

“Everything is energy and that’s all there is to it. Match the frequency of the reality you want and you cannot help but get that reality. This is not philosophy. This is physics.”

Einstein

Roberto Assagioli was interested in energy and exploring all facets and levels of how energy comes into play and its role. (See part 1 of The Embodied Experience: working with Energy in the Therapeutic Setting). In 1972 he attended a conference on “The Understanding and Use of Energy” – with notables such as Michal Eastcott, and Norman Gregor.

Browsing through RA’s archived notes (in the library of his home outside Florence) I came across some typed notes written in 1970. Here RA spoke of the realisation that *“God is energy – and not just Love.”* He stated the importance of bringing this awareness into all fields – especially psychology – and named it *psychoenergetics* --- which he said was *“different and wider than psychodynamics.”* He says and I quote:

“... we’ll try to build the psychology as psychoenergetics, of which psychosynthesis will be one of the chief expressions.”

So, I wonder why this has not been taken on more widely and incorporated into our trainings? Strange too when you remember that psychosynthesis was originally called bio-psychosynthesis – from *bios* – which means body. Massimo Rosselli’s shamanic and embodied energy work comes closest to it.

In 2005 (the year I completed my training in Energy Medicine) Martha Crampton presented a keynote paper at the Psychosynthesis Conference in Minneapolis on *Psychoenergetics*. When I first read this it blew my mind – not only did she seem a kindred spirit – working in ways that I too had been integrating --- but back in the 90’s I had begun to describe my work as ‘psychoenergetic’ – long before I ‘knew’ or had heard of it via Assagioli. The term had obviously been reverberating ‘in a universal field’ somewhere and like a Venn diagram these energetic loops of consciousness had overlapped!

So – why bother with energy psychology or embodied awareness at all? Isn’t talking, telling the story and having it witnessed, bi-focal vision, exploring meaning and purpose, plus the relationship and dynamics between therapist and client etc., enough to be getting on with? Mostly it is.

However, there are times when a psychoenergetic approach – using energy psychology techniques --- can shift the awareness and facilitate a change – that it may otherwise have taken years and years of talk therapy and interpretation to get to. **This awareness is not intellectual --- but embodied or somatic insight.** It may pivot a complete turnabout in thinking or beliefs, or clear a behaviour or pattern that has been known and talked about for years – but remains stuck.

Just as with talk therapy we work with what is blocked – so too with energy therapy. If you think of the energy in a person as their life-force or movement – then it’s obvious when this is not flowing. It entropies – or goes into paralysis. You can see this in the calibrations of trauma – as a dead disconnect in the eyes, a withdrawal or absencing from the body, or a flattened tone of voice.

There are various different energy psychology approaches – and many explanations of why and how it works – and there are many skeptics. However recent trial based research shows that it does work – and the effect it has on parts of the brain – that enables often lasting transformation.

Recently BBC Midlands News featured a 2-minute piece on bemused and surprised GPs as to the astonishing effects of using EFT (tapping) on depressed patients. (Prof. Tony Stewart).

<http://www.staffs.ac.uk/news/alternative-tapping-technique-good-for-mental-health.jsp>

Then there's the science-based evidence. I quote from David Feinstein PhD – a neuro-psychologist and psychotherapist in the US who has been researching and collecting evidence into the effects of energy psychology, and meridian tapping:

The stimulation of acupuncture points (acupoints) by tapping on them—used in conjunction with more conventional psychological interventions—has been shown to be effective in the treatment of a spectrum of psychological disorders (Benor, 2014). Known as “energy psychology” (Gallo, 1998), a variety of protocols have been developed, with Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT; Craig, 2010) and Thought Field Therapy (TFT; Callahan & Callahan, 1996) being the best known and most widely practiced. Outcome investigations suggest that including the somatic elements of the approach can resolve a range of clinical symptoms with greater speed, power, and precision than psychological interventions alone ...

