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Integral Healing Centre Training - the Oral

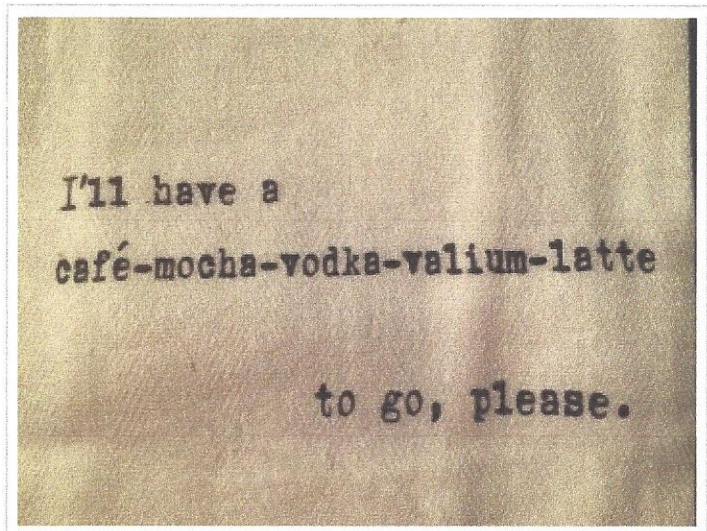
Posted Nov 29th, 2015 in [Mental Health](#), [Depression](#), [Shame](#)

Our therapy training weekend was on the Oral Character Structure. It began with the usual Friday evening meditation, assisting our arrival into the space. Our breath lengthens as we drop in, leaving behind hectic days, full of distraction. We descend into a profound level of self-discovery, continuing to build a solid foundation for our future work as therapists.

The students have been practicing as therapists and clients for each other (weekly) between trainings. So, there are lots of questions. Good, there should be. It is totally acceptable to not know how to be a therapist. That's what they're here to learn.

Shame, guilt, judgment are held lovingly in the training. We learn from our mistakes. This is a safe laboratory in which to learn what works and what doesn't. We encourage students to explore, be brave, allow (even to expect) to not be good at it. How could you be? Curiosity, inquiry and exploration are the action words we encourage.

Saturday was a thorough bioenergetics warm-up covering the body from bottom to top. We started with finding ground through the feet, which many of us never do for ourselves on a day to day basis. It's so important. We travelled slowly and methodically right up to the top, working with the eyes. Again this is something many of us do not regularly exercise and should. They have important muscles that need exercise too.



I feel as though I need to give you a suggestion or two for both the feet and the eyes as exercises. Stand with your feet shoulder length apart and shift your body weight from side to side until most of the weight is on one foot. Repeat that 5 times. Now roll your feet from the inner to the outer edge and then rock forward and back from toes to heels. Make sure you are not locking your knees.

Lift one foot and slowly circle the foot at the ankle. Repeat on the other foot. Place both feet in parallel position. Bend and straighten your legs actively pushing away from the ground as you lengthen your legs. Breathe throughout. Bend forward and hang, breathing into the back lungs. Roll up slowly actively pushing the floor away as you come up to stand.

For the eyes we held a forward position of the head while moving just the eyes to the right and then to the left, up and then down, upper right diagonal to lower left diagonal then upper left diagonal to lower right diagonal. Take soft, full breaths as you circle the eyes right and then left as well as figure 8's in both directions. Exercising all those tiny, ever-so-important muscles of the eyes is important.

And of course because it is bioenergetics we are aware of the holding patterns in these body parts that get stirred by breath and movement. Exercising eyes may illicit tears our grounding may stir up fear. All feelings are welcome, embraced and worked with in the class.

This weekend the oral character structure was explored through a guided regression. People caught in the oral character structure experience powerful feelings of deprivation, loss, or abandonment. This gives rise to a fear that there is "not enough" of something now or in the future. If the emptiness is felt in the body there may be attempts to bring comfort by stuffing the body with food, drink, drugs, alcohol or tobacco...all taken in through the mouth (hence the term 'oral').

If the deprivation is more emotional, soothing might be sought through shopping, watching TV, travel, study, work, sports, exercise. Not that these are bad activities in and of themselves - rather they are being used to try to soothe an inner sense of deprivation (which cannot be soothed in this way). The oral personality feels dependent, clingy or needy in relationships, which quickly evokes a reaction of disgust and revulsion.

Any of this sound familiar? Most of us have some of this character structure in us. It is certainly encouraged and promoted in our culture through advertising, etc.....especially at this time of year as we approach the holiday season.

How aware we are of it and how much control we have over our oral urges (addictions) are determined by our level of self-awareness and how much healing we have done around our early (physical and emotional) life experiences.