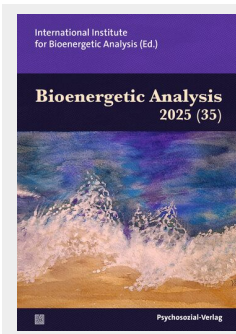


Len Carlino, Laurie Ure

A Reflection on the Exquisite Amalgam of Bioenergetic Analysis



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Abstracts

The uniqueness of bioenergetic analysis lies in the wide variety of facets that it incorporates. While advanced bioenergetic therapists and trainers may have a clear understanding of the many aspects of bioenergetic analysis, this article introduces several new concepts and outlines seven distinct facets that together make up the exquisite amalgam of the bioenergetic approach to psychotherapy. These include psychodynamic theory, character analysis, the physical dynamics of character structure, transference and countertransference, the therapist's use of self with an available heart, resonating with the patient, and the new concept of the pendulum illustrating both regression to progress and progression to regress. Throughout the article, we explain these areas and offer references for further understanding. We include case examples to illuminate some of these principles, such as regression to progress and progression to regress.

Keywords: character structure, regression, relational trauma, therapist-patient resonance, therapist's use of self

Uma Reflexão sobre a Extraordinária Amálgama da Análise Bioenergética (Portuguese)

A singularidade da Análise Bioenergética está na enorme variedade de facetas que ela incorpora., embora terapeutas bioenergéticos experientes e *trainers* possam ter uma compreensão clara dos seus muitos aspectos, este artigo apresenta vários conceitos novos e salienta sete facetas distintas que, juntas, configuram a extraordinária amálgama da abordagem bioenergética na psicoterapia. Elas incluem: teoria psicodinâmica, análise do caráter, a dinâmica física da estrutura de caráter, transferência e contra-transferência, o uso, pelo terapeuta, de si mesmo, mas com o coração aberto, ressoando com o paciente, e o novo conceito do pêndulo – ilustrando tanto a regressão para o progresso como o progresso para

a regressão. Este artigo explica aquelas áreas e oferece referências para uma melhor compreensão do assunto. Incluímos exemplos de casos, para ilustrar alguns desses princípios, tais como regressão para o progresso e progresso para a regressão.

Une réflexion sur l'amalgame exquis de l'analyse bioénergétique (French)

La particularité de l'analyse bioénergétique réside dans la grande variété de facettes qu'elle intègre. Bien que les thérapeutes et les formateurs bioénergétiques avancés puissent avoir une compréhension claire des nombreux aspects de l'analyse bioénergétique, cet article introduit plusieurs nouveaux concepts et décrit sept facettes distinctes qui, ensemble, constituent l'amalgame exquis de l'approche bioénergétique à la psychothérapie. Il s'agit notamment de la théorie psychodynamique, de l'analyse du caractère, de la dynamique physique de la structure du caractère, du transfert et du contre-transfert, de l'utilisation du soi par le thérapeute avec un cœur volontaire, de la résonance avec le patient et du nouveau concept de pendule qui illustre à la fois la régression vers le progrès et la progression vers la régression. Tout au long de l'article, nous expliquons ces domaines et proposons des références pour une meilleure compréhension. Nous incluons des exemples de cas pour clarifier certains de ces principes, tels que la régression vers le progrès et la progression vers la régression.

Una riflessione sullo squisito amalgama dell'analisi bioenergetica (Italian)

L'unicità dell'Analisi Bioenergetica risiede nell'ampia varietà di sfaccettature che incorpora. Mentre i terapeuti e i formatori bioenergetici avanzati possono avere una chiara comprensione dei numerosi aspetti dell'Analisi Bioenergetica, questo articolo introduce diversi nuovi concetti e delinea sette sfaccettature distinte che insieme costituiscono lo squisito amalgama dell'approccio bioenergetico alla psicoterapia. Questi includono la teoria psicodinamica, l'analisi del carattere, le dinamiche fisiche della struttura del carattere, il transfert e il controtransfert, l'uso del sé da parte del terapeuta con un cuore disponibile, la risonanza con il paziente e il nuovo concetto del pendolo che illustra sia la regressione al progresso che la progressione alla regressione. In tutto l'articolo spieghiamo queste aree e offriamo riferimenti per una maggiore comprensione. Includiamo esempi di casi per chiarire alcuni di questi principi, come la regressione al progresso e la progressione alla regressione.

