



FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE

**INSTROKE**

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## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE INSTROKE

The development of working with the instroke of the pulsation of the life force was a major breakthrough in body psychotherapy. The effectiveness of the classical techniques of breaking down the armor had already fulfilled their potential, and the limitations of this approach were becoming more evident. In the fourteen years since I published the first article about the instroke (Davis, "Working with the Instroke", *Energy & Character* April, 1984). This work has taken body psychotherapy into new areas, some of which are represented by Michael Munzel's article on Narcissism, Lilly Davis' article on Integration and Thomas Harms' piece on mother-child relationships. This first article is intended to familiarize the reader with the history and concepts behind working energetically with the instroke. The following articles develop these ideas further.

### History of the Instroke

The conceptualization of the instroke was originally developed as a technique to bring about emotional discharge in the classical Reichian sense. When I began working with emotional discharge, I soon saw that some clients had difficulties with this model. They could not breathe long enough to charge up; they could not make a voluntary sound or make the voluntary movements required of them. Or, they would attempt to do it in a mechanical fashion to please the therapist, but they split off and the process never deepened into spontaneous, vegetative release. Also, many of them were threatened by the style of the technique and they would either avoid it or stop the work after a period of "failure".

In 1984, I discussed these types as "soft" structures in comparison to the highly charged, "hard" muscular types. These so-called "soft structures" may give the illusion of softness or weakness, but deep inside, there are strong holdings. These character structures are contractive, having issues of early disturbance. I would now call them contractive "plasmatic structures". They include the schizoid, the oral, the narcissist and the borderline (see Davis, "The Biological Foundations of the Schizoid Process", *Energy & Character* 1998).

The original styles of Reichian work were based on outstroke functioning. (I took the two terms outstroke and instroke from Charles Kelley, the founder of Radix who described the pulsatory flow of the life force as moving from core to periphery in an outstroke of the pulsation and the inflow, from periphery to the core, as the instroke.) Therefore, the character structures that blocked the outstroke - the phallic, the masochist, the anger etc. - were more comfortable with this style of therapy. But those who were blocking the instroke - the contractive or plasmatic types mentioned above - did not easily take to the outstroke orientation of the therapy. Because this style was a direct and immediate challenge to their armor, most of them experienced it as invasive and threatening. They were asked to move out, when they wanted to move in.

In order to work with these people, I developed a step by step, developmental style of centering the organism deeply with slow breathing and gentle movements before the excitement increased. That allowed the person to take time to feel more secure before deciding to move outward in expression. Once I developed the techniques of working by supporting the development of the inflow of the pulsation, the outstroke work became more effective. Those con-



tractive types who previously were threatened by discharges were now able to center more deeply, contact their power within and then willingly move outward in powerful, explosive emotional releases that they could stay in contact with until completion. (Previously, when these structures did get into discharge, they would often split off or engage in projective behavior.)

Had the concept of working with the instroke developed no further, I think it would have been a contribution to broaden discharge techniques in body psychotherapy. But the instroke has continued to develop so quickly and in such surprising directions, that we now find ourselves not using discharge anymore, yet we continue to deepen our therapy and our knowledge of energetic functioning. The benefits, limits and dangers of discharge work are known. Because of these limits and dangers, Reichian oriented body psychotherapy has been drifting away from so-called energy work to other fields in order to continue developing. With the conceptualization of the instroke, we can continue to work energetically and at the same time avoid the limits and dangers of discharge work. After almost 20 years of working with the instroke, I see no end in sight as to how much further this approach can expand our knowledge.

## **Some Problems with the Classical Approach**

In order to further explain the instroke, it is instructive to first go back to some of the original understandings of energetic functioning as represented in the concept of the expansion and contraction principal of pulsation. A typical explanation of pulsation is to look at expansion and contraction as reaching out towards the environment in pleasurable anticipation, or shrinking away in pain from unpleasant situations.

It is clear that the expansive movement outward is positive and the contractive movement inward is negative. This formulation represents the general western philosophy towards action, production, and materialism. Kelley has even suggested that the creative process itself is dependent not on pulsation, but on the outstroke. The expansive phase is the creative aspect of energetic functioning. All early Reichian techniques were based on the concept that the "expansive" phase was the good one, and we needed to break through, get out, etc. Alexander Lowen likens a person to being a butterfly inside a cocoon. All of his potential is wrapped up inside and he will not come out by himself. It is the role of the therapist to break through this outer wrapping and allow the real person inside to emerge.

