

**By Faye Berton**

## **CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY**

**Provider: Benjamin Bell**

**The Balancing Point – Matson-Bell**

CranioSacral Therapy was developed by osteopath Dr. John E. Upledger. It is based on his observation that the cerebrospinal fluid, the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord, has a pulse that can be felt and modified. The quality, rate, amplitude and symmetry of this fluid's flow are indicators of conditions in the body.

CranioSacral Therapy is a very gentle physical manipulation. It monitors and modifies the four characteristics of the cerebrospinal fluid with the intention of encouraging their optimum functioning. This in turn encourages a fluidity, an ease of movement through and within all the body's systems.

This fluidity allows the body to respond with its full potential against any stressor, either internal or external. It means that disease is more likely to disappear and less likely to appear.

Another element of this work is called Somato-Emotional Release. It is based on the notion that unresolved emotional pain becomes locked in areas throughout our bodies.

Referred to as "energy cysts," these areas are blocked – not open to free movement – and in a sense do not participate in the healthy functioning of the body and person. These cysts can be dissolved by the practitioner and client working together to "unwind" these areas physically allowing the pain and emotional memory to release.

### **The Session**

Lying on my back, fully clothed, on a soft, padded table, Benjamin put his hands gently on my lower abdomen. He held them there for about three to five minutes. He repeated this on the middle of my body, chest, and head. Throughout the process he described what he was noticing. This had been an evaluation.





He had determined that the place to begin work on me was my hips. With one hand under my lower back and the other on my lower abdomen he continued to explain what was happening. Although I was interested in what he was saying I had started to feel some changes in the area he was working on and wanted to be still so I could pay attention to them. I expressed this to him and he understood. The rest of the session was done primarily in silence.

He then asked me to slide toward the top of the table so my shoulders could lie over the edge. It felt a little frightening but as I felt his hands support my head that fear vanished. He very slowly began moving my head in what seemed like peculiar directions. He explained that it was my head guiding the movements – my head wanted to go in those directions. He was simply following and supporting me.

There was a slight amount of discomfort in my neck for a short period of time. One position of my head triggered an old fear response. Every time my head went to that position the fear would reappear. It was interesting to

observe that response from a place that felt safe. I became aware of a gripping in my abdomen. I also became aware of the personal history connected to that gripping.

Although my head and neck position throughout this process felt extreme it was not uncomfortable. I could tell that my body liked it because as the session was ending my head wanted to remain in that position. It felt as if the work had made a very deep, old pattern accessible to me both emotionally and physically. It was very deep and beautiful work.

## **TRAGER PSYCHOPHYSICAL INTEGRATION**

**Provider: Benjamin Bell**

**The Balancing Point – Matson-Bell**

**Please Note: Benjamin's Trager practitioner status lapsed in 1995**

Trager Psychophysical Integration is a system of movement reeducation developed by Milton Trager, M.D. to help people experience greater ease of movement. A session is one-two hours long, undergarments or swim suits are worn and no oil or lotion is used.

The work is based on the notion that for every physical blockage there is a related mental pattern. The work and the intention of the practitioner is to relate new messages of lighter movement to the client's

unconscious, allowing this mental pattern to release. The body then becomes a freer vehicle for movement and self-expression.

Benjamin Bell refers to the essence of Trager work as something that is “caught” not created. The practitioner works in a state of “hook-up.” This term was developed by Trager to describe a state similar to that of meditation which can be caught by the client. The client then experiences a sense of inner stillness as his/her body is being taken through the movements of the session.

This work is meant to help all people maximize their potential for light, efficient, expressive movement. This includes people with limitations by diseases such as Parkinson’s disease and cerebral palsy as well as people wishing to further refine their movement skills.

### **The Session**

For Trager work I began lying on my back on a padded table with a sheet over me. Benjamin began moving my head in soft, sweeping movements that felt larger than my neck should be able to do. This was my first experience with Trager work and the movements surprised me. As I relaxed, however, they began to feel very freeing.

These same large, sweeping movements were used on both my arms and legs. Although their size and speed continued to surprise me, the movements felt light, comfortable and natural. They made me aware of a range and ease of movement in my body that was new for me.

Ben would occasionally, half audibly, say “thank you.” At first it seemed a bit peculiar. Shortly, however, it started to feel like an affirming and respectful response to a body that had just released some of its protective patterns and tension. It seemed to fill the space left by the release with an affirmation allowing these areas to remain open.

The most interesting response happened after I left. I noticed a deep body memory of the lightness and ease of movement I had experienced. The work felt as if it had influenced me on a deep level.

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