Eine Reflexion auf das exquisite Amalgam der bioenergetischen Analyse (German)

Das Einzigartige der bioenergetischen Analyse liegt in der Vielfalt ihrer Facetten. Während erfahrene bioenergetische Therapeuten und Trainer sicher ein klares Bewusstsein dieser mannigfachen Aspekte der bioenergetischen Analyse haben, führt dieser Beitrag verschiedene neue Konzepte ein und beschreibt sieben unterschiedliche Aspekte, welche zusammengenommen das exquisite Amalgam des bioenergetischen Ansatzes in der Psychotherapie ausmachen. Dieses Amalgam beinhaltet psychodynamische Theorie, Cha-

rakteranalyse, die körperliche Dynamik der Charakterstrukturen, Übertragung und Gegenübertragung, Gebrauch des Selbst seitens des Therapeuten mit einem offenen Herzen, die Resonanz mit dem Patienten sowie ein neues Pendelkonzept, welches sowohl die Regression zum Fortschritt als auch die Progression zum Rückschritt erläutert. Im Laufe des Beitrags erklären wir diese Bereiche und bieten Hinweise für ein vertieftes Verständnis. Wir führen auch klinische Beispiele an, um einige dieser Begriffe wie z. B. die Regression zum Fortschritt und die Progression zum Rückschritt zu erklären.

Размышление об изысканном сочетании биоэнергетического анализа
(Russian)

Уникальность биоэнергетического анализа заключается в широком разнообразии аспектов, которые он включает в себя. В то время как продвинутые биоэнергетические терапевты и тренеры могут иметь четкое представление о многих аспектах биоэнергетического анализа, эта статья вводит несколько новых концепций и очерчивает семь различных аспектов, которые вместе составляют изысканную смесь биоэнергетического подхода к психотерапии. К ним относятся психодинамическая теория, анализ характера, физическая динамика структуры характера, перенос и контрперенос, открытость сердца терапевта как инструмент, резонанс с пациентом, и новая концепция маятника, иллюстрирующая как регресс к прогрессу, так и прогресс к регрессу. На протяжении всей статьи мы объясняем эти вещи и предлагаем ссылки для дальнейшего понимания. Мы приводим конкретные примеры, чтобы проиллюстрировать некоторые из этих принципов, такие как регресс к прогрессу и прогрессирование к регрессу.

Reflexión sobre la exquisita amalgama del análisis bioenergético (Spanish)

La singularidad del análisis bioenergético radica en la diversidad de facetas que integra. Aunque los terapeutas y formadores bioenergéticos con más experiencia suelen tener una comprensión clara de los diversos aspectos del enfoque, este artículo introduce varios conceptos nuevos y describe siete facetas distintas que, en conjunto, conforman la exquisita amalgama del análisis bioenergético en psicoterapia. Estas facetas incluyen la teoría psicodinámica, el análisis del carácter, las dinámicas físicas de la estructura del carácter, la transferencia y contratransferencia, el uso del terapeuta de sí mismo con un corazón abierto, la resonancia con el paciente y el nuevo concepto del péndulo, que ilustra tanto la regresión hacia el progreso como la progresión hacia la regresión. A lo largo del artículo, se explican estos aspectos y se ofrecen referencias para profundizar en su comprensión. Además, se incluyen ejemplos clínicos que ilustran algunos de estos principios, como la regresión hacia el progreso y la progresión hacia la regresión.

对躯体动力分析精巧组合的反思 (Chinese)

摘要：躯体动力分析的独特之处在于它所包含的方方面面。虽然高级躯体动力分析治疗师和培训师可能对躯体动力分析的许多方面都有清晰的了解，但本文介绍了几个新概念，并概述了躯体动力分析心理治疗方法的七个不同方面，这些方面共同构成了躯体动力分析心理治疗方法的精巧组合。其中包括心理动力学理论、人格分析、人格结构的物理动力、移情和反移情、治疗师带着一颗心的使用自我、与患者共鸣，以及说明从退行到进步和从进步到退行的钟摆新概念。在整篇文章中，我们对这些领域进行了解释，并提供了进一步理解的参考资料。我们还列举了一些案例来说明其中的一些原则，如从退行到进步和从进步到退行。

Introduction and Personal Note

In this article, I'd like to share how I came to understand Bioenergetic Analysis and how to present/teach bioenergetics to students who are in the process of becoming bioenergetic therapists. I believe I have a unique perspective, having been a student of bioenergetics for over 50 years, an IIBA trainer for over 40 years, and a patient, student, and colleague of Dr. Alexander Lowen for 25 years. I encourage others with similar rich experiences to contribute their unique perspectives.

