

*A new view is emerging which sees symptoms of suffering, in the form of assorted aches, pains, tension, and anxiety, as the body's innate wisdom creating communication with the conscious mind to promote somatic education, growth, healing and transformation. This perspective embraces the wisdom of embodiment. It views illness, neuroses, anxiety, depression, and addictions as instinctive and timely calls for change. To feel better, both the body and the Self need to be heard, respected and healed.*

## CHAPTER 1

### <sup>TM</sup> *Evolved Embodiment*

In this course, we will focus on the problem of somatic (sensory awareness of one's own body) dysfunction. This is a problem of bodily use and alignment that is unconsciously and automatically produced as a strategic survival response to trauma. It is also acquired as a compensation for dysfunction or disease that exists elsewhere in any of the bodily systems. Physically-based impairment and altered functional capacity involve not only misalignments or misuse in the skeletal, arthrodiagonal, and myofascial structures, but also the related vascular, lymph, and neural elements. This suggests that somatic dysfunction affects your functional capacity, your health, and your overall well-being. Because physical maladies are (per the concept of the mind-body continuum) linked with some sort of psychological counterpart, any type of somatic disturbance or irregularity creates a breeding ground for both physical and psychological compensation strategies.

This course proposes the value of a new type of healing construct that we call Evolved Embodiment. The general goals for achieving the advanced state of Evolved Embodiment, which is above and beyond the average individual's level of somatic awareness, include the following:

- Developing the ability to access somatic material using the vehicles of stillness, silence, concentration, and introspection. For the fitness professional, this goal translates into allowing time and space for the participants to explore and discover.
- Developing the ability to report somatic material using detailed, sophisticated, and precise terminology. For the fitness professional, this goal translates into developing the ability to use detailed, sophisticated, and precise instructional cues.

- Developing mind-body manners. This includes learning to stand, sit, and move efficiently and with awareness; learning to improve posture and basic movement skills; learning to relax at will; learning to breathe better; learning to select your thoughts.
- Using creativity to experience adventures in embodiment. This means letting ourselves become nourished, inspired, and uplifted by creative activity and aesthetic appreciation, and identifying how we respond to these constructs somatically.

*A good somatic educator will periodically remind the students that she is their second teacher, and that their own bodies are their first and best teachers. This fundamental statement clarifies the intent of somatic-based therapies. It suggests that your body is a rich source of instinctive, intuitive, and experiential information that is an invaluable resource for leading a productive, disciplined, happy, and fulfilling life.*

The state of Evolved Embodiment is a consciously-supported form of evolution that combines instinctual and intuitive ways of knowing with intellectual and analytical ways of knowing. As you get to know your body, you will get to know your mind. Metaphorically, you are ‘waking up.’ You are gradually becoming an active, energized, and interested, yet calm, collected, and content participant in your life’s journey.

#### General benefits of Evolved Embodiment

- Becoming more open to new experiences, growth and change
- Letting go of the need to judge, criticize, or continually seek perfection
- Coming to terms with the past
- Becoming less anxious and more confident
- Moving beyond comfort zones (removing self-imposed obstacles and boundaries)
- Improving imagination, attention, and aesthetic appreciation
- Developing curiosity and interest
- Taking responsibility for making changes in your body, life, and self

#### Physical benefits of Evolved Embodiment

- Better posture
- Better breathing
- Reduction in aches and pains
- Reduction in bodily tension
- Better range of motion
- Reduced chance of injury
- Better movement patterns
- Better digestion and elimination
- Better relaxation, better sleep
- Increased energy