

The Metamorphic Technique

- By Elizabeth Harley



The Metamorphic Technique is a unique tool for personal transformation and growth. This simple yet profound approach to growth, transformation and personal development can easily be learned in a weekend or evening workshop, by parents, practitioners and individuals.

"Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it now. For boldness has genius, power, and magic in it." Goethe

We all have great potential, but due to limiting beliefs that we hold about ourselves and our lives, we tend to get ourselves stuck in particular patterns that keep us from fully realising that potential. These patterns can show up in various ways - physical or mental illness, emotional problems, limiting attitudes or repeating patterns of response or behaviour.

The Metamorphic Technique offers us a new and fascinating way to look at life and also offers us the possibility of changing it. It is during the 9 months of gestation that the potentials of the human life are established. The practitioner acts as a catalyst to the client's own life force energy, which can transform any old, negative or unhelpful patterning which was established during our most fundamental formative time - the prenatal period.



The practice of the Metamorphic Technique involves a light touch along the spinal reflex points on feet, hands and head. It may be either seated or lying down – whichever you find most comfortable. Some people go into a very deep space and may fall sleep, others prefer to sit up and chat. It makes no difference which you choose. Whatever else happens, most people find a MT session very relaxing and enjoyable. It can be used by anyone – young or old, healthy or infirm, human or animal. Within the first few minutes of touching the feet, babies often go into a state of deep stillness with great attention and awareness seemingly focused within.

The Metamorphic Technique is gentle, non-invasive and completely safe. As it is the person's own life force that does the healing, it cannot do any harm. It can be safely used by anyone including children, pregnant mothers and people who are dying.

The Technique can be received on its own or alongside other approaches, whether conventional medicine or alternative and complementary therapies.

About The Metamorphic Technique

The practice of the Metamorphic Technique (MT) involves a light touch along the spinal reflex points on feet, hands and head. It may be either seated or lying down – whichever you find most comfortable. Some people go into a very deep space and may fall asleep, others prefer to sit up and chat. It makes no difference which you choose. Whatever else happens, most people find a MT session very relaxing and enjoyable. It can be used by anyone – young or old, healthy or infirm, human or animal. Within the first few minutes of touching the feet, babies often go into a state of deep stillness with great attention and awareness seemingly focused within.

There are no contraindications to the MT as it is your own Life Force that guides the outcomes. The practitioner practices an “active detachment” thereby allowing free rein to your own unique and boundless potential. If the practitioner was directing the process or manipulating energy in any way, the outcome would then be in the direction of their own expectations or desires. (We now know from quantum physics that even the act of observing particles will influence their movement.) In the MT it is your own Life Force, at the deepest and most fundamental level, that enables transformation.

The movement of transformation has to come from within ourselves. Only we hold the key to what we could become, to what is held within us. If we take the analogy of the seed, the earth doesn’t decide, “Ah, I think this seed should become an apple tree.” Rather, it simply provides an environment that enables the seed to make manifest the highest potential that is held within it.

So what happens with people? Everyone is different as you might expect. Most people notice some transformation over a period of receiving the MT. Sometimes this can be dramatic and completely transformative, at other times it may be more subtle. Many people find that old negative patterns of behaviour no longer occur, that they respond differently to situations that would have been previously stressful or difficult. There may be significant improvements in physical, mental or emotional health or a noticeable increase in energy & vitality, or there may be an increased sense of confidence and wellbeing. Basically, the Life Force moves us in whatever direction is appropriate for us, taking us from who we are now, to what we would become....

What is actually occurring with the technique? It is bringing into focus the fundamental time period of our formation – our gestation period, from conception to birth. At the point when conception occurred, all the energies and influences that we require to manifest our fullest potential as unique human beings were in place. However, once we begin to form as human beings, we are then subject to all the human influences that then surround us.

From our earliest moments in the womb, we are affected physically, chemically and emotionally by our circumstances. Our cells, even at that stage, hold and reflect the memory of our circumstances and our experiences.

