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The Social Value of Zero Balancing

By DAVID LADEN, ZB Faculty

“When I speak of love I am not speaking of some sentimental and weak response. I am speaking of that Force which all of the great religions have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life. Love is the key that unlocks the door which leads to ultimate reality.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

INTRODUCTION:

Does Zero Balancing have a social value? Does it in some way contribute to the betterment of society? Does it really have the capacity to make the world a better place? These are questions I started asking myself years ago when I was going through a period of soul searching - investigating my own feelings of powerlessness - feelings of not doing enough in the larger sphere of “making the world a better place”.

It was obvious that ZB did good for individuals. My clients were happy, my practice was successful, my son had graduated from college and was working, the bills were paid, we were out of debt, the grass was green. No dandelions in my life. ZB was good for me and my clients.

I had fulfilled most of my personal goals as I had conceived them. Yet, as much as I tried to ignore it, I felt that I was not contributing to the greater good. Was my work just another self-indulgence for baby boomers like me, part of another narcissistic self-improvement program? Did it merely reinforce a paradigm of self-centered, body-obsessed materialism? Was there something different that I needed to do with my life so that I felt meaningful not just to my family but to the world?

In hindsight I now know that these sorts of unrelenting questions and feelings cannot be pushed away. They come from a soul level and have an urgency, that a new level of understanding, a higher vibration of spiritual receptivity is trying to be born. Answers and resolutions cannot be forced. All one can do is remain open, be patient and trust that a new path forward will emerge from the darkness.

This is what gradually happened. A new level of awareness about ZB that I was not yet acquainted with became clear to me, intuitive awareness that held the answers to the harsh but necessary questions I had asked. Over the course of my ZB teacher training program coupled with insights I received about ZB during several meditation retreats, the relevance of ZB to the social good became clear. These are the insights I would like to share. They include three major interrelated principles: Stillness, Kindness and Empowerment.

STILLNESS:

At the deepest level, Zero Balancing is capable of eliciting an expanded state of consciousness where transformative change is possible. And expanded states happen only when the body and mind can become still. Stillness is the key.

We know that ZB is not a belief system, but it can be a doorway to a person's deepening experience of themselves as a spiritual being - more than a dense material body subject to pain and disease, more than a mindset of thoughts and feelings conditioned by past experiences and frustrated desires. ZB opens a space to the present moment - a state of Being unconditioned by the past, unconcerned about the future, out of the dictates of Time itself. Any experience of the present moment is beyond duality - by definition it is peaceful and fulfilling.

During a ZB session we observe that our clients experience a deepening stillness of body and mind. Breathing is made quiet, inhalation/exhalation being the metronome of time that keeps the soul tied to body consciousness. In a deep ZB session we observe that our clients lose the need to breathe at all, sometimes for extended periods. The person is being nourished by subtle vibrations, by deep pranic currents in the spinal energy body and does not need to inhale oxygen or exhale carbon dioxide. In my understanding of the physiology of meditation, periods of breathlessness are not the result of deprivation of oxygen, but are caused by the bypass of normal metabolic breathing in favor of subtler forces that maintain life. In these interiorized states the body does not need to breathe. The life force and consciousness have temporarily been drawn away from the sensory-motor nerves. They have been magnetized and withdrawn into the central axis of the astral spine. In this way, Zero Balancing belongs in the same family as meditation. In fact, ZB is facilitated meditation. Consciousness is expanded by the interiorization of energy.

[If you are interested in exploring this spiritual physiology in depth I suggest reading "Autobiography of a Yogi" by Paramahansa Yogananda, especially the chapters, "The Law of Miracles" and "The Science of Kriya Yoga."]

The reason an interiorized state lasts only a limited time is that the average person is not able to sustain this high vibrational state and so normal breathing and the metabolic exchange of blood gases must resume for life to continue. But advanced yogis can maintain the breathless

state for prolonged periods of time and thus experience the joyful unity with Spirit which lies underneath the duality consciousness of breathing, emotional conditioning and the restless mind. As we learn even in beginning ZB classes - if we want to change consciousness, we need to transform the energy field. If we want to change the energy field, we first create a state of deep relaxation and stillness of the body/mind.

