Southern California Institute of Bioenergetic Analysis

Course Description and Title:
Embodiment and Bioenergetics Through a Feminine Lens
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Embodiment and Bioenergetics Through a Feminine Lens

Introduction

I would like to introduce a movement practice that utilizes Alexander Lowen's core Bioenergetic concepts: awareness, movement, breath, and sound - the four pillars of embodiment. I will examine the concepts of masculine and feminine energies in embodiment. Every human, regardless of their gender-identity or sexual-identity, processes both *masculine and feminine* energies. We need both and we need balance. We live in a culture that values the rational, the logical, the intellectual, the thinking self, what I call masculine energy. We then may find ourselves depressed, anxious, worried, angry, or painfully still. We may realize that something's missing from our life and yet we may believe that 'the fix' is something outside of ourselves - a new job, a new car, a new significant other, a new adventure. What we're really missing is an internal connection with our life force energy, our flow. I will discuss how epigenetics, generational, and familial trauma may play a role in our inability to be embodied and I will present Bioenergetics and Bioenergetic techniques through a feminine lens. And lastly, I will invite you to participate in a 20 – 30 minute movement practice. I believe this is an exquisite movement practice that allows our bodies, male and female, to wake up from the slumber of numbness and remember the joy and pleasure of flow. Embodiment is our natural state and when we awaken the flow, we can fill a yearning to reconnect with the beautiful

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sensations of pleasure and aliveness. Awareness, movement, breath, and sound can be a doorway to our aliveness.

Disclaimer:

I'll be discussing the history of the mental health treatment of women, my own family history, my own history as a female, while referencing the terms masculine and feminine. Some history from a feminine perspective may be uncomfortable, I have no intent to offend or disrespect men, Dr. Alexander Lowen, or the Bioenergetic community.

I love Bioenergetics and I'm eternally grateful for Dr. Lowen. I have loved physical activities and psychology since I was thirteen years old. When I found that Bioenergetic combined both, I was instantly and completely committed. As many have said before me, Bioenergetics gave me my life and the Bioenergetic community became the loving and nurturing family that I never had.

I especially mean no disrespect to men. I love men. I love my husband of 52 years. I often wonder, with my history, how I attracted such a kind loving man. And I might add, he's very masculine. He can be very directive! Very decisive and very opinionated. He flew helicopters in the army for 27 years, he was General Patton's personal pilot, and he survived three war zones! And if you know anything about pilots, well let me ask you this, "Do you know when you're halfway through a date with a pilot? When he says, 'That's enough about flying. Let me tell you about me'!"

And I want to clarify that this movement practice is in no way meant to be a substitute for Bioenergetic Therapy. It is another tool.

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Masculine and Feminine Energy in Embodiment

I'll begin by discussing my meaning of masculine and feminine energy and their importance. In *The Spirituality of The Body*, Dr. Lowen wrote about the concept of health being the balance and harmony of two great forces. What the Chinese call yin and yang….and these two forces should be balanced in the individual as they are in the universe.[1] The concept of Yin (feminine) and Yang (masculine) dates to Chinese philosophy in the 3rd century BCE. Everything exists in opposites: hot/cold, light/dark, heaven/earth, and male/female. The masculine is about **'doing'**. It's action oriented. Our masculine energies, yang, are the directive, penetrating, logical, linear, heated, go currents. The feminine is about **'being'**. It's more passive, creative, intuitive. Our feminine energies, yin, are the receptive, feeling, flowing, circular, still, cooling, emotional currents. Men can have feminine qualities and women can have masculine qualities. These qualities can also be unconscious and can become a **'shadow'**.

In the western world, many of us are great at embodying our masculine, though not always in healthy ways. We're encouraged to be logical, directive, productive and go-go-go. This is the culture we are raised in. The feminine energies, the feeling, flowing, emotional currents are an aspect of our nature that we (men, women & gender-fluid individuals) are not taught to embody or embrace. So we repress these energies and our bodies become constricted and numb, disembodied.

