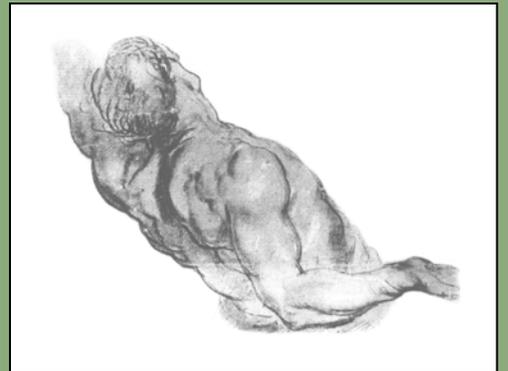


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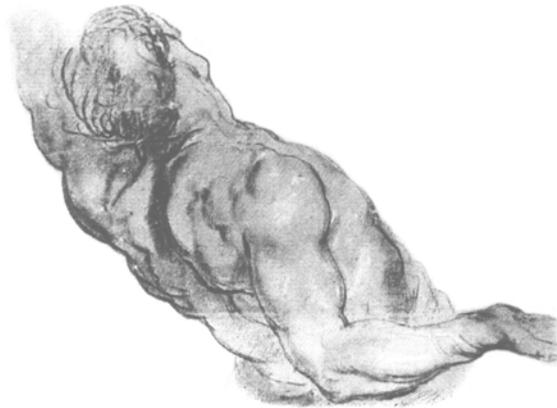


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USABP Mission Statement

The USABP believes that integration of the body and mind is essential to effective psychotherapy, and to that end, its mission is to develop and advance the art, science, and practice of body psychotherapy in a professional, ethical, and caring manner in order to promote the health and welfare of humanity. (revised October 1999).

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A Tribute to David Boadella and
Energy & Character



Silvia Specht Boadella



David Boadella

Interview with David Boadella: February, 2005

Esther Frankel, M.A.

Abstract

Esther Frankel interviews for the first time David Boadella in February 2005, from the foundations of his life, groundings from age 35 till 50, his expansions from age 50 to 65 and the consolidations of his personal and professional life from age 65 till today.

Keyword

David Boadella

Esther: Tell me about your early background, David, and how you came to be interested in psychotherapy

David: I was born in London, but grew up in Kent. To the north lay the suburbs of London, to the south was open countryside. I grew up very close to trees, and had great joy in climbing them.

My parents were connected to a spiritual teacher (an open-minded person who taught the root principles of the world's major spiritual traditions). Both my father and mother were looking for what lay beneath the surface of life. I was a rebellious teenager, nevertheless. One of the key moments in my development was discovering the works of Wilhelm Reich, at the age of 21, in an anarchist bookshop in London.

My parents lived to be very old. My mother was an optimistic person: she loved painting and was very artistic. She died in full awareness when she was 96. Her last message was: I have no regrets about the past, and no fear of the future. As for the present, I still have my grip on life. She was very bright to the end. From my father I learned respect for the roots of knowledge in a wide variety of cultures. He hid his unorthodox soul behind an orthodox exterior.

At school my first interest was literature. This was my main subject at the University of London. My first book, written when I was 25 was called "The Spiral Flame" and was a comparison between the work of the English poet and novelist, D.H. Lawrence, and the work of Reich. I sent a copy to Tage Philipson, the Danish doctor who was Reich's first client in vegeto-therapy: I met him later in Paris, and he was very fond of the comparison between Lawrence and Reich.

After discovering the books of Reich, I looked for a therapist. I wrote to Reich who told me the nearest Reichian therapist was in Oslo, Ola Raknes. I could not travel to Norway then, but I found a psychiatrist in London who had been trained by Od Havrevold, another Norwegian Reichian. Unfortunately her work was very mechanical: she used nitrous oxide from a gas-and-air machine to induce streamings in her clients. If they got into negative transference, they blamed the machine. I stopped this work after a few months. Later I discovered a very creative man in Nottingham, Paul Ritter, who was passionate about Reich, and practiced a very humane and sensitive form of intuitive vegeto-therapy. Reich wrote him a letter of support. He became my first real therapist.

Later Ola Raknes came to London regularly, and I could take a series of intensive sessions from him.

Esther: What was it like to work with Raknes as a therapist?

David: Raknes was over 80 at this time, he had extraordinary energy. He was a very grounded kind of man and he worked not so much with words, but more with touch, with melting points of the armour and mobilizing energy. He practised classical vegeto-therapy as he had learned this from Reich. He was in his mid- eighties, and I was at that time 39. He liked to do a process to help the client to relax - he wanted the client to be completely stiff. So I would be lying down and he would say "make yourself completely stiff like a board", and then he'd take my neck and lift me to standing, which needs a lot of strength, then lower me down again, and then he said "now relax".

