

Introduction to Holistic Movement Therapy and the “Animal Energetic Gateways” method

Teachings from the Wild

My personal story of co –creating the method

A short while after I moved from Israel to the Netherlands I have made an intuitive and spontaneous contact with animal energies and received bodily teachings from the Wild. My personal state at that time was shaky. I felt alone, unstable and insecure. I had left a world behind me that was familiar, a place that has defined much of who I was. I was working daily in the studio on a solo performance “ Labyrinth”, exploring and investigating my body, my mind and my ideas about life. It has been an intense work that involved the whole of me. At a certain point my body started moving in a way that was different from the way that I had been used to as a dancer. I felt guided to stay in certain positions, to organize my body in a different way and stay in tune with the images that emerged from nowhere to my mind. At that time I knew little about energy, so I surrendered to this magical process with the curiosity of an artist.

My receptivity and ability to feel my body while moving was well developed at that time. Actually, it would be more accurate to say that while moving I became more receptive to my feelings. Movement has always been a way to deepen the contact with myself, so I have found it natural to feel new things through motions.

The Land Turtle, The Bear, the Buffalo and the Cat where the first animals that honored me with their presence and teachings.

I have shared this new information with my students as soon as I could retrieve the feelings, images and motions. Every body could make contact with the material. Most of the students have felt the energy of the Bear while moving in the specific motions of that animal. Short after, I was inspired to teach new animal motions also without the personal introduction to me alone in the studio. To my great surprise and fascination, my students have found this whole animal dance quite confronting, but natural. This intuitive process has been going on since then, and I have dedicated a lot of my time and capacities to deepen my contact and understanding of the animal wisdom through movement. Creating and developing the method has always been based on an open dialogue and cooperation between intelligence: the intelligence of my body and that of the animals.

This work has changed me in a profound and blissful way. My great honor is to share the teachings of the Wild with others, so they could also make a more conscious contact with their inner wisdom and power.

Movement & Health.

Our body is the conscious instrument through which we contact the world around us as well as the world within us.

We live in a time that requires from each individual to take responsibility for her own well being and health. Health can be understood as the natural ability of the body – mind to balance itself and respond efficiently to impulses from within and without. For many of us, the growing awareness of the connectedness of body, mind and spirit to the greater whole, to life in its various manifestations, contributes to the understanding that we are constantly interacting and influencing each other and the environment. This exchange is the nature, mystery and beauty of life itself and touches all aspect of our reality. Our body is the conscious instrument through which we contact the world around us as well as the world within us.

The body is a multidimensional physical manifestation of all other levels. When the body is acknowledged for what it truly is, an intelligent, dynamic and complex organism with a unique behavior that differs from individual to individual, we develop respect to our own bodies and to life itself. We get *involved* directly with our health and *evolve* further to benefit more joyful bodily experiences. **Only personal responsibility for the body and an open dialogue with it will result in full cooperation of the entire organism. It will than release the innate capacity of its intelligence for regeneration and improved health.** Taking responsibility for your own health is something active, it is an inner motion towards wholeness. A body that is acknowledged as intelligent, is respected and is aware of itself, will respond and serve you in greater efficiency and effectiveness. Lack of energy, weakness and susceptibility to illness are signs that the body is depleted from an essential substance, your essence energy or in other words, your consciousness. Consciousness is energy, and an acknowledged body is infused with energy - awareness, nourished to its optimum and can communicate and fulfil its role. It can react instantly to impulses from within and without, balance and heal itself automatically. It is vitalized, full of itself and flowing. This is a content, happy body that joyfully and actively dances through life. It is fully awakened and alive. It is then your intimate partner, sharing with you your soul's vastness and unlimited potential. And that's what health is all about.

The Animal Energetic Gateways is a creative, experiential and structured method. It offers a way to be directly involved with yourself, learn about yourself through an intimate friendship with your body.

In our personal search and journey towards balance and health working with the method, we are challenged and inspired to shift the focus from weakness and deficiency to power and support. We move towards a wider awareness that includes recognition of innate life sustaining and health promoting forces that are available for everybody and are to be found elsewhere but in the body itself.

We all have these power sources within us, but they need our presence and bodily awareness to be activated to the optimum. No body else can make this contact, of the person to his body, but the very individual that inhabits it.

So we can see that the way to benefit from the life sustaining treasure we all have, we need to become more aware and connected to the body itself, to its physical aspect which is a mirror and a podium to all other levels. Movement is one way to enhance this contact of the body to it – Self.

