

The Eutony Method

by Alicia B. Souto

The word “Eutony” combines “eu” from the greek, meaning “harmonious,” and “tonus” from the latin meaning “tension.” This approach to body awareness and physical therapy was developed by Gerda Alexander around 1950.

In her own words, “Eutony is a western approach to experiencing the unity of the total person. This feeling of unity and integrity liberate the creative forces and develop the capacity to have contact with others without losing your own personality.”

The totality of the conscious and unconscious parts of the body are made manifest through the autonomic and motor nervous systems. Movements and posture, breathing, and all expressions of the physical, mental and emotional states are in turn influenced by them.

By the Eutony method, the involuntary tonus regulation and autonomic balance can be consciously influenced. Tonus is the level of tension of smooth and striated muscle fibers. Tonus is controlled by the peripheral nervous system and other physiological regulators, and can be affected by psychological conditions.

The practice begins with “presence,” a state of awareness of the body surface, then of the inner space, including bones, internal organs, circulation and breathing. G. Alexander says in her book, *Eutony*, “Disfunction can be eliminated and an optimal tension balance can be achieved leading to the Eutony of the total self.”

Such training requires a particularly acute ability to observe. Awareness itself can become the object of observation, while tracing at the same time the effects of this observation on the whole organism, registering any change in tonus, breathing, body stillness or movement, thoughts and emotions.

A Eutony therapist must develop the

capacity to observe all the student’s non-verbal manifestations. Awareness of the effect of postural reflexes is developed, and postural reflex is stimulated by pushing various body parts against resistance. This releases the tension of muscles connected to the bones involved, liberates breathing and circulation, and makes the body feel light.



In addition there are “control positions or postures.” In “control positions” we try to achieve maximum freedom of joints and appropriate length of muscles for movement. This approach is especially valuable for movement training in sports, dance and gymnastics.

My experience is that Eutony used with Yoga techniques has the potential to be an essential therapeutic approach for psychosomatic disorders and rehabilitation.

Working with cases of osteoporosis, Gerda Alexander achieved therapeutic results using techniques such as “micro stretch” and “intention of movement.” To obtain optimal circulation in deep lying muscles, “anticipatory innervation” (the intention of stretch movements, without executing them) is used. In this way, the motor innervation, metabolic demands, lactic acids and waste

products of movement are avoided, and only the tonus and blood circulation are effected. This technique is employed for hypo and hypertension, poor circulation, and paralysed muscles from poliomyelitis or accidents.

In Eutony, a distinction is made between “touching” and “contact.” In “touching” the boundaries of the body are experienced, while “contact” gives essential information about the external world and sensations coming from the outside. In “eutonic contact” we also include the surrounding space in awareness. Thus, without touching, the Eutonist is able to make real contact with other human beings, objects, etc. This “contact” has greater influence than “touch” in relation to changes in tonus. It permits reestablishment of the equilibrium of the autonomic system.

With eutonic movement, which includes total body awareness, “presence” through space is widened by means of “contact.” Once practitioners have the capacity to balance their own tonus, they are able to observe and influence the tonus of others.

My experience is that Eutony used with Yoga techniques has the potential to be an essential therapeutic approach for psychosomatic disorders and rehabilitation.

G. Alexander wrote, “Since the body is also the mind, it contains traces of the individual and the collective consciousness and unconscious.

Therefore, it must also be able to express the totality of each unique personality by means of the infinite riches of its own possibilities together with the past history of humanity and all the future potentialities of the species. Eutony is devoted to this never ending quest.”

Alicia Souto will be one of the featured speakers at the Yoga Research Society Conference (October 21-22, 2000)



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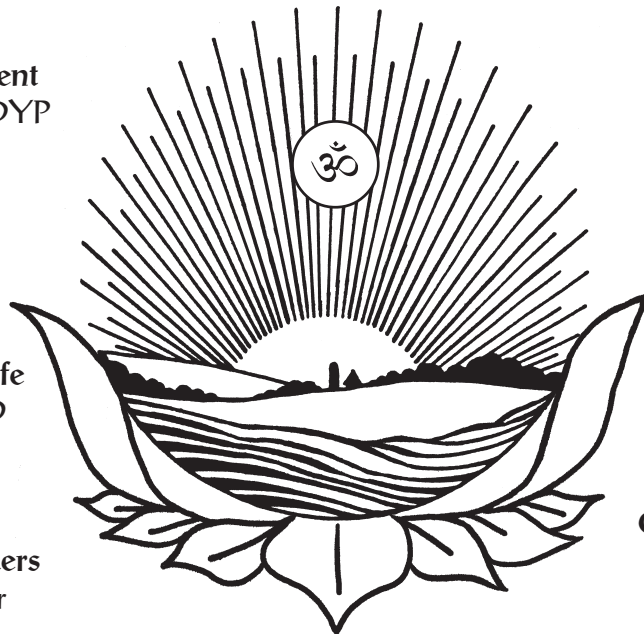
SATURDAY

Yoga for Life Management
Vijayendra Pratap, PhD, DYP
India

The Breath of Life
Dietrich Ebert, MD
Germany

Bringing the Soul to Life
Maurie Pressman, MD
Todd Pressman, PhD
USA

Meeting with the Speakers
YRS Members' Dinner



SUNDAY

Managing Ageing
Julio Kuperman, MD
USA

Eutony Awareness
Alicia Souto, MA
Argentina

Homeopathy & Yoga
Bernardo Merizalde, MD
USA

QiGong & Cancer Therapy
Master FaXiang Hou
Justin Wu, MD
China

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