[1] The Spirituality of The Body Bioenergetics for Grace and Harmony Alexander Lowen M. D. 1990 Macmillian Publishing Co. New York pg. 8

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Disembodiment vs Embodiment in an Era of Generational Trauma and Epigenetics

We are in an era of intergenerational trauma[2] and epigenetics[3]. Epigenetics is the study of how our noncoding DNA – 98 % of our DNA- is affected by environmental stressors, toxins, inadequate nutrition, and stressful emotions. This noncoding DNA is responsible for many of the emotional, behavioral, and personality traits that we inherit. These biological changes happen to prepare us to cope with the traumas our parents experienced. These adaptations can be detrimental. For example if your parent "lived in a war zone, you may inherit the impulse to recoil in response to sudden loud noises".[4] This noncoding DNA is different from chromosomal DNA - 2% of our DNA which is responsible for color of hair, eyes, skin. Noncoding DNA can be passed through the generations and can also be changed with time. From this perspective, I would be remiss if I didn't include the historical perspective of the treatment of women and women's mental health treatment. There is a long history that might explain reasons for not feeling our bodies - disembodiment:

"Since the second millennium BC, women have been persecuted, locked up, tortured, burned at the stake as witches and labeled insane by men. Our emotional reactions, intuition, sadness, and disobedience were diagnosed as **'Hysteria**". The scientific view of female hysteria was blamed on the 'spontaneous movement' of the uterus, a "**wandering uterus**" and until Sigmund Freud, hysteria was considered exclusively a female disease.

Women were considered inferior, weak, or 'mad' and subjected to cures with strong irritating substances to the nose and vagina; poisonous herbs; and required to have either more sex or to abstain from sex.

Plato came up with the idea of the "**melancholy uterus**." The uterus was sad when it did not join with the male and give rise to a new birth. Aristotle and Hippocrates were of the same opinion. Unmarried women and widows were forced to marry any man who would have them so they could live a satisfactory sexual life within the bounds of marriage.

During the Middle Ages, 500 – 1500 CE, treatments included purging, mint, laudanum, belladonna extract and valerian and any stimuli that could excite a woman should be repressed.

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[2] American Psychological Association https://www.apa.org 2019/02; Tori DeAngelis February 2019, Vol. 50, No.2 Print version: page 36. The Legacy of trauma: an emerging line of research exploring how historical and cultural traumas affect survivors' children for generations to come.

[3] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. www.cdc.gov 2022; What is Epigenetics? Epigenetics is the study of how your behaviors and environment can cause changes that affect the way your genes work. Unlike genetic changes, epigenetic changes are reversible and do not change your DNA sequence, but they can change how your body reads a DNA sequence

[4] *It Didn't Start with You* by Mark Wolynn, 2016, Penguin Books, 375 Hudson St, N.Y., NY, 10014

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One of the first female healers was responsible for the idea that women's melancholy was a **'defect of the soul'** and originated from sin and evil. This belief grew during the Inquisition during the time of St. Thomas Aquinas, 1225-1274, and contributed to the idea that 'hysterical' women needed an exorcism which eventually got confused with sorcery.

When the Roman Catholic Church developed manuals of Inquisition, in the 13th century, politics and religion became intertwined and anything and everything could be used as proof of the existence of demons and witches. It's estimated between 40,000 - 50,000, mostly women were executed and the last witch was sentenced to death in Switzerland in 1782.

Inferiority and hysteria remained exclusively a female issue until the 18th century when hysteria was for the first time associated with the brain instead of the uterus.

In 1897 Sigmund Freud made a case for **'male hysteria'**, using himself as the identified patient. Here we reach a crucial point in mental health history. Hysteria, which had been an accepted **result of 'the lack of conception and motherhood'**, was now considered **a 'lack of libidinal evolution', and the failure of conception was the result, not the cause of the disease**. This set the stage for Freud's Oedipal conflict.

Humane treatment for women was still not in the picture. Female independence was still considered 'madness', and a woman who stood up to her domineering husband could be sent to the asylum, institutionalized for causing family disturbance and for defying the **domestic control of the male.**

Medical wisdom at the time was that assertive, **ambitious women were 'unnatural'**. The accepted belief was that women should be fulfilled solely by being wives and mothers, and doctors declared that any woman who rejected her submissive, domestic role was medically impaired.