It was a paradoxical intervention: stiffening in order to relax.

Raknes was a respectful, non-invasive therapist, who paid great attention to body signals. Once he had a client who said "Doctor, I feel like a corpse". He looked at his client and saw one toe was moving. So he said "I never saw a corpse move its toe". Then the toe moved the foot, the foot moved the leg, one leg activated the other, and the man changed his job a few weeks later.

Esther: At that time Reich was still living?

David: Reich was still alive, living in US and I had one letter from him recommending Ola Raknes. I also wrote, in 1952 as a young student, a letter to Nic Waal (who was a doctor trained by Reich in Oslo) asking her who is now available to do vegeto-therapy. I received a 4 page letter back from her. giving me the whole history of vegeto-therapy in Oslo and telling me some very important things. She said that unless we do a contained building-up of the ego, we can create psychosis in our clients. So I was getting a message from a leading vegeto-therapist (she was the director of an Institute of Psychiatry in Oslo), which was giving me, as a young student who was just beginning, the very clear message that containment is needed if you are going to work with strong energies and strong emotional expression. This message I never forgot.

Esther: What did you do when you finished your university studies in London?

David: When I finished my studies I moved to Nottingham to take my therapy with Paul Ritter. I decided at that time to become a teacher and work with children because I was interested in emotional issues of children because of my Reichian interests in the prevention of neurosis. I later took a Master's degree in Education. I got my first job teaching children parallel to taking my therapy from Paul Ritter.

In 1957, after 5 years with Paul Ritter, and studying orgonomy at his research institute, I took my first client parallel to my teaching. So I now had one client and when his therapy was finished one year later, I wrote up the case. It was called "The Treatment of a Compulsive Character". After writing it I heard about Alexander Lowen and I wrote to him and sent him this case study. He wrote back and gave me encouraging and supportive feedback.

Esther: How did your work in education relate to your work as a therapist?

David: I was working with maladjusted children, aged between 7 and 11. My Master's thesis at the University of Nottingham applied the early attachment theory of John Bowlby, and Donald Stott, to the motoric behaviour of children. I worked with their signals and signs of emotional experience.

By "signs" Bowlby and Stott meant what is shown in facial expression, body gesture. So I wrote twenty case studies, in my thesis, of children I was teaching, in which I dealt with their emotional issues, and with how they signalled these in non verbal language and how they could be helped by the kind of therapeutic interventions I mention below in the normal teaching context. All this was described in my Master's thesis published in 1960.

For example: if a child is repressing aggression, how can you help him? So I created a situation, in a pause, or in physical education time, and I said - here is a mattress. How much dust can you take from this mattress? This was a neutral way of helping to re-channel aggression non-destructively. I didn't say let yourself be angry. I just said: create some more dust.

Another example: I had a child who was very inhibited, a very anxious child and I gave him a big piece of paper and I said, "See if you can scribble on this paper." He started very timidly in one corner of the paper, and then developed the courage to fill the page with intense expression. I noticed afterwards that in the physical education lessons, where usually he would walk around the wall because he was afraid to go in the middle of the room, he would now trust himself to expand his space.

Esther: How were you accepted by other teachers?

David: That's interesting, too. One of these teachers was the first client I mentioned, and he said to me, "I need therapy. You know something about Reich - where do I get therapy?". I told him the nearest Reichian therapist is in Oslo. He said, "But you have a therapist in England." So he wrote to my therapist, but he did not have a space for him. The teacher then said "Well, I have to work with you." I told him, "I'm not a therapist." "But now you are," he said, "because I'm your first client." So that is how we started.

Esther: Fantastic!

David: My second client was more borderline, much more difficult, his case was also published. It is called "The Divided Body". He was a very schizoid man, my second client. Then, another teacher in the school had an emotional crisis during the time I was teaching there. I couldn't help him therapeutically but he was a friend of mine and I supported him emotionally just as a friend.

I worked at that time under a repressive head master, a very conservative tight minded authoritarian man, who left me completely free in my classroom but outside the classroom the children had to be very controlled and so forth.

So I taught my children - inside here you can behave like this but outside the classroom you have to behave differently.

Esther: They could do this? They liked you?