Over the years this model has proven to be incomplete. Nature doesn't work this way. The potential butterfly in the cocoon doesn't need anyone to break in, any more than a chicken needs help getting out of its egg. Both are up to the job, when the time is right. And the time is right when the instroke - the gathering, creative phase - is finished. Then - and only then - can a whole organism emerge. When we support the instroke we are also supporting the outstroke.

In my view, the wave of "eastern" philosophies, meditation, and yoga that swept the west in the last 25 years was a reaction to this driven sense in our culture that we must always "do" something. There was no time or space to go in: to relax, re-charge, re-organize, re-create. Too much was outstroke oriented. In the media and professional journals it is referred to in the general terms of "...the stress of modern living", burnout syndrome etc."



Reich too was aware of the overemphasis on the outstroke in both our culture and therapy. "If this biological state of pulsation is disturbed in one direction or the other direction, that is if either the function of the expansion or of the contraction predominates ...then a disturbance of the biological equilibrium in general is inevitable." (Function of the Orgasm, p. 264) He even goes on to point out that "long continuation in a state of expansion is synonymous with general parasympatheticonia".

## **A New Model of Functioning**

### **Differentiating Between an Instroke and a Contraction**

Both the instroke and a contraction are a flow of the energy inward from the periphery towards the core. The direction of the movement is the same. After this initial similarity, they differ totally.

A contraction, while originally a movement, soon becomes a state and then a block. It is a retraction of the organism away from the periphery, but the energetic flow never reaches the center. It stops moving, tightens and holds. The contraction prevents the pulsation from continuing and now becomes a counter-pulsation. The intention of a contraction is to decrease sensation and awareness- a painful emotion for example - by limiting energetic movement.

An instroke is an open flow towards the center. It is a true movement in that it continues to move because after the inflow phase of the pulsation is completed, an effortless flow outward in expansion can occur. With a contraction, because the inflow has been interrupted, the result is that any following outstroke will be incomplete and unconnected.

As a result, we see that a contraction is not truly a movement towards the center. It is an intentional movement away from something - something unpleasant or dangerous. Conversely, an instroke is a natural, spontaneous, unimpeded flow towards something - the center or core. The fact that an instroke results in a movement away from the periphery is secondary.

A contraction avoids or prevents something from happening. An instroke is creative so that something can happen. One prevents, the other provides. A contraction is always an automatic "no". An instroke may seem to be a "no", but its deeper statement is a "yes" to what is good for the organism in the long term.

Whereas an instroke has a sense of freeing and creating possibilities, a contraction has a repetitive quality in the sense of being static and unchanging. This repetitive quality is most easily seen in the physical realm, but is discernable in the psychic apparatus as well. When a contractive counter-pulsation comes into play, we will see repetitive physical movements, either in a segment or in the whole body. One characteristic of counter-pulsatory movements is that when they are finished, the organism is untouched, unchanged - like jumping up and down in one place. In the end, you are exhausted, but still in the same place after all that "movement".

One client I worked with would always begin very graceful looking, wave-like movements with the hands when "the energy" began to move within. He said that these hand movements always came in his previous therapy and every time they were worked with, nothing hap-



pened. I asked him to see if he could not move his hands which was a premature discharging of the energy that didn't allow it to gather and focus. When he stopped this energetic dissipating movement, then something happened. A deeper movement came up through his whole body this time and he began to cry. It became clear that the repetitive nature of these beautiful hand movements simply functioned as a control mechanism to stop anything deeper and more meaningful from developing.

They were not true movements in the sense that the organism was not "moved" by them. In fact, the hand movements prevented another deeper movement from developing. This is what a defense always does. A true instroke of the pulsation always touches the person and in that sense moves them. In this example, it moved him to a deeper, more contactful space and it moved him in the emotional sense.

## **Inner Ground and False Ground**

Whenever there is contraction, the person gets a sense of strength or power from it. He is reluctant to give up the contraction because he will feel too vulnerable. With a blocked instroke, a true inner ground never develops and the person develops a false sense of grounding by identifying with the contraction. The contracted state is akin to the image of a castle under siege in medieval times; the bridges are drawn closed and everything is pulled within and it remains this way once the siege is lifted. This provides a sense of security. But it is a limited security and it severely limits life's possibilities. All the positive possibilities are prevented from happening along with the more negative or dangerous ones.