Most people, when they think of relaxation are really thinking of diversion from stress. We settle into the couch in front of the TV to watch our favorite shows, movies or sporting events. A couple of beers and a bowl of chips completes the picture in my own life. There is nothing wrong with a little diversion. We all need some entertainment and relief from the myriad stresses of modern life. But our diversions and distractions should not be confused with the profound stillness as described above.

Those practiced enough to be able to meditate deeply or lucky enough to receive Zero Balancing sessions regularly can have an experience of deep inner peace that has the potential to change how we experience ourselves and the world. People who cultivate inner peace naturally bring peaceful and loving vibrations into their environment. As Martin Luther King states in the quote at the beginning of this article - this Love, this Peace is a powerful Force, a force that comes from the universal Spirit, binding all humanity and all of nature together into a unitary consciousness. "Blessed are the Peacemakers". Dare we say that ZB is a pathway for many people to draw closer to Unity Consciousness and make it more real in their lives?

If people feel more relaxed and at peace within themselves, their behavior will naturally be more peaceful and harmonious with all others and with all of creation. ZB contributes to this evolution of world consciousness, helping make the world a kinder, more loving place - one person at a time.



KINDNESS:

Kindness is implicit in the way ZBers touch people. We approach each person with non-judgmental acknowledgement of their innate value and beauty, no matter how they may present on the personality level. We are always relating to each individual as a unique being, worthy of respect and unconditional high regard. Our clients feel this as we interact with them and touch them at Interface. It is a privilege to have the freedom and independence to counteract society's typical way of evaluating people as economic units, judged only on the basis of performance and outer achievement. As ZBers, meeting people on a spiritual level creates a field of kindheartedness that is healing for us as practitioners as well as our clients. The practice of ZB requires and encourages our best selves. Our clients feel themselves held in a Field of Kindness without it having to be outwardly expressed in words - though words, well placed, have the power to amplify the field.

Touching people at the levels of structure and energy simultaneously gives a person the body-felt sensation of being more than just a solid mass of conditioned tension. They can enter a new world of lightness, pleasure and ease. This can be a revelation to people and we are privileged to be both facilitator and witness to this transformative experience.

When people feel more open, expansive and creative they are happier. Happier people are naturally more kind and accepting of others. Unhappiness and a sense of lack can force a person into the defensive postures of prejudice, selfishness, tribalism and aggression towards others. The most destructive people, underneath their dominant personalities and need for control, feel empty, unhappy and lacking in personal power. They operate in a spiritual vacuum. Thus, Zero Balancing contributes to peace in the world by giving people the opportunity to let go of defensive postures, both physical and emotional, experiencing themselves as free to be more inwardly fulfilled.

As ZBers we are not responsible for changing people except by being fully present with right attitude, mindfulness and all our skill in crafting the session. This attitude of "letting ZB do the work" keeps our ego's need for personal accomplishment out of the relationship. We are respectful that it is our clients who are receptive to change from within, given the opportunity that a clearer, stronger field provides. Thus, we ourselves receive healing by relinquishing any need to take credit or to shoulder blame. We are not attached to results because there is no agenda to fix people. We are not focused on "problems". We work with our attention, not intention. We trust that the "clearer, stronger field" is intrinsically healing.

A modern koan might be: "The most effective healer sees nothing to be done". This implies that each person is a child of the Great Creative Power which is the Healer. Our job as ZBers is to open a wider doorway so our clients and ourselves are receptive to this ever-present Power.



EMPOWERMENT:

How do we behave in the world? Who do we align ourselves with? What do we identify with? Who do we choose as community? What do we embrace or reject? Where do our values and actions come from? Do they spring from frustration and victimization, leading us to embrace ideologies that are false sources of power that ultimately engender violence and suffering? Or do our values come from an inner spiritual attunement, a sense of truth which is in harmony with universal principles known to produce peace, prosperity, health, harmony and justice?

These are questions that have always played themselves out in human societies - where do our actions, beliefs and policies come from? Do we get a sense of identity from outer structures of power or from inner soul force? In either case our actions are dictated by who we think we are. For most people that is a mixture of confusing forces we are hardly aware of.