As the title of this article states, bioenergetics is exquisite in how it integrates many theoretical psychotherapeutic approaches. The most profound is the integration of the body with the psyche. Further, bioenergetic therapy offers more than a specific technique or even a series of techniques. The bioenergetics approach incorporates a complex combination of factors to address the full range of issues clients present effectively.

While staying true to the IIBA curriculum, I found that using the framework presented in this article gives a rich, comprehensive, and simplistic way of understanding and teaching the exquisite amalgam that is bioenergetics. I have crystallized the ways I work as a bioenergetic therapist into seven distinct categories, which I will describe in this article.

Finally, Laurie Ure has enriched this article with her writing and editorial skills. She has added useful therapeutic examples and has brought my ideas alive and more relatable. I hope you enjoy reading our joint effort.

Psychodynamic theory

The foundation of our understanding of our clients, as bioenergetic therapists, rests in psychodynamic theory – that is, the understanding that early childhood

experience profoundly impacts a person, including both who they are and the problems they bring to the therapy. In bioenergetic therapy, we integrate basic Freudian theory and other psychodynamic theories, including Self-Psychology, Object Relations Theory, Attachment Theory, etc.

Psychodynamic theories further influence our understanding that childhood experiences impact a person's development and current perceptions of the world. Bioenergetic theory expands psychodynamic/developmental theory with the belief that early childhood experiences impact the form of a person's body as well as their current life functioning.

While we perceive that early childhood experiences form the root of a person's struggles, our clients are often unaware of the significance of their childhood. The past lives in their unconscious, and it becomes our job as therapists to help them link their past to their present realities. We do this through verbal exploration of their memories, our understanding of what we see in the shape of their body, and making connections between the past and their current challenges. In bioenergetic analysis, we also understand that developmental experiences contribute to how a person functions, what they feel, and their expectations in present relationships.

By being aware of the significance of psychodynamic understanding, we can, when appropriate, specifically point out the link between a person's present situation and their early experience. This enables us to increase our understanding of the roots of the client's presenting problems and offer psychoeducation as a therapeutic intervention.

In the article "Analysis of Developmental Trauma," Shahri (2014) excellently describes the intersection of psychodynamic theories with bioenergetic analysis. He comprehensively explains theories of child development and their impact on the formation of the individual. Shahri also covers findings of neuroscience, including Polyvagal Theory, and discusses how these theories contribute to the bioenergetic concept of character structure as rooted in developmental trauma.

Character Analysis

A thorough understanding of character analysis forms the basis of Wilhelm Reich's contribution to bioenergetic analysis and the field of psychotherapy. Reich introduced affect into analysis. In Reichian work, the therapist confronted the patient's character, which often elicited an emotional response from the patient. Reich emphasized how something was said and not just what the patient

said. Character analysis aims to make the patient identify their character as a neurotic formation that limits and interferes with vital ego functions.

Character is the basic defensive attitude with which a person confronts life – e.g., proud, ashamed, sarcastic, seductive, overly friendly, seeking to please others.

Additional examples of expressions of character that need to be observed and analyzed by the therapist include:

- haughtiness
- sarcasm
- whining
- hostility
- nastiness
- passivity
- envious
- spiteful
- bitter
- pushy
- shy/withdrawn
- boisterous
- overly polite
- overly accommodating
- overly happy
- smiling all the time
- cold

These qualities transcend character structures and become defensive styles to protect the person from further injury, similar to what they experienced as children. Therefore, they can be viewed as “defensive styles” of relating to people in their lives. For further explanation of the concept of defensive style, see the article “Defensive Style in Bioenergetic Therapy: What it Means and Why it Matters” (Ure, 2023).

Working with a patient’s defensive style is related to more significant issues of character analysis. The topic of character analysis warrants additional ongoing and thorough exploration in the bioenergetic community. It is one of Reich’s significant contributions to the field of psychotherapy and forms the basis for making accurate bioenergetic therapeutic interventions. The better the therapist’s skill with character analysis, the better they will be at identifying a patient’s defensive style and vice versa.

