

(Most of the images have been lost in translation in 2010)

Einjährige Weiterbildung certified by Gestalt Institute of Houston in Europe
THE LIVING GESTALT JOURNEY
EIN GRUNDSTUDIUM
Eine Art zu leben und zu arbeiten
von
Dr. phil. Leland Johnson & Auguste Waldschmidt

INTRODUCTION

In einer Box: Fritz Perls Zitat

As Fritz has said in „The Gestalt Approach, „Man transcends himself only via his true nature, not through ambition and artificial goals. They lead, at best, to pride and vain glory.“ In Gestalt we can live with what is rather than what ought to be.“

In the last 50 years Gestalt has been established as a philosophy of life, a part of the mainstream of contemporary east-west psychology and a valuable contribution to the humanistic notion that people can be allowing of themselves and loving by supporting each other in the realization of their full and authentic potentials toward each other. As a philosophy, the Gestalt notion traces its beginnings to European existentialism, Eastern mysticism, and German phenomenology.

The Gestalt adventure course is your one year journey through yourself. What we will share with you are the thoughts and experiences of our own journey as „gestalt people“ and the process of our relationship with our students and our teachers who are often one and the same. In our theoretical presentations we will include both the writings of many persons who have served as an inspiration to our work with ourselves and the reflections of many people whom we have served as guides as they explored their own consciousness path. The outline of this course follows one of many routes to the understanding and application of gestalt. There is no one way. Here in this outline article we have expressed in words, drawings, quotes exercises and experiences one view. We are pleased to present the process that is „gestalt“ for us.

MANY PATHS

New methods evolve in gestalt as each new teacher develops their own style. The individual expressions and the diversity of Gestalt Teachings are the strength of Gestalt. Part of our excitement in creating this course comes from wanting to share our teaching experiences. In the last 35 years we have watched the people in our gestalt trainings programs as they realize a unique way of being with themselves and their own students. There is no one path that will speak to everyone. We have brought together many different disciplines as we have journeyed on our adventures. The principles, methods and techniques brought together here represent many different systems blended together. If you join us in this course of study we want you to use whatever is meaningful to you as an individual in your work with yourself and with others. Please consider this synthesis as an indication rather than an absolute. This course is a bridge between what is now and what is possible rather than a straight line to the last word on Gestalt. Many books have been written as the last word of Gestalt. but thankfully there will never be a last word. „Gestalt“ is a continuously changing process in the unfolding of every new moment.

OUR PEOPLE COME FROM DIFFERENT SCHOOLS

With the principles of Gestalt in this course we can guide the participants beyond a focus on cure or recovery of physical and mental symptoms to the continuous rediscovery of their true potential and the profound and simple truth of their divinely inspired consciousness. They can first experience themselves with the Gestalt Process and then teach the relevant experiences to their students, clients and „graduates“ of other schools. Our students can blend everything they have already learned in other „Schools“ into a unified whole.

CREATOR OF YOUR LIFE

Only after we have connected to our personal strength and have realized our individual resources can we then experience our capacity to transform our life. Permanent changes can occur only if we involve ourselves fully in the process of life as the active creator of new possibilities and not just as the passive recipient of wisdom from outside. As Thomas Merton says:“We have what we seek. It is there all the time, and if we give it time it will make itself known to us.“ This Gestalt Education will be created to realize the true nature of us all. We can teach the teachers and students of all the divergent schools the unity of the one.

IN DIVERSITY IS OUR STRENGTH

BLOCK I - THE OBVIOUS (color box)

„If you look right under your nose, you will find everything you ever wanted to find.“

„A Place for Human Beings,“ by Pamela Rainbow Portugal

Zitate alle gleich hervorgehoben!!

In Attention to the Obvious we start with the existential moment of the „here and now“. As we allow our awareness to focus on the emerging gestalt we become identified with that aspect of the environment which meets our needs and captures our interest. We will stay with this thought or feeling until some action finishes the gestalt. This is the uninterrupted recipe for a healthy life.

In Gestalt the person is seen as a unified energy system in which there is no difference between mind, body, intuition and spirit. We deal with the education of the whole person and the unfolding of the figure and the ground for each person. Awareness comes to the foreground as the figure. We can learn to see who we are, not as something separate from the rest of the world or from ourselves but as a continuous synthesis of all the parts of us and the others. With an experience of all of everyone and all of everything being the unitary whole, the integrative process of Gestalt begins. Crippling dualistic rigidity occurs when we are unable to allow figure and ground to emerge spontaneously unwilling to experience the permeability of our contact boundaries, and incapable of owning all parts of ourselves. With The Gestalt Awareness Continuum of seeing and hearing „what is“ we can learn to reconnect to our authentic self and our basic needs.

SELF AND NOT SELF

With the recognition of self comes the awareness of „not self“. With the appreciation of beauty comes the knowledge of ugliness. With the realization of pleasure comes a taste of pain. With the yin comes the yang. When we can flow with the changing figure-ground balance of our shifting gestalts, then we can regain our „True Identity“ connected to the eternal now and live with more and live with more grace in the duality of life.

