

The Pre-Natal Somatic Integration Process™

by Patti Steurer and David Fuerstenau

StarFire

Abstract: The Pre-Natal Somatic Integration Process™, defuses identity issues arising during the pre-natal period. This confusion can arise due to the developing child being completely physically identified within the mother, therefore not aware of its own separateness and ability to discern between its mother's and its own feelings, beliefs, blood chemistry, etc.

The pre-natal period creates the foundation for relationship patterns throughout the developing child's life. The first ever bonding event is conception, which results in the independent zygote. The zygote then bonds with the mother by implanting in the uterine wall. These events, and the manner in which they occur are the first learning for the new being as to how life will be. At this point a longer term bonding and relationship begins, during which the learning is anchored, and the first experiences of the influences of daily life and its stress begin. Much fascinating research is being done on the intrauterine development of humans, and on the effects of sensory environment and stressors on the developing child. One discovery is that as awareness develops sensorially and cognitively in children during gestation, they bond with their mother (and father) on different levels, through the various senses. The quality of this bond is influenced, among other things, by the awareness of and attention to the developing child by the parents. Traumas or stress that occur for the parents at this time also are experienced by the child, through the developing senses and on the chemical level through the placenta and umbilical cord connection.

Children are not aware until birth (and then abruptly) that there is a true separateness between themselves and their mother. In utero, there is little or no distinction for the child between its mother's and its own identity. Results from this confusion include the child experiencing and identifying with its mother's emotions, beliefs, chemistry, habits, etc. Throughout life, people may experience in themselves emotions and habits that are actually their mothers, which were transferred across the placental connection in utero. People can live out these patterns

without ever distinguishing them as their mother's, rather than their own. Making this distinction and establishing a clear identity as separate from one's mother while exploring the pre-natal experience can unwind life-long patterns on physical, emotional, mental and spritual levels for many people.

An example: One man's father died while he was in the womb, and his mother did not complete the grieving process before he was born. She experienced a great deal of sadness during the remaining gestation time. When he was an adult he became aware of a general feeling of sadness, and couldn't discern what could be causing it in his current life. Through breath therapy he was able to distinguish the feeling of sadness as not his but his mother's, and was able to work with the sadness until it became complete for him, on the physical level. Following this awareness and completion he no longer had the experience of this unconnected sadness in his life. In addition, he was able to see that from his pre-natal experience he had developed a pattern of relating to others as if they were already leaving, and in fact he would leave relationships before others could leave him, so he could avoid at least some of the sadness. With this awareness he was able to create relationships that lasted.

From our experience with breath and movement therapies and study of human development, we developed in 1989 a Somatic Integration Process that accesses the prenatal period of development. Many people have experienced energetic and emotional shifts, and increase awareness of personal patterns through this process. The main benefits can be described as a mental sense of freedom and shifts in relationship patterns. Additional benefits include marked changes in blood chemistry, emotions and beliefs.

The process combines several different movements which are done in an adaptation of the repatterning format designed by Dr. Paul Dennison, PhD. The process is enhanced when done in water (such as a hot tub or heated pool, at body temperature), but can also be done with the client in a supine position out of water. If not done in the water it's better to do this process on a mattress or pad on the floor, rather than on a table, because some phases are quite active.

The first movement, the Dart fetal movement, was identified by Dr. Dart, an M.D. It is an homologous movement, rather than either homolateral or crosscrawl movement. Dr. Dart noticed this movement being done by babies in the womb during the third trimester, and observed that it has a natural pulse of ebb and flow, unless the child was stressed by some influence. The movement ceased, for example, when chemical stress (alcohol, cigarette smoke, etc.) or emotional stress (fear or anger) was introduced through the mother. This movement is used in place of the crosscrawl movement in the repatterning.

The second set of movements were identified by Thomas Hanna, developer of Somatics. These are his Red and Green light reflexes, which are stress responses in the body. These also are homologous movements, and they take the place of the homolateral movements in the repatterning.

We have not devised a finger mode for this Somatic Integration Process, although it would come under the structure/index finger mode. It can be done as a balance alone, or it can be part of another balance. Clearing tests, permission and a clear verbal goal statement or intention should be created in either case. The overall intention of the process has to do with the realization of self as connected to the Divine, in whatever form is appropriate for the client, and as separate from mother. Confusion (or forgetting) our innate connection with the Divine arises in the womb due to stressors and the crossing of the placental connection by body chemicals such as neuropeptides, and other chemicals such as alcohol. Birth (which has often been shocking until the recent discoveries about this very phenomenon) reminds the child that it is a distinct, separate, incarnate being who is connected to its mother, not part of its mother. The lingering effects of whatever

stressors have been present during gestation which interfere with this individuation process are addressed through the Pre-Natal Somatic Integration Process.

Doing this process in the water creates a state-bound learning recall situation, stimulating the prenatal experience. The process for the client is usually non-verbal, as the intrauterine time was also non-verbal. The water will have the effect of softening the release of the stress, as if it soaks away the stress, with the result often of a blissful state at the finish of the process. The client then often feels very connected with the Divine, within and without.

Set The Stage

The goal of this process is to remember and bond with oneself as whole, complete, individual and divine, and to bond with the Divine. Take time before starting for the client to set clear intentions in regards to this process. If the parents are available for questioning, it is valuable to inquire prior to beginning the process about stressors present for the parents during the client's gestation. This Pre-Natal Somatic Integration Process will take approximately one hour. Be sure the client takes plenty of time to do each phase until it is complete. Muscle test each stage for completion and readiness to proceed to the next step.