This therefore sets up physical & neurological characteristics, and patterns of response or behaviour that we hold throughout our life. We know that alcohol abuse in pregnancy can cause physical anomalies as well as impaired neurological function and behaviour difficulties. We may not be so aware of the potential lifelong effects of emotional traumas on the baby. A study in Finland in 1978 by Huttunen & Niskanen followed children’s medical records for 35 years and found that those who had who lost their father while their mothers had been pregnant were at increased risk of mental diseases, alcoholism, or criminality.

Interestingly, they had also studied an equal number of children whose fathers had died during the baby’s first year and found no increased risk in this group. This clearly demonstrates that the emotional state of the mother during pregnancy can have profound effects on that child throughout their life, and that the baby is more vulnerable to emotional influences in the womb than in the year following birth.

Other studies from Sweden, Prague and Finland looked at the long term effects on the children of unwanted pregnancies. They found that the degree of sociability of these children was lower than the control group, and that the differences were still detectable at age 35. The Finnish study found that the risk of later schizophrenia was significantly raised in the babies whose mothers had requested (but been refused) terminations.

Michel Odent (the wonderful obstetrician who introduced the concept of birthing pools) has gathered a database of research on foetal influences. He states that “An overview of the Primal Health Research Centre databank shows that when researchers explored the backgrounds of people who expressed some sort of “impaired capacity to love” – either love of oneself or love of others – they always detected risk factors in the period surrounding birth.

Our birth is the first time we take action in life. In the MT this point is reflected on the heel, base of thumb

and base of skull. The pattern of our birth sets the scene for our later actions. Basically, the way we were born is the way we act in life now, when it is important. We continually repeat these patterns throughout our life. From our birth to our first breath is usually the time we take between our thought and action. So, in a normal birth this will happen in an appropriate amount of time after reasonable thought and preparation. If, for example, you were born feet first, you will have a tendency to jump into things without thinking them through first.

Again, this has been backed up by scientific research. In a Swedish study of 412 forensic cases comprising suicide victims, alcoholics, and drug addicts, suicides involving asphyxiation were closely associated with asphyxiation at birth; suicides by violent mechanical means were associated with mechanical birth trauma and drug addiction was associated with opiate or barbiturate administration to mothers during labour. Frederick Leboyer wrote about birth and how its effects follow us through life, how its traces are found "everywhere... in all our human folly, in our madness, our tortures, our prisons, our legends, epics and myths." Wilhelm Reich wrote "civilisation will start on the day when the well being of newborn babies will prevail over any other considerations." The burdens we carry from the prenatal and birth periods often keep us from finding our true place in life, from living fully, magically and spontaneously as the completely unique expressions of Life that we are.

In the Metamorphic Technique, as the practitioners' fingers work along the spinal reflexes which are mirroring that crucial time period from conception to the birth, they are acting as a catalyst to the Life force within you, allowing it to release old, unhelpful patterns and shine the light of your unique being more brightly throughout your life. It is often said that "the longest journey is the 13 inches from head to heart." perhaps this is easier when we have travelled the route from toe to heel on our metamorphic pathway and let go of our prenatal handicaps.

How frequently should the MT be given? That depends entirely on the circumstances. As a general rule, weekly is fine for people who have to function in normal life. For babies and children or adults off sick or on holiday etc. sessions could be daily. How many will you need? Allow your life force to guide you. Some people have a few sessions then have a break, others may continue for months or even years. You will know when it is time to stop.

Who can learn it? Anyone. The practice itself is very simple. It is learned by parents, individuals, health professionals and complementary therapists. It has been used a great deal with people with physical & mental disabilities and in schools for children with learning difficulties, in hospitals, prisons, and with people with addictive patterns, eating disorders and stress-related conditions. It is often used by pregnant women and midwives as it can allow an easier pregnancy & birth. Above all, it is suitable for anyone who is interested in realising more of their unfulfilled potential and becoming all that they were meant to be.

The History of The Metamorphic Technique

The Metamorphic Technique has evolved from reflexology, through the work of Robert St John, a naturopath in Canada. During the 1960's he discovered that he could bring about significant changes by using what he termed "Metamorphosis". He had become dissatisfied with his general naturopathic practice because he had come to recognise that we create our own stresses, which then causes our illnesses. His current methods of treatment did nothing to alter the underlying patterns of internal stresses, and therefore the results he achieved were temporary.

