

## Editorial

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I AM PLEASED TO COMPLETE our fourth year of publication by featuring a series of articles on body-oriented work that are grounded in a Gestalt perspective, while integrating other theoretical orientations.

A focus on the body has, from its inception, been a cornerstone of the Gestalt approach. Much of the credit for this important emphasis belongs to Laura Perls, a student of Elsa Grindler, who stressed breathing as a primary form of support. Because Laura did not write, her teachings were conveyed primarily through her workshops and training programs.

Fritz Perls, as most Gestaltists know, incorporated the body in his work, most likely due in part to his having been a patient of Wilhelm Reich. Perls adopted much from Reich's approach to working with bodily resistances (see Perls, 1969). In addition, there were many other individuals who influenced the shaping of Gestalt body work, foremost being Ida Rolfe (see Perls, 1969) and Charlotte Selver.

Little has been published in this area until recently. (A notable exception is *The Body in Psychotherapy* [1985] by E. R. Smith.) However, this has begun to change. Two excellent books are currently in print, Jim Kepner's *Body Process: Working With Body in Psychotherapy* (1987) and an edited volume by Edward Smith, Pauline Clance, and Suzanne Imes, *Touch in Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, and Practice* (1998).<sup>1</sup>

Our current issue of *Gestalt Review* contains excerpts from two additional books that will be published in the near future, *The Listening Hand*, by Ilana Rubinfeld (2000), and *Reaching and Being Reached*, by Ruella Frank (in press). The recent outpouring of publications devoted to contemporary Gestalt approaches to body-oriented work is a tangible testimony to the development and growth of this particular focus of Gestalt therapy.

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<sup>1</sup> Please see a review of this book by James I. Kepner, Ph.D., in *Gestalt Review*, 3:4 pp. 341–348.

Rather than describe these excerpts and the lead article by Frances Baker (with responses from Cynthia Cook and Deborah Ullman), I have asked James Kepner to provide an introduction and commentary. I am sure that you will agree that he does an excellent job of presenting his unique perspective, as well as providing a framework for the reader.

Our last regular article is "Toward a Cognitive Map of Change" by Karen Fleming and Wesley Jackson. This rigorous experimental study examines how people describe the experience of change. It presents some exciting results. Their findings show that nearly all participants, when faced with change, reported similar processes. However, what is surprising is that the content of their thoughts was also similar.

The importance of conducting and publishing research that attempts to validate Gestalt principles cannot be underestimated. Published, validated research gives us needed credibility in circles that make decisions regarding licensing, therapy utilization, and so on.

We end this issue with Back Pages featuring a description of the second annual Gestalt Australia/New Zealand conference by Alan Meara, who served as its primary organizer. This conference reflects the combined interests of the 13 Gestalt training centers (most of which are accredited by GANZ) in Australia and New Zealand and *The Australian Gestalt Journal* under the editorship of Bruno Just. As a participant in this conference, I found it filled with excitement and creativity.

Two more notes before ending: After many stops and starts our web page is alive and well (and functioning!). Please check us out at [www.gestaltreview.com](http://www.gestaltreview.com). This web page, under the editorship of Liv Estrup, will be creative, ever-changing, and filled with exciting and interesting information relevant to the Gestalt approach.

Last and most important, it is time to renew your subscription to *Gestalt Review*. Our first issue of next year features an interview of the four founders of the Gestalt Academy of Scandinavia, which celebrates its 25th year and will be the host for the fourth triennial EAGT (European Association of Gestalt Therapy) conference in Stockholm, September 13–16, 2001.

We will also present Joseph and Sandra Zinker's "Process and Silence: A Phenomenology of Couple Therapy," Peter Mortola's "Links Between Gestalt Therapy Theory and Child Development Theory: A Shared Sense of 'Disequilibrium,'" and Kevin Prosnick's "On the Utility of Combined Theoretical–Empirical Methodologies in Gestalt Test Construction: Mills Revisited." Throughout the year we will also be publishing book reviews, articles on organizational development ethics and cultural issues, and much more.

*Please* join us in our endeavor to present leading edge Gestalt theory.

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### References

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- Kepner, J. I. (1987), *Body Process: Working with the Body in Psychotherapy*. Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 1993.
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