

body armour, restoring optimal muscle tone and balancing the gravitational relationship between head, neck and back. AT teaching uses gentle hands-on guidance and touch, and is usually conducted in one-to-one teacher-student lessons. One important aspect of the teaching method is an unconditional presence between teacher and student, and a collaborative working style. A student's relationship with the teacher is often similar to that between a therapist and client in psychotherapy.

Limited studies on the psychological impact of the AT include one in relation to depression accompanying Parkinson's disease (Stallibrass C 2002), and another on fear of falling in older adults (Glover 2018). However, research in other modalities that share aspects of the AT work, suggests psychological healing as a possibility.

There is a known link between body posture, muscular tension and emotion (Riskind J 1982), (Armitage 2009). It is also believed that traumatic experiences can be held as muscular tension in the body, and especially negative experiences in early development can cause increased activity in the 'body armour' defence system (Hartung T 2018).

Touch has healing and therapeutic effects (Jones T 2014), but these may not operate straightforwardly - transference can play a role in any one-to-one, intimate therapeutic relationship (Hanifin E 2000).

In an existential-integrative approach to psychotherapy, unconditional presence is brought to bear, supporting an environment of openness and acceptance. Presence includes being aware of oneself and the felt sense. This state has been found to foster psychological healing (Kenneth Bradford 2007).

The body has a capacity for healing when given the opportunity. This is true for psychological as well as physical maladies. Resistance and defensive structures are by nature unstable and impermanent and will unravel when given space to do so<sup>1</sup> (Kenneth Bratfold G, 2007).

Another important area affected by the practice of AT principles is one's sense of agency: The subjective awareness of planning, initiating and controlling one's own activities (Gallagher 2005). People suffering from depression generally have a low level of sense of agency (Ratcliffe 2014).

In this light it is hardly surprising that the Alexander Technique can contribute to major psychological changes.

## Research

An online survey was sent to Alexander Technique teachers through twelve national and international AT professional societies<sup>2</sup>, in order to collect data and connect with

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