

Philophonetics Counselling *what is it, what is it for?* by Yehuda Tagar

Philophonetics-Counselling is the most recently created modality of therapy based on Anthroposophy to be presented at the Melbourne Therapy Centre, where it has been practiced since 1991. It has been formulated out of research in the fields of theatre, Humanistic Psychology and Psychosomy (Anthroposophically based psychology) starting in the early '80's. The name Philophonetics was coined in 1986, meaning literally 'Love of Sounds' and broadly 'Conscious relationship to one's experience through Sensing, Movement, Visualisations and the Sounds of human speech'.

What it means practically is a method of Exploration, Expression and Transformation of inner experiences which combines Counselling, Artistic Expression, Body Work Self-Observations. In all parts of the therapeutic process the client is completely in charge of it, being the sole source of information, observation and choices. The role of the therapist is to provide a range of useful possibilities, points of view, exercises and practical tools for achieving goals set up by the client. A skilled, sympathetic and positive listening and understanding is the main tool the Philophonetics-Counselling work.

Anthroposophy, on whose philosophical and scientific ground Philophonetics is based, claims that a profound purpose and meaning underlies the inner and outer life of every individual, and that fundamentally each one of us is potentially equipped to deal with and make use of the challenges and the opportunities presented on one's journey.

Philophonetics-Counselling puts these promises to the practical test. Based on our experience of what could be achieved with the help of this method we claim that -

- A) everyone is potentially capable of Knowing what is happening within one's body and soul,
- B) everyone is potentially as strong as the strength of one's experiences, good and bad, having the potential power to take charge of one's life, and
- C) that everyone is potentially richly endowed with every quality one truly needs for one's well being.

These claims we put to the practical test in every Philophonetics-Counselling session, with very good results.

How do we do it?

Suppose you suffer from extreme stress because of accumulative pressures from work, family life, ill health and troubling negative patterns of thoughts and anxieties. As things get worse, you no

longer know which in all of these factors is a cause of which, and which of them are the effects. It is all too much, your state of health is deteriorating, and the doctor suggests that you try what Philophonetics-Counselling do for you.

Through a relaxed, warm and non-threatening skilled conversation the broad picture of your situation is being unravelled, laid out in front of you, non-judgementally observed, included and listened to. Very often this is the first time you gave yourself a special hour during which the full load of what occupies your mind, heart, gut and body can be fully shared and sympathetically listened to - even by yourself, let alone by a sympathetic friend. For that is what a counsellor is: a sympathetic, objective, supportive professional friend, who, for a limited time, is fully focused on *you*, demanding nothing for him/herself. That, by itself, is a great release, relief, deepening, breathing and perspective-creating.

Following the creation of the common picture between you and the counsellor, you will be ceremoniously invited to make a "wish" regarding the displayed content in sight. Your wishes could include the desire to be able to get rid of this wretched head ache you get in the middle of the day, the neck and shoulder tightness you get at the end of it, the negative thoughts you are helplessly pestered by on your way to and from work, the tension and mistrust which prevail between you and your office staff, the un-expressed anger with your workers, the strange disappearance of joy from your marriage, the nasty confrontations with your children and the general depletion of energy in recent time.

Most of the above have their source and origin not in the area of thought and words and clear pictures in front of you, but rather in the unconscious regions of your emotional, bodily and habitual levels of existence, to which, normally you have no direct access. That is the limitation of verbal communication: it can embrace and deal with what is in front of us, not with what is "behind" us, so to speak.

But through the instrumentality of Sensation, with which every emotional experience can be traced to its origin through the traces it leaves in the body, and through the instrumentalities of Gesture and movement which can directly express the sensations - that dimension can become observable and accessible to treatment.

A sensation of headache, shoulder tightness, knotted stomach, pained neck - could all be sensed, expressed through the clenching of the fists and the contorting of the rest of the body, and, with the help of the breathing held and then released with sounds (GGah, Pshh, Dah, Bah, FFah) can be largely released. Being released - the origin of these tensions can be traced through the range of imaginative pictures which such a release will make possible. And then the exploration, encounter and release can move into the deeper layers, the deeper patterns of response which regularly cause the tensions.

Negative thoughts can be traced to either their emotional or bodily origin. Again, sensation, gesture and visualisation will reveal what words and mental reflection will conceal. An inner pool of fear from future which is not being paid attention to and checked logically can revenge for this lack of attention by "invading" the mind from "behind" so to speak. The observation of the bodily processes accompanying the mental ones could easily reveal these connections, rendering them accessible for care and treatment by oneself.

Communication difficulties with colleagues, family members and friends including mistrust, un-released tension, underlying anger, hostility and non-constructive criticism could be healed when one learns to take responsibility for one's own part of the communication equation. In most cases, a block of communication outside of

oneself is an unconscious reflection of a block of communication within one's own mind-emotion-body connections. People tend to remind us of other people, and the closer they get to us and the more our well being depends on them - the more likely they are to trigger in us a whole range of defensive patterns of behaviour which we have acquired during earlier phases of our life. One's inner relationship to one's parents in childhood, to one's early teachers and peers could be easily projected into present relationship, destroying their true potential. Once becoming aware of what my colleague, wife or boss has triggered within me, I can take care of an inner wound or anxiety in my privacy, cease to project my defences into the outside, and clear the space for what I consciously choose to fill it with.

