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## Logosynthesis: Energy Healing with Words

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### Abstract

Logosynthesis is an Energy Psychology technique and approach that was developed by Willem Lammers. Although Logosynthesis draws from various schools of psychology - especially Psychodynamic Psychotherapy and Transactional Analysis, as well as from the field of Energy Psychology it is essentially a trans-psychological technique or approach, as it is one of the few psychological approaches that explicitly integrate mind, body and spirit.

Logosynthesis embodies elements of hypnotherapy, somatosensory focusing, cognitive therapy, depth psychology, energy therapy and ritual. It is meditative in the sense of facilitating an internally focused, intentional state, attending to one's internal reality as determining experience – which permits a dissolving of the energetic structure of the problem. This results in more than a change in perception about the problem, and of oneself in relation to the problem; it is a change in one's experience of oneself.

Like all Energy Psychology techniques, Logosynthesis can be used not just in psychotherapy, but also in coaching, and in self-treatment. It can also be used as a *practice* - like meditation - to systematically resolve energetically charged imprints from past experiences, including traumas. Regardless of the way it is used, the result is the resolution of negative patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving that interfere with our ability to be the best we can be, to feel the best we can feel, to reconnect with our true Self, or Essence.

This article describes the technique, its distinguishing features and its application, as well as discussing broader aspects and implications of its hypothesized mechanisms. Three case examples are offered to illustrate both its application and its effectiveness.

*Key words – Logosynthesis, Energy Psychology, energy healing, healing with words, body/mind/spirit psychotherapy, reconnecting with essence, resolving negative patterns and feelings.*

### Background

Willem Lammers is fond of saying, "I am lazy and I am stupid and I don't want to work that hard at therapy." This always evokes laughter at workshops but it speaks to some of the key elements of Logosynthesis, the approach that he invented (or, as he says, discovered). Lammers is a Dutch-born, Swiss psychologist<sup>1</sup> with over 30 years' experience working with a variety of approaches. He trained in

bioenergetics, TA, hypnotherapy, NLP and Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT). He has been an EFT trainer and edited the book *The Energy Odyssey - New Directions In Energy Psychology*. All of these approaches are integrated into Logosynthesis to some degree.

I first encountered Logosynthesis in 2009 at the annual Energy Psychology Conference in Toronto. This was transformational for me. Here was a technique that completed a long process I had been following – of integrating energy work with psychotherapy. My training in psychotherapy, beginning 25 years ago, taught me to think of and to work with the psychological in terms of energy. I learned these concepts within a variety of frameworks, including Bioenergetics, Therapeutic Touch, Yoga, meditation, spiritual healing etc. For many years, as a licensed psychologist, I sought and sometimes struggled to find ways to integrate this understanding and this way of working with psychological issues in my practice. Some of the ways I was taught would not have been seen as acceptable or defensible for a licensed psychologist to utilize. Some of the techniques would have simply scared away clients who came for "normal" psychotherapy or counselling (or so I feared). Nevertheless, I have a fundamentally integrative nature, and only work effectively when I can be fluid and adaptive, moment-to-moment. So I found various – if minimal - ways to include "energy work" in the therapeutic process. One of the ways I did this was with guided meditations, guided imagery and guided journeying. I also had experienced and learned about the power of words as energy – in hypnosis, in magic, in ritual, and in ceremony. In all of these practices, the spoken word is seen as having resonance and power to affect people beyond the normal conscious, cognitive processes of psychotherapy. In hypnosis, words are seen as acting directly on the subconscious. In magic, ritual and ceremony, words are understood as actions on material reality with the capacity to affect it. In Kirtan (Indian devotional chanting) the resonance of certain vowel sounds are understood to affect both chanter and listener on an energetic level. So I also integrated "energy work" in my clinical practice through the conscious and intentional use of words, as I had learned to do in these practices.

Previously, I had had training in Shiatsu (Acupressure massage) and I was also acquainted with the ideas and the practice of working with the energy meridians in the body. So when I encountered EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques), this method made perfect sense to me and seemed to be a wonderful way to integrate energy work into psychotherapy. After learning it, working with it on myself to experience its effectiveness and to become practiced, and reading countless reports of its utilization, I began to utilize it with clients and found it highly effective in for a variety of problems, but especially for altering negative reactions to cognitions, events, perceptions and memories.