Dr. Lowen said that doing skilled character analysis (and, by extension, identifying a patient's defensive style) is the most difficult task for a therapist to master. It requires a lot of therapeutic experience as well as personal life experience.

Character analysis includes both a thorough understanding of the person's characterological defenses through reading the shape of their body and becoming familiar with their defensive style in relationships. When we have developed a solid relationship with the client, we can sometimes verbally confront their character. This analysis can be done through the therapist's direct statements highlighting the patient's harsh reality. Sometimes, interventions such as humor or gentle teasing work effectively to highlight the point.

Interventions to confront the client's characterological ways of being require that the therapist be mature and clear enough to know that they are not projecting their own feelings onto the client. Further, the therapist has to have an advanced understanding of the client, being certain that the client will be able to hear and accept the feedback without it causing them to become more defensive.

Two case examples from Laurie will illustrate this point. The first involves a client who has a history of being overly nice and fears he will lose the relationship if he expresses himself assertively. Occasionally, he asks to use the bathroom before a session by stating in a meek voice: "Would it be okay for me to use the bathroom before we begin?" I (Laurie) have worked with him for several years (I would not respond this way with a new client), so I feel comfortable confronting this defense with teasing by saying something like: "Oh boy, that's a lot to ask. I don't know if it's okay for you to use my bathroom, maybe you should just hold it until the end of the session." In response to this comment, we can laugh together.

Another client who had a history of severe self-deprivation, including barely eating enough calories, revealed to me that she sometimes does not eat before her mid-morning sessions with me. Again, we had worked together for several years at this time. On one occasion, I noticed that she spoke especially loudly, with pressured speech, and expressed anger about a situation out of her control. I asked if she had eaten anything before her session that day. When she said she hadn't and talked about not wanting to eat out of fear of gaining weight, I realized that her irritability was likely related to hunger. I stopped her irritable rant and told her that, going forward, she needed to eat before her sessions. I said I would not see her that day if she did not eat before she came. While this may sound harsh, I used this strong intervention to cut through her deeply rooted, characterological habit of self-deprivation and denial about the impact of poor self-care on her health.

Her eating habits and self-awareness shifted after this, and she said it helped her feel that I cared about her.

The Physical Dynamics of Character Structure

One of Dr. Alexander Lowen's most profound contributions involves correlating character structure with physical dynamics. He linked tensions he observed in a person's body to their childhood experiences that formed their body structure. He noticed that bodies develop patterns of tension to hold back expressions and feelings (including both sensations and emotions) that were not allowed or accepted in the childhood environment.

Dr. Lowen also developed active techniques to confront both the physical dynamics and the character structure. These techniques are designed to soften the physical tensions and, in some instances, strengthen flaccid and collapsed musculature. He designed all of the techniques to increase blocked energetic flow in patients.

Bioenergetic therapists develop knowledge and experience working with the body-based techniques of Dr. Lowen. A central aspect of practicing as a bioenergetic therapist includes understanding when and how to use body-based techniques that integrate movement, expression, breath, and emotion combined with understanding. These techniques include grounding, breathing backward over a stool, exercise ball, or roller, kicking, hitting, and asserting personal boundaries. Further, advanced bioenergetic therapists have the flexibility and creativity to design their own body-based techniques in the moment, to address needs presented by their clients.

For a thorough explanation of the bioenergetic concept of character structure, descriptions of each structure, and treatment approaches for addressing them, see the books *The Physical Dynamics of Character Structure* (Lowen, 1958) and *Bend Into Shape* (Schroeter & Thomson, 2016). *Bend Into Shape* offers a comprehensive reference guide to the bioenergetic character structures and treatment approaches for each type. It provides valuable information for both bioenergetic therapists and trainees.

Transference and Countertransference Phenomenon

Understanding the impact of transference and countertransference deepens our understanding of the relationships our patients experienced in their childhoods,

and how these influence their patterns and expectations in current relationships. Transference and countertransference involve recognizing and working with the unconscious projections of childhood experiences and attitudes of patients onto the therapist and of the therapist onto the patient.

As bioenergetic therapists, we have the added benefit of working with our own bodies to understand the patient's transference and when we are activated by countertransference. Bioenergetic therapists highly value ongoing in-depth self-exploration and development of our ability to sort out the impact of transference and countertransference within therapeutic relationships.