Physical and psychic behaviors that come from the contraction are always connected with the armor, the unhealthy defense system. Behaviors that develop from the completed instroke are core connected and thus more supportive of the growth and development of the organism over time.

Contraction is a form of disappearing, both from oneself as well as from others. By contracting one disappears from oneself by not feeling a specific emotion or by not realizing a certain idea or belief. On the other hand, by contracting one hides feelings and thoughts from others by not expressing them. An instroke, while moving away from the periphery, is still experienced strongly by the person and oddly enough, others also feel the person more clearly even when they are moving away.

In an eye exercise we do, every time the person doing the exercise indirectly and unconsciously contracts - spaces out, goes away, etc. - the partner loses the sense of the person's presence or experience. But when the person consciously and freely goes deep inside herself, the partner always reports feeling the person more clearly and strongly! The partner doesn't feel avoided or left or disliked. He feels still in a type of contact with a strong presence that simply is not there right at that moment.

Chart 1 summarizes the differences between the instroke and a contraction.



## Comparing the Instroke and Contraction

### Chart 1

Instroke and contraction are similar only in that both represent a movement from the periphery to the core. Movement, which energetically speaking is pulsation, equals life. Any interference in the pulsation decreases the life experience.

A contraction can occur on either the outflow or the inflow of the pulsation.

#### Instroke

An open flow towards the center

A gathering and focusing quality

Opening

Allows pulsation

Continuing pulsation

Towards something

To make something happen

Provides possibilities

Freeing movements

Inner ground

Creates inner ground

Core connected functioning

Appearing

Information

Separation

#### Contraction

A retraction from the periphery

A holding quality

Blocking

Prevents pulsation

Counter-pulsation

Away from something

To avoid something

Prevents possibilities

Repetitive movements

False grounding in the contraction

Re-creates the contraction

Armor functioning

Disappearing

Dis-information

Isolation

## Informing and the Feedback Loop

The last differentiation to discuss between an instroke and a contraction is how the conceptualization of the instroke provides so many new possibilities.

In an unpublished article, I outlined an energetic model of development using Reich's concept of the energy flow as a spinning wave. The organism flows out to the world and back, the flow out contacts the environment. The flow back brings information about that contact to the organism. This is the basis for all psychic and physical development. The diagram below represents this process.



The flow back is the instroke of the pulsation. The outstroke of the pulsation has been understood and worked with for many years in body psychotherapy and in psychotherapy generally though the latter does not use an energetic model. For example, contact, bonding, love, relationships, transference and projection - the bread and butter of all forms of psychotherapy - are primarily understood in terms of outstroke functioning.

What we add is an awareness of the importance of the instroke in this overall process. What is experienced in the outside world only affects the organism in terms of what and how it is brought back to the organism. We see the instroke as a feedback loop, a learning system, an information system that both informs - provides information for the organism and organizes it into form - and creates forms in the sense of structures, both physical and psychic.

Without clear instroke functioning, the outside world is unknown, misunderstood and/or misrepresented. The open flow of information back to the center of the organism is a quite different learning and integration process than a contractive withdrawal. This gathering of information and experiences is totally determined by the quality of instroke functioning and represents the difference between incorporating information or incorporating dis-information.

## Qualitative Aspects of Pulsation

A broader understanding of pulsation is developed by the listing below to better differentiate among different types of instrokes and outstroke by evaluating the qualities of each.

<u>Outstroke</u>		<u>Instroke</u>
Expansion	-	Contraction
Expansion	-	Gathering
Expansion	-	Organizing
Explosion	-	Contraction
Explosion	-	Gathering
Dissipation	-	Gathering
Dissipation	-	Organizing

The instroke of the pulsation is not always a contraction, just as the outstroke is not always an expansion. Therapeutically, it is the *qualitative* aspect of both of these movements that is most important. We must evaluate the quality first to determine if a movement is beneficial or not. A functional evaluation must be made. *The quality of the movement determines the experience, not the direction of the movement.*

The most descriptive and neutral terms are instroke and outstroke, the spontaneous, natural and desirable flow of the energy from core to periphery - outstroke - and back again - instroke. Together they define the two phases of a pulsation. The word contraction has a negative connotation reflecting the attitude that it is "bad" or at best not so important. If it was true that the energy only expands and contracts, then every night when we fall asleep we would be contracting, which is the equivalent of an anxiety state; half of our heart beats would produce anxiety, half of our orgasm would be anxiety ridden. Keleman's term of gathering, and I



would take it one step further to organizing, is a more balanced and descriptive formulation for the inflow of the pulsation.

