

**the usa
body
psychotherapy
journal**



Volume 7 Number 1 2008

The Official Publication of

THE UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION FOR
BODY PSYCHOTHERAPY

Table of Contents

Editorial Jacqueline A. Carleton, Ph.D.	4
Guest Editorial James Elniski, LCSW, CBC	5
Alexander Lowen	6
Pulsation: The Growing Edge of Emotional Connection James Elniski, LCSW, CBC	7
Bioenergetics as a Relational Somatic Psychotherapy Robert Hilton, Ph.D.	9
The Clinical Theory of Lowen, His Mentor Reich, and Possibly All of Us in the Field, as Seen From a Personal Perspective Robert Lewis, M.D.	15
Becoming and Being a Bioenergetic Analyst Alexander Lowen's Influence in My Life Philip M. Helfaer, Ph.D.	28
Grounding and Its Variations Odila Weigand, PUC/SP	36
Bioenergetic Analysis in the College Classroom Peter S. Fernald	47
Bioenergetic Pamphlet	52
An Appreciation of Alexander Lowen Alice Kahn Ladas, Ed.D.	54
Gratitude Laurie Ure, LICSW, CBT	56
An Interview with Dr. Alexander Lowen Frank Hladky, Ph.D.	57

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USABP Mission Statement

The USABP believes that integration of the body and the 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.



Alexander Lowen, M.D.

Dec. 23, 1910-Oct. 28, 2008

A student of Wilhelm Reich's in the 1940s and early 1950s he developed a form of body psychotherapy known as Bioenergetic Analysis with his then-colleague, John Pierrakos.



Gratitude

Laurie Ure, LICSW, CBT

Abstract

One of Alexander Lowen's finest gifts was his passion and excitement in working energy with individuals. I am pleased to share some of my experiences working with him and to express my gratitude.

Keywords

Gratitude – Passion – Aliveness – Excitement - Laurie Ure - Bioenergetic Therapy – Bioenergetics - Alexander Lowen

I am fortunate to be among the last people to have a session with Alexander Lowen before his debilitating stroke in the summer of 2006. Living a 3½ hour drive from his home in New Canaan, CT. offered me the opportunity to meet with him with some ease. While I had never gone to him regularly for therapy, I had been to his home office and to workshops with him periodically from about 1994 to 2006. Usually I went at some turning point in my life.

Earlier in 2006 someone had told me not to see him as he was losing his mental capacities and memory. But, with my step-daughter having moved a 10 minute drive from him, I decided to take the chance anyway. I am glad I did! Although he asked several times during the session where I was from and what my name was, his work with my body was as sharp as ever, perhaps even more so. His intuition was remarkably keen as was his excitement in helping me, and his commitment to helping me get my body more alive. He told me not to waste my life, something I especially needed to hear at that time, even though it was not based on anything I had said to him.

Whatever Al Lowen wrote or didn't write in his books, I witnessed and experienced his presence and aliveness in working with people consistently for over 10 years. He was as tender, encouraging and supportive as anyone I've ever met. He also pushed people to work hard on breathing more fully and releasing tensions, even when it meant tolerating significant pain. When people complained of the pain, he responded with encouragement: "only dead men don't feel pain!" During a session in 1999 he worked my legs and feet hard, and inspired me to continue this on my own. I remember screaming loudly and repeatedly from the pain ("I can't stand it!") as I did the bend over grounding for 5 –10 minutes per day. Within about a month, I went down more than one size in my hips (from a 10-12 to an 8), without doing anything else differently, and have not gone up since.

During my session with him in January, 2006, he asked several times when I could come again. It seemed he loved his work so much and missed working with more clients. I was fortunate to return for one more session, about a month later. My husband had a session with him then as well. At the beginning of my session a feeling went through me, with the realization that it would be my last session with him. Again he worked my body hard with head rolls, stool work (with a 10# weight in my hands and his enthusiastic "breathe, breathe, come on, breathe!!"), the bow repeatedly (saying "do that one again"!), and his hands working my jaw. Everything about him exuded his love for working energy –doing whatever it took to help the body come more alive, more charged. He gave this his all – this was his passion, his joy, and his commitment.

Over the years I observed him in workshops respond at times harshly to people. He had no tolerance or patience for what he perceived as off-base or with what he didn't agree. I remember, for example, someone asking about spirituality in a workshop and he responded sharply something like: the word is over-used in our culture and takes people out of their bodies – he went on to the next question. Another time, someone said that the workshop was powerful and he quipped that it's not about power. One time in a workshop I commented about noticing my cat's ability to go from being deeply asleep to quickly fully alert. He fired back at me: live more like your cats then – sleep when you're tired, eat when you're hungry – follow your body. I learned that his sharpness was not personal, nor to be taken personally. It was just his way of responding. Once I heard him say that he doesn't get involved with people. I observed that in him at these times.

Through Al's many complexities as a person, and while we can argue his theories and the ideas from the brilliance of his mind, to me it is his joy, his excitement and his aliveness expressed through his work with individuals, that touches me most. For this gift I offer my deepest gratitude.

Biography

Laurie Ure, LICSW, CBT, has a private practice as a Bioenergetic Therapist in a beautiful cottage near the ocean in Gloucester, MA. She is the Director of the Massachusetts Society for Bioenergetic Analysis. She celebrates her connection with Bioenergetic Therapy from 1986 to the present.

USA BODY PSYCHOTHERAPY JOURNAL

The Official Publication of
United States Association for Body Psychotherapy
Jacqueline A. Carleton, Ph.D., Editor (jacarletonphd@gmail.com)

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Subscription Rates: Single current issue \$20; \$35 yearly. Postage outside the US and Canada please inquire at usabp@usabp.org.

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