This dissatisfaction with his work led him to explore Reflexology. He noticed that the reflexology charts were all different, so he decided to do some research for himself. He created his own charts of the reflex points on the feet, as he had found them. From here he made the discovery that problems in the body could be related not only to the reflex points on the feet, but also to the corresponding area on the spinal reflex points. He discovered that working the spinal reflex area alone was just as effective as working the whole foot.

Robert St John began to look deeper and observe the psychological effects of his treatments. Whilst working on the heel area, he noticed a corresponding association within the patient with what he came to call the mother principle. He found that if there were blocks or imbalances in that area (which reflects the base of the spine, the sexual organs and the point of birth) then there were also difficulties with either the relationship between the patient and her mother, or with the mother principle within the patient herself, i.e. the ability to express or to receive caring, nurturing and love. The mothering principle reflects how we have been mothered, how we mother others and how we mother ourselves, regardless of our sex. It also reflects our ability to be in touch with reality, to be earthed, to be grounded.

Having found the mother principle around the heel area, he began to wonder if there was a father principle. He discovered that if there were blocks on the area around the first joint of the big toe, he also found corresponding psychological difficulties with the father principle i.e. with the biological father or any external authority figures. Later observations showed that this area may also reflect difficulties with expressing our own inner authority or fathering qualities, with acknowledging and enacting our right to be ourselves and even at a deep level, with accepting our right to be here at all.

Having recognised these psychological states, Robert St John realised that there was a psychological map superimposed upon the physical reflex map. He then made the most significant discovery of all. He found that between the father principle reflected at the toe and the mother principle reflected at the heel, lay another map, the time period of our nine months spent in the womb.

It is at conception that the father could be said to be most active, as it is only here that he fully participates in the creation of the incoming life. The mother also participates at conception, but it is really at the birth that she plays her most active role in the production of the baby. Between these two crucial events, we have the gestation period, which in the Metamorphic Technique is reflected between the areas of the father principle and the mother principle, i.e. along the side of feet, hands and along the centre of the head.

Therefore, when we work with the Metamorphic Technique, we are actually working on the time structure during which all our characteristics were primarily established.

Negative patterns we have held since conception onwards e.g. deep-rooted fear and dread in a child who has been conceived in rape, emotional patterns of feeling rejected and unwanted in children born to mothers who have been refused abortions, the impulsiveness and yet vulnerability and fear of consequences in those born prematurely, etc., can all be transformed.

Many amazing claims have been made for this work, but it was one particular lady who made Robert St. John realise its importance and that it was time for him to make it public. She came to Robert St John with her six week old Down's Syndrome baby daughter. He gave the baby weekly sessions, and taught the mother how to perform the technique on the baby at home every day. By the end of that year all her symptoms had gone. The last to disappear were the slight slant of her eyes and the bump on her neck. The extra chromosome which causes the syndrome had not gone, but it was no longer operative.

Over the last 30 years Gaston St. Pierre, who studied extensively with Robert St. John in the 1970's, has continued the work which is now known as the Metamorphic Technique. He set up the Metamorphic Association in London in 1979 to promote the technique worldwide. He continues to train parents, practitioners and teachers.

Although the technique itself is very simple, the philosophy and principles behind it can be a little more difficult to grasp. This, combined with the fact that there have not been many teachers may be why the technique is not as yet as widely known as other modalities. It does however claim some very famous and inspirational followers, including Diana Cooper (International workshop leader and author) and also one of the directors of the Life Foundation – a wonderful organisation dedicated to world peace and relief of suffering in war torn areas through therapies and energy block techniques.

I believe that the Metamorphic Technique is the choice of the future. When we are a little more ready to accept the inexplicable, more open to energy medicine and more aware of our spiritual inheritance and incredible human potential, then the Metamorphic Technique will be as widespread, accepted and commonplace as Aromatherapy is now.

For more information or to book a course please contact

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