If we put a negative connotation to expansion, we get explosion. Explosion is the discharge process of the expansion but is not synonymous with it. Explosion is a qualitative aspect of the outstroke as is expansion. An explosion can be contractive too if the client is afraid of expansion. The organism will hold back, partially block, interfere with - in a word, contract. An explosion can also be too open and contactless - for example blind rage or a manic phase.

If we put another negative connotation to expansion, we get dissipation: a disorganized, unproductive movement outward. It is qualitatively different from an explosion and an expansion. An expansion is a co-coordinated, connected, spontaneous flow from center to periphery and even beyond. An explosion is a push outward, against something in an attempt to overcome it; either an internal blocking process or an external resistance. The contact with the core of the self is lost. A dissipation is an attempt of avoidance, a breaking apart to interfere with contact, not a breaking out to make contact. Dissipation is non-productive, directionless and not core connected or unified in its flow. It is an acting out instead of acting on resulting in emotion *as* defense.

Equally, not all instrokes are contractive. Centering, focusing, gathering and concentrating are all movements towards something. A contraction is a movement away from something or an attempt to stop something from happening. It is an avoiding, a systematic holding to not experience as in Kelley's counter-pulsation and Boadella's interference pattern. Contraction offers the same result on the instroke as dissipation does on the outstroke - an avoidance of deeper contact from without or within. Any energetic movement inward or outward can be contractive.

The listing above can be used to describe different character structures in terms of pulsation. For example, an explosion/contraction formulation could model schizoid behavior. Schizoids are deeply contracted and control is an essential issue for them. When the contraction loosens too quickly, they do lose control and are quickly thrown into an existential panic or explosive rage. When they have lost their "ground" and security they then begin to contract again to get control. Another example would be hysterics who would be seen in a dissipation/gathering model. They too easily spread their emotions and energies all over the place in a contactless manner and then need time to gather themselves again. Unfortunately, they then dissipate what has been gathered and are caught in a never ending cycle of dissipation and attempts at gathering.

## **Applying the Instroke Concepts**

Reich understood what any good therapist knows. You cannot push the client into what he or she does not want to understand or to experience. He writes: "It is an important rule in disarming people to proceed slowly, step by step and not to advance ... unless the patient has become accustomed to the situation which has already been reached."... "When a certain breakthrough has been accomplished, the organism must be given time to organize and assimilate the emotions which have been broken through. (Character Analysis, Third Edition.)



As described earlier, traditional "energetic" work has been focused too much on the letting out, the release, the breaking through often creating a pushing quality. Understanding the role of the instroke in pulsation, we can now work energetically without the risks and limits of outstroke oriented work.

Pulsation functions with an in and out movement in *pulsatory thrusting movements* and not in a linear, pushing out movement. Working with the instroke allows us to mimic the natural movement of the energy by allowing the client to pulsate outward and *forward* and then to flow *back* in. This approach uses the model of building momentum and not of pushing outward. The movement *back* is not seen as a resistance or avoidance, but part of the natural pulsation process that will in turn support the movement out and *forward*.

If the organism chooses to flow outward, even into a discharge, it is free to do so. If it chooses to flow deeply inward, it is free to do so. The only important criterion is the quality of the movement. Is it open, does it continue to move? Is the organism integrating the experience as it is happening? The direction is irrelevant. Both directions will appear in their natural rhythm, and then we have real pulsation: an open spontaneous movement from the core to the periphery and back.

## **Working with Existent Energies**

It is a common understanding that some structures, orals for example, are "low energy" and it is thought that they need to "charge up" to get more energy. When using the instroke understanding, we see that everyone has enough energy. The only problem is that it may not be available to them. They are blocking it because it is too much for them to experience either as powerful emotions, vivid memories or too clear understandings of their life situation. Therefore, it doesn't make sense to add more excitement to an already overloaded system. The idea is to mobilize the existent energy without charging them up so that they can incorporate what was previously experienced as too much.

