

The Continuum of Engagement: A Tantric Approach to Working Therapeutically

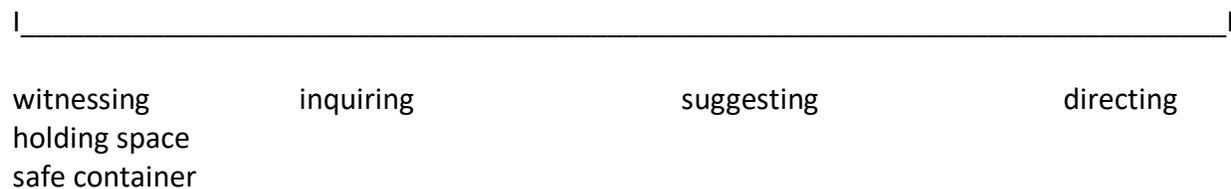
Spanda® Yoga Movement Therapy is grounded in the Samaya Sri Vidya Tradition. This is a Tantric perspective that rests in the knowledge that each individual person has an inner guidance system; and innate intelligence shared by all life, as seen even in a plant that turns toward the sun.

The many branches of the yoga tradition share in the practice of witnessing, or objectively observing the flow of activities appearing on the screen of the mind through the senses and other faculties. This ability to step back and observe the arising of impulses to thought, emotion, and action is at the heart of the therapeutic process as well.

Another main feature of this point of view is a belief in the agency of each individual. In this sense, this school of Tantra is humanistic; asserting that everyone has a vast reservoir of inner resources and an innate desire and capacity for growth, wellness and positive development.

In working with individuals in a therapeutic context, we can view engagement on a continuum that spans interactive choices ranging from silent witnessing, in the way one might watch one's own thoughts, to acting with the authority to determine what is best and fully directing a client in a session. Within these two polarities are opportunities to pose gentle suggestions, make inquiries, and otherwise engage in ways that are respectful of the individual's autonomy and developing abilities.

In group instruction, the setting may be such that this level of sensitivity and non-directing behavior is inconvenient and time-consuming and at times contrary to the adequate flow of the needs of a class. However, in private work, or even in work with small specialized groups, it is of great therapeutic value to allow self-reflective and self-directive faculties to mature, as this opens the doors of perception of the inner guidance always available and very much at the center of the yoga tradition. It also acknowledges the personal power potential of the individual client, and diffuses to a large degree the power differential that can impede self the development of self-awareness and self-responsibility.



Exercise: 3 partners: 1. Client- talk or move or do asana practice. 2. Practitioner. Respond in some ways. 3. Silent witness. Share with "I" statements. Switch 2 times. Share with group.