David: The children liked this atmosphere. They had to learn that when they cross outside the classroom, life outside is different. This work with children was very important because in England education was in general freer than in much of Europe at that time. A. S. Neill, whom I knew personally, had a big influence indirectly on English education; and the principle of English education in that age was play. Do it playfully - and this attitude of play influenced me years before I became a regular therapist. This playful attitude, in therapy, is the opposite of the over-severity which some psychiatrically trained persons bring to their work.

Esther: It is the opposite of clinical psycho-pathologism .

David: Yes, it is emphasizing the resources in the child, and helping to draw them out. This is the literal meaning of the word education, which comes from the root *e-ducere* . It is the same focus in our therapeutic work with adults. The emphasis is on creativity in expression. I was doing a lot in my educational work with poetry art, drama, dance (which I learned from the Laban Institute), and with martial arts, such as Judo. Judo was helpful for children to have more trust in their bodies. I was introducing a lot of creative work in school.

Esther: So, this work with children laid a basis for your therapeutic work?

David: Before I started working with adults on a regular basis, ther-apeutically, I had already spent fourteen years working with children in schools.

Esther: Because I feel that when you work, you work in a very playful way. You are contacting the inner child of the client, not necessarily with words, but in how you approach them.

David: Part of preparation for that was work with the children in this free atmosphere of making space for their expression. I published two books of poems by children in the school period and the first one was published just after I started the therapeutic period in London. This was produced a few years after I moved to Abbotsbury School in Dorset, and became the Head Teacher there. I had many years in Abbotsbury School with complete freedom to create an environment that drew children out of their normal expectations

The first published book of poetry by the children I taught, was called "Handfuls of Light " this title was a phrase from a poem by one of the children.

I became 50 years old before they closed the school due to a narrow educational policy under Margaret Thatcher. I lived in this village for 22 years. It was a mile from the coast, and I could always hear the sea in the night. I have always had a strong connection to the sea ,and all my life I was living near water, by the sea, or a river, or overlooking a lake: water is a very important part of creation. My old Professor in Nottingham wanted me to teach in the University. He told me "don't get yourself into a backwater," but I moved beside the backwater in Dorset, which lies behind Chesil beach on the south coast. I even lived on Back Street.

Then, during that period in Abbotsbury, soon after I had moved to Dorset, I had a letter from Alexander Lowen who invited me to write the introduction of his book "Love and Orgasm". I was the only person he knew in England that was interested in Reich. So I wrote the introduction, and this introduction was read by the American, Malcolm Brown, who was also interested in Reich. So he invited me to London in 1967 to give a lecture to people interested in Reich and I called this lecture "Beyond Therapy", because I wanted the people to be aware of their inner potential, creativity and capacity for self-help, and of what is non-pathological in them besides the problems that might lead to therapy. Today we would say this was putting a major emphasis on their resources.

Esther: This was in a way a consequence of your work with art, poetry, music?

David: Yes. Paradoxically, out of this lecture for thirty people came five or six who wanted therapy: so indirectly I gained a regular therapeutic practice. From Abbotsbury I went to London every second Saturday and I soon built up a clientele in a common practice, at the beginning with Malcolm Brown and then with Aaron Esterston, a colleague of R. D. Laing. I built up a practice of twelve clients. I worked from 8 in the morning till 8 in the evening, and then I went home.

During the first half of my adult life I was married to Elsa Corbluth who was a very gifted writer and who became a quite well known poet in England. Living with her I could deepen and intensify my poetic connections, and also my connection to landscape. Elsa was a passionate mountain climber: it was a deep pleasure that we shared, and mountain climbing was always an important part of my grounding of my physical expression. After climbing trees as a child came climbing mountains. These were part of my deep connections to my first wife, Elsa.

Esther: How many years did you spend together?

David: Until the teaching was finished. So we had over 30 years together. These were very important roots of my connection to poetry.

In this period when I started to go to London, that was the beginning of my regular profession with therapeutic work.

In 1968, the year I started in London, I went to Rome to lecture on vegeto-therapy. Federico Navarro was a medical student who came to the lecture, and later trained in vegeto-therapy.

In 1969 - one year later- Gerda Boyesen came to London. I set up her first course of lectures for her and soon after I started my second personal therapy and further training with Raknes. This was a whole opening for me as a country boy - living in Abbotsbury, in the back water, from Back Street. I was going to London, studying with Raknes, and teaching in Rome. In 1968 I was one of those who invited Alexander Lowen to lead the first Bioenergetic workshop in Europe.

I also went to the University of Edinburgh and gave a lecture to British Psychological Association and this lecture was part a seminar on non verbal communication, and became the first chapter of my book *Life Streams*. It is called "Language of the Body".