## **Some Results of Working with the Instroke**

### **From Self Expression to Self Experience**

Because of the strong inflow of the pulsation, the focus of the therapy changes from an interpersonal emphasis to a more intrapsychic experience. The client becomes more interested in his relationship to himself than in his relationship to others including the therapist. The therapeutic relationship remains important, but the bonding process has another quality.

The "new sciences" in physics and biology are now studying "self organizing systems" and they call this process "self-referential in the first line". Self-reference is now believed to be an essential, primary process in any system - both living and non-living.

As a result of this emphasis on self-reference, there is less transference, acting out of emotions, projection, dependency and blaming. Not just in the therapeutic relationship, but in life



in general. The client becomes more concerned with what she thinks of herself and not so much what others think of her. She is not so other-oriented, yet the quality of her contact with others increases. The improved quality of contact is the essential difference between the development of a healthy self-referential quality and narcissism.

Because the instroke is an organizing and gathering process, a clearer sense of security develops within. It is a gathering of resources and experiencing oneself as being more powerful than had been perceived before. I have had a number of contractive/plasmatic character structures report such things as having some "heat" inside for the first time, a "glow" or a "sun" inside, a feeling for the first time that... "I can stand it, I am strong enough". There is a growing sense of empowerment and control.

A gay client reports that he sees that by staying in the "groupings" of a gay center where he worked, he could "hide" himself. He decided to move his work out of the center and to work privately. At the same time, he began to make good contact with his father with whom he had had no contact over the years and had always seen as a hard man. He now felt strong enough to be in front of his father and take what would come. And in an accidental contact with his distant brother, the brother rejected him in a sarcastic manner. The client reported:

"I was very hurt by this, but it is good to see clearly that we really have no relationship. I can forget about it. And the amazing thing was that there was no drama about all of it. It just is!"

Other "harder" types of character structures report feeling soft, but powerful. There is a better differentiating between soft and weak. They can allow themselves to soften without fearing that they will be seen as weak. They no longer have to depend on the hardness of the armor to feel powerful.

## Creating Inner Structures

These types of responses from mobilizing an instroke process describe a fascinating and unexpected result. We say that there is a spontaneous development of inner structuralization within the self and the soma that did not exist before. The old, armored behaviors are capable of simply disappearing without being worked on or worked through. The development of new structures replaces the older structures developed by the armor. It is a constant and still amazing fact to hear from clients that they have "forgotten" to continue to be angry at their parents or lover, to be afraid in specific situations that they were always afraid in, to believe certain things that for them have always been true.

The forgotten responses were all from the armored state. As a result of the gathering process of the instroke mobilization, the clients are spontaneously creating new *inner structures* that now displace the specific, armored responses. The emotions, thoughts and beliefs from the armor simply fall away.

The example given above of the sense of a "sun" inside is typical. The clients feel a self-generated warmth; they feel that they can warm themselves, care for themselves better than they thought. They are not so dependent upon outside sources of warm - in the physical as well as the emotional sense. They begin to see that they have something to give. As a result, their picture of themselves as isolated and ungiving, and all the fear and anger about that begins to fall away.



These new *inner structures* are not simply split off parts of the self that are being re-integrated, though that certainly is happening. New aspects develop in the psychic, emotional and physical realms that didn't exist before. It is a new development in the self. This is another aspect of the *informing process* mentioned earlier in the feedback loop function of the instroke. New structures are created by this condensing process and are being put in a form.

## Border Development and the Instroke

The creation of new structures brings us to the last topic of discussion about the instroke - the border making process. What we see is the spontaneous development of healthy borders replacing the rigid borders that developed out of the armor. Armor is a bordering process and while it may have served an important historical function, it is now interfering in the client's life. It is amazing to see the spontaneous development of new borders merely by mobilizing the instroke of the pulsation. Without working directly on border issues, these problems are altered and clients report major changes in their relationships.

While we clearly see this phenomenon occurring regularly, our understanding of how it happens is still limited. As we work more with this process, our understanding will deepen. The model for border making offered below is applicable to any therapeutic school or technique. Anytime healthy border development occurs we believe it is always rooted in the instroke process, no matter what approach is used to mobilize it.