Women were committed to asylums for jealousy, for reading novels, and for insanity during the 'change of life'. A woman's menstrual cycle alone could have her committed, suffering from **'uterine derangement**.' Period-related madness was so commonplace that doctors encouraged mothers to delay the onset of their daughters' menstruation by making them take cold baths, abstain from meat, and abstain from reading novels.

Chloroform and ether were widely used for the treatment of boisterous women to quiet them permanently. Asylums used straightjackets on disobedient women but rarely on men. And when drugs and straightjackets didn't work, now they used surgery! In 1860's the newest treatment for female insanity of spending too much time reading or expressing distaste for her husband, was a **clitoridectomy**. Which continued in USA until the mid-20th century. Other treatments included the removal of the ovaries, the injection of ice water into her intimate orifices and the application of leeches and caustics to the genitals.

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In the 1940's, just 9 years before my birth, a neuropsychiatrist Dr. Walter Freeman popularized another psychosurgery to liberate patients, **the lobotomy**!"[5] The year of my birth, 1949, Dr. Freeman nominated Antonio Moniz for the Nobel Prize for discovering the therapeutic value of the prefrontal lobotomy and he won it. By 1952, an estimated 50,000 patients in the United States and Canada had been lobotomized and the majority of those were women even when most institutionalized patients were men.

At a time in our history in which women were expected to be calm, cooperative, and attentive to domestic affairs, the definition of mental illness was bound in cultural norms.

A surgery that rendered female patients docile, compliant, and well enough to return to and care for their homes was the treatment of choice, until the first major tranquilizers became available in 1954. By 1968, Valium was marketed as the antidote for was termed - **socially dysfunctional women**!

In 1963 Betty Friedan wrote in *The Feminine Mystique* that women's unhappiness was '**boredom and a sense of meaninglessness'**.[6] Women also claimed that having 5 babies in 7 years with no control over her fertility was also part of their unhappiness! And a researcher, Ali Haggett, suggested that women were not only unhappy being housewives but they were unhappy with how individual husbands and society at large treated housewives.[7]

Now in 2023 with Dobbs v. Jackson there is a renewed attempt at controlling women's bodies and women must again fight for the right to have control over their own reproduction, their uterus's, their bodies! And let's not forget the outrageous repression of Iranian women by the mullahs. These women face arrest, torture, imprisonment, and death, and the Afghan women have been ordered by the Taliban to stay at home and not work. Women are rising up against decades of oppression and violence. I do acknowledge and thank the men who are joining the fight for women's rights.

But I ask you, with the effects on our DNA, "Why would any woman want to feel the sensations in her body – to be embodied?"

My own family history supports this historical view of women's roles as bearer of children and homemaker. Going back six generations to the 1700's, my 6 times Great grandmother had 13 children. The 13th child was my grandfather, Archibald Stinson. He was Mormon, had three wives and fathered 13 more children. Again my line began from the 13th

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[5] (F)ailing women in psychiatry: lessons from a painful past - PMC (nih.gov) Journal List CMAJ v.190(20); 2018 May 22 PMC5962395 Andrea Tone, PhD Social Studies of Medicine, McGill University, Montréal, Que.; Mary Koziol, B. Arts Sc Faculty of Medicine, McGill University, Montréal, Que.