In 1970 I started the journal *Energy & Character*. So the backwater was not such a backwater and the Journal was very interesting. Somebody told me that we needed a newsletter. The first subscribers were members of the Wilhelm Reich Study Group in London, trainees of Gerda Boyesen, vegeto-therapy students from Rome, colleagues from the University of Edinburgh, and members of the Institute for Bioenergetic Analysis, in New York.

E&C is not the longest running body psychotherapy journal, because the Journal of Orgonomy has been running for three more years. But, we have produced more issues, over a hundred have been published so far. So I founded the most productive journal in the field of body psychotherapy in the world. All that started in Backstreet by the backwater.

Esther: Can I ask you something? At that time, I can see you were open and could help all the body psychotherapy streams to come together in your journal. Besides helping Lowen, and Gerda, of course you were developing yourself. I think this basis is so important to be written about.

David: That was a very important time. It was just after the political student revolution in 1968. The Growth Centres grew out of this period. The first Growth Centre in Europe was in London, where I was working. So I had connection here, and this was a place where Eva Reich also came and worked. We made an important connection there. Later she was a guest trainer at our Institute.

Esther: What do you mean by Growth Centre?

David: A Growth Centre is a humanistic organization which is teaching different kinds of psychotherapeutic approaches and self-development and is part of humanistic movement that was starting just as this time.

Just around the time I started to work in London was the birth of the Humanistic Psychology Movement in America and later in London. I was appointed as one of the directors of the Institute for the Development of Human Potential, in London, which pioneered humanistic and body-oriented approaches in England and abroad. I was invited a few years ago to attend the 40th anniversary of the humanistic movement, which was founded in America, because they recognized me as one of the founders of the humanistic movement.

A few years later came the invitation to write my historical study on Wilhelm Reich, *Wilhelm Reich: the evolution of his work*.

Then, in 1971, Lowen invited me to be the guest of his congress, because of *Energy & Character*. He organized the first Congress in Bioenergetics in Mexico, on a wonderful island by the water - again more water- and this is called The Island of Women - Isla Mujeres. I was rather honored by this special status.

In reality the journal soon became a mouthpiece of Biosynthesis which was developing around that time, but the journal was open to publish articles from Biodynamic and Bioenergetics and many other different directions because I was a bridge builder and not a splitter. I was building bridges between these different movements which I saw as cousins to my own work. We had a friendly relationship with these movements and later I became an invited guest trainer in many of the body-psychotherapy directions. I was teaching my work in their trainings before I had my own training.

Before this congress of Lowen, even before I started in London, I had a very important meeting with a man who I knew of through the *Paul Ritter Journal*. This was Stanley Keleman. Stanley Keleman knew of me early because of what I had written in a journal published by Paul Ritter, and he came to visit me in Dorset in 1966. This was my first meeting with Stanley Keleman and I re-met him a few years later in 1971, in Mexico.

I again met Keleman in 1973 and formed a very good connection with him and this connection was repeated in meetings in many different places. Keleman for me was a very important inspiration, because he helped me to see through the limitations of the classical Reichian model.

These limitations were to do with too much outside pressure to go in a particular direction and too little focus on the individual process and on the awareness of containment for pulsation.

Esther: How did he help you?

David: I'll tell you how. I was on the island of Isla Mujeres in the middle of the wonderful sea off the coast of Mexico, in April, in 1971 and all the congress members were enjoying the sun and the fresh air and movement and swimming and surfing. But there was a particular participant, a woman who seemed strangely out of touch. Keleman understood her energetic condition from a therapeutic context. He told me, "When she streams, she splits." This sentence impressed me at the time. It turned out that she was, in fact, rather borderline, very on the edge, quite spacey and ungrounded. She had become over-identified with her energy flow but she had too little form, she had lost contact with the ground and with her feet.

Keleman had understood that streaming without grounding can be a form of splitting.

This was a very significant moment for me. I became aware that the classical Reichian work as developed after Reich's death was sometimes in danger of becoming a technique and of pushing the client too much in a particular direction and not enough following the hidden signals, which I had been studying with my children in my therapeutic work within the educational field. This later Reichian work had become more mechanical, as Reich had warned could develop. Reich himself always put a major emphasis on the level of vital human contact between therapist and client, parent and child.

Then I realized that the classical Reichian work may be important and valuable work for rigid people, but as soon as you have a traumatized person, or a borderline person, or a weak ego structure, this work can do exactly what Nic Waal had warned me about in 1952. It can create psychotic states or fragmented states of re-traumatization, and therefore in such cases the emphasis needs to be on forming better boundaries, which she called ego building, and which Keleman was calling containment.

