

Touch For Health and the Partnership Way

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StarFire

The Partnership Way is:

- A relationship characterized by mutual respect towards maximum aliveness for all vs. relationships characterized by controlling others through fear
- A relationship of equals who respect the sovereignty of each other
- Based on nurturing rather than controlling (healing vs. allopathic)
- Love vs. violence/fear

The Partnership Way is a means of restoring and maintaining wholeness, harmony and balance which is challenged constantly by the current model of society relationship, which is in actuality the source of most, if not all stress in society today.

The Partnership Way and Touch For Health are both based on a common ground, of taking responsibility for oneself, and on respecting the sovereignty of an individual in the fullest measure. The models described in the book *The Chalice and the Blade* by Riane Eisler is a description of the source of most stress experienced by probably everyone in the world for the duration of recorded history. The stress produced by the way society is structured and therefore how we interact at a basic level is the stress that we are working to release and to return the body/being back to maximum aliveness and balance.

In Chalice the distinction between two opposing societal relationship structures is made as follows. The predominant model for the last eight millennia has been a hierarchical structure organized around power over others or domination by force and violence or the threat of violence. Previous to that and at various times during the same period there have been societies in which the predominant model is focussed on self-actualization of each member and mutual respect, nurturing and

honoring. A picture of the two would show the power hierarchy structures as layers of privilege and prestige, with inequality and separation based on fear between the layers, vs. a "body" of equally important, connected and differentiated members. In the human body it is the case that each cell has its own distinct vital role to play, none is more important than the other, and all together they make up the body, rather than the case that some cells are more important than others and the rest exist for the benefit of those few cells who enjoy some special privilege the other cells don't get to enjoy. On this basis alone it makes sense to me to pick the organic model.

Briefly, let's look at some costs of the power hierarchy model, and some benefits of the body-based mutual respect and inter-connectedness model.

The power hierarchy model is based on control through fear. Controlling even one other person takes a huge amount of energy and effort to accomplish, and if you imagine controlling all members of a population the size of the United States, you can see easily how impossible a task that is, and the enormous stress that would result for the controller. Then think about our President, Congressmen, Mayors, etc., and notice the signs of stress.

You can even try this on your own. Get a willing player to experiment with. Take turns one controlling the other in a physical way, staying safe. It could look like one person actively maneuvering a passive standing partner by the shoulders or arms, with the active one leading or moving the passive one in various directions of walking. It is up to the active one to provide the energy to start and stop the passive partner's movement, and to turn the passive one in new directions. Discuss if either of you felt any fear in this exercise. Then try a variation in which the passive partner actually resists being moved (not to the extent of pushing

back, just with the legs and body). This is too much work. Also discuss if there was fear or any other feeling for either participant in the exercise.

Also, In the hierarchy power model most members of the society will not get their needs met, or their full self-actualization will be sacrificed for the needs or goals of the few in the privileged layer.

Some of the benefits of the Partnership Way model are that all members of the society are not only free to pursue self-actualization, but also a main goal of the society is that each member be nurtured and supported to self-actualize. Ultimately no one will be happy unless all are happy. Each member of the society will enjoy respect, love, support, and personal sovereignty (their being is honored and safe).

Imagine the freedom from stress that this kind of society would provide for all its members. So the question is: How do we get there?"

There are many simple practices that lead us to living in a Partnership Way. Respecting and honoring others, honoring and loving myself, refusing to abuse or disrespect in any way others, actively applying my consciousness to the ways in which I interact as better than or worse than others, i.e. when I do not act as if all are absolute equal in value (not skill or ability). And Touch For Health.

Touch For Health is based on the principle that each person is sovereign, that they are honored and respected as valuable beings, and that each person has their own unique process, state and way of being, and the each body has its own absolute wisdom about its state of being, level of stress, and need for returning to balance and wholeness.

This is the reason that I love Touch For Health, that the system and the practitioner honors the sovereignty of the client or receiver. In fact, nothing else makes sense to me.

Regarding men and women in the Partnership Way, part of the focus necessary to bring the system back to balance (create a society that

honors the sovereignty of all) is to personally address the inequality of privilege and power between men and women which is an integral part of the power hierarchy model. This is not the only arena of inequality, layers of difference exist between women and women, men and men, adults and children, whites and other ethnic groups, religious groups, and on and on. The inequality between men and women is however more than just that men have privilege more than women. "Masculine" traits are more valued than "feminine" traits, and "masculine" ideals and philosophies are elevated over "feminine". This imbalance pervades many different levels of consciousness and action.

This is not to say that "masculine" attributes are "bad" and "feminine" are "good". This kind of distinction is in fact a strategy of the power domination hierarchy, a strategy of justifying holding privilege and power over others. Rather, we will thrive best when "masculine" and "feminine" are valued equally, though distinctly, and kept in balance.

Part of the cause of the confusion that arises when humans consider ideas, attempting to understand how things are, is that our minds by nature like to have pictures and models to compare and contrast to. This is fine in itself, but the human mind also tends to attach the label "good" or "bad" to the models and/or understandings it constructs. Then we get into stress, and make mistakes. So it is not a matter of getting rid of the "masculine" in favor of the "better" "feminine", or of giving the power and privilege to the women now instead of the men. What we can do is to create an equality and balance, not of power, but of respect, wholeness and aliveness.

It is helpful actually to remove the labels "masculine" and "feminine" from behaviors, qualities, traits and attitudes, and critically consider the behaviors, etc. directly, assessing the behavior's ability or appropriateness to support wholeness and respect and self-actualization for all involved vs. separating, abusing or restricting self-actualization. Then choose the behaviors, etc. that support wholeness, life, self-actualization for all, and respect for life.

Experiment with replacing the idea "masculine" or "feminine" along with all their connotations, with a simpler idea. A useful and fundamental bipolar construct is that of an "active" and a "silent" principle. This is different than active and passive as in the Tao, or yin and yang, or active and receptive. The fundamental opposite of active is silent, or still. Passive has a connotation from other contexts that confuses this idea. Active means energy moving, silent means energy in potential, not the absence of energy. Together, these two hold all that exists. This is the foundation of being that the human mind has confused as it tries to do what it tends to do, to bring understanding and meaning by comparison to other models and ideas. The value of the distinction "masculine"/"feminine" has been distorted and confused from the foundation bipolarity of active and silent.

Ultimately, we are both active and silent, and each has equal value, and we can safely conclude that we must have then both values that are now characterized as "masculine" and "feminine" to be whole and in balance and harmony. Not distortions of these qualities, however, which is the stuff of the power hierarchy based society or individual

I propose a balance that you can do, which we will do in the group during the conference, on the theme of choosing to support wholeness, mutual respect, self-actualization for all, respect for all life, and the inter-connectedness that underlies everything rather than separation, and relating as better

than or worse than. We will do a Somatic Integration Process™ to defuse our stress and re-establish balance and harmony based on this model, the Partnership Way.

We wish you peace and partnership towards wholeness!

Suggested reading:

- The Chalice and the Blade
- The Partnership Way
- Sacred Pleasure all by Riane Eisler
- The End of Patriarchy by Claudio Naranjo
- Love and Awakening by John Welwood
- Embracing the Beloved by Stephen and Ondrea Levine
- Conscious Loving and every book by Gay and Kathlyn Hendricks

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