We see borders as energetic functioning, specifically in terms of pulsation. The flow outward creates the experience and the flow inward acts as a feedback system and organizes the experience. The experience is put into a meaningful form by the instroke of the pulsation and now we can consider the person *informed* and *in form*. The gathering and organizing of the experience by the instroke function is the *making sense* of the experience and is the border making process in action.

As the organism gathers towards the center, there is a compacting and condensing process that happens. It is a gathering and organizing of all the resources the client has. These resources - powers, abilities, strengths, and talents - are now more focused, clear and available to the client to utilize. In addition, new inner structures are developing that are well bordered as they develop. The sense of self becomes clearer - both the positive and the negative aspects. Due to the condensation process, the person is now grounded enough to handle the so-called *negative* aspect directly without having to project or repress them. She is also in a better position to act on the more positive aspects.

One of the most obvious border making changes we see is that clients spontaneously change their relationship to their parents. They stop seeing their parents as objects and start to see them as people - who happen to be their parents. As one client reported, a "satisfying distance" had developed between herself and her mother. There is separation without isolation (another difference between instroke and contraction).

Unbounded structures are those with poor instroke functioning. Since there is no centering process, nocenter can form. They are left with a weak ego, poor self development and no effective defense system which leaves them susceptible to breaking down all together.



An example is a client who had a rounded, shapeless body, and was always exhausted from doing too much. She also had a terrible fear of her supervision sessions in her training program. All three of these characteristics represent poor bordering. She was formless in her body, she was *all over the place* in her behavior due to a lack of realistic limits and she was terrified to present herself in supervisions because of poor ego development. To present herself coherently in her supervisions would be to take a position - to take form and then she would be seen.

Overbounded structures give an opposite impression, but the functional result is the same. They have overdeveloped, rigid, external armored borders that give the illusion of strength and also serve as an ego. But because these borders are peripheral, they also have no real center.

We distinguish between armored borders and healthy borders, between preventing and protecting, between instroke and contraction. Defenses are necessary, but their quality determines their functioning and as a result, the experience.

Healthy borders are flexible, plastic and pliable. They protect the integrity of the organism and are both present moment oriented and suspendable. The physicist Erich Jantsch's terms of "optimal, temporal structuralization" and "process structures" represent this view the best. The unbounded client mentioned above reported with surprise, "The more I structure, the more I flow!"

Armoring is inflexible, rigid, paralyzing. It is automatic and can be either conscious or unconscious. But in both cases, it is still out of the person's control. Armoring is always against something, never for anything.

Paradoxically, true contact - even merging - can only happen with well established borders and separation. I must experience myself as separate from you before I can contact you. Without borders, I have no experience of my self. There is no one - no self, no ego - to do the experiencing of the contact or the merger! To repeat, there is an essential difference between isolation (contraction) and separation (instroke).

We see better borders developing in all realms through the mobilization of the instroke. Physically the body begins to get a more clear shape. Segments differentiate better without segmentalization. Paradoxically, there is an increased unity to the body as the segments become more clearly defined and yet the segments flow into one another. Time and again, I have heard myself say to clients: "I see your head and neck now."

We also see other physical alterations such as changes in menstruation. The flow changes in the way of being better bordered. It comes; it is shorter in duration and more intense for that shorter time period. It doesn't go on for a week or more. It is similar for thoughts, emotional states, digestion, sleep and other physical activities.

Emotions are better organized and expressed. There is a clearing process that develops whereby the client separates his emotions from those of the others and he becomes aware of his contribution to the problem. There is less blaming of others and the feeling of being a victim. In a contact with her father, one client reported that he did not "see" her. "It didn't really hurt me as much as I thought it would, but I see how sad it is that he could not enjoy my hap-



piness. And I see that he still loves me in his own way". Another, having been rejected by a lover, states: "It's sad but o.k. I am not a bad person."

The mental realm re-organizes too and thinking and speaking become clearer and simpler. More is said with fewer words. One client suddenly said: "It's clear now; I do not want to have a child." The long struggle to decide is over.

Borders develop simply by the organism organizing its experiences and itself - the instroke defines and delineates, shapes and forms. What fascinates is that all of these border changes occurred without working with border themes. They arose spontaneously as result of the instroke mobilization and the organizing process that follows.