HERE AND NOW

Our approach to help you perceive the meaning of your experience and the substance of your being is to focus on what is and not on what could, should or would be. You will learn to weave the obvious in the moment into the recognition that being in the here and now is not just possible: It is inevitable and very welcomed.

BLOCK II - THE AVOIDANCE (color box)

„The whole philosophy of nothingness is very fascinating. In our culture „nothingness“ has different meaning than it has in the Eastern religions. When we say „nothingness“ there is a void, an emptiness, something deathlike. When the Eastern person says nothingness „he calls it no -thing-ness - there are no things there. There is only process, happening.

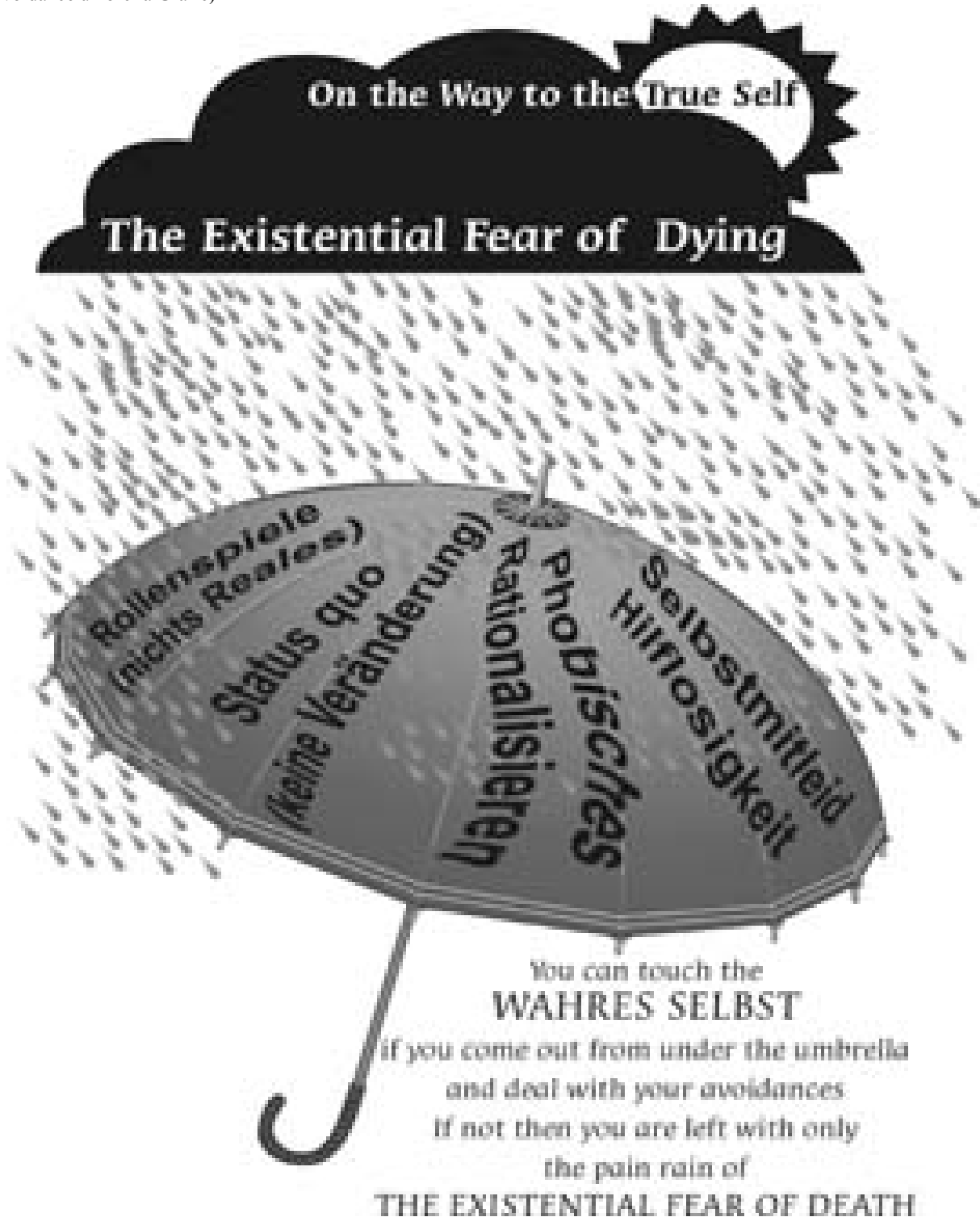
Gestalt Therapy Verbatim by Fritz Perls

Zitate alle gleich hervorgehoben!!

ITS ALL ABOUT TO AVOID
THE PAIN OF FEELING SEPARATED

Dance Around the Pain
Protection Against Feeling the Pain

(Avoidance umbrella Graphic)



Wahres Selbst im Geist
As If Status Quo

Bewusstsein
Phobic Kein Selbstbestimmt

The price of avoidance is that we do not touch our true self soul.

SELF DIRECTED CHANGE

We will carefully help the student move from crippling helplessness and confusion to the recognition of their boundless capacity to be guided by their personal truth within. With patience and equanimity we can let each student feel, once again, the courage that comes from self-directed change and the integration of your power to take charge (and let go of control) of your life.