Body language - behavior and organization

Each body is different from the other and behaves in a unique way. Behavior is an expression of organization, of intelligence. Body language is the expression of the body intelligence of an individual. Body posture, mobility, suppleness, strength, tension, communication, tempo, rotation, grounding, focus, direction, resistance, coordination, balance, expansion and flow are some of characteristics of body language. The ways we breath, move and talk are reflections of our state on physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels. Through movement we express the conscious and unconscious energy patterns, or organizations, that compose the very unique individual we are

From birth to adulthood and death, the body is our tool for exploring the world.

When we are brought up in a way that supports the natural flow of our expression, we experience basic trust and joy in every thing we do. We feel free to feel, are able to integrate our feelings and thoughts in our daily life, communicate inwards as outwards in an open, honest and direct way. We feel balanced. For many of the people who are seeking professional help, regular as alternative, the reality has been different, with various gradations. One seeks help when one feels not in balance, physically or emotionally. The body is expressing its personal story and needs through signals. These signals carry the information about the nature of the processes going on. The body speaks through its behavior, its organization that is less functional or even self-destructive.

Can we influence or teach the body another language for improved health? Can we learn to move in a way that will influence also the emotional, mental and spiritual levels? Can we learn movements that will influence our entire approach towards ourselves and life? Can we learn to listen to and talk the language of our innate life enhancing forces?

I believe we can.

Like any other language, also our body language has its own history, structure and rules. Learning a new language requires an open and flexible mind, regular practice and patience. In this case the process is

experiential and involves our entire being, our emotions, thoughts, and beliefs as our muscles and bones.

Usually we move without paying too much attention to our body language. Expanded awareness of the body, together with clear guidance concerning the integration of new kind of information will teach the body to respond to impulses with greater availability and freedom.

When given the opportunity, the body will balance and heal itself. The " Animal Energetic Gateways " method offers such an opportunity. The method offers guidance and stimulus for the body to explore and express itself. **In away that is familiar to us from babyhood, through playful and creative processes, we allow the body to create naturally new challenges for experiencing itself and the surrounding.**

This new experience is based upon a wider panoramic view, contact and understanding of the sources of our behavior. Our reactions and responds to life's challenges are based on and have been formed by our past experiences. When we are open for change, growth and adulthood, we become responsible and take charge of our life. The Animal Energetic Gateways method will facilitate gentle means for reconstructing and reprogramming our bodies and psyches.

Working regularly on energetic level with images from nature enables us to experience our motions, sounds and eventually thoughts and feelings in a non attached manner. We learn to credit an experience, a situation, a person and ourselves for what we are, pure energy.

Energy flows, never stays the same, and we learn to free ourselves from being strongly identified with one aspect of ourselves, may it be the weak, sick, strong or confused aspect. We open ourselves even more to new possibilities, qualities and potential. We expand and live with more joy and trust in our inner wisdom and power, we live life more fully.

Nature as a teacher

Robert Bly in his beautiful book " Iron John" writes:

" To receive initiation truly means to expand sideways into the glory of oaks, mountains, glaciers, horses, lions, grasses and waterfalls. We need wilderness and extravagance.

Whatever shuts a human being away from the waterfall and the Tiger, will kill him.

The Wild Man is the door to the wilderness in nature, or nature itself. He encourages to trust in what is below, the lower half of our body, the genitals, legs... inadequacies, the animal ancestors, the earth itself...to follow our desires, and not only sexually but also to follow our desire to the infinite."

The source of all creative expressions in the universe is energy. Energy is consciousness, intelligence and a creative force.

We are all composed of energy, interact with it and affect it at all times. This essence energy and the teachings and gifts it carries, are available for us in many forms. We can choose to consciously experience different aspects of it and through this conscious experience gain more insight into ourselves.

Nature is an aspect of this Intelligence. There we find a constant and dynamic movement towards balance - a capacity for self - healing and regeneration. We can also name it the moving force of evolution, for improvement and fuller existence. We are an integral part of nature, and so, consciously attuning to its principles and energies can intensify our personal experience of balance, harmony and well being.

The "Animal energetic Gateways" method is basically an energetic work.

We learn to tune into cosmic and planetary power sources, to nature, to the elements, animals and plants. Through this contact we facilitate and empower our personal system, which is linked to the cosmic system, to open itself to the power sources within it and use them upon intent.