Further, bioenergetic therapists value the use of supervision to separate out the sometimes complex and intricate dynamics of transference and countertransference that can occur in long-term therapeutic relationships. The requirements for certification to become a bioenergetic therapist include extensive personal therapy and many hours of supervision, which reflect this value. Bioenergetic training programs also include training in in-depth processing to allow the working through of transference issues from one's own childhood.

Robert Hilton, PhD, CBT, discusses a bioenergetic viewpoint of countertransference in the article titled: "Countertransference: An Energetic and Characterological Perspective," which can be found in his book *Relational Somatic Psychotherapy: Collected Essays of Robert Hilton, PhD*. (Hilton, 2007, pp. 286–293). In addition, the 2009 clinical journal of the IIBA article contains an article about countertransference titled: "Personal Musings on Countertransference in the Context of Becoming a Bioenergetic Analyst" (Mills, 2009). In the article, Jacqueline Mills describes her experience with countertransference challenges as a bioenergetic therapist.

The Therapist's Use of Self in Relationship with an Available Heart

The therapist's understanding and comfort in using his/her unique self to make therapeutic interventions in the context of an intimate therapeutic relationship becomes a valuable tool when the therapist feels comfortable using it. In addition, when the therapist can offer an available, open-hearted connection within the ethical boundaries of the therapy relationship, this can become an integral part of the healing dynamic.

In my article titled: "The Therapist's Use of Self" (Carlino, 1993), I explain what I mean by the therapist's use of self and how this differentiates from coun-

tertransference. I explain how I prefer the term the therapist's use of self rather than the psychoanalytic term of sharing the countertransference, stating: "This (term therapist's use of self), I believe, is more consistent with the bioenergetic tradition and the importance of self-expression for a healthy, functioning person." (Carlino, 1993, p. 91).

Further, I discuss how the use of self involves a keen awareness of my bodily sensations as I sit with the patient and the emotions the patient elicits in me, as well as an understanding of what the patient may need from me regarding relational repair from their childhood experience. It requires that I, as the therapist, maintain solid self-understanding to separate my unconscious countertransference from the patient's real needs in the relationship.

In my article, I outline guidelines and cautions for the therapist's use of self within the therapeutic relationship. I describe how honestly sharing my feelings with the patient requires that I do this solely for the patient's benefit and not my own, that I do it within the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship, and that I maintain awareness of the patient's ability to handle genuineness responses in their relationship with me. Finally, I state: "There is no single correct way to apply the use of self in therapy, but if the therapist is honest, direct, non-judgmental and comes from the heart, it will be the most effective" (Carlino, 1993, p. 92).

Most of our patients have experienced wounding within a significant relationship during their childhood. Healing these wounds requires that the person have a different relational experience. They learn to love themselves through our example of demonstrating love and care for them. By offering our heart – manifested in our care for them – we offer them an ability to relate differently to themselves – with love, respect, and kindness, rather than with contempt, hatred, neglect, seduction, or smothering.

Modeling a different relationship includes a thorough exploration of the client's childhood relational experiences to understand the expectations they bring into their present relationships. Exploring a person's relational patterns includes considering how they have learned to relate to themselves and others – often with contempt, hatred, criticism, or neglect. Understanding these patterns requires significant exploration because clients generally cannot tell us about their childhood relationships, as they are integrated into the person's beliefs about themselves and others and their behavior.

Further, relational patterns are generally deeply ingrained and often largely unconscious. In therapy, we learn about a person's relational patterns over time through how they relate to us, what they tell us about their relationships, and

through asking about their self-talk. Shifting relational patterns requires significant repetition and patience.

I (Laurie) described my work with a client on the journey from self-loathing and deprivation to self-love in an article titled: “The Enduring Power of Bioenergetic Therapy: From Trauma to Joy” (Ure, 2024). My genuine care for the client, which I communicated throughout our therapeutic relationship, enabled her to shift her deep depression into living a life focused on joy. In the article, I described interactions with my client in which I communicated my care for her. I discussed how she informed me that it was my care that made the difference, as she shifted from self-hate and self-deprivation that she learned from her relationship with her mother to self-love and self-care, which I modeled and expressed throughout her therapy.