AVOIDANCE

The student can learn to experience the void, to go through the impasse, and to come out of the trance of avoidance. Then true surrender will occur in the process of living in the here and now with selfdirected preferences guiding the everyday activities.

As Rumi says:“We are departing for the skies. Who has a mind for sightseeing?“ When you go to the top of the „Here and Now Lookout Mountain“ then you can see everything very clearly. You are then willing to give up the avoidance play and see that going into the existential pains means that you can come out on the other side a different person. Once you successfully deal with pain (especially caused by the fear of dying) then you will be free to come back to life fully engaged in living.

BLOCK III - THE FOCUS (color box)

„Get out of your own way“ The Cosmic Wit
Zitate alle gleich hervorgehoben!!

Many of us are not our own best friend! Would you spend the weekend with yourself? Do you do as others want you to do and take out the garbage every time? (Living out your Introjections and swallow whole every injunction). Do you do to yourself what you would like to do to someone else? (Bite your own ass in Retroflection). Do you simply not know who is doing what to whom? (We are all one). Do you do to others what you see them doing to you? Projections such as: It«s them who are after us we have to get them before they get us. So then we make war to have peace! . Gestalt offers a way out of our old habits and of self torture games.

SUFFERING IS NOT A „NATURAL“ PART OF LIFE.

Are you caught in the melodrama of „relationships“ or in the struggle of „survival“ or the „senselessness“ of life. Then „now“ is the time to experience the freedom that comes from the gestalt adventure into the next layer of consciousness beyond the self torture and the contracted struggle against Life Energy. You can focus on your potential power to take the chance of living your life . Joyfully!

WONDER, AFFECTION AND JOY ARE NATURAL TO LIFE

Using the methods of gestalt, as conceived by Fritz Perls, we are able to facilitate a new integration with a flexible acceptance for our shifting polarities and an experience of wonder, affection and joy on our everyday life. It is possible for us to get in touch with and bring harmony to those conflicted, fragmented parts of ourselves which drain our strengths and stifle our potential resources.

IN THE GESTALT EDUCATION

We have teachers who can stay with the participants as they transcend the illusion of their suffering and move into the center of their true self. This process requires time and practice. We will support each person with our vision and our knowing as they move past looking for a „cure“ for their suffering or an answer to their „problems“ which are caused by „forces or circumstances“ outside of themselves. Each student needs the time and space to realize that he/she has have an inherited right to celebrate our being alive! We can give up thinking of ourself as the misunderstood victim of outer influences or past humiliations.

BLOCK IV - RESPONSIBILITY - NOT OBLIGATION **(color box)**

„You yourself are the eternal energy which appears as this universe. You didn't come into this world. You came out of it, like a wave from the ocean. You are not a stranger here. On the contrary everything that happens to you, everything that you experience is your karma; your own doing.“

Cloud Hidden Whereabouts Unknown by Alan Watts

Zitate alle gleich hervorgehoben!!

Underlying all of the work in gestalt is the basic ethic of self awareness and self responsibility. Living in the „gestalt way“ means to enhance the ability to respond to each changing moment and live in our authentic consciousness so as to take full responsibility for our actions, feelings and thoughts. Try not to confuse responsibility with obligation. There is no separation between you and the universe. What happens to you and what you do are the same thing. Pay attention to what your senses

are telling you, and exercise your responsibility to live life with the full ability to respond which is our way to spell responsibility. Self support can be fun if you don't turn it into a should with the Dualism - Suppression - Projection Self Denial Formular (Wilber).

The balance of our physical emotional and spiritual energies demands that we finish up unfinished and disturbing experiences, thoughts or feelings whenever they occur or very soon after the event which left you with your basic needs unfulfilled. If we leave these situations unfinished then we will drag these disturbances into the presence. This results in distortion of the here and now as well as confusion and frustration. Our free existence requires that we deal with our fear of seeing that we are responsible for our own suffering as well as our own joy.

YOU ARE THE CREATOR

As teachers we know there is no hurry. The moment of true awareness that we teach our students through the Gestalt process, is timeless and spaceless, but we must help them to focus and clearly see how they, themselves can create their universe without looking to us for „the answer“. All is an open secret and you already know what is true. You just have to remember that you are in charge of your life.

PERSONAL STRENGTH

Only after our students have connected to their personal strength and have realized their individual resources, can we help them to experience their capacity to transform their life. Changes can occur for us personally only if we are involved in the process as the active creator of new possibilities. Transformation is going on all the time. If you are conscious of your moment to moment processes which lead to change then you will be engaged in living life responsibly. For us this means to respond to each moment with spontaneous authenticity and deliberate consideration of every one involved in the experience.

OUR COMMON RESPONSIBILITIES AND POSSIBILITIES

We work with the gestalt- awareness experiences to develop a compassionate witness with each person. Then they can come to experience their uniqueness and their power to realize their responsible possibilities to go beyond loneliness, confusion and helplessness. What this means is to give up being the victim of circumstances and family scripts which say that your parents, or the government, etc,etc, are to blame for your suffering.

The possibility of an emergent energy explosion on the planet earth is very close at hand. We are all on the edge of a new beginning here on the planet earth. Our responsibility is simple. We share a common responsibility to help each other to raise the level of our own consciousness and to create another chance for the human person.