" Animal Energetic Gateways" are physical and vocal expressions of images from nature and of our human inner landscapes as part of nature. These are specific and defined body images in motion which we can recognize and experience intuitively while shifting into an open and receptive state of being. They are an invitation to explore different energy patterns within ourselves, conscious and unconscious voices, qualities, personalities or selves. The summon up of these patterns is our personal body language. Each " Energetic Gateway " carries universal knowledge and multidimensional messages about our inner attitudes towards ourselves, which determine our relationship with all around us. Images in motion from wildlife and animals create a gateway, an access into new area, territory or dimension within ourselves. The gate itself has two poles. The one stands for our shadow or weakness and second stands for a power source. Together they enable the process of getting in touch with and becoming more aware of the energy that is not in balance. A path, a way, follows the gateway. This path offers clear and safe guidance about how to deal and integrate the experiences we have been going through. With our bodies, spirit and mind we are moving towards wholeness.

Animals: Why and how?

Our contact with animals is basic, instinctual and for a great deal unconscious.

Animals share with us this planet, they have been evolving parallel to our evolvment, and in many cases much earlier. They appear in our dreams, mythology, and religious teachings about Gods, Goddesses, evil and divine forces, art and visions. Many animals have become an archetype, a symbol for an aspect of the human psyche. Wherever we live on planet earth, differences of land, language, tradition or culture, we are all equally imprinted with animal's images and symbolism. We

can all recognize animals and have a certain feeling or thought about them. We may like a certain animal or fear it, be curious, fascinated or totally indifferent, in any way, there is a contact that might not always be understood by us, but nevertheless, it is there.

Our contact with animals is not mental, but instinctual, intuitive and energetic. Animals have a direct bodily impression on us. Enjoying or being terrified from a tiger is not a mental process but physical and emotional first. It is an intimate and immediate experience, an interaction that transcends logic.

Children like animals in general. They have a natural empathy and contact with animals, they like to play or observe animals in the zoo or in cartoons.

Children are more open to experience animals as an aspect of themselves, it is natural for them to identify with them. **Our inner children can easily retrieve the contact with animals, energetically.**

I am working with people from different cultures, ages or sex; they all know what a bear feels like. Even most of us who have seen a real bear only in the zoo or in a nature film. So the contact of human and animals is ancient, basic and profound. It is universal and totally available for us.

Working with animal energies has another important advantage. It is a playful process that is based upon imagination, experimentation and the innocent aspect that lies in each of us. Resistance is greatly reduced when we talk about animals. They are not human beings, we don't have long life-hidden agendas with them, They are more neutral to identify with. Most of the people are receptive to this kind of work, find it funny, crazy and freeing. It unleashes tremendous amount of energy that otherwise might be directed to intellectualize the process of feeling.

Within the system of the "Animal Energetic Gateways", each animal embodies a certain energy or quality. We could see them as energetic nutritional substances, essences that are necessary for optimal growth, physically, emotionally and mentally. Each of these "energy substances" is essential and has a specific role within the body's system. When we miss a certain substance or produce it too much our health and growth is diminished. We experience imbalance and disorder on different levels. This imbalance can appear as emotional or mental weakness that is reflected physically in our body language.

Some examples of animal essences:

The Dog essence is letting go of control.

The Bear essence is self-confidence and stability.

The cat essence is softness towards oneself.

The Buffalo essence is firmness.

The Ram essence is determination.

Each one of the 36 Animal Energetic Gateways tune into a specific essence and help us assimilate it and extract the most of its values for our personal

well being. When balance is restored the body can produce this essence itself in the right dosage, similarly to the way hormones are produced.

Energetic drawings

Energetic drawings are mandalas that contain the energy patterns that constitute an Energetic Gateway. Each one of the 36 E.G.W. has a specific way of relating to space and energy movement within and around the body. The geometry depicted by the drawing can help us to attune into its specific qualities by looking at it, coloring it or contemplating upon the reactions it invokes. In short, the drawing carries the entire knowledge or wisdom of that Gateway.

As mandalas, a symbol for the human psyche, the drawings can help us tune inwards and center. It facilitates an ordering mean that can help us to balance and explore our own unconscious minds.

I have been drawing those geometric patterns as a result of many years of research. There was a need to gather and concentrate the richness and variety of the Gateways.

My own study of sacred geometry has given me the tools to create them.