Keleman and I were there at the beginning of this process, and then something very interesting happened. I travelled in 1974 to the Esalen Congress on Reich, in San Francisco, and on the way I flew over the North Pole and as I looked down I saw the water, ice and something in between - half water, half ice. And I had the insight, sitting in the plane flying over the North Pole, that we have extremes of liquidity and solidity and in between is the liquid crystal that is the basis of life. Liquid without structure is not life. Neither is structure without fluidity. I realized that too much liquidity is like floating away. It reminded me of spacing out, and coma-like states of trance. Convulsion, on the other hand, is more like hysterical process - everything is too tight and contracted.

So, ice is like a contraction as in convulsion and water is like a free flow which is needing ground, a river in search of banks; in between this crystallized form which is life. That was the beginning of a series of articles I later wrote called "Between coma and convulsion."

When I arrived in San Francisco for the Esalen Congress, I stayed in Keleman's house and I told him about my experience of the north pole and he reached out behind him towards his book shelf and pulled up a book he had written (*Your Body Speaks its Mind*). He opened it, and read me a passage which began:

Once flying into San Francisco over the salt flats I looked down and suddenly saw how a super-saturated solution begins to form a crystal. I saw a crystalizing field in the water". He went on to describe his own prior observations of states of excitation, and of pulsation within boundaries.

Keleman just laughed, because we had in this way very parallel insights and this was a very interesting moment in my understanding of polarity. The polarity that connects is the opposite of a duality that splits. This was the beginning of my insights into the treatment of trauma, and a very important moment in the understanding of the polarity concept, which became central in Biosynthesis. It was the beginning of my move beyond the classical Reichian model which emphasizes the importance of breathing out, and letting go, with the risk of forgetting the other pole, related to breathing in, digesting experience, building form and containing energy.

Esther: And it is so interesting when we see people in your group here. How some people need to let go and how some people need really to organize and build their ego.

David: Building the ego in our understanding means coordinating perception, and coordinating motility. It has to do with the voluntary principle, the autonomy principle. For many borderline clients their main problem is loss of autonomy. They have become helpless victims of the circumstances of their life story.

Understanding how to get the right balance between expressive release and the creation of flexible boundaries was the foundations of our work with trauma which went back to the early 1970's.

Esther: When did you start to speak about stress?

David: That was around the same time, and this came from an invitation by Jay Stattman, who later on was the moving force in setting up the first European body psychotherapy congress. He was biodynamically trained and later became the founder of Unitive Psychotherapy. I knew him in London and he invited me to talk at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. This was a very nice invitation because the Tavistock was then the principal headquarters of attachment theory in England. Here I could go beyond my master's thesis, which applied attachment theory within education. I was being invited into the principal British centre of good psychodynamic understanding of the human being, and was being asked to speak about my therapeutic understanding of polar concepts of character, which in turn reflect the energetic polarity I had described in the earlier articles on coma and convulsion.

For example "freeze or run," the character pattern of going inside and shrinking, or the opposite pattern - run away as fast as you can outside. Here I was influenced by the work of Frank Lake, who I had at that stage not met. I knew only his theoretical work.

Esther : Who was Frank Lake?

David: Frank Lake was a very creative man who brought together clinical psychiatry and a Christian-based theology. He had similar views to those of Reich in his book *The Murder of Christ*. Lake was also a co-director, with me, and others, of the Institute for the Development of Human Potential in London, from 1977 onwards.

Frank Lake was very interested in the prenatal aspects of development. He also had understood that energetic polarities underlie character development, He wrote about this at length in relation to the schizo-hysterical swing, which he also saw as a trans-marginal response to stress. So Frank Lake helped to bring this polarity concept into therapeutic understanding, and part of that insight was that we have motoric patterns such as running away, reaching out, and so forth.

My interest in motility started very early because in 1964, after I had started my therapeutic work, I wrote a theoretical study of motility and evolution. I studied movement from the amoeba through different animals going up to man. It was a biosocial study of motoric behaviour. I was very interested in movement.

Esther: Why were you interested in movement at that time? You were a teacher.

David: This interest came in part from my early contact with Reichian work. I was very impressed with the chapter in Reich's book, *Character Analysis*, about the expressive language of the living. Reich was writing about

the amoeba, the process of primal expansion and contraction. Reich was focused primarily on the emotional expression. But of course emotional expression for Reich was linked with movements, vegetative movements, orgasm reflex, reaching out. Reich was very much focused on contact and one of the contact channels is expressive movement, which had been a focus of this study I did for my master's thesis on the signs and signals of the child.