BLOCK V- THE DIALOGUE OF POLARITIES
(color box)

POLARITY - CROSS CHART graphic (Refurbished in 2010 by Kenan Doyle Branam)



„ I’ve told you that the internal dialogue is what grounds us.“ Don Juan said.
 „The world is such and such or so and so, only because we talk to ourselves about its being such and such or so and so.“ Don Juan explained that the passageway into the world of sorcerers opens up fter the warrior has learned to shut off the internal dialogue.

„To change our idea of the world is the curx of sorcery.“ he said. And stopping the internal dialogue is the only way to accomplish it. The rest is just padding.“ Tales of Power by Carlos Castaneda

Zitate alle gleich hervorgehoben!!

In our idea of what reality is we have developed pairs of opposites which break ourself and our environment up into separated halves of right-wrong, good-bad, self-not self, voluntary- involuntary,etc. With the gestalt Polarity Cross Chart we can re-experience the unity of all aspects of life and the union of opposites. Throught the interlocking of order and chaos we can learn to float without panic. You can more easily exist in a unified world with yourself as the stream which flows, without your controlling or being controlled by your own introjections or fear of domination and control from others. You can learn to be free.

Love, anger, sadness, devotion, faith, ecstasy,etc. etc. are all part of the changing polarities that we choose from to mold our life and affirm our existence. In our gestalt work we turn attention to the phenomenology of awareness in an effort to restore the person’s contact with the emerging gestalt and the possibility to meet the meaningful and organized whole.

BECOMING WHOLE

A genuine contract between the opposing polarities within us will usually result in a lessening of crippling indecision, righteous prejudice, and internal struggles. The person whose dialogues have begun to merge at the third place of compassion can experience seemingly incompatible qualities such as love - impatience,fear - joy, all at the same time or in the same

situation without being „stuck“ at any one point. (The love within a person can be in the foreground as figure, and impatience can be as ground all at the same time). The synthesis of these polarities with the gestalt dialogue will result in a profound sense of being whole.

PRIMARY DUALISM

The notion of dualistic polarity is as old as man's ability to conceptualize. The night -day, life-death, yes-no range of possibilities and of choices are endless. Western thought has been dominated by an attempt to conquer nature by developing a fragmented split between man and nature, good and bad, right and wrong. The frozen polarities which we have created in our rigid mind-body categories have all but crippled our capacity to appreciate ourselves as a part of nature and nature as a part of us.

Polarities merge, fragments blend, choices crystalize and awareness extends into our own personal gestalt. As the fragments of our dialogue become obvious, self discovery evolves out of choosing to be ourselves and touching the excitement and hope of responsibility. „What Is“ emerges out of what we are.... alive strong, creative , real and all here with being split up the middle. We are a part of all of what we create.

WITNESS= FLEXIBILITY FROM THE THIRD POSITION

The organic process of self discovery comes only when we can live feely with the paradox of determinism and free will. The business of gestalt is to use the awareness of self in the service of letting go of the need for your „selves“ as separate from you. You can learn to shuttle in between yourself and out of yourself with ease by using the two empty pillows as a mirror for each other. As your reflections across the pillows become complementary instead of antagonistic then you can more easily appreciate the unity of the first and second positions. You can learn to watch the Primary Dualism without getting caught in either position.

BLOCK VI - DREAMS, FANTASIES & Re-Enactment (color box)

Watch old movies

„Now in Gestalt Therapy when we talk about „acting out“ we do not mean living out but „Be an actor“. We have a script in the form of a dream or a fantasy. We see that the dream (or fantasy) is a story, a drama, and we act it out again in therapy to make us more aware of

what we are , of what is available.“

Fritz Perls in Acting Out -vs Acting Through by Cooper Clements and Fritz Perls from Voices

Zitate alle gleich hervorgehoben!!

THE MIDDLE ZONE

DREAMS AND FANTASIES - PAST AND FUTURE

In Gestalt we are always returning to the present moment. The world of fantasies, reveries, memories and even anticipations of the future can all be brought into the now. We learn to shuttle back and forth between past - present - future as well as inside and outside. We blend images, imaginings, and dreams to recreate the feelings that frighten us, to relive the moments that are unfinished, and to realize the possibilities of consciousness in the here and now which is not contaminated by Old Life Skripts and Kino Reruns.

REENACTMENT OF THE OLD MOVIES AND SCRIPTS

All of time is in a spiral. What was and shall be IS NOW! In the renewal of the here and now dialogue we can relive the unfinished business from the past and follow our imagined future catastrophies to their absurd conclusion. With this technique it is possible to gain freedom from the negative repetitions of the unfinished gestalts. The underlying existential dilemmas will emerge and be resolved as they come to the surface of self responsibility. This means we can clear up some of the old messes in our life if we can begin to see how we ourselves have created the trouble.

DISOLVE FROZEN POLARITIES AND

LEARN COMPASSION FOR YOUR SHADOW SIDE

The Gestalt dialogue with the empty pillow/chair is much like Plato's idea of the cave and the shadow. We all cast ourselves on the wall from the fire in the middle of our ego. Moreno, Berne and Perls have all adapted the notion of the empty chair / pillow / stool to be used in the therapeutic quest. We can hope to balance ourselves only when we are able to bring our full awareness to the shadows we cast on the wall and to the one-sided images we have created with our one-sided view of the rightness and wrongness of our personality traits. Self depreciation - projection - retroflection games can be eliminated.