In depression, trauma and PTSD, or in dissociative states (DID) – the psychological and emotional disturbance creates a disruption in the energy and neurological system – which becomes blocked or paralysed – and we call this a *reversal*. Understanding the roots of a problem, depression or trauma – and just talking about it does not always clear it. (Mollon)

As Einstein said *“The significant problems we have cannot be solved at the same level of thinking with which we created them.”*

The following is a more neuro-psychotherapeutic explanation of tapping:

It's not – as some people think – the actual tapping of the acupoints that 'cures' – but that it temporarily normalizes and deactivates the trauma memory (right frontal cortex) – by sending signals to the amygdala and other parts of the brain to reduce arousal. The debilitating and fear-based responses are 'held at bay' whilst a new 'juxtaposition' experience is created. Rather like when we ask clients to describe a traumatic scene, say from childhood – and then ask them to visualize or replay it *as it could have been, or what their child could have said or done differently*. This, combined with a verbal 'reframing' – for example an affirmation with choice, helps install intention (will) and consolidates learning.

In energy psychology, the protocols are repeated to test that the emotions triggered around the trauma story or problem have been cleared – and to enable any other related aspects that surface to be cleared.

There is much more to say around the subject – but if you are interested in the neuropsychotherapeutic take on the subject do take a look at Feinstein's findings. Awareness of the energy centres in the body – the chakras, and muscle-testing are other useful tools and ways of connecting to the intelligence of the client's energy system but for reasons of space I will not go into these here.

The rewards of integrating energy work are many – but primarily once a client experiences a

psychoenergetic shift or insight – where previously the issue had remained stuck at the level of talk, or self-negating thought or belief, the awareness is so deeply felt and embodied that it cannot no longer be ‘split off’: it becomes re-remembered and re-integrated.

Elizabeth Mason researched the use of energy psychology in psychotherapy practice and lists many of the benefits for the client (aside from results) which include self-regulation, an increase of inner resourcefulness, and a strengthening awareness of and trust in the transpersonal.

Which brings us full circle to Assagioli’s vision again of psychoenergetics needing to become one of the “chief expressions” of psychosynthesis!

References and further reading:

1. Assagioli. R. Letter extract 5th October 1970, Library Archives: Box 17, Istituto di Psicosintesi, Florence
2. Crampton. M. Psychoenergetics: toward an integration of subtle energy work with the psychosynthesis perspective. *Conversations in Psychosynthesis: Psychosynthesis and the Body*. 200:6:16-45
3. Eden. D. & Feinstein. D. *Energy Medicine*. London: Penguin: 2000
4. Feinstein. D. How Energy Psychology Changes Deep Emotional Learnings: The Neuropsychologist: issue 10: January 2015 www.neuropsychologist.com
5. Fogel. V. *Killing me Softly*. Private Practice: Spring 2014. BACP Publications UK
6. Gallo. F. *Energy Psychology: explorations at the interface of energy, cognition, behavior and health*. New York: CRC Press: 1998
7. Judith. A. *Eastern body, western mind*. California: Celestial Arts: 2004
8. Mason. E. *Energy psychology and psychotherapy: a study of the use of energy psychology in psychotherapy practice*. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*: Routledge: September 2012
9. Mollon. P. *Psychoanalytical Energy Psychotherapy*. London. Karnac Books. 2008

Viv Fogel is a training supervisor at The Psychosynthesis Trust. Since 2008 she has been teaching psychotherapists, counsellors and health practitioners to incorporate Energy Psychology techniques, specifically EFT, (or tapping) into their clinical practices. She mentors energy psychotherapists and is an accredited Master EFT Trainer and Supervisor with AAMET (The Association for the Advancement of Meridian Energy Techniques). She is and always has been – passionate about Psychosynthesis – having commenced her journey with it in 1979! (For more biog. info – see Part 1 of The Embodied Experience).

The next EFT supervision and mentoring day is at the Trust on Friday October 9th and is open to therapists and counselors qualified in EFT at Level 2. Contact vivfogel@gmail.com