

BOOK REVIEW

Body Psychotherapy for the 21st Century

by Nick Totton

Confer Books, 2020

Chris Walling

Nick Totton's latest book, titled *Body Psychotherapy for the 21st Century*, is a new, brief introduction to the field of body psychotherapy that provides a succinct overview of the many tributaries that form our multidisciplinary profession. The publisher, Confer Books, is the new division of Confer-UK, a training organization based in the United Kingdom. This title was released as part of their inaugural collection. The publisher states they are "interested in the exploration of psychotherapeutic ideas," and this short volume is both modest and mighty for anyone who seeks to familiarize themselves with body psychotherapy.

Totton draws upon the depth of his own vast experience and scholarship as he explores four models of embodied practice within the current state of our profession: adjustment (bodywork), trauma/discharge, process, and relational. In the book's introduction, he reports that to condense his thirty-five years of practice into a brief account was a "mixed blessing" that forced him to balance the task of straightforwardly assessing an immensely complex discipline. The book's four chapters successfully deliver a satisfying overview of the common themes a typical patient or student might want to know, should they look into the privilege of working with a skilled body psychotherapist.

Totton first provides a historical context, ranging from Freud to Reich, to give the reader some historical and epistemological foundation before exploring what he defines as the "turn to the body." This turn interfaced with what he sees as a movement to "professionalize" the therapy world and create "Body Psychotherapy 2.0." Positioned at the intersection of relational psychoanalysis and scientific advances in the neurosciences, it includes mentions of polyvagal theory and infant research.

He further delineates how the last decades of research have contributed to clarify the foundational principles of body psychotherapy and have informed the techniques of the many different embodied methods. He invites us to further consider body psychotherapy as being countercultural in its values, maintaining a strong link to Reich's own revolutionary benefaction to body politics.

I found Totton's overview incredibly useful. It is a practical resource for many of my new patients who seek further insights into what they may be getting into when they meet me, a body psychotherapist, for the first time. As I read this book, I noticed that in my own embodied imagination, I envisioned a post-pandemic world where I would place this book on my waiting room table in order to provide a solid presentation of my own clinical sensibilities. Totton's work has unquestionably well represented the field of body psychotherapy, and we all owe him our sincere gratitude for offering such an elegant compendary volume.



Chris Walling, PsyD, MBA, SEP is a licensed clinical psychologist and an active leader in the biobehavioral sciences. He is a Clinical Research Fellow at the Traumatic Stress Research Consortium at the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University where he is working on advancing the science of body psychotherapy and trauma psychology. Dr Walling is the President of the United States Association for Body Psychotherapy (USABP), and a Clinical Associate at the New Center for Psychoanalysis in Los Angeles, California where he also is in private practice.

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