However, I observed that with EFT my clients would not necessarily have learned much about themselves in the process; they often would not have integrated a deeper or more complex understanding of themselves in relation to these patterns of feelings that had brought them to therapy– an understanding that would further enhance their resilience and deepen their meaningful relationship with life. Sometimes, in fact, people seemed to not even remember that they had had the problematic reaction or feeling that had so distressed them only moments before.

Granted, for many people the only goal in seeking help or treatment is relief from suffering, and I accept that this is the case for the majority of my clients. However, if people obtain relief from suffering without any understanding of how or why they suffered, of both the external and internal conditions that led to this suffering, there is less chance of them generalizing these changes to other aspects of their lives; less chance of them being able to take ownership of their well-being. I feel an ethical obligation to create a transformational situation where people at least have the opportunity to heal, rather than just to "feel better," and that implies an aspect of growth and learning.

My personal experience of working with inward-focused and energetic approaches (experience that include bioenergetics, meditation, ritual, ceremony and visualization) had taught me the benefits of these introspective and experiential processes, including exploring, engaging and working with the

inner world. My deepest motivation as a therapist is to introduce people to these potential processes and possibilities: the possibility that working on “problems” is a gateway to liberation from old patterns that limit one’s ability to live the life we truly want and to be who we really are.

A year or so after I started using EFT, I trained in TAT (Tapas Acupressure Technique) which I preferred as a better fit for me. It invited mindful, internal focusing and a slower, more contemplative and self-experiential process. I also appreciated and resonated with the emphasis on the practitioner's *Presence* as a critical factor, and as a focus for the practitioner. The influence of the practitioner’s energy and energy field on the energy field of the therapeutic session – and, therefore, on the client – has always been of immense importance to me. I presented a breakout session on this topic at the Energy Psychology Conference in Toronto in 2011, entitled “The Heart of the Therapist: Conscious Embodiment as an Ethic for the Energy Psychology Practitioner.”

As much as I enjoyed using TAT, I sometimes found the numerous steps cumbersome, and felt that surely it must be possible to streamline the process. When I attended Lammers’ session in Toronto, he presented a technique that did not involve tapping, or holding, or doing anything at all with the hands. It was unbelievably simple and elegant. It brought the focus at all times into the present moment. It made one aware that when working on an issue, one’s reaction at any moment was always to one’s own constructs and not to any external “reality.” Theoretically and philosophically, it was solidly grounded in the idea that there is one consistent, core issue underlying all others, which is the source of all suffering: our disconnection from our true Self or Essence. The client’s narrative about a problem, the events in time and their affect, are all recognized, respected and listened to, but are never reinforced or reified (that is to say, reinforced as being materially real). This prevents the therapist from inadvertently magnifying the narrative to which the client continues to react, or of providing positive reinforcement for these reactions themselves.

As noted above, although Logosynthesis draws from various schools of psychology - especially Psychodynamic Psychotherapy and Transactional Analysis, as well as from the field of Energy Psychology -- it is essentially a trans-psychological technique or approach, as it is one of the few psychological approaches that *explicitly* integrate mind, body *and* spirit. In fact, the premise of Logosynthesis is that our core Self is not located in our minds or bodies, in our thoughts or our feelings, but in our Essence, which some may call Spirit or other names. Most of the problems and symptoms we experience are seen as essentially caused by separation or dissociation from our true nature, or Essence (Lammers, 2008). Our essential state (the state of our Self in Essence) is understood to be one of wholeness. Therefore, if in our sense of self and in our moment-to-moment identity we were truly identified with our Essence, we would not feel the fears or the anxieties we feel. We would not be taking things personally, feeling threatened or fearing abandonment by others. We would at all times feel integral, whole, and unthreatened.

On the psychological level, problems are seen as being rooted in “imprints” - in the sense of “negative energetic influences” - left by our experiences. In more traditional psychological approaches these imprints may be seen as intangible but perceptible effects on the psyche, or as physiological effects on the brain. For example, a child who grows up with a parent who flies into incomprehensible, violent rages will be “imprinted” by this because it will remain an unresolvable experience that involved feeling unsafe both emotionally and physically. This experience will exist as a form of “template”. In the future, this person may react to others’ perhaps even appropriate expression of anger as if they were being faced again with incomprehensible, violent rage. The expression of anger in the present, “triggers” or resonates with the imprint from childhood and activates physiological, mental, emotional and behavioral responses from the childhood experience. In Logosynthesis, anything to which we have such a reaction when we think about it, for example, such as an imprint, is seen literally as an energy construct that exists in the present, as a 3-dimensional energetic structure, within our personal space. It is hypothesized that within our physical/energetic personal space, we hold energy related to

the person or event to which we are reacting, comingled with our own energy in reaction to it, and that the two create a structure of "frozen" energy. In this way, it is a representation that we participate in creating, and to which we react. That energetic structure is termed an "introject," in the language of Transactional Analysis. Although it may initially seem to be a stretch, with a little coaching people are often quite easily able to "tune into" or perceive these introjects - either as an image or as a felt sense.

