person's defense system protecting

someone from feeling, experiencing or accessing the second smaller inner circle which holds the actual trauma or wounding to the sense of self or our “false self”.

The third and smallest circle is in the center and represents one’s true sense of self or core essence - the part of ourselves that is whole, complete. Some would call it our “god self.” Helping a client move from the outer defensive circle toward connection with one’s inner whole self is the artistry of therapeutic healing.

In ME-B therapy, we use the “three rings of awareness” as a philosophical basis to guide a client toward understanding their inner circles and meeting a deeper sense of self. The outer rings represent more outer mind aspects with the center ring representing the client’s core or true self. An ME-B therapist gently guides a client to meet one’s inner parts. If a client becomes afraid or overwhelmed, the therapist slows down the process and re-establishes a safe relationship and safe environment with the client.

These three rings have energetic defenses that are explicit and complicated. They are linked to body centered character structures that hold specific personality traits. For information on these, attend the Mind Energy Body Institutes’ Integrative Energy Psychotherapy Training.

THERAPUTIC PROCESS

In ME-B therapy, the goal isn’t just to release unhappy thoughts or actions, but to discover the Core Self and identity through exploration of its various parts or blocks.

Another major goal of ME-B therapy is to teach clients a process so they can eventually, on their own, travel through the three-rings of awareness and heal themselves. Therapists can help clients learn how to experience their true self at both the cognitive, physical and energetic levels. As the parts or blocks are discovered at the body and mind levels, the release of these blocks becomes a natural process in compassion, time, space, clear intention and consciousness.

The therapist tracks, monitors and influences the clients energy system and teaches the client to track, monitor and influence their own energy system because one’s energy system is a mirror of what is happening at both the mind and body levels. If the mind is in contraction, so will the energy system contract. Clients learn to regulate their mind, energy and physical systems so that they can learn how to connect to their true self.

Once physical and mental awareness develops, release may occur as a tangible choice by the client. This way, physical and/or mental awareness can help one choose to let go of obsolete behavior patterns and incorporate new responses to remove defensive character armor by using the awareness of it and of its function as a base from which to do psychological exploration. It allows the client to reenact this unfinished situation in the present so it can be repatterned and replaced by aliveness and a fuller sense of self.

It is understood that unless the inner system of trauma and false sense of self is not repatterned, the external systems that are not working in a client's life (such as financial or relationship problems) also will not heal or shift. (Note: At times, this can happen at a subconscious level.)

In addition, if a client is triggered into an emotional response by another's actions, it is a red flag calling attention to a part of the client's sense of self that is still asking to be met, understood and addressed. Blame and projections are valuable identifiers of areas in a client that hold a false sense of self or child consciousness or are yet to be differentiated. Once again, it is the system of change within that releases challenging conditions in the everyday world.

The goal is the search for wholeness and wholeness cannot be found outside of oneself but within. As Transpersonal Psychology may suggest, wholeness is completed within oneself and only then can it be experienced in one's life.

Integrative ME-B Therapy believes that everyone has a "Primary Scenario" that is the sum of prenatal and early life experiences (Rand, 1989). It is the collection of physical, energetic and emotional events we went through in our early years and includes everything our parents did to us and for us as well as everything their parents did to and for them (Rand, 1989). It includes the whole milieu into which we were born – time place, the culture and the sub-culture. This collection of experiences is what formed our false sense of self and its sub-parts. This false self is represented by fixed muscular and energetic patterns, emotional responses and belief systems that are lodged in the body and in ones behavior, energy system, mind and thoughts.

Reclaiming lost parts, strengthening the egoic structure, developing a truer sense of self and thus supporting the inner systems so that the outer systems are more harmonious are goals of IMB.

Since no one can really control another person or anything outside of himself or herself, learning how to influence one's own inner world can greatly promote happiness, comfort and safety. In other words, a client's connection to and awareness and understanding of one's inner parts (physical, energetic and mental) result in a connection to and expression of their truer sense of self. So, as one experiences their truer sense of self -- the systems within relationships, family and community can be experienced smoother and with more happiness and fulfillment.

Under Integrative ME-B therapy, conditions necessary for behavior change begin with the willingness to first look at one self and investigate how:

- (1)one's relationship to oneself,
- (2)one's relationship to another; and
- (3)one's relationship to the environment may have more to do with illusions about their own identity than with a problem with the other person or their outward environment.

Choosing to trust that a healed, whole and balanced true self exist within everyone is also essential. The ability to develop a positive ego structure is key and the willingness to explore physical sensations within the body and ones energy system is necessary. The use of an empowered witness can help a client maintain the detachment essential for deep inter-exploration of painful parts. The empowered witness holds ones true sense of self.

The therapeutic relationship is to come from my core essence, the center of my being and significance and to share that inner self and joy with my fellow man by my own expression in form, all else in accomplishment is shallow and of little lasting significance (Rand, 1989).

An underlying philosophy of ME-B therapy is that when a client is aware of an emotional issue or thought in the mind, as they are able to link the issue to a specific sensation in the body, the client is able to gain an experiential understanding of the issue internally. As a client is able to connect at both the body, energetic and mind levels with compassionate and nonjudgmental awareness, the part shifts and integrates into the whole. Clients learn that they are not defined nor need to be negatively influenced by anger, abandonment or any of our other internal woundings. The role of the therapist is to guide clients through the three circles of awareness: (1) one's defense, (2) woundings/trauma and (3) true self. Clients are encouraged to meet challenges and joys in both the mind and body systems levels.