Other articles in the bioenergetic literature elaborate on the theme of the significance of the therapist’s relationship with the patient. Robert Hilton, for example, in his book *Relational Somatic Psychotherapy: Collected Essays of Robert Hilton*, offers essays about the significance of the therapeutic relationship. He includes an essay titled: “Relationships: Taking the Care” (Hilton, 2016, pp. 133–140) and another titled: “Ending With an Open Heart” (Hilton, 2016, pp. 199–214). Elaine Tuccillo offers a rich, in-depth discussion of unconscious relational dynamics in her article titled: “Somatopsychic Unconscious Processes and Their Involvement in Chronic Relational Trauma: Somatic Transference and its Manifestation in Relational, Family and Power Dynamics” (Tuccillo, 2013).

Resonating with the Patient

Increasing the therapist’s energetic contact with the patient can facilitate understanding a patient’s defensive style and character structure and make more accurate therapeutic interventions. The energetic contact happens when the therapist softens their character defenses and loosens their ego boundaries. This softening of personal boundaries enables the therapist to resonate with the patient’s energetic self. The resonating contact can be compared to a tuning fork, where the patient represents one prong of the fork, and the therapist represents the other. The task of the therapist is to have the two prongs resonate together.

When the therapist is in resonance with the patient, contact becomes an energetic phenomenon, not merely mechanical or intellectual. The therapist can then use their theoretical and intellectual knowledge, integrated with their resonating body experience, to understand what the client experiences and may need

for growth. Using personal resonance facilitates the therapist's making profound, accurate, and grounded therapeutic interventions. While the evolving scientific research on mirror neurons is inconclusive, it may one day find a neurological explanation for what makes bioenergetic resonance in therapy a reality.

In his book *Character Analysis*, Wilhelm Reich (1949) focuses on the importance of flowing freely in the work rather than clinging to intellectual knowledge. He states:

“Treatment rests largely on intuitive comprehension and action. Once one has overcome the typical tendency of the beginner immediately to ‘sell’ his knowledge of the case if one lets oneself flow freely, then the essential basis for analytic work is established. This ability of the analyst to let himself flow freely in the work, instead of clinging to his intellectual knowledge, depends, of course, on certain conditions of a characterological nature ...” (Reich, 1949, p. 137).

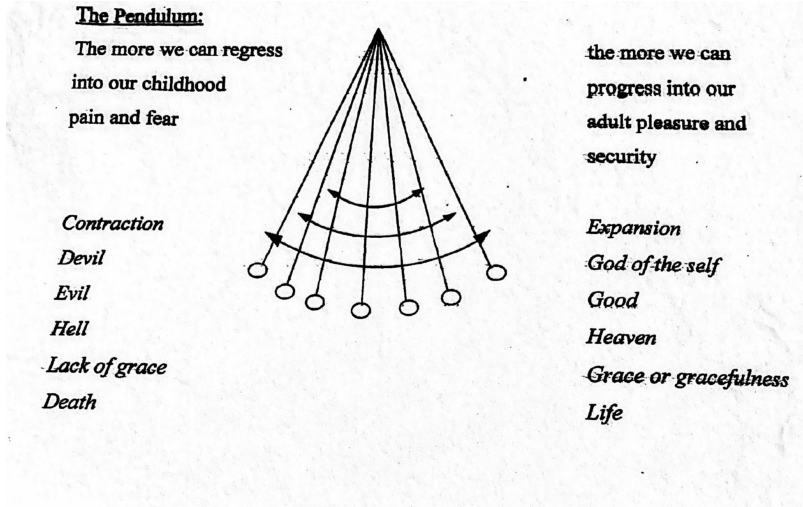
As a therapist, I attempt to resonate with what the patient experienced as a child even before they have expressed it in words or even are conscious of it. This resonance gives me an energetic insight into what they experienced or didn't experience as a child and guides my interventions with the client. Because of the subtlety in this way of working, learning to resonate with a patient energetically is the most challenging skill for a bioenergetic trainee to develop.

“The Pendulum:” Regress to Progress and Progress to Regress

Bioenergetic therapy values the use of regression via catharsis. However, regression is only productive to the extent that the uncovered feelings can be grounded and integrated. Similarly, growth via insight alone is not productive unless the insights are grounded in past pain and trauma. Productive analytic body therapy, thus, involves the ability to increase feelings via both regressive and progressive work.