The other defining feature of this technique is that it uses the power of words to heal. Words have an impact on the cognitive mind and on the subconscious, but more than that, words are energy, which have the power – when spoken with the focused energy of intention – to create change, to affect energy and matter. There is substantial interesting literature on this, starting with the hypnosis literature on physical healing, in addition to the well-accepted "observer effect" which involves the influence of unspoken thought or intention (Lipton, 2008, p. 93; Fosar and Bludorfon, web reference). There is also evidence of words having a direct effect on gene expression and through that, on brain function: "Positive words, such as "peace" and "love," can alter the expression of genes, strengthening areas in our frontal lobes and promoting the brain's cognitive functioning... However, a single negative word can increase the activity in our amygdala (the fear center of the brain). This releases dozens of stress-producing hormones and neurotransmitters, which in turn interrupts our brains' functioning." (Borchard, 2013)

Like all Energy Psychology techniques, Logosynthesis can be used not just in psychotherapy but also in coaching and self-treatment. It can also be used as a practice to systematically resolve introjects from the past. Regardless of the way it is used, the result is the resolution of negative patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving that interfere with our ability to be the best we can be, to feel the best we can feel and to reconnect with our true Self, or Essence. (Lammers, 2009)

In this paper I will be focusing more explicitly on the *technique* of Logosynthesis, but it is already clear from the above that this technique is firmly embedded in - and expressive of - a distinct and cohesive *approach*. I would argue that it is the *approach* of Logosynthesis that is truly groundbreaking and radically new in psychotherapy. As an approach Logosynthesis is a coherent system of conceptualizing how we develop the kinds of problems that bring us to therapy, and of addressing and resolving these problems. As I have described, it is based in a philosophy that explicitly integrates mind, body and spirit, locating our core Self in our Essence. Most of the problems and symptoms we experience are seen as essentially caused by separation or dissociation from our true nature, or Essence. Problems in our patterns of feeling, thought and behaviour are seen in terms of energy constructs that exists in space, and words are seen as actions that can dissolve those energy constructs. The use of the *technique* of Logosynthesis (described below) is inscribed in a comprehensive approach to guided change.

## **The technique**

Logosynthesis has certain conceptual and theoretical underpinnings which are essential to an understanding its practice, and which are particularly essential in the contextual framework of *why* we are doing what we are doing. These theoretical and conceptual underpinnings are so intrinsic to the work that in the results of the therapeutic work they emerge in the client's expression of their experience. However, in using the technique and in doing the work, theory and concept are more or less invisible and do not complicate or get in the way of applying the technique.

The technique is simple and elegant. In using Logosynthesis we do not have to conceptualize problems nor the origins of problems, nor the structures of problems. In fact, it is possible to use the technique without ever naming the problem (as it is with most energy-focused techniques.) We focus on two elements of the client's experience at any time – two elements which in fact constitute what the

client identifies as a "problem." First, there is a feeling or a state of mind or some other perceptual experience that the client has identified as problematic or, at least, the indication of a problem. Second, there is whatever it is that this feeling or other sensory reaction and related elements are a reaction to. We are not concerned with identifying the real, literal or accurate "thing" (cause) to which we are reacting. This would pull us into a subjective narrative, and out of the present moment. The framework of Logosynthesis keeps us in the present moment.

After inviting and/or guiding the client to tune into the sensory evidence of the "problem" for which they are seeking help (such as a particular emotion, mental state, or physical sensation) the therapist will ask, "If this feeling is a reaction to something here and now, in your personal space, what is it?" Alternately, if the client is confused by this, or has difficulty letting go of the narrative, we can also ask: "What is the first thing that comes up – before any thinking - if you imagine or wonder what this feeling is a reaction to?" The client might identify an image or a memory, or they might identify something more abstract such as "a pressure coming down on top of my head" or "a black cloud sitting on my chest." The client might even say, "It's another version of me, standing just a little to the side." We do not have to analyze or figure out what that represents, we simply work with what comes up in the present moment. We trust whatever the mind/body/spirit brings up for us to work on as a response to the question. Clients can form their own meanings about the introjects, and these meanings may evolve with the process.