Again, the shift from focusing on the external trigger into focusing on the internal pattern require more than mental reflection and words. The bodily sensation can reveal the emotional sources of behaviour, accessing them to consciousness and to care. Sensing, Movement, Sounds, Visualisations, the languages of the Inside story are the tools for that task.

Exhaustion, depletion, fatigue, unexplained constant tiredness - could all be traced to the particular inner blocks which prevent the flow of life health-bearing energy in the body and in the soul. By entering in sensation and in movement into the inner experience of fatigue and exhaustion - that which drags me down, weighing on me, blocks me and chokes me can be discovered. More than not, the origin of bodily weakness are in the emotional arena, in fears, rages, feelings not released and not expressed even to oneself. Taking responsibility for one's inner life can result in rapid changes in one's bodily well being, even down to the strengthening on one's immune system with all its ramifications.

Migraine could be traced back to an inability to digest emotional pains and struggles, especially regarding close people; Chronic Fatigue Syndrome could be traced back to self-neglect; panic attacks, confusion interpersonal blocks, shallow breathing, circulatory problems and chronic pains - could be traced back to un-released early abuses, sexual, physical and emotional, to un-healthy dynamics of parental treatment, to wounds and scars from a neglected past. A whole range of addictions, both behavioural and substance-related could be traced back to the real, hidden, blocked natural needs, which have not and are not being answered.

All these could be made observable, accessible and capable of release, strengthening, transformation and healing with Philophonetics range of practical tools. All the exercises which are tailor-made during the sessions - could be adopted for self use at home, for ever. A session lasts between 75 to 90 minutes. On average, people need to see a Philophonetics-Counsellor Practitioner for about six sessions for the recovery from a particular set of issues. The length of the period required depends largely on the willingness and the ability of the client to practice exercises and observations at home.

An on-going group of self-help with Philophonetics will start in the beginning of July for a period of 8 weeks on Friday mornings at the centre. Issues will cover all that was mentioned in this article, mainly stress relief, recovery from fatigue, creation of inner safety and self and interpersonal communication skills. Enrolments can be made through the Centre.

Once a year we take a new intake of students to the Foundation Year in Philophonetics, Anthroposophy and the Arts, which is designed to equip people for a whole range of skills of personal development, artistic expression and communication. The Foundation Year is also a pre-requisite for the further two years of training towards the diploma of Philophonetics-Counselling

Practitioner. Future courses in Philophonetics-Performing for Drama and Music and for Philophonetics in Social Development will be based on the same Foundation Year.

For more details on courses, talks and workshops contact the Persephone College of Philophonetics 22 Kardinia Crescent, Ringwood VIC 3134, ph. 03-9879 9370.

*Philophonetics Self-Care Group
A new Philophonetics-Counseling on-going group with Yehuda Tagar*

An on-going group of self-help with Philophonetics will start in the beginning of July for a period of 8 weeks on Friday mornings at the centre. Issues will cover all that was mentioned in the article on Philophonetics-Counselling in this issue, mainly stress relief, recovery from fatigue, creation of inner safety and self and interpersonal communication skills. Basic Philophonetics self-care skills will be gradually introduced and acquired for self use at any time. For more details and enrollment contact the Therapy Centre on 03-9876 3011, or Yehuda on 03-9879 9370. Enrollment through the Centre.

Notes and Impressions

MTC Melbourne Therapy Centre Association Annual General Meeting 27th May 1995

The meeting, held on a wintry Saturday in May, was opened with beautiful lyre music played by Dorothy and Murray Wright. Margaret Piper read Maxine Hewitt's poem which has always been a part of these meetings. It was through Maxine's experience with cancer and her strong desire for appropriate therapy and care in Australia, based on anthroposophy, that initiated the work of the Centre.

The meeting heard highlights from the various reports of the President, Treasurer, Doctor, Nurse and the Therapists. Although small in number, those present were able to participate informally in this part of the meeting. This was brought about by a sharing and interaction through the various comments and questions throughout the reports.

It is worth noting that the educational side of the Centre's activities continues to grow through the monthly lecture series, workshops and special lectures. Participation in healthy life-style exhibitions at Ringwood and the Melbourne Exhibition Building was also reported. The Centre has recently taken a step to become more active in its public relations and we are very pleased that Ian Cuming is working in this role.

By the conclusion of the meeting, those present were able to remark on the quality of warmth and enthusiasm that progressively developed as the work was reported and questions and comments revealed realities of the work for everyone. This in turn seemed to spark a desire to take various items further. Throughout there was an earnest plea for other people to assist the rather stretched core of workers in specific ways. These are;

- in producing a Newsletter on a regular basis
- keeping the association membership list current