When this process is done in the water, the following logistics apply. If possible have a male and female holding the client on either side, each having one hand at the neck and shoulders and the other at the low back. If a third person is available, they support the head. Allow the client's body to be surrounded and supported by water. Be sure they are only touching other human bodies, and not the sides or bottom of the pool, etc. It is the supporters' job to keep the client safe, i.e. water out of nose and mouth, and not banging against sides or bottom of pool. Additionally, supporters send love to client non-verbally and without active touching).

Please refer to the handout for diagrams of the following described positions.

Phase 1

Do the following Dart fetal movement until it feels smooth, easy, effortless and the body is

relaxed. *Client maintains the hands with cortical thumbs (hands in a fist with the thumb inside the other fingers) and eyes closed throughout the Dart movement during Phase 1.* The tempo and rhythm of this movement is very slow and even, like a very slow, relaxed breath. There is a slight pause between every movement. Begin in the neutral position: supine, head resting on supporting surface, cortical thumbs tucked, arms bent at elbows so hands are near shoulders, knees bent so feet rest on supporting surface.

- a. Begin simultaneously. Right leg crosses over left leg at the ankle, right arm crosses over left arm at the wrist, and the neck and head curls forward to the chest as the knees and hips bend up towards the head. Breath is drawn in during this phase.
- b. Return to neutral position, uncrossing arms and legs, relaxing head and feet to supporting surface as the body unfolds. Breath is exhaled during this phase.
- c. Repeat the movement with the opposite leg and arm crossing over (left over right). Breath is again drawn in.
- d. Return to neutral position, breath exhales.
- e. Continue alternating the curled in position with the neutral position, while alternating right over left, left over right. While the person is crossing and uncrossing in this way, the therapist and/or others present hum on a continuous, single pitch. When this movement feels effortless for the client, this phase is complete.

Phase 2

Do the following startle reflex movements until they feel effortful, uncomfortable and consume lots of energy. Client will likely feel exhausted. The tempo and rhythm is fast and staccato, with clear stops between the two positions as they alternate. Both movements are sharp, with a slight pause in each position. Begin in either of the startle positions or in the neutral position.

- a. Fingers, mouth and eyes wide open, quickly extend the arms to the side and

legs wide apart, arching the spine so the stomach is forward and the neck and head back. Breath is sharply drawn in.

- b. Fingers, mouth and eyes remain wide open, quickly curve the spine and contract the stomach and chest in, the head, arms and legs back to center. Breath is sharply exhaled.
- c. Continue alternating these two positions with a sharp transition between the two, until it feels effortful for the client. The therapist and/or the others count aloud beginning with one, two, etc., in loud, clear, crisp monotone throughout.

Phase 3 Integration metaphor

In a relaxed and supported position, client extends the arms out to either side of the body. In one hand they imagine holding one side of their body and brain, and in the other hand the other side of their body and brain. One hand also can hold the divine part of themselves, the other the human part of themselves. The client takes all the time needed to bring their hands together, melting any resistance to the fullest integration of body and mind, soul and body, feeling the integrity within themselves, blending themselves for being ... (goal) ... whole, complete, individual, separate, divine and bonded with _____ as their source.

Phase 4

Client repeats the two startle movements as in Phase 2, this time while looking in all directions with eyes both open and closed. Be sure to make eye contact with the therapist (or people supporting). Client continues these movements until they feel effortful, uncomfortable and consume lots of energy. They will probably feel exhausted.

Phase 5

Client repeats the Dart movement as in Phase 1, while looking in all directions with eyes open and closed, and making eye contact with the therapist (or people supporting). Client continues until the movement feels smooth, easy, effortless and their body and breathing is relaxed.

Final Integration and Grounding Phase

- a. Give plenty of integration time. If requested, hold the client for a while, very simply, without stroking or verbal communication, as they feel the internal sensations of bliss and harmony that result from this process, and eventually,
- b. Send them on their own for a walk (or swim through the water) as they notice the bliss within and without.

References

1. Hanna, Thomas, *Somatics*, Addison-Wesley.
2. Hendricks, Gay and Kathlyn, *Radiance*, Wingbow Press, Berkeley, CA, 1991
3. Laing, R.D., *The Facts of Life*, Pantheon Books, New York, NY, 1976
4. Leboyer, Frederick, *Birth Without Violence*, Alfred E. Knopf, New York, NY, 1976.

5. Pierce, Joseph Chilton, *Magical Child*, Bantam, New York, NY, 1977.
6. Pierce, Joseph Chilton, *Magical Child Matures*, Bantam, New York, NY, 1985.
7. Saint-Pierre, Gaston, and Debbie Shapiro, *The Metamorphic Technique*, Element Books Limited, Longmead, Shaftesbury, Dorset, Great Britain, 1989.
8. Verny, Thomas, M.D. and John Kelly, *The Secret Life of the Unborn Child*, Dell Publishing, 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103, 1981.

Acknowledgements

Dr. Paul Dennison for the repatterning format,

Anna Most and Margaret Passeri for the information about the Dart movement,

Gay and Kathlyn Hendricks for the inspiration to address the prenatal period,

and the various colleagues and clients who have participated in the development of this procedure.