I was born and raised in the city of Philadelphia. As a youngster I idolized my hometown sports heroes. I lived and died with the fate of the Phillies, Eagles and 76ers. Even today, when Philadelphia teams win, I am happy. When they lose, I am disappointed. But as an adult I don't anymore have my identity overly enmeshed with the city or its teams. I've realized that sports teams, like many things, only serve as surrogate sources of loyalty and belonging.

But our human yearning for belonging, connection, loyalty, sacrifice, personal power and purpose must be fulfilled. Will these needs be fulfilled from limited outer sources of identity which are always in competition with each other - team vs. team, country vs. country, race vs. race, religion vs. religion, democrat vs. republican, etc. We will always search in vain for fulfillment through these surrogate identification mechanisms, rooted in dualistic consciousness.

After eons of disappointment, of “looking for love in all the wrong places”, we finally understand that this need for love, power and fulfillment can only come from contact with our own inner spiritual core. This understanding sets us on the right path. Our outer actions and choices in life can then be guided by our inner attunement. Our inner Being and outer Doing can be integrated and we have the opportunity to feel more balanced and whole. An integrated person is one who has an inviolable spiritual core which is expressed in active relationship with the world, flowing and responding to changing influences without losing inner stability.

Zero Balancing serves the quest for wholeness and the process of integration - the Sacred Marriage of the alchemists - the Heavenly Queen wed to the Earthly King, their union producing the Divine Child of everlasting harmony. It is all a metaphor, a set of symbols rooted in human physical and energetic anatomy.

The Bride is the axial skeleton: the sacrum, the spine, and the cranium. This is where we find the foundation joints which serve as the physical conductors of the subtle vertical energies flowing between Heaven and Earth. The Groom is the appendicular skeleton where we find the semi-foundation and freely moveable joints which initiate movement and fuel the impulses of the Will. The ZB protocol can be seen as a ritual of ongoing integration: awareness directed to the spiritual body in order to generate action in accordance with our inner identity.

How does Zero Balancing make the world a better place? This was our original question. The answer is that ZB helps to empower people. Empowered people, no matter what their role in life, will act positively and creatively. When they make mistakes, they listen to their voice of conscience and make adjustments.

ZB has social value. If we can strengthen a person’s inner body-felt integrity, we also strengthen their authentic value system. A person is better able to discriminate and act from inner Truth. These people will not be susceptible to authoritarian figures who know how to emotionally manipulate people, preying on their unmet needs in order to gain converts to an ideology based on false power structures, be they political, racial, nationalist, religious or any other outer-based identity system. In its own way, ZB helps create stronger citizens, the foundation of any successful democratic society.

CONCLUSION:

Albert Einstein declared that, “All human suffering is the result of a lack of imagination”. It is only by the use of our unique human capacity to create images, to envision a better life, to think thoughts that take us forward, that we as individuals and as a society will evolve towards our inborn spiritual potential which is the only guarantor of peace, happiness and collective harmony.

It would be naïve to think that Zero Balancing or any healing modality is by itself capable of affecting lasting change. But if we think of ZB as one thought of many, one image of many, one force for good of many, then we know without a doubt that as ZB practitioners we are adding our considerable energies to the collective evolution of the world. Thoughts are real. Images are real. Imagination carries Soul Force. Zero Balancing was born and is carried forward by a force dedicated to the healing and the greater happiness of all.

Every time we do a ZB session we open a doorway to the best part of our clients and ourselves, our “better angels.” Stillness, Kindness and Empowerment are innate principles that are embodied and expressed through ZB touch and the structure of the protocol. Let us all move forward with confidence in our power to imagine and therefore manifest a better world, a more loving world, for all.

*“Just as oil is present in every part of the olive,
so love permeates every part of creation”.*

Paramahansa Yogananda



Dr. Fritz Smith and David Laden

DAVID LADEN (ACR, CZB) has been an Advanced Certified Rolfer since 1983, a Certified Zero Balancer since 1996 and a ZB Faculty Member since 2004. He lives and works in Madison, WI where he and his wife Gabrielle established the Center for Integral Healing Arts. David is a student of Paramahansa Yogananda and has been a meditation practitioner for 40 years. He loves hiking in the mountains, daydreaming by the ocean and playing with his granddaughter.