



The Following is a description from a long-term client.

Why did you want to do a somatic based Movement Re-patterning session?

What initially led me to this type of exploration was a strong interest in learning to be very present in my body as well as a desire to express myself, uniquely and creatively, through dance and movement.

What I have been pleasantly surprised to find is that this type of work has led me to discover a healthy relationship with my body and, ultimately, a healthy body.

Could you describe a session (from your perspective) ex. how does the session begin, progress, etc?

Each session begins with an opportunity to “arrive”; that is, a warm-up that allows me to transition from outside activities to specific actions in the studio session. Donna often uses the phrase “a date with gravity” and it really is. This phase is an initial opportunity to identify and let go of areas of holding in the body - often through laying on the floor and engaging in some specific breathing activities. I absolutely love this start process and return to it often outside of the studio as a way of checking in with my body as to where I have areas of tension or holding.

From this beginning, Donna tailors each session to my specific needs at a specific time. Over the four-year period that I have been working with Donna, she has taken a diverse number of approaches depending on my interests and needs. Certain sessions focus on working more deeply in the body with Donna providing hands-on touch to support the re-patterning objectives of the session and allowing tension-releasing shifts in my body. Other sessions focus more broadly with the use of specific Bartenieff Fundamentals developmental patterns that I initiate. Regardless of the approach, Donna provides information as to the underlying theory of re-patterning and gentle guidance to make the activity most beneficial. She also has a wonderful intuitive ability to discern particular nuances that make an activity more effective.

From this activity, Donna always includes an exercise to resolve or lead to the closure of the session. After the exploration described above, this aspect feels like a “coming home” of sorts - a realization of the integration of new patterns in my body. At this time in the session, I always feel like I have had a good inner workout in that I have re-integrated certain parts of my body and aspects of my being.

Finally, Donna allows time at the end of the session to discuss the activities and exercises and answer questions. This interchange is helpful in understanding the theory behind the shifts in my body (eg the impact of the re-patterning process), confirm the new movement palate, and identify some at-home activities to continue the work.

How does your body feel at the end of the session? What changes do you notice? What do you 'get' out of session?

Even though I have been working with Donna for four years, I continue to be amazed at the changes in my body after an hour-long session. I start each session with a certain amount of tension in my body; however, by the end of the session, I notice a considerable release. Specifically, my body relaxes: the chronic tension in my shoulders recedes, my voice becomes deeper, and my skin colour richer. Overall, I gain a feeling of well-being and a stronger sense of self.

How do weekly ongoing sessions support you?

Donna's sessions support me in three ways. Firstly, from a health perspective, prior to my sessions with Donna, I had a significant thyroid disorder that could only be managed, marginally, from a medical perspective. Yet, after working with Donna, my thyroid is working better, without medication, than it has in my entire lifetime.

Secondly, I love the sense of grounding that Donna's work provides to me. I work in the area of negotiation and mediation. This sense of grounding helps me to work from a centred position as I participate in dispute resolution activities.

Finally, I appreciate the expressiveness and creativity that I gain from Donna's work - she really does work on connecting the inner and outer. I walk into the dance studio, after working with Donna, and can feel the music in my body as a result of these sessions. My movement is more authentic/heartfelt, more organic, and more joyful.

Consequently, all of these outcomes support my original objective, that is, to be more present in my body.

Would you recommend these somatic-based movement re-patterning sessions to others? if yes, why?

Yes, I would definitely recommend these types of sessions to others! As mentioned above, the benefits range from improved health to increased creativity to enhanced presence. These benefits are valuable in the workplace, in social or creative situations, and in all types of relationships. I plan to continue this work for the rest of my life.