- 1) Integrative ME-B therapists help people discover their defenses and thus notice and meet their traumas or internal wounds. (The largest outside circle.)
- 2) They also assist so they become aware of what their defenses are protecting – (trauma or wounds) such as fear, anger, abandonment, shame, images, projections, abuse, negative images or beliefs, envy.... (This is the second inner circle. The actual wounding that limits one's sense of self or what this author calls the false sense of self.)
- 3) In addition, ME-B therapists help clients go deeper to the core or the inner third circle to discover and recover each one's true sense of self.

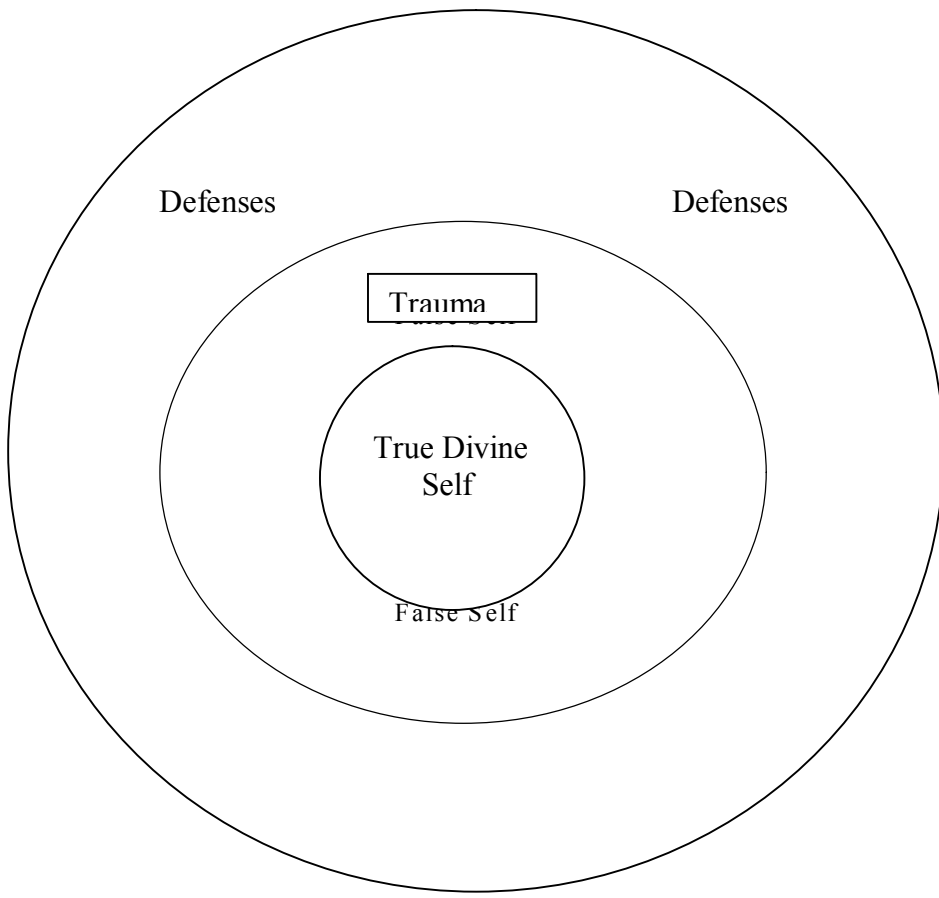
Integrative ME-B places a strong emphasis on helping a client develop a safe container within their own energy field and within the energetic field of those around them. Teaching clients how to run their energy system and to notice when their energy system is in defense is also outlined in therapy session when clients feel interested and open. Because the energy system is reflective of one's emotional and physical systems, if the energy system is shifted in a positive manner it helps shift the clients emotional and physical systems. Time during an average session is also spent discussing boundary issues and healthy non-defensive methods to connect to oneself, ones environment and another. Creating a safe container for deeper inner contact is primary during IMB sessions. To facilitate deeper inner contact, a series of body-centered breathing, movement and energy exercises may be recommended. However, these so-called techniques are there as resources and are not viewed as a set formula to follow. In addition, because movement, energy and breathing exercises can be very powerful and can send someone very deep into their inner world, they are rarely used with

inexperienced clients that don't have a strong enough self to assist them if emotions become overwhelming. Once again, safety and a trusting therapeutic relationship is key.

Overall, ME-B therapy supports a client's development of their Self and differentiation. The system creates the personal internal structures that can provide self-empowerment toward change. The models teach clients basic life-skills that transcend beyond the office of the therapist and can be initiated in every day life, relationships and community. It can be viewed as a path toward individualization and personal freedom.

This author believes that all of us are beaches of beautiful sparkling sand and only a few grains of sand don't sparkle as bright. Unfortunately, many of us forget we are the full beach and we only identify ourselves as the few grains of sand that don't yet sparkle. As both individuals and therapists are more and more able to connect to the reality that we are really the whole beach and not just the few grains of sand, oh the magic that can happen!

In black and white thinking (dualism) we think that one grain of sand is better than another such as the feeling of love, being better than the feeling of inadequacy or hate or anger. By placing a judgment on a "part" as being better than another, we automatically invite our inner defenses into action. However, non-dualism would see each part as important as any other part because they make up the whole. We don't serve our whole by rating our parts. By honoring each and every part equally, we eliminate judgment and can lessen our need to defend these so called lesser parts and thus are more able to achieve our highest integration and become whole.



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