

WHAT IS PESSO BOYDEN SYSTEM PSYCHOMOTOR (PBSP)?

Overview

The Pesso Boyden system of psychotherapy is a gentle and powerful process that can help to unblock limiting patterns that have their origins in our internalised experiences of the past. The method is very structured, it follows the client and is very respectful. People can make profound changes and grasp major insights. As a body based psychotherapy, PBSP connects with how our body 'keeps the score' and how our perception is inextricably linked with our memory. As Al Pesso explained "Present consciousness is a tapestry woven of the threads of memory".

The PBSP process provides symbolic new memories (called antidotes) to redress our deficits of the past. This clears the way for us to develop our true potential and become who we truly are. Al called it 'the endless act of becoming'.

Key goals of PBSP

To gain clarity about confused and distorted present day relationships.

To clearly and satisfyingly reveal and express symptom-making unprocessed emotion.

To symbolically attend to unmet needs (with appropriately named role players if in a group context) when clients are emotionally and cognitively connected to earlier levels of consciousness.

That the new memory will help to transform our pain into pleasure, our frustration into satisfaction, our despair into meaning and our alienation into connectedness.

The five life tasks - We need to:

Satisfy our basic maturational needs (see below).

Integrate and unify all our polarities (the parts we disconnect). To take ownership of all aspects of ourselves.

Develop consciousness and language, which offers us the facility to make meaning in our lives.

Develop the 'Pilot' or executive choice-making part. (Develop 'The President of the United States of Consciousness').

Realise our unique potentiality (Bear fruit. Make our contribution to the unfolding of the cosmos)

The five basic maturational needs

Place - To receive a welcome to the world and then have a place in our caregivers' hearts.

Nurture - To be appropriately fed and then to have our self esteem nourished.

Support - To be appropriately physically supported and then to have our efforts affirmed.

Protection - To be reliably shielded and then to have our rights defended.

Limits - To experience appropriate, lovingly applied boundaries and to have our life energy welcomed.

Note that these needs are optimally met first physically, then symbolically in benign dependence, at the right age and in the right kinship relationship. We are then able to appropriately internalise the process and meet our own needs without rejecting the expectation of help from others.

Unmet needs

The pressure of unmet needs influences and distorts present day perception and behaviour, causing us to selectively attend to events and figures in the present that APPEAR to promise satisfaction of those basic needs.

Where our basic needs have not been met by the right people at the right age, then we seek satisfaction indirectly and unconsciously with others - friends, teachers, employers, ministers, marriage partners - potentially distorting and overloading those relationships.

More about the 'Pilot'

This is the conscious, coordinating, executive, and choice-making aspect of the self that selects and combines elements of the soul and ego through which the self is expressed at a given moment in time and space.

The pilot is at the apex of consciousness where the highest level of integration takes place.

Categories of memory

There are three categories of memory which affect us.

Memory of deficits: When our maturational needs have not been met at the right age and in the right kinship relationship. In other words, our 'genetic expectation' has not been satisfyingly counter-shaped.

Memory of trauma: Traumatic events awaken uncontrollable survival mechanisms which include Fight (unbridled aggression), Flight (escape), Freeze (become invisible) and Appease. In appeasement there appears to be a powerful but unconscious impulse to provide rewards and pleasure to the attacker (including unbridled sexuality) as one of the strategies for survival.

Memory of filling 'holes-in-roles' which are gaps in the family (or cultural) network that we unconsciously step in to. As children who have not yet had all our maturational needs met we may automatically and unconsciously fill 'holes-in-roles' when we hear family or cultural stories of injustice. One consequence is that we become the 'one and only' answer to these problems. If we are the 'only' we become omnipotent and god-like for then there is no 'other', i.e., no counter-shaper who can influence us.

The effect of filling 'holes in roles' - Systemic Defences

Filling holes-in-roles has the unexpected and startling consequence of loosening the controls over those forces which are frightening and dangerous in their unlimited form.

So our psyches, in their systemic-attempts to hold off emotional and physical upheavals that might result in such disasters, provide us with a number of different, automatic interventions to keep things under control. These are:

Depression: turn way down the thermostat of all energy expressions

Dissociation: turn off the connection to the self so as not to be in touch with what is interiorly stirring

Retroflection: Feeling pursued by external dark forces that are really our own fears turned against us (e.g. self harm).

Avoidance of Completions and Closures: Turn off the capacity to complete even simply ordinary closures.

Inability, or reduced ability, to receive from others and take in.

More resources

Online

www.pessoboyden.co.uk - A UK based web site about PBSP

www.pessoboydenuk.org - Another UK based web site about PBSP

www.pessoboydentraininguk.com - UK main PBSP training web site

www.pbsp.com - American web site with useful articles and videos

www.therapyandcounselling.co.uk - Look for stuff on PBSP.

www.talk-works.co.uk - Official Talk-Works web site with useful articles and resources.

Books

'Moving Psychotherapy: Theory and Applications of Pessso System Psychomotor Therapy' by Al Pessso and J Crandell.

'Secrets, Lies, Betrayals: The Body/Mind Connection. How the Body Holds the Secrets of a Life, and How to Unlock Them' by Maggie Scarf.

'Landscapes of the Heart - The working world of a sex and relationship therapist' by Juliet Grayson

'Working with traumatic memories to heal adults with unresolved childhood trauma' by Petra Winette and J Baylin

Adapted from work by Juliet Grayson by Tom Corbishley