[6] The Feminine Mystique - Wikipedia

[7] Cecilia Tasca, Mariangela Rapetti, Mauro Giovanni Carta, and Bianca Fadda Women And Hysteria In The History Of Mental Health - PMC (nih.gov) National Library of Medicine.
Clin Pract Epidemiol Ment Health. 2012; 8: 110–119. Published online 2012 Oct. 19

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child, Carmel Stinson, born in 1890. That same year the church's new prophet revealed that the Church should stop polygamy to avoid difficulties with the surrounding neighbors. Carmel's first wife had 9 children. After her death, he married a second time. They had no children but she took good care of Carmel and his home until her death. Polygamy was practiced by the Mormons "to bring forth the next generation and allow worthy women a chance to be sealed into eternal families."[8]

In the 1900's only about 12% of psychologists were women. Women faced discrimination, many were not allowed to study with men, and some were denied the degrees they earned. They were refused academic positions where they could do research and get published. The prevailing opinion at the time was that women were both intellectually inferior and essentially semi-invalid during their menstrual cycles! Some of the well-known who managed to rise above or force their way through the discrimination were: Anna Freud, who established the field of child psychoanalysis and the concept of defense mechanisms in her book, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (1936) and Mary Ainsworth, who earned her PHD in 1939 and developed the groundbreaking work on attachment styles by studying mother-child attachment.[9] I ask again, "Why would any woman want to be embodied?"

Bioenergetic Analysis was Founded during this Masculine Dominant Era

During WW II (1939 -1945) women took over men's jobs for the war effort and broke out of their previous domestic roles but when the war ended, men and women were expected to return to their previous roles. Men returned to the public domain of politics, industry and

[8] Why Did Mormons Have Multiple Wives (Mormon Polygamy)? - Bing video
[9] 10 Women Who Helped Change Psychology (verywellmind.com) by Kendra Cherry Updated May 14, 2020. Fact Checked by Emily Swaim

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commerce and women returned to caring for the home, social visits, and church activities. Women's virtue was once again tied to submissiveness, and domesticity. The 1950's were also very much a *masculine* predominant era. Stay-at-home moms struggled with neurosis, anxiety, or depression in the '40's through the '60's.[10] This was the culture of my beginnings.

When Bioenergetic Analysis was established by Dr. Lowen and Dr. Pierrakos in 1956, I was 7 years old. I've read that Al Lowen considered himself rigid and somewhat controlling. When Al Lowen died in 2008 his colleagues and friends organized a memorial in New York City. Erica Kelley quoted her late husband, Chuck Kelley, who at an honoring of Alexander Lowen in 1996 (Chuck Kelly was a student of Reich after Lowen and the originator of Radix work). Chuck said:

> Al … is an easy person to hate … aggressive, cocky and opinionated. He is also creative, insightful, and productive, a man who has made the most of his potentialities. Every one of us at this conference owes Al Lowen a large debt of gratitude. [11]

I can't say those opinions are true. I never met Dr. Lowen personally, however, I am going to call the characteristics: rigid, controlling, aggressive, cocky, opinionated, and productive - *masculine energy.*

In my family, the masculine dominance over women was characterized by abuse, more disembodiment. My maternal and paternal grandfathers and my biological father were alcoholic and abusive. My mother was sexually abused, malnourished, neglected, and used for domestic labor at age six when she had to care for her baby brother. She ran away at 16 to get away from her abuse. She married an abusive alcoholic and had two children by the age of 19. My brother

[10] Gender: Separate Spheres for Men and Women | Encyclopedia.com
[11] Full article: Alexander Lowen (1910–2008): reflections on his life (tandfonline.com) Body, Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy Journal Volume 5, Issue 2 Alexander Lowen (1910-2008): reflections

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was born when she was 17. My biological father loved and adored him. In 1949 I was born. My mother was 19. My biological father denied that I was his. He never held me. I was a female and not worth his time or effort. My womanizing biological father accused my mother, falsely I may add, of having a sexually transmitted disease. She was thrown in jail. Another little-known fact of American history, a program called "the American Plan" from 1910 through 1950's and even into the 60's and 70's, could detain and forcibly examine any women for sexually transmitted infections.[12] My mother was finally tested, was negative, and released 30 days later. Upon release her lawyer advised her to steal her children and run. She did! I was one year old; my brother was two and a half! A year later she married a hardworking, hard drinking pipeliner who also adhered to very rigid roles for men and women, boys, and girls. We moved four or five times every school year for a total of 48 moves. We lived in 21 states and three countries before I graduated from high school.[13] My parents drank a lot, were stressed moving from job to job, and angry all the time.

