

Our Community

The following article by ***Marvin Solit***, D.O., published in Lilipoh Magazine, Summer/Fall, '98, describes the history and community orientation of Foundation for New Directions.

"I am convinced that we must find new ways based on free initiative; where people who feel related through destiny can find their way to one another, wanting to live and work together out of free choice".

So said Eva Marie Batschko in the Winter/Spring '98 issue of Lilipoh.

Our community in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Foundation for New Directions, is just that: a group of people, unrelated, who started to come together as far back as 1966, seemingly through destiny. We started a Holistic Health Center and have become a small community. How did this happen?

Having graduated in 1958 as a Doctor of Osteopathy and interned in Massachusetts, I started my private practice in Boston. I had always been drawn to natural, non-intrusive healing. My practice integrated homeopathy and rolfing with osteopathy, which proved to be the foundation for what was to become a holistic approach. My practice at first was quite traditional in that I saw patients one at a time, in separate rooms, treated them, and charged specific fees. I was the doctor, they were the patients.

By the mid '60's, I had been influenced by the Human Potential Movement. I learned the value of becoming aware of feelings in a therapeutic situation, in which the sole technique was to stand, and let my feelings surface. Standing seemed to act as a catalyst to promote awareness. It struck me as a promising way of experiencing the connection between body, thoughts and feelings. I noticed that when my muscles were not directed by me to do anything, they had their own agenda. It was a fascinating agenda. I found myself impelled to move in what turned out to be repetitive patterns. Soon I became aware of pains and tightness in various parts of my body. As I allowed them to manifest, they led to unsuspected feelings, some of them reminding me of past traumas. As these feelings climaxed and then subsided, I noticed an increase in well-being.

I realized that our bodies are structured to repair themselves; they do so constantly. Yet there are so many illnesses, accidents, emotional problems and chronic diseases that don't seem to heal. Why not? The immune system fights hard but not always successfully. Certainly germs, genes and stress play their part, but as body/mind therapies have found, the events of our lives, both past and present, when suppressed, actually 'freeze' growth and healing at all levels. Freezing has a purpose. It is to avoid feeling the pain that led to suppression in the first place. As a control, or defense mechanism however, it makes repair harder.

Ordinary pressures such as earning a living control us further. So do the ways we have been taught to think, feel, believe and behave. I knew that by gradually reducing controls we could permit our repair mechanism to function better; traumas and injuries, past and present, would surface more easily and 'unfinished business' would be completed and released.

I decided to establish an environment which would tend to eliminate as many controls and structures as possible. First, I stopped making appointments, so people came whenever they wanted to. Soon several people were there at the same time. Then, instead of going into separate rooms, they often chose to be in the same room. Gradually, there was interaction among those present, both with one another and with me.

Separate rooms and specific fees were no longer mandated, which changed the traditional relationship between doctor and patient. This also allowed me to give up the control of a professional stance and to get in touch with my own feelings. Along with controls, I gave up financial security, of course, which both my wife and I found very upsetting but which could not be otherwise if I was on a valid track.

How do we survive? The usual way that organizations survive is to charge fees – it is considered a 'given' regardless of any other controls that are lifted.

The extent to which we have carried our giving up of controls typifies our willingness to let things develop organically. Since money is a key issue in value systems and relationships, the money provided by students, group members and other sources is part of their relationship with me and the 'work'. By not making money a major issue, we allow it to become part of the flow and exchange of energy.

The upshot of the gradual letting go of controls was that we expanded the parameters of health and healing. We discovered connections to one another which facilitated access to traumatic events. We honed our skills and relationships which fostered a sharing of activities, including work, childbirth and childcare, among others.

Now, 32 years later, we continue with standing awareness, do business, conduct workshops, study and present new paradigms in physics, evolution and geometry. We have discovered, for example, that the material universe as it is traditionally viewed is not all there is. Through changing perspectives of space and matter, we see a relationship between the non-material and material worlds. Even holistic thinking tends to view ourselves and our bodies as one and the same.

We have learned that we are not our bodies, but we do have a relationship with our bodies.

Like Eva Marie, we also believe the future belongs to free communities of destiny-related people. We would like to be available to those who wish to start one of their own, or establish connections with ours. We will gladly provide information, assistance and encouragement.