But parallel to my work in school at that time, Elsa gave birth to our two children, my son and my daughter. Adam, which means earth, was born in 1960. My daughter Eilidh, which means light, was born one year later. It was a very good time in our lives when we could share the growing up of our children beside the sea, and enjoy their development in the creative context of the school, where Elsa was also involved. So I was able to look first hand at how children developed and how emotion developed, and what was happening with body expression. As a therapist, I was very interested in how expression begins and then to support my teaching work, I started to take some courses on creative dance. I was going to dance workshops and learning through dance teaching from Laban Institute Teachers, such as Lisa Ullmann and Diana Jordan. These insights were further developed and came into Biosynthesis as what we have since called "impulse qualities."

This was another early beginning of what later we called the motoric fields of Biosynthesis. Then several years later in 1975 I started training within my first therapeutic groups in London, at the Churchill Centre, organized by a colleague of Frank Lake.

In the same year, I was invited to lead a group in New York State. I had a very intense experience there which connected me deeply to the principles which we call "centering, grounding and facing," which are related to the three embryological germ layers in the body, and their later expressions in the adult body as affect, behaviour and cognitions or beliefs. This was a kind of baptism for Biosynthesis. After this my work became deeper and more organic, and I developed more trust in the group-energy between people. The word "Biosynthesis", which means integration of life, is one expression of those insights from that time.

Esther: I know that there was a crisis in your personal life around this time.

David: During the later part of the 1970's there was a crisis in my family, induced by the late adolescence of my son, Adam. The crisis my son went through involved drugs. He took LSD, got disoriented through these experiences, and came into an emergency situation in which I was needing to draw on everything I knew or did not know about this kind of event induced by drugs. What I found out was that I had to study very quickly what LSD does in the brain, because I wanted to understand practical things that could be done to help a person like my son in this kind of crisis. I discovered some of the effects of LSD in the brain, and what these do to the normal body and to the neurotransmitters.

Esther: How did this help you to deal with his crisis?

David: I looked at ways to interrupt the negative neurotransmitter pathways through vitamins. I found a particular combination of vitamins that could help to re-stabilize the brain. It is not so much that my therapeutic understanding helped me to deal with this crisis, but dealing with it helped to deepen my therapeutic understanding. In fact, it works both ways.

In this way I could partly help my son to get himself back. I wrote up these insights, and it became a 120 page book called *The Charge of Consciousness*. It consisted of a very complicated combination of biochemistry, which I knew almost nothing about to begin with, and psychodynamic process, which I knew a lot about, and pre-psychotic process, which I knew of therapeutically, but not in relation to what is happening in the process of the brain. So I was putting together in this book, therapeutic experience, psychodynamics, and brain biochemistry, as well as a study of some altered states of consciousness. It's a complicated mixture!

I wrote it in two weeks, non-stop, because it was a crisis. I took it to my printer and said, "I want this quickly." The book was in my hands two weeks later, a month from the first writing on the typewriter to the book sitting in my hands. This is probably the most densely written text I have ever produced, because I wrote in a kind of state of overcharge. I still go back to this book and read it now as a kind of neurobiological resource. I am always surprised with what I find in it. So much was packed in there in those two weeks!

It was a kind of death and rebirth crisis my son went through. He came out of it stronger and more spiritually aware, and has never touched any drugs since. In fact, he became very interested in alternative herbal medicine. Unfortunately, a few months later my family went through a second traumatic crisis.

That was when my daughter, Eilidh, who was 18, decided what she wanted to do in her life. She wanted to go to work at a hostel for the homeless in London called The House of Peace, which was operated on behalf of Mother Teresa, and to work as a helper with the homeless people there. She was not a Catholic, but she was a committed Christian, who wanted to help people in her own way.

The day she went to London, for her first day of work, on that same night there was a fire. It was lit by an alcoholic woman, with a history of arson. Twenty people were in the hostel, and ten died that night. One of them was my daughter. It was a total tragedy!

Esther: How did all this development of yours, professional and personal, help you to understand and to contain and deal with your pain?

It took me years to deal with this. But, deep questions came up like. "What is the meaning of life beyond the body, beyond this existence?" It led me out, very strongly, to the spiritual aspects of my work related to understanding better the connections between body and soul, hope and despair, fate and faith in something deeper. These insights, which grew out of the tragedy were later part of the last chapter of *Lifestreams*, which is called "The womb, the tomb and the spirit".