In gestalt we are creating a situation in which the person is able to explore the split within himself. This dialogue of division can also be experienced in your body as a right - left split or top-bottom half conflict. As each polarity speaks their position the possibility for resolution is increased. As the internal mental and physical dialogues are re-enacted, then we are able to let go of the unfinished business of unfulfilled daydreams and futile speculations. We are able to recognize that we have created frozen polarities as a way of maintaining the „status quo“ of what we think „should“ happen. As we are able to identify with both „Sides“ of our self, then we come to see the absurdity of splitting ourselves. „Old business“ is finished when we can explore what we have left undone in the past and what we imagine will happen in the future.

BLOCK VII - GESTALT AND YOUR BODY
(color box)

„You think you know your body, but you don't even know when you scratch your head.“
Gurdjieff in The Unknowable Gurdjieff by Margaret Anderson
Zitate alle gleich hervorgehoben!!

The thoughts of Perls and Reich have converged at several major points. The gestalt work we do always reflects the importance of body awareness as it relates to the blending of mental and physical processes. In addition to attention to movements, postures, gestures, expressions, and other „body language“ aspects we also focus on sensations, perceptions and even proprioception. We study the breathing, static postures, dynamic movements and muscle tension of the self - governing, unarmored, responsible person who is the authentic person. Reflexive integration, clear body boundaries, grounded stability, flexible balance, and orgasmic potency become the new possibility. We learn not to put a straight jacket on the natural functions of the body such as rage, joy, fear, grief, and ecstasy. „Acting through“ these feelings is not necessarily „Acting Out“

The early experiments in perception and the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts has led to the notion that we select and organize our world in such a way as to create anew each changing moment of existence. Our interests emerge out of our biological needs and our resulting actions blend with the constant flow of energy experienced both inside and outside of our body.

Anna looking at herself
Lion stretch

THE BODY IS THE DOOR TO THE SOUL

As guides for our students and clients we can learn the process of channeling the energy of the Gestalt process on three levels that are the foundation for change and growth:

**AWARENESS, TRANSFORMATION
and TRANSCENDENCE.**
(IN A BOX)

This three step process toward the Transpersonal experiences on the level of the gross, subtle and causal bodies is central to the existential explorations of Living Gestalt & Körperbewusstsein. The refined awareness of physical processes in the emerging gestalt are essential in the development of concrete manifestation of abstractions such as love, hate, helplessness and ecstasy.

THE BODY REMEMBERS EVERY THING

The Life -Death-Life Rhythm of life reflected in the breath is the key to the release of mental and physical blocks which have occurred in a persons life. Directly pinpointing to physical sensations in the body and their related thoughts and memories makes it possible for us to „finish up“ many unfinished gestalts and to realize many unfulfilled needs. The body contractions from the past find release in this process.

Gestalt iswhich has a concrete form in your body Zitat - Leland Johnson

Zitat hervorgehoben!!

**BLOCK VIII - GESTALT
AS PURE CONSCIOUSNESS AND ACTIVE MEDITATION**

„The „LIONS ROAR“ is the fearless proclamation that any state of mind, including the emotions, is a workable situation, a reminder in the practice of meditation. We realize that chaotic situations must not be rejected. Nor must we regard them as regressible, as a return to confusion. We must respect whatever happens to our state of mind. Chaos should be regarded as extremely good news.“

The Myth of Freedom by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche

In our gestalt work we can find a balance of Polarities within contemplation and action, intuition and rationalism, feeling and thought. We want to be able to move easily between the work of the gestalt group or individual session and the world of action. We have much to learn from states of meditation, moments of creative inspiration, altered states of consciousness, and mystical experiences. We practice gestalt as a form of active meditation: not to listen but simply to hear, not to look but only to see, not to think but to watch.

The contribution of eastern mysticism has cleared up much of what is obscure in the more rigidly scientific approach of early gestalt psychology. Reality has, in our gestalt work, come to represent an underlying oneness which is more understandable or intuited by oriental psychology. In gestalt we have been freed from the linear cause-effect logic of western

thinking. We integrate the teachings of both east and west, intuitive and intellectual, mystical and practical, whole and part, sensing and thinking, ordinary and ecstatic, person and culture.

Mandala - Graphic

Gestalt as the Unification of Body and Mind

As Christ said: „The Kingdom of Heaven is within you.“ We can accept that we can in Christ's words „die to be reborn“, or in the wisdom of Mohammed who says: „It is in pronouncing Thy Name that I must die and live.“ When a person has learned meditation and the mantra comes from the heart, then it is possible to unify the mind, body, intuition and spirit. This process requires trust in oneself in order to open the next door to the unknown through the sitting meditation of Za Zen in the Soto Tradition. This practice of dhyana consists of here and now principles and liberation through consciousness experiences which are very similar to much of what we do in our Gestalt practices. We explore direct pointing to concrete physical awareness and the development of spontaneous naturalness

(as Tzu-jan). Without struggling for nirvana. In Gestalt we come to learn that what is-is! And what we are searching for is Already there and the ordinary mind is always in the Tao.