Growing up in the 50's and 60's in this masculine dominance, children were supposed to be seen and not heard. I was terrified, fearfully silent, and so timid and quiet I couldn't think for myself. Today I know I was in a constant state of dorsal vagal shutdown and dissociation. I was disembodied! The only time my nervous system was calm was when I was outdoors in nature or playing sports. I was a good obedient girl which set me up to be sexually molested at age 12 when we lived in Tripoli, Libya. It was during this time, when I was 13, I read an article about a psychiatrist treating a young boy for anger outbursts toward his mother. I knew I wanted to become a psychiatrist. I reviewed the requirements and dismissed the goal because I didn't

[12] America's Forgotten Mass Imprisonment of Women Believed to Be Sexually Immoral - HISTORY
[13] *Wake Up…Live the Life You Love – living in the NOW.* Compiled by Steven E, & Lee Beard Little Seed Publishing Laguna Beach, CA 2009 page 81 "Wake Up to Be in the Moment" by Linda S. Hines

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believe I was smart enough, despite being an 'A" student. No-one had ever told me that I was good at anything. I loved sports and in my senior year of high school, a female physical education teacher asked, "Have you ever thought of becoming a physical education teacher?" Teaching was an acceptable occupation for women. I went home and talked to my parents about college. My stepdad's response was "You? A teacher?" He knew how quiet and timid I was. When I decided to go to college, which no-one in my family had done, I told my parents that I was going to major in physical education and psychology, my stepdad's response was "You a shrink? No! You want to be a legal secretary!" I had never even heard of a legal secretary. I guess because of my looks my stepdad thought in that occupation, I could snare a good husband. Many "girls" married right out of high school because that was what women were supposed to do, marry, stay home, and have babies. My role model for women was my mom who was a stay-at-home mom with no ambitions except to be a wife and a mother. (I mean no offense to women who choose this profession. It is a worthy one but not for every woman).

I did go to college in 1967 with a dual major: physical education and psychology. That was the era of the Viet Nam War and my high school sweetheart joined the military to avoid being drafted. In 1970 before he left for his tour in Viet Nam, we got married. I dropped my psychology degree and graduated with a degree in physical education. We moved a lot during his 27-year military career. Ten years into our marriage, I found myself living in beautiful Augsburg, Germany, married to a wonderful man with two beautiful children, depressed, crying at the kitchen window, and asking the universe, "Why am I here? Is this all there is to life?" I heard an answer, "You're here to help other people get through the pain of being on this earth." The next day, I enrolled in graduate school at Boston University and graduated in 1984 with honors.

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In 1999 while engaged in an intensive three-year training in Heart-Centered Hypnotherapy, I experienced the unconscious in the body. I experienced how clearing energy blocks in my body could result in spiritual experiences. I had to learn more! I googled 'energy and the body' and I stumbled upon the Dallas Society for Bioenergetic Analysis. Chuck Lustfield said, "come on down to Dallas. We're interviewing new trainees." I didn't know what I was getting into. I hadn't yet heard of Dr. Alexander Lowen but when I learned that Bioenergetics combined counseling and physical interventions, I had to learn more.

Masculine and Feminine Techniques in Bioenergetics

Before Bioenergetic Analysis, I thought, 'if I could just learn enough / know enough, then I would know the right thing to say at the right time and I would be liked and accepted'. My defense throughout my life was "I have a brain, stop looking at my body." Most of my role models for success were masculine. (Except for Sophia Loren. I longed to be beautiful, graceful, and sexy like her.) The masculine model for success was: Do, do, do. Think, think, think! Achieve, achieve, achieve! Set a goal, achieve that goal. Move forward. Be powerful. Don't cry.