If you think of something embarrassing that happened last week, you will feel embarrassed - *as if the event is occurring here and now* - and yet it is not. Here and now is a completely different time and place. We can say we are reacting *to the memory of it*, and yet if that were true, we would not be reacting as if it were happening now. We would be fully conscious that the event has passed and therefore no longer exists. Furthermore, when we ask the client to identify where in their personal space is, for example, the image of the person to which they are reacting, it is consistently possible to locate the "introject" to which they are reacting, in a specific position in the personal space. It can come up virtually anywhere – in front of them, to the side, behind, higher or lower. As we work on it, it will often shift in form, appearance and position before disappearing. We therefore ask: to what is the person reacting *here and now in the present moment*, if the apparent cause is not present? The answer is that the person is reacting to some form of representation of an event that they can locate in their own personal space.

Since these representations take on various, changeable forms, and since they are not physically evident in the space, and since we know that all matter as well as thoughts and emotion are in their essence, energy, the "thing" to which we are reacting is therefore considered in Logosynthesis to be an "energetic structure in space" (Lammers, 2008)

We then set about working with three simple sentences, retrieving our own energy that is bound up in and sustaining this energetic structure, and removing energy that is not ours that is bound up in and sustaining this energetic structure, as well as retrieving our energy bound up in our reactions to it. The sentences are simply action statements to that effect. The fact that these sentences are effective seems to further confirm the conceptualization of the introject as energy.

#### *Example 1.*

A man exploring his feelings of social exclusion is asked, "What is the first thing that comes up if you imagine that this feeling is a reaction to something, here and now?" He identifies an image of being in a schoolyard, looking at a group of peers. He describes the image as about ten feet away, in front of him and a little to the right.

We do not need to explore this memory or this narrative. The next step, the application, is to set about working with three simple sentences, retrieving the personal energy that is bound up in and sustaining this energetic structure, and removing energy that is not ours that is bound up in and sustaining this energetic structure, as well as retrieving our energy bound up in our reactions to it. The sentences are simply action statements to that effect:

1. *I retrieve all of my energy bound up in... and return it to the right place within myself;*
2. *I remove all non-me energy related to... from all of my cells, from all of my bodies, and from my personal space, and send it back to where it belongs;*
3. *I retrieve all my energy bound up in my reactions to... and return it to the right place within myself.*

Between each sentence there is a period of processing that can last from a few seconds to many minutes. After each sentence, or after all three, we refocus to find out what is in the field of awareness related to this issue, at the present moment. After repeating all three sentences this individual reports that that image has disappeared, to be replaced by one of his father. He identifies this image as about six feet away from him, a little higher than his eye level. We now repeat the procedure on this image. This, in essence, is the application of Logosynthesis.

### *Example 2*

An older woman has been suffering from multiple physical health issues, resulting in multiple losses from loss of mobility, loss of autonomy and self control related to incontinence, to loss of being able to engage in her favorite activities. She is in a reactive depression. We have done some work on a cognitive-behavioral level, but she continues to feel depressed and consistently describes it as a "fog" that has descended over her and within her. When I guide her in focusing, she describes the fog as descending a little below her solar plexus. After applying the technique, she describes the fog having lifted a little, and now only descending to the base of her jaw. As we continue, she eventually describes the fog as still present, but well above her head and not affecting her at all. Subsequently, she experienced a lifting of her depression that has continued for four months at this writing.

After applying the sentences, we always refocus on the introject and ask "what has changed, and what is the same?" in reference to both the introject and the response to it. As in the examples above, the feeling reaction will often have subsided – sometimes completely, sometimes partially. Sometimes the introject will have changed. If it is an image, people often describe that "it's fuzzier now. I can't see it so clearly, I can't grasp it." If it was, say, a sensation of weight or pressure on the body, they often report "it's gone" or "it's not as strong as it was."

Sometimes the introject is replaced by a new one, as in the first example. There is often a process of working through successive aspects of the problem (presenting as successive introjects). With a specific trauma or memory, for example, we may need to deal with specific parts, pieces or scenes of the event. Sometimes this can be done within one session, sometimes it takes multiple sessions.

Along with this, there are cognitive shifts that occur. When dealing with memories that were actively triggering strong reactions even ten minutes before, clients will often say something to the effect that, "It's in the past now. It has no relevance to me." The sentences themselves often lead to a new awareness: "I've expended a lot of *energy* on this..." This represents a significant cognitive shift when people were, up until a short time before, perceiving themselves helplessly and unavoidably affected by the memory. It is a cognitive shift that involves recognition of their own agency in sustaining the problem that had been causing their suffering.