## Two Forms of the Instroke

Originally, I developed what I called the instroke technique to support the discharge process. I was working as a Radix teacher, and the centerpiece of Radix sessions was vegetative discharge. As mentioned, this outstroke oriented technique was difficult for more contractive, *plasmatic* structures that were blocking the instroke. Developing the instroke helped to produce full body pulsations and a more open discharge.

In this technique, the person would be lying on his back with the knees up and the feet on the floor. When the instroke of the pulsation was activated, the body would rise up and draw itself together in a ball. When it released, the body would elongate and the person would return to the lying position. This gathering/elongating movement would be repeated and intensified as the process deepened into discharge.

The gathering into a ball is the instroke phase and the elongating is the outstroke phase. This is the true pulsatory movement of the body - gathering and expanding in a rhythmic flow. It is Reich's description of the life reflex. Then, a strange thing began to happen. When this instroke came, there were times when the client did not want to come back out again in the usual rhythmic movement. He wanted to stay curled up in a ball with the knees pulled in to the chin and the arms wrapped around the legs. There was a strong emphasis on the gathering phase and a desire to remain in that state - both physically gathered and psychically drawn in. Classically, this position would be seen as a withdrawal, an avoidance or a resistance. It looked like the fetal position; in a word - contraction. But I could sense that the movement and the "holding" wasn't a contraction, so I supported it. (In *Working Energetically, Part I "Meaning and Expression"*, Energy & Character, 1988, I discuss this phenomena more fully.)

There was no following strong movement outward. The client simply relaxed after awhile and because of what had changed once they came out of their "contraction", I trusted that it was not a contraction at all. Armor had been released without a breaking through or working it through: vision cleared, memories and emotions came spontaneously, long standing problems were now viewed differently, themes that were never worked on resolved themselves. And when an emotion came, it was usually a deep, relief type of sobbing that had no content. There was no theme to this sadness and it felt good and safe to do. The sobbing would often alternate with laughter. There was always a deep sense of well being even during deep emotion experiences.



It seemed that there was a *second* instroke. What is clear now is that the first instroke movement that we had been working with was in fact a secondary process of a deeper instroke. The gathering movements, the holding in, the emotional expressions were manifestations of mobilizing a deeper instroke process that could not be directly seen.

In the late forties, Reich wrote clearly that the discharge of emotions was not either the essence of the work nor was it important if they even came up. As well, emerging memories and working through historical material was not what his work was about. The discovery of this primary instroke makes sense of Reich's statement. We now find that it is possible to work without discharge/expression, without necessarily having to work through historical material. We can now avoid the limits and risks of the classical discharge work, yet continue to work energetically. (See Working Energetically Part II)

If we look at the diagram below, we see that there is a primary energetic movement and a mechanical energetic movement. The mechanical movement is a direct reflection on the psychosomatic and behavioral level of what is happening on the more primary level. On the mechanical level, the neuro-muscular system is directly involved. Any energetic experience will be reflected in physical movements as well as in emotions. When working on this level, the client must discharge emotions, work through historical material, interpret and integrate

When the energetic experience remains below this splitting into psyche and soma, the emotional and neuromuscular states do not have to be involved. This is closer to plasmatic functioning as represented in the amoeba. At this level, there are no memories to be awakened, no emotions to be activated and no muscles to be released. This is what we see when we mobilize the primary instroke. The person usually doesn't move. They often go deeply into an altered state of consciousness - the going towards something mentioned earlier similar to an alpha or meditative state.

This is where the disturbances lie and where changes take place. What we see when the client's behavior changes is simply a reflection of the alterations on a deeper level. After the mobilization of the instroke, a fuller pulsation is possible. We then see these alterations reflected in the "higher" levels of the psyche and the soma. All the changes mentioned earlier in the body and in the self as well as the falling away of the armored responses are due to a re-arrangement on this deeper, more primary level. There is a re-forming of the core functions. As well, we see the creation of the fore mentioned *inner structures* which is a new forming of the core potential and functioning.

What is of importance to understand is that the instroke process is a deep movement inward with no visible signs to the outside observer. It is similar to watching someone meditate. Sometimes it can even be felt by others in the room. But it looks like nothing is happening. In fact, the person is going deeply in and both creating and re-creating who they are.

This brief description of the instroke and its functioning is to help to introduce the concept of the instroke. The principles outlined here find their way into our lives in many different formulations. It is my belief that the future body psychotherapy lies largely in the development of the mobilization of the instroke of the pulsation.



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