So, this painful tragedy, when I worked through it, gave me a deeper inner ground for my therapeutic work.

This double crisis brought on many major changes in my personal life. Shortly afterwards, in 1981, the school I had worked in for 22 years was closed because of political decisions in England at that time.

I had just reached the age of 50, which is the earliest legal age to retire, and I had just passed that age by 2 months. Before that, I could not retire. Now I could retire. I could receive a small pension in England as a teacher who had stopped early. This was now a great opportunity to expand my therapeutic work, for the first time full time.

Esther: That was a kind of a professional birth?

David: Yes, while I was digesting the immense pain of the death of my daughter, I stopped teaching for some weeks. When I resumed teaching for a further year, I was also continuing my therapeutic work and was beginning to transmute some aspects of this pain into helping other people who were traumatized by closeness to death in ways that could be very catastrophic. One of the insights I had during that period was that we have envelopes of experience around us. We have negative and positive circles of events. We experience agony, and trauma, or maybe wars, and death. Then I had a feeling: What is in the outmost circle of these spheres of experience? What is the ultimate outermost envelope of containment at the end of this? Is it positive or negative? I had the feeling that beyond the hurt and horror was one further enveloping circle. This outer envelope is not destructive but creative and supportive. We are carried, in this sense, by the cosmos.

One of the first people to ring me after this death was Stanley Keleman, who heard about it from somebody in London. I didn't tell him. He must have spoken to somebody in London who had said: "David has had a disaster". He rang me from California, very briefly and he said: "It's time that you take some help. Put her in your heart and grow her as your soul". Some statement that is! Such a gift at a time of disaster! Yes, this was a wonderful gift. I had, of course, hundreds of people writing me things, but the more they wrote, the less they affected me. But, just this one sentence I remember for the rest of my life

Esther: I'm learning from both of you how to meditate through my body, which began with you recommending me to do Kum Nye. When I began to do this, I felt I could regain my connection with my people, who are dead, and like this I can still be with them, they are with me and they continue as part of my soul. Wasn't it about this time that we first met?

David: Yes, the first group I did, after this death was in May of 1980, in Salvador Brazil.

You were a member of that group, Esther. So this group, when I came to Salvador, was also a birthing because it was the first time I worked with my Biosynthesis groups in South America.

Esther: Yes, this work in South America was the nucleus of the future Biosynthesis trainer community, the beginning of a whole process of expansion.

David: I would like to come back to your question about how I dealt with the pain. I had been living in back street for nearly 20 years, travelling to London, sometimes taking a big trip to South America, or Australia, but until this time I had been basically anchored in my environment, teaching next door to where I lived. It was 10 steps from my house to the school. I travelled occasionally, but that was the exception.

My father was somebody who wanted to sail around the world in ships, but he never got the chance and became a worker in the port of London, watching ships coming in and going out. His life script somehow was "life begins at home."

My 22 years kept me anchored in a wonderful landscape beside my doorstep. Then, suddenly the school was closed and I had no money, except for my pension. I have no work, my rented house is gone, and I've lost one of my children. What am I going to do with my life?

Esther: So this was quite a crisis of transition for you.

David: Yes, a deep midlife crisis, rather later than usual. Then I decided: this is my opportunity to grow. Elsa was shaping her own response to the crisis, the double crisis. She decided to update her career. She went to study at university for the first time, and took a master's degree in creative writing, which supported her life-long interest in poetry. But, we were increasingly taking time off from each other, professionally and personally. So, we were drifting apart, at this level. She was getting her creative writing degree. I was getting my opportunity to expand my work. I was dealing with pain by travelling away, out of the whole area. I travelled for 5 years, practically non-stop. I travelled to 30 countries in these 5 years. I have travelled to the moon and back, in terms of distance. Part of that was dealing with my pain. Part of that was having the opportunity to build.

One of the first places I worked in, actually before the school was closed, was Japan. A man who had read my early book *The Spiral Flame* wrote to me. He later went to Japan and became a professor of literature at a University of Kanazawa there. English literature, remember, had been my first subject. He invited me to Japan to teach Biosynthesis there. There I met a colleague of his who was a professor of literature and philosophy in the same university where he was, and who helped in the organization of my visit.

This was Silvia, a wonderful human being, and a creative philosopher and writer: we fell in love and she became my second partner. This was again a rebirth. So around this time I had a complete change around: I was coming through a separation process with Elsa. This was very painful for both of us, but we have managed to keep a very good friendship, and still maintain a deep and important contact. In this period of change, I was developing my new relationship with Silvia, I had given up the school, I would eventually, give up my country and my language, and my house. I had the feeling my ground was a pair of shoes. I had the feeling, in a way, this was giving up everything I had except my work and gaining everything I have had ever since: a second life, a second opportunity.