I believe that the further we can regress in a grounded way, the more we can progress. Similarly, the more we can progress by strengthening the ego, the more the ego is capable of regressing. To represent the process of regression and progression I use the analogy of the pendulum. The swing to the left represents regression, and the swing to the right represents progression. The further we can regress, the further we can progress, and vice versa. The left side or regressive feelings represent pain, fear, contraction, the devil, evil, hell, lack of grace, and death.

The right side, or progressive feelings, represents pleasure, security, expansion, the God of the self, good, heaven, grace, gracefulness, and life. The following diagram further illustrates this:



We can also correlate character structure as viewed via the pendulum swings as follows:

Character Type	Regressive	Progressive
Schizoid	Fear of annihilation	Self-Integrity
Oral	Longing and insecurity	Connected and safe
Narcissistic continuum	Denial of the true self	Self-possession
Masochistic	Feeling constricted and controlled	Free and independent
Rigid	Inability to open heart and connect with sexuality	Open heart connected to sexuality

To give an example of how this pendulum swing works with a patient – I invited a client to go backward over the stool. In a regressive, cathartic movement, she cried

strongly to express how frightened and abandoned she felt as a child. After several minutes of crying, she seemed stuck in the crying, and I believed it had ceased to be productive. She had lost contact with her adult sense of self, and to stay there would have affirmed her childhood experience of feeling sad and being alone.

I wanted to help her build tolerance for the pain from her past, which she could not feel as a child, but also not stay in this overwhelmed state. I wanted her to separate the past, when she was helpless as a child, from the present, where, as an adult, she can reach out for what she needs and wants.

Gently, I encouraged her to stop crying and focus on breathing deeply to feel her body, especially her legs and feet. I then suggested that she lower her pelvis so it would start vibrating. In this, she can feel herself as an adult woman, with the capacity to feel and enjoy pleasure in her body, especially in her pelvis. Expanding this feeling of pleasure disrupts the despondency and despair from her childhood experience.

The progression includes moving towards a greater sense of self. It involves deepening the awareness and feeling of what our patients experienced as children while differentiating that as adults, they have a different reality, with more capacity to build strength and make choices.

Important points regarding the concept of the pendulum:

- The pendulum swing is a natural phenomenon. Grounded regression often brings forth growth on its own. Patients frequently report that when we identify their childhood reality and invite them to feel the feelings they could not feel as children, growth “progression” happens spontaneously in their lives.
- Likewise, the more we invite progression, by way of strengthening the ego, through grounding exercises, asserting boundaries, and expressing strong feelings, the more the patient can tolerate deeper regression.
- As the patient builds tolerance for their painful, regressive feelings, they can become grounded and embodied in their painful past. This increased tolerance makes the movement towards progression to an adult state possible. By regressing repeatedly, we aim to build tolerance for painful feelings rather than simply focusing on catharsis. Repeated regression is in the service of building tolerance for the childhood pain and trauma.
- Every psychotherapy session can have this dynamic of both regression and progression present. The pendulum swing from regression to progression can happen either slowly or rapidly.
- Basic bioenergetic exercises can be used both progressively and regressively. Kicking, for example, can be used to expand and express childhood impotence (regression) and with the expression “I didn’t feel seen.” It can be progressive

when instructing the client to kick with straight legs and strongly express: “See me!”

- A word of caution: the therapist must be careful only to regress the patient to the extent that they can integrate and ground the regressive feelings. Regressing the patient with integration and grounding allows growth and vitality, not flooding, overwhelming, or retraumatizing them with the experience. When and how to focus on regression vs. progression is a clinical decision that the therapist makes with caution and expertise.

Conclusion

I use this framework of the seven aspects of bioenergetic analysis when I do therapy. I keep all seven parts of the amalgam in the background of my consciousness while focusing on one or more of these aspects at any given moment. Based on my intuitive understanding and observations of what the client presents and how they respond, I then intuitively rotate the focus from one part of the amalgam to another. Doing profound bioenergetic analysis requires utilizing and integrating all seven aspects presented in this article. As therapists, we need to incorporate all seven aspects without eliminating or leaving any of them out. Our ability to weave these aspects into the therapy correlates to our effectiveness as therapists. Integrating these varied and rich facets makes Bioenergetic Analysis an exquisite amalgam, unique and different from any other form of therapy.

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