BLOCK IX - EMOTIONS

„In your daily activity, especially in the moments of interest in your work, when near someone sexually desirable, during an absorbing artistic experience, while confronted by an important problem- notice how you tend to hold your breath instead of breathing more deeply as the situation biologically requires. What are you restraining by holding back your breath? Crying out? Shrieking? Running away? Punching? Vomiting? Deflation? Weeping?“

Gestalt Therapy by Perls, Hefferline, and Goodman

If we are to live fully responsive to the immediate here and now, then we must find a way to clear out unfinished situations. Whenever possible, the healthy person will clear the Body of anger, fear, dread, sadness, and impatience so as to be free to experience joy, sensuality, devotion, ecstasy and peace. The human condition is one in need of excitement - action. The emotions are the means by which we all change and grow. With our expressiveness comes rhythm, movement and the ability to feel alive...reborn into each moment.

Dancing joyfully Picture!!!

LEARN TO COMPASSIONATELY (AND WITH SOME HUMOR) WATCH THE MELODRAMA OF EMOTIONS

In our Gestalt practices we can develop a pure consciousness witness in the Third Position of the Polarity Cross Chart. In this place we can learn to watch the ebb and flow of emotions and not get caught in the suffering of repetitiously acting on our feelings without considering what polarized concepts thoughts and expectations are causing our pain. In our Gestalt experiences we integrate the witnessing of the breath, the intensity of the language, the authenticity of the movements, the clarity of the responsible and creative person, the grace of the life-death-life dance, and the courage of resolving paradoxical dualities. This process is always lively, and unique to each person as the adventurer moves through the 5 stages of resolving emotional closure:

1. Denial: „Who, me? No, I am not feeling that.“
2. Shuttling: „Well maybe yes I could feel hatred.“
3. Simultaneously: „But I can also feel love“
4. Both here & there: „Yes I can feel love and hate“
5. Neither here nor there: „Perhaps I can just become Love and also hate.“

Then there is only loving and hating. That's the truth. When the obvious becomes clear than we can see and experience that you can live your truth and still be able to balance on the tight rope of dualism. The „becoming“ of both loving and hating is a freedom that can release you from the contraction of being caught in either polarity.

Dualism - Suppression – Projection

The vital life force energy of pure mind is pushed up to the biosocial level where it becomes an idea or an emotion. Then the idea or emotion is then suppressed in yourself and projected out onto the others. This results in disowning parts of yourself and seeing other in our own image. When we are severely reacting to some negative (or positive) idea or emotion within ourselves we then push it out of ourselves and project it onto the others. This boomerang effect eventually comes back to us as self destructive sabotage or violent acts onto others. This is the disaster of emotions.

In the Living Gestalt we undo this circular pattern of projection of energy coming from the threatened ego. We do this remembering, reowning and reuniting with our projected qualities and emotions with Gestalt dialogues and awareness experiences.

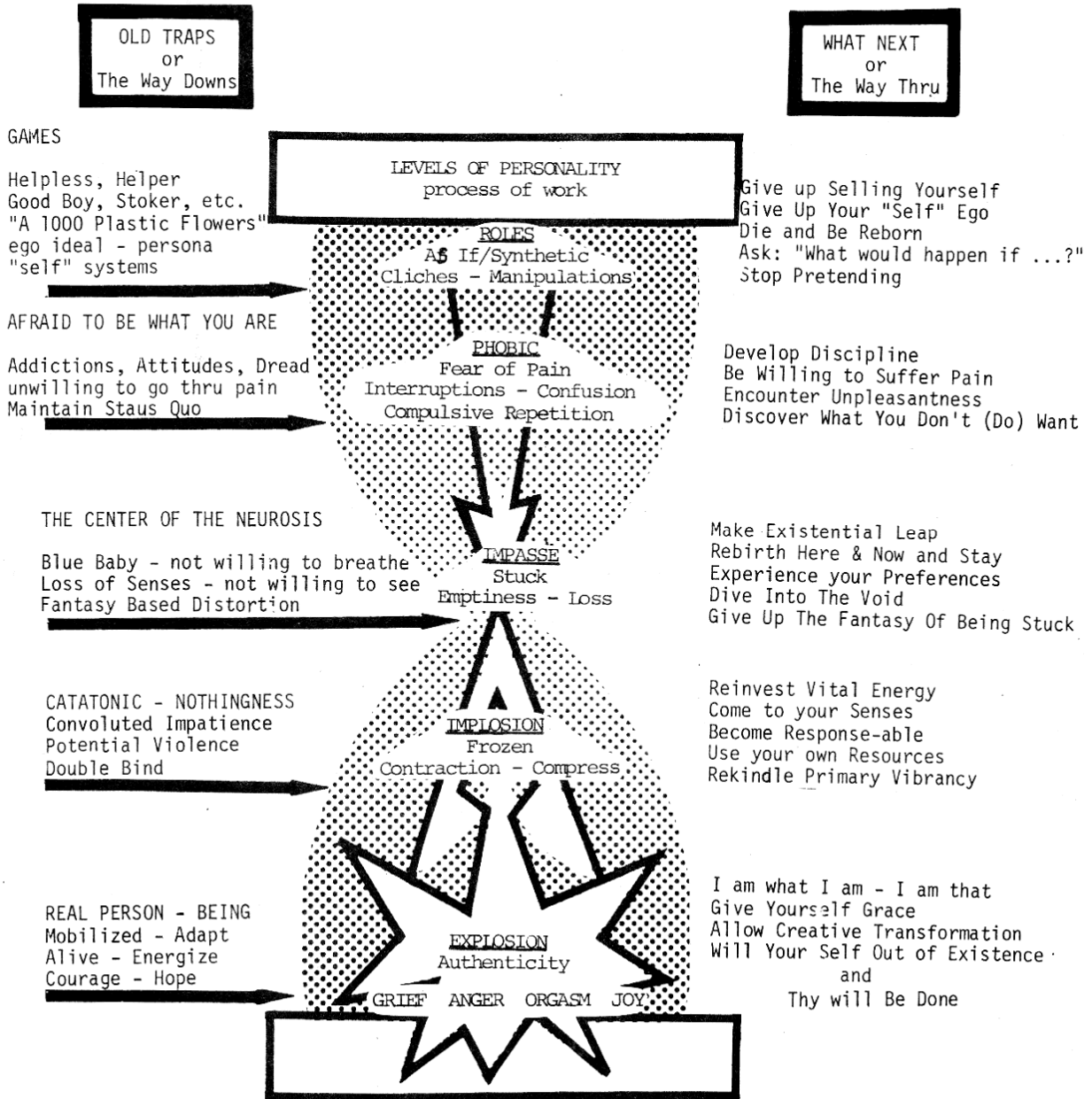
Reintegrated Emotions & Qualities create the positive energy necessary for the end of alienation and disidentification

