

## **ON TAKING BODY PSYCHOTHERAPY INTO CORPORATE CULTURE [PART 2]**

A "Trends" Interview With Albert Pessó By Jan Dragin  
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***Due at least in part to managed care, many psychotherapists in recent years have attempted to transfer their skills into the world of business consulting. What is the potential for body psychotherapy in the corporate world?***

**We decided to talk to someone who has been bringing "BP to B" for a long time. In this edition of "Trends" we bring you the second part of a talk with Al Pessó, co-founder with Diane Boyden-Pessó, of Pessó Boyden System Psychochomotor (PBSP).**

### **NL: What about the body psychotherapy aspect?**

AP: I think holistically. Sure we use the body, reading the body in Microtracking and body expression-- and body experience when we do the reconstructions and make new memory. You want to have touch and movement, because that fortifies the experience so much more. Otherwise the experience is mostly verbal and in the head.

And here we come to a different spot: You're so much safer doing body-oriented work in a group setting. When you do touch and movement in a one-on-one setting, twenty percent of the time or so, the person can get confused about the touch and sexualize it. This is the hot topic in a psychotherapeutic setting.

There is a lot of attention now to sexual exploitation in the workplace. Lines are drawn so sharply in the workplace.

So, in the use of touch, in a group can be about the use of limits. So many high powered executives have problems with limits. There are no checks and balances built in. Look at Enron. Unlimited.

We have a whole notion about limits and creation of what produces unbounded individuals, particularly in a son, without the presence of male parenting.

Elias Canetti, Nobel prize Winner and sociologist, who wrote *Crowds and Power*, talks about unbound power. There are a lot of dead bodies when there's unbound power. Rwanda, Jonestown and so on.

With many corporate folks, their enormous ambition gets them up that high. It may be checked just enough, but then they blow out. We do some work literally giving physical limits in our groups.

Not only is that useful in working with omnipotent guys, it's also good in working with trauma. The traumatized have an unbounded vulnerability around working with their trauma and their fear of unbounded aggression underneath.

The corporate executive with this boundless ambition didn't get limits in the maturational steps. This work has to be done in a group, where the person's aggressive impulses can be appropriately capped within the group. Then he or she can use power in a more benign way.

When this individual would get to a sense of fury when someone's in their way, inside they might feel murderous, that they could kill. We would trace back to earlier history when there was no leading figure to help them temper the aggressiveness, where limits were not imposed. They'd be held strongly, while inside they're feeling the impulse to ravage and destroy.

They need to be held, and held lovingly. Some how that seems to have some effect on their prefrontal cortex. I think, it's almost that the id is unbounded. There's no ego holding that id stuff back. Ego is formed by interactions. When we have someone labeled in role playing as the parental figure, we're establishing ego primacy over those unbounded, cancerous energies that pay no attention to the boundaries of others. That which says "no" to those impulses internalizes in the prefrontal cortex.

#### **NL: How has PBSP work changed over time in general?**

AP: The most profound change: Reading about brain structure and seeing how it has confirmed a lot of our assumptions. This knowledge has given us greater clarity about how to hone what we do. It has given us new ideas, new angles, and confirmed what we know.

What people are saying is that the work is so much clearer, teachable and transparent now. Before people would say things like, "Oh, you're brilliant, you're doing magical stuff." Now they say, "I see exactly what you did." I love that. I try to be as clear and precise as possible. It's more teachable that way.

More and more, we're also linking the verbal and nonverbal. The nonverbal is the heart of it. The real changes come in the body's experience and expression. But you want to make sure that what's happening in the body gets planted in the brain, in the "then" of their history, so it will affect the "now" of the present moment when they are organizing the shape of the future.

I know enough now about the operation of the brain to know how to put the event in the appropriate place in their mind via language. I've been working on the notion of stages and screens, the different platforms or stages where experiences happen. Three stages: the stage of the here and now. ..second, the stage of the surface and interior of the body, where the emotions dance. ..the third, virtual stage where we're making the new memory and planting it. Memories are changeable; they move through time and space.

We want to make a new memory of the past: Our task is to establish what's going on on the third, virtual stage which we have built on top of the stage of the "here and now." We establish that new, hypothetical memory as if it had taken place in the "there" and "then" of the actual past.

Our next task is to put it in the right place in the brain. This we do with the clear use of language which helps keep the client's ego intact, and utilizes the client's adult consciousness to organize the experience as if it had happened that way when they were in their childhood.

**NL: What do you see as the future of the work and where you're going?**

AP: The bodywork. That's the future. To do psychotherapy without the body is not it. When you use the body, you change the chemistry. It's not just by thoughts, or words.

You know what's hurting the psychotherapy field? The pharmaceutical field. They're pushing the HMOs, etc. We make our own pharmaceuticals with our emotions. We should make a drug-free psychotherapy cure. The body makes its own, natural pharmaceuticals to battle with historically based problems, such as depression, anxiety and phobias. Of course, for some conditions such as schizophrenia, pharmaceuticals are beneficial and necessary.

That's where the future is. To do this so clearly and cleanly, and with such proof that it competes with the drug business. Traditional Psychotherapy is shrinking all over the world, and it's trying to make a comeback. But I don't think it will without the use of the organic chemistry that is produced from body-based psychotherapies like PBSP to compete with the artificial drugs of the pharmaceutical industry.

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