Within this very simple structure, there is infinite room for the unique processes of both client and therapist. The creativity that is invited is not of the ego, but of one's Essence, accessed through intuition and felt sense.

*Example 3.*

I may have a sense that a person is so attached to a particular narrative, to a particular perception of themselves and their problem, that instead of directly addressing a "presenting problem" I might have them start with an internal, mindful focusing, and then ask: "If your fundamental desire or goal was to feel at peace inside, 100% at peace, without thinking about it, what is the very first thing that comes to mind as being in the way of feeling that way?" This sometimes allows for something to come up that the person had not been focusing on. It allows me to put aside my ideas of what we "should" work on. It also sometimes allows for a very clear and specific aspect of the already identified problem to come into focus – which takes us out of the narrative and "down" to a more fundamental level.

It cannot be overemphasized, however, that - aside from its use for self-help - Logosynthesis is seen as an intervention within a larger process of guided change. Whether in coaching, counselling or psychotherapy, the process begins with creating rapport and establishing safety, while exploring the client's goals and presenting issues. The client/practitioner relationship itself is understood to be the means by which the change happens; the "technique" is a process applied within that relationship. (Lammers, 2008)

A detailed clinical example of a single session is presented here. A more detailed example of a series of sessions is presented later.

*Example 4, from Willem Lammers:*

In one of our groups on trauma and Logosynthesis, François, a big, strong man, volunteered for a demonstration. After many years, he was still grieving for the loss of his sister, who had died in a traffic accident in France in 1979. For 34 years he had suffered in silence; now it seemed the right time to continue his life's path. In tears, he told the story of a dramatic week, how a policeman showed up at this front door and told him the news that would change his life. After the policeman was gone, François had spent long hours in a state of shock. Finally he had found the courage to inform his parents of the death of his sister, first his father, then his mother.

In the following days, he went to France to see his sister and to arrange the transport of the body to his country. When he arrived at the hospital, a nurse advised him he'd better not look at his dead sister: she had been trapped into the car and her body looked terrible. Then he decided not to go to see the body.

Here stalled François's story. His voice had sounded as if the fatal accident had happened yesterday. His grief touched me deeply, and I took the time to let his story sink in. I had to do something, but what? There was so much material that I could go along with, I could help him process each single event in that traumatic week, but that didn't seem right. There had to be a single key intervention key to end the grief process at once.

When is the time for a final farewell? After people have seen the dead relative. François had not seen his sister after she passed and hadn't had an opportunity to say goodbye. The nurse had blocked the grieving process, paradoxically caused her wish to protect him against reality. Thus there was no picture of this reality: 34 years after her death François remembered his dearly loved sister as a cheerful 24-year-old, full of plans, full of life. On a subconscious level he had a repressed fantasy of what his sister must have looked like when she had died in that wrecked car that night.

This was the key to the solution. I gave François the Logosynthesis phrases, which he repeated and took the time to process: 1. *"I retrieve all my energy, bound up in the image of my sister I've never seen, and take it back to the right place in my Self."* 2. *"I remove all non-me energy related to this image, from all of my cells, from all of my body and my personal space and send it to where it truly belongs."* 3. *I retrieve all my energy, bound up in all my frozen reactions to the image of my sister I've never seen, and take it back to the right place in my Self."*

The effect of the sentences was dramatic. Initially he cried softly, tears running down his cheeks. Then he became silent. The tense silence spread in the group, for a moment only noises from outside could be heard. I asked François what had happened, and with a dull voice he said, "Now I can recognize that my sister is gone." Now he knew their roads had parted, on that day in 1979. He felt a great emptiness. Then he described a small picture of his sister, which he saw up high left in the room, and he pointed to the beams of the attic where we worked.

Now I gave François the Logosynthesis sentences for this small image. After the second sentence, while the energy of his sister was leaving his personal space, he wept for minutes without holding back, heartbreaking. This was the real grief, saying goodbye to a life with his sister. After the third sentence François was quiet again, but this time the silence was different, there was a relief: The agony was over, everything had found a place after 34 years. Now I could talk to him about the fact that every person has their own way of life, that those roads meet, that we go together for a while and then split up. This interpretation seemed to help François to create a new frame of reference after this experience, and we were able to close the session. In the last minutes of the session I had tears in my eyes, too.

Two days later, François's wife Nadine told the group that in