BLOCK X - THE VOID, CONFUSION AND IMPASSE

„The human spirit however, is to be understood as that which is common to all human beings; the deepest center of our consciousness. Unless we are able to dive into this center, we cannot reexperience or relive the organic growth that led to the creation of those archetypal symbols and forms which to our intellect have merely a historical or aesthetic significance.“
Creative Meditation and Multi-Dimensional Consciousness by Lama Anagarika Govinda.

For many of our students the work in gestalt becomes a new beginning making it possible to experience the death of old patterns of being and to relive birth. Loneliness can be replaced by a recognition of our mutuality. Boredom gives way to excitement. The death layer at the impasse can be transcended if the person is willing to go through the repetition of roles and the inertia of fear to the other side and unfamiliar experiences. We don't force change in gestalt; we simply encourage our students to be aware of what is. We offer each person a glimpse of what is possible. The choice to leap through the frozen state is left up to the individual. Desperate confusion can be replaced by self-sustained change. All of the person's energies are released in a creative surge through the void.

gestalt 
INSTITUTE of HOUSTON



Illustrations by Kenan Branam
© The Gestalt Adventure by
Johnson and Merksamer

(The following graphic is an update in 2010 by Kenan Doyle Branam)

LEVELS OF PERSONALITY

process of work

Old Traps or The Way Down

GAMES:
Helpless, Helper
Good Boy/Girl
Ego ideal - persona
"self" systems

AFRAID TO BE WHAT YOU ARE:
Addictions, Attitudes, Dread,
unwilling to go through pain
Maintain status quo.

THE CENTER OF THE NEUROSIS
Blue Baby-not willing to breathe
Loss of Senses-not willing to see
Fantasy based distortion

CATATONIC - NOTHINGNESS
Convuluted impatience
Potential violence
Double bind

REAL PERSON-BEING
Mobilized-Adapt
Alive-Energise
Courage-Hope

ROLES
As if / Synthetic
Cliches-Manipulations

PHOBIC
Fear of Pain
Interruptions-confusion
Compulsive repetition

IMPASSE
Stuck
Emptiness-Loss

IMPLOSION
Frozen
Contraction-Compress

EXPLOSION
Authenticity

What's Next or The Way Through

Give up Selling Yourself
Give up Your Self Ego
Stop Pretending
Ask: "What would happen if...?
... so Die and Be Reborn

Develop discipline
Be willing to suffer pain
Encounter unpleasantness
Discover what you don't (do)
WANT

Make existential lead
Rebirth Here & Now and Stay
Experience your preferences
Dive into The Void
Give up the fantasy of being Stuck

Reinvest Vital Energy
Come to your Senses
Become response-able
Use your own resources
Rekindle primary vibrancy

I am what I am - I am that
Give yourself Grace
Allow creative transformation
Will your self out of existence
and
Thy will be done



GRIEF ANGER ORGASM JOY

Concept by Dr. Leland Johnson
Graphics by Kenan Branam
The Gestalt Institute of Houston 1970s



ROLES

Most of us start our Gestalt Journey at the roles layer of the personality. That is the biosocial Spiel we have learned to manipulate our parents, teachers, trainers, masters and finally ourself. This is the „as if“ layer. To transcend this layer it is only necessary to have the curiosity to wonder : „I wonder what would happen in my life I....“ Fill in the Blanks for yourself. Then we can begin the long journey back to our authentic self.