I picked Rick Spletter as my Bioenergetic therapist. When I entered his office, he asked the reason I picked him, I said, "I want to learn to be in my power in the presence of men." For the next five years, I hit, I kicked, I pushed, I did pelvic thrusts and 'I killed my therapist' for two hours at a time. Finally one day, I collapsed to the floor and cried. I realized with all my repressed internal rage; I was just like my raging mother whom I hated. Trying to understand Lowen's character styles and the developmental stages, I confronted Rick, "so let me understand this developmental process. I must first 'kill' you and then I can have sex with you?" I never did get into my sexuality. My process was learning to have my "no" before I could surrender to my

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"yes". It was all very *masculine energetic techniques*. After my required hours for certification had met with Rick, I picked a female Bioenergetic therapist for a feminine perspective. She had trained with Al Lowen and again I hit and banged and screamed some more, *more masculine energetic techniques*. With her, I did connect with my infant need for nurturing. Eleanor Greenlee was our International Coordinator. She had a softer more *feminine relational* approach in training to Bioenergetic Analysis. Bioenergetic Analysis was, until the mid-70's, called the 'hit, kick, and scream era and in the 1990s, Dr. Lowen returned to his theme of anger, and required all Bioenergetic trainers to attend professional development workshops that he ran called 'Back to Basics',[14] I call it 'Back to the *Masculine'.*

Late in my training, I went to another female bioenergetic therapist in St. Louis, who had trained with Frank Hladky. I only did hitting one time with her. She stretched my long rigid body and finally I found my vibrations. She got me in touch with my fear of abandonment, increased my breathing but never once on the breathing stool, and I experienced Reich's orgasm reflex. My work with her was surrendering to the more *vulnerable feminine energy*. I recall saying to her if we taught this to our children, they would never do drugs! They would say to their friends, "Come on over Saturday night and we'll vibrate together!" I found the joy and the pleasure of embodiment!

After my Bioenergetic certification in 2004, I heard through our Bioenergetic community that Peter Levine, founder of Somatic Experiencing, had made a comment about Bioenergetic Analysis retraumatizing clients. This sparked my curiosity to see Bioenergetic Analysis through the lens of Dr. Levine, so I attended one of his intensive weekend training courses. Dr. Levine's work emphasizes internal awareness through a term he calls 'felt sense'. Dr. Lowen calls it 'self-

[14] Full article: Alexander Lowen (1910–2008): reflections on his life (tandfonline.com)

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awareness'. I call it, 'internal bioenergetics'. Dr. Levine uses body techniques that are like Bioenergetic techniques. The body techniques I saw him use were softer and slower, perhaps what could be called *more feminine*. I agree somewhat with Dr. Levine. Bioenergetic techniques can be retraumatizing; not that they are. They can be! When therapists are not themselves 'embodied'; when therapists don't have solid training and application of bioenergetic techniques matched to character structure; when therapists haven't worked through their own character structure or traumas sufficiently; or they don't have sufficient knowledge about their client's trauma history and trauma's effects on the nervous system, I believe the 'therapist' not Bioenergetic therapy, could retraumatize a client. I believe that self-awareness (embodiment) improves our ability to be other-aware. Bioenergetic techniques can be fast and loud, and speed and loudness can impact trauma survivors. The nervous system and the body speak more slowly and softly than cognition, and when trauma is involved, speaking, and moving more softly, more slowly, *more feminine*, gives the mind time to catch up.

Masculine and Feminine Energy in Embodiment and Bioenergetics

Masculine energy is to go. Masculine character is concerned with clarity, purpose, direction, competition. We can see the masculine character in the male genitalia. Penetrating, external, and ready to thrust. The masculine energy movement of the body is a 'collecting' of internal resources to move energy up and out into the world. In this way, the masculine energy dynamic is about bringing energy up and forward, out of the body.

The feminine energy is about flow. We can see the feminine character represented in Mother Nature – constantly changing, dynamic, evolving, beautiful, sensual, and infinitely bountiful. We can see the feminine character in the female genitalia. The feminine is receptive, internal,