Biosynthesis grew up out of our love for each other and our love for working deeply with people in an embodied spiritual way, with the deepest feelings that they bring, which we support and encourage as processes of self-healing.

Esther: You were 50 years old then?

David: I was 50 just after Eilidh died, but 54 when I moved to Switzerland. Quite late for a new beginning. I stopped my world travels and moved to Zurich in 1985. At the same time Silvia and I were together, and we started a training with Bob Moore.

Bob Moore was a wonderfully intuitive psychic teacher, who understood the subtle energy circulation of the body better than anyone else I have ever met. I first met him in London several years before, through clients of mine who knew him. When Eilidh died he rang me up to express his support.

In this period of transition, Silvia and I had started a training with him in Denmark, and that was a 15 year process. We were going every year for several different weeks. Bob Moore's way of understanding human beings became a vital support to our work in Biosynthesis and brought in a deeper understanding and practice of working with subtle energy.

Esther: Tell me about how Silvia coming into your life changed Bio-synthesis?

David: Silvia's contributions to Biosynthesis have been incalculable. It was from our interaction together at the very beginning that the theme of the seven life fields of Biosynthesis emerged, which forms the most comprehensive and integrative model and expression of how we work.

The life fields are grounded in the seven energy centres of the body, which were particularly emphasised in her own subtle energy work in the training. She brings a centred quality of presence to her work, which people find very inspiring. She holds a Ph.D. in philosophy together with psychology, literature and art, and she can challenge people to think about who they are and what they are doing at much deeper levels than is usual in this kind of work.

Our son, Till, born in 1988, was a source of great joy to us both, and a continuing learning at a deeper level about processes of natural child development. As well as being the mother of a young child, Silvia carried the lion's share of the developmental energy in the content and structures of the Biosynthesis trainings, as well as of the household. I often reproach myself that I did not do more to support her in this immense undertaking.

Silvia brought to Biosynthesis her own unique qualities of energy, compassion, and clarity, in the development of the philosophical and psycho-dynamic frame of our work, in the individual therapeutic accompaniment of our trainees, and through her very special feeling for group energy and group process.

At the time I moved to Switzerland, Biosynthesis had been taught around the world, but it had no home. Silvia used her organisational talents in the tremendous work finding buildings, organizing the European trainings, and supervising the administrative structures that made our teaching possible.

We both worked hard for political recognition for Biosynthesis. I did this at the European level, where I achieved the scientific recognition of our work from the EAP at Brussels in 1998. This was itself based on the work Silvia had done gaining recognition within the Swiss Psychotherapy Charta, and dealing with other professional associations in the German language area. Later, the building of the International Foundation for Biosynthesis, to integrate all the trainings that had grown up in many other countries, was also her work. This was like polishing a diamond, and cutting the faces, until the final structure was coherent and warmly appreciated by our community.

Her contributions to Biosynthesis have been incalculable at many different levels. To do justice to these contributions would require a separate story of the past 20 years.

In 1994, the International Institute for Biosynthesis, which she had founded, moved to its permanent home, in the foothills of the Alps, overlooking Lake Constance, with a view over four countries. Silvia master-minded and supervised the thousand details of reconstruction and design of an ecologically sound building which is now the structure to contain our therapeutic work.

When we held our open day for the public, a few months later, the Health Minister came, looked at the exhibition we had mounted, and commented "This is a work about the heart, in a place for the heart".

After jointly leading some eighteen Biosynthesis five-year trainings in Switzerland, we are finally finding time for working on a series of books, some jointly, some independently, in which the latest messages about our work and our lives can find expression.

Biography

Esther Frankel (M.A.) was born in 1948 in Brazil, daughter of Jews from Poland. She is one of the pioneers of Body Psychotherapy in Brazil. She is a clinical psychologist trained by Jean Piaget's team at the University of Geneva. As a Body Psychotherapist she was trained by Gerda Boyesen, David Boadella, Alexander Lowen, and Albert Pesse. She is a member of the European Association for Body Psychotherapy. She was a teacher of Pontificia Universidade Catolica of Rio de Janeiro. She is an International Trainer in Biosynthesis, Director of the Biosynthesis School of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), Director of the Biosynthesis Training for Portugal, Director of the Biosynthesis Training for Israel. She trains psychotherapists in several countries.

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