PHOBIC

The next step is to realize that if evolution of consciousness is to proceed then the brain game of seeking psychological explanations and symbolic interpretations of behavior and abstract problem solving is a waste of time. Then we can begin to let go of mentalizing and the consequent confusion.

IMPASSE

At this level of the „no way out point“ we can experience the strengthening of our confusion on the physical, mental and spiritual levels of senselessness and feeling lost. The only way out is to make an existential leap out of fantasy and to realize the clarity of your preferences. When this happens you have two possible doors which you can now open.

Implosion (the ultimate contraction) or
Explosion (the Ultimate Affirmation of life energy pure.)

IMPLOSION

Here you can give your pure experience a total shock with stiff and rigid frozenness of body, mind and spirit. This level of compressed energy is the last effort of your threatened ego which until now has never tasted the freedom of authentic expressiveness.

EXPLOSION

The pure expression of your authentic self finally has its day of the glory of living out the full potential of the „I am as I am“ without fear of losing control of sadness, anger, orgasm, love or joy. You are then all here, open to be seen and to be yourself.

BLOCK XI - CLOSURE AND SELF DISCOVERY

„You can't improve on your own functioning you can only interfere with it distort, and disguise it. When you really get in touch with your own experiencing you will find that change takes place by itself, without your effort or planning. With full awareness you can let happen whatever wants to happen, with confidence that it will work out well. You can learn to let go and live and flow with your experiencing and happening instead of frustration yourself with demands to be different.

Awareness by John Stevens.

In gestalt we are not so much interested in cure or recovery as we are involved in the continue rediscovery of our true potential. We can develop, if we learn through hope and courage, the experience that there is a possibility for living life fully, completely aware.

As you take your own gestalt adventure you may find something of yourself previously unknown or unrealized. You may uncover yourself in the transformation of mind, body and spirit which you yourself will allow. Clarity and integration come with the assimilation of all parts of you.

The Way Home Chart Grafic

The way home to your true self is a wandering path through forgetting your self to remembering yourself. Through thinking you know yourself to the part of yourself which up to now has been unknown. With Gestalt awareness and compassionately witnessing yourself you can „walk the crooked mile“ home. Coming out of the Box of the known and to risk the journey into the unknown can be a major breakthrough in your rigidly, programmed doing, thinking and feeling habits which are guided by your fragile ego. When you reach the „Wissen“ layer of your inner truth then you will be all the way home.

In the Gestalt Education our students will be ready to move from the practices of transformation to a clear transcendence, free of self-conscious seeing and ego-power trips. As Zenrin says: „if you do not get it from yourself, where will you go for it?“ (When you are 40+ years old)

The faculty of the INTEGRA Interdisciplinary Institute can go back and forth between the mountain and the valley to be with others and help them listen to their own unique truth. The truth that is beyond dualities.

BLOCK XII - TRANCE ZEN DANCE

„If each one of us loved ten persons, saw their beauty as human beings just the way they are, without wanting to change them, we could form a network of love big and strong enough to hold everyone in the world.“

A place for Human Beings by Pamela Portugal

Our journey would be joyful if all people were able to transcend their separateness through love of themselves and each other. This message has filtered through our collective consciousness. We as individuals are the center of the circle through which the energy of the whole universe is completed. Love is a continuum from the spiritual to the material. Whenever we allow ourselves to experience the divine consciousness within, then the emerging gestalt is one of honesty and delight. Profound and simple truth is all an your conscious awareness.

Zen Circle

THE WAY OF ZEN & GESTALT

Our students must have, under our guidance, an opportunity to experience complete moments of creative inspiration, altered states of consciousness and even mystical experiences. We will help them move more easily through these levels of listening, watching and remembering their true self.

BEYOND TECHNIQUES GESTALT A WAY OF LIFE

We will guide our students beyond the techniques and teachings of any „one“ school to the harmony of their inner self.

Personal Freedom is A very Individualized Process of Gestalt Awareness

The combination of interdisciplinary practices which we can teach, will be used by each student in a different way. We expect that they will take what we teach in techniques and go beyond the form to their personal version of liberation.

BECOMING YOUR OWN MASTER

The Gestalt work in the Einzeltraining-Session with our students clearly shows that each person can be helped to come to an awareness of their own unique personal power to be their own master and their own teacher.

GESTALT EDUCATION

In these seminars we will integrate the teaching of both, east and west. The student is seen as a unified energy-system in which there is no difference between mind - body - intuition - spirit. We will create an „Education of The Whole Person“. There is not just one path that leads to this realization. We will blend the theories, principles, methods and techniques of many „systems“ to create a learning environment for training teachers, leaders, therapists, and counselors who are inspired to create a new life of conscious living on the planet. To find a bridge between what is now and what is possible on the next level of enlightened explorations into human consciousness and planetary harmony.

**On the Way to the True Self
or
The Existential Fear of Dying**

**When You Stay Under the
Avoidance Umbrella
then
Your miss the Chance to
Experience Your True Nature
with
Pure Consciousness
and then touch to the
WAHRES SELBST
if you don't come
out from under the umbrella
then you are left with only**

THE EXISTENTIAL FEAR OF DEATH