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capable of creation and giving new life. The feminine spirit manifests into matter, then all matter and all textures of matter – from physical, mental, emotional, and energetic- are her domain. The gifts in her nature are those of every sensation within the spectrum. The feminine aspect is concerned with embellishing and magnifying radiance, beauty, and energy. Being in the feminine is to be **in the moment**, allowing pleasure, surrendering to the joy of connecting to yourself and others, filled with pleasure. The feminine energy sits in the hips and pelvis, the lower body. It swirls into infinite creativity within **our internal world**. The feminine in the female body has a natural flow **of feminine and masculine energy**. During the feminine 28-day menstrual cycle, we go from day 1 of our bleed being internally oriented, letting go, fluid, moody, chaotic, more emotional (feminine) as our bodies destroy the womb lining that was preparing for new life, then we transition around day 14 to being outgoing, doing, get stuff done (masculine) externally focused orientation. This is a feminine flow, this natural cycle of emotional changes is what was formerly called a disease. When the lower body is constricted or numb/dissociated, our energy naturally rises into the head.[15]

In my Bioenergetic training, the techniques that were used with me were what I refer to as masculine techniques: hitting, kicking, hip thrusting. Hard techniques like breathing stools, tennis rackets and loud techniques like “tell me you could kill me”. I did them and they did get me acquainted with my sympathetic nervous system and my capacity to discharge energy. There definitely is a place for them in developing the ability to defend oneself, but they did not get me into my feminine flow, my feminine power. They got me more into my masculine power! It was necessary to get me out of my dorsal vagal passive traumatized disembodied female body. We

[15] Jenna Ward Feminine Embodiment Coach and founder of School of Embodied Arts http://JennaWard.co

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need the ability to access and embrace both our masculine and our feminine to balance and be in harmony and flow.

Awareness, Breath, Movement, and Sound in Embodiment and Bioenergetics

As I share this process of getting into our bodies more gently, I want to honor Al Lowen who gave us 'grounding' into the feet and legs. It is this descending 'internally' focused awareness and energy that brings us into the body and into the feminine. In one of Dr. Lowen's early lectures, he taught "There are self-evident truths that need no demonstration. But because they are self-evident, they escape our attention. For example, no one will deny the importance of being alive. We want to be alive, yet we neglect to breathe, we are afraid to move, and we are reluctant to feel. Another self-evident truth is that personality is expressed through the body as much as through the mind." He said, "Breathing and movement determine feeling. An organism only feels the movements of its body. In the absence of movement there is no feeling." "Why do so many people have difficulty in breathing fully and easily? The answer is that breathing creates feelings and people are afraid to feel. They are afraid to feel their sadness, their anger, and their fear." "The respiratory wave normally flows from the mouth to the genital. In the upper end of the body it is connected to the erotic pleasure of sucking and nursing. In the lower end of the body it is tied to sexual movements and sexual pleasure. Breathing is the basic pulsation (expansion and contraction) of the whole body; it is, therefore, the foundation for the experience of pleasure and pain".[16]

[16] Alexander Lowen Lecture Series Breathing, Movement and Feeling; The Basis of Bioenergetic Analysis Alexander Lowen, M.D. The International Institute for Bioenergetic Analysis 144 East 36th Street, New York, NY

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Conclusion

This is the basis of Embodiment and Bioenergetics through a Feminine Lens. This view is to return to balance in our aliveness; the masculine has been emphasized without the balance of the feminine. They are not in competition. Each needs the other for the flow to be balanced. The masculine has been over-emphasized at the loss of the feminine energy which has made us lobsided – heavy on the brain focus and low on the heart focus. I want to give credit to Al Lowen for the foresight of how breath, movement, and sound are necessary for aliveness. I want to give credit to Jenna Ward, Australian Feminine Embodiment Coach and Founder of the School of Embodied Arts, for introducing me to this movement practice. She also teaches, 'The four pillars of embodiment: awareness, breath, movement and sound, as the four vehicles or tools we use to aid our sensitivity and experience the inner felt senses.'[17] The "fix" is not out there but within as we wake up from our numbness and find the joy and pleasure of being in these bodies.

Contact Linda S. Hines to schedule a time to experience the movement practice.

lindahines@lindahines.com

The movement practice can be experienced in the comfort of your home, in person or in a group process. Linda lives in Oklahoma City, OK.

[17] Jenna Ward Feminine Embodiment Coach and founder of School of Embodied Arts; http://JeannaWard.co

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