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HELLO DARKNESS MY OLD FRIEND: AN EXPERIENCE OF A TRANSFORMATIONAL SESSION WITH ZERO BALANCING

(NOTE: This article is from a chapter of Jim's forthcoming book, ZERO BALANCING: Conscious touch and transformation due out from Handspring Press in the spring of 2021.)

In March, 2016, Dr. Fritz Smith, came to the Boston area to teach a new class he had just created, called Zero Balancing and Consciousness. This particular class was about how to work with "consciousness" through Zero Balancing. That is, how to help guide the client into deeper, expanded states of consciousness where more change is possible, not only in her body but also in her consciousness and awareness.

Technically an expanded state of consciousness is any state of awareness that is different from normal waking consciousness. A quote from the Core Zero Balancing Study Guide is useful to understand this phenomena better.

Brain physiology tells us there are a number of brain wave patterns, each having its own characteristics. In ZB we use "expanded states of consciousness" to indicate brain waves that move away from a linear-thinking mindset. Experience has taught us that people move into expanded states they are less bound by specific definitions of themselves, definitions in which illnesses are often embedded. People seem more prone to change and healing in expanded states than in normal brain wave states."(Smith, 2020, p. 66).

The session I describe below happened in my office a day after that class, and incorporated many of the new ideas about expanded states of consciousness and how to induce them through touch that I had learned while studying with Fritz in that class.

Ella works in corporate America and has received ZB sessions every few months for several years and has taken a number of ZB classes herself.

Her frame for this session was, "I just want to have a wonderful ZB session – without limiting the possibilities by having some specific want." Sometimes we say to a client, "Let's have a session that serves your highest good" without needing to be specific about what that good would be, and trusting that it can happen. That was her wish for this session. I was totally fine with that so we got to work.

As we started the session she began right away to move into a deep state, accompanied by many of what we call "working signs". These are signs the client's body gives that can be used to monitor how the session is going, particularly when the client's energy field is experiencing a big change. In this session the signs included multiple deep breaths; rapid eyelid fluttering (REF), gurgling in her tummy (borborygmus), and others.

Often when a person has gone to a deep state quickly, I don't need to do more special "consciousness" fulcrums to take them even further. It isn't necessary, and there is always the possibility of overload – of doing more than the person can integrate easily or well. In this case I decided it was safe to do as much as Ella could tolerate, and to watch her carefully to make sure we didn't overdo it. This is always a clinical judgment, but Ella is experienced with Zero Balancing and I knew her well and was confident that she would do well with stronger work.

So, I employed some of the fulcrums that Fritz had just taught us to see if I could help move her even deeper into an altered state of consciousness where she could become more connected to her deepest core self.

Some of the fulcrums I used with Ella to help this process happen included: the "lift off" fulcrum on the lower rib cage, used near the beginning of a session to help the session be more powerful right from the start; and a "compression fulcrum" on her hips, aimed to amplify the strength of the person's energy field, and thus to allow her to have a more powerful experience.

Ella did fine with it all, continuing to have full, deep breaths. Since she was doing well I chose to continue helping her have as powerful an experience as possible while also continuing to monitor her, both by observing the "working signs" as mentioned above, but also by noticing the quality of both the tissue and the energetic field. The bones and the soft tissues can literally feel more lively, more elastic, and more vibrant, and similarly the energetic field of the client can feel more vital. When a client is entering a deeper meditative state the energetic field becomes more lively and often more sparkly. This felt this like the fizziness of carbonated water compared to still water.

She continued to have many positive working signs all along including many deep breaths that seemed to go through her whole body; many more REFs, and slight, tremulous head movements that are frequently a sign that the client has gone into a deep altered state of consciousness. And in between these working signs from the body, she would have periods of extreme stillness, her body not moving while her energetic field grew quieter and quieter.

During an altered state Ella's awareness was more inside her body. Her consciousness was paying attention to the shifts she was feeling in her body, mind and spirit on the inside. She was less attuned to the outside world. This actually allows more personal change in her amount of energy, in her feelings, and often in bodily symptoms.

I kept doing expansive fulcrums right to the end of the session including what we call “the wrist fulcrum on the trapezius;” working with the bones of the skull; the “toe sandwich;” and other techniques designed to affect the person’s awareness in a deep way. The slight head movements were continuing and increasing. The vibration of the energetic field, which I could feel under my hands, continued feeling very alive and expansive.

At the end of the session Ella took several minutes coming out of the experience of the session after I had taken my hands off. She stayed very still with her eyes closed for a long time. Only then did she begin to show emotion. During that time a few tears began to drip out of her eyes. She opened her eyes, and as we began to talk about her experience, the first thing she said was she felt sad. She was crying slightly but then soon after was smiling and laughing.

We talked for thirty minutes after the session, longer than most sessions. She was very animated during this time. She both looked, and said she felt, totally alive. She had a beautiful expression of amazement on her face at the experience she’d just had.

She described parts of what she had felt during the session. She said the rhythm of the session, the fulcrums and the pauses were perfect and powerful. She had seen images of her ex-partner as a young man, and saw younger and younger images of him as the session went on. There was a lot of sadness with these images. I had done one fulcrum I call the “rest in my hands” fulcrum, where I gently held her head with great care and connection and asked her to just let her head rest in my hands. She felt a huge “whoosh of sadness” after I took my hands off her. Ella often hears music in her head during a ZB session and this time the music was “The Sounds of Silence,” from Simon and Garfunkel. *“Hello darkness, my old friend I’ve come to talk with you again,”* which connected her back to the loss she had suffered in that relationship.

The “whoosh” and the pause after, allowed her to strongly and deeply feel those feelings of sadness, but then to move through them and to move on to other feelings. The sadness was not repressed at that point, but fully experienced and transcended.

As we talked further she said she felt “refreshed and renewed.” “I feel alive like I haven’t felt for decades....I can’t stop smiling. I feel so much joy it’s almost bursting out of me....I feel new...I feel surprised...I feel like dancing...I have a swagger to me.”

As she felt this joy, she began to connect to her younger self who she remembered was “smiling all the time.” She remembered a woman she worked with who told her to “stop smiling all the time.” She had felt so alive and happy at that time and remarked “It’s been so long since I felt that way”. She began to feel totally connected to her own younger self and was so delighted to be connected again. There are many techniques for asking a client to dialogue with their inner child. I asked Ella to speak to her younger self and tell the younger self how happy she was to be in touch with her again. And then to ask her

younger self what it was like to be connected again. This connection made her younger self extremely happy.

As this went on for a while, Ella's tone began to change again. She realized she had felt really good in herself when she met her former partner and not so good during and after that relationship due to the difficulties they had experienced. She was still feeling the joy in this moment and at the same time feeling sadness for having been away from this joyful part of herself for so long. This experience is called "mourning the self." Often after someone has made a big breakthrough in her personal work, and is feeling the delight and expansiveness of this new place, she can begin to feel sad at not having been in this place earlier in her life. She can become aware of all the opportunities she missed earlier in her life by not being able to access this joyful and open place. Even though there is sadness involved, from the practitioner's point of view, this is a very healthy and important part of the process and indicates deep movement has happened for the person. Ella went into the sadness for a while, and we talked about it, and then she was able to transition back to the joyful feelings.

This session is a great example of what I mean by a "transformational session." A totally different person came off the table than the one who started out on the table. These are often watershed moments for the client. Clients tend to remember these experiences for a long time, and often refer back to them as the time when their lives changed.

A few days later I wrote to check in with her and received this reply:

Hi, Jim,

I was thinking of sending you an email when I got out of work tonight, and I got one from you!

Monday's session was momentous. It really felt like something major opened up inside for me. I didn't want to go home right away so I had a quick dinner at S&S Deli. And flirted with a young guy on my way out! That young and carefree girl just sprung out before I could stop her! 😊 I meditated a little after I got home but it was difficult to sit still so I gave up after less than 10 minutes and just walk around a little, with a swagger of course. The sleep Monday night was totally peaceful.

Unfortunately, my work schedule was jam-packed yesterday and today. I could sense the light around me dimming as things started to pile up. The good news is that I seem to be able to cope better just by sinking into my body and "feel/be more present". That's another term that I heard many times from you but didn't really grasp the meaning until now.

Thank you again for another wonderful ZB session. I am truly grateful for everything you have done for me. Ell

References

Smith, F. F. (2020). *Core zero balancing: Study guide: Fourth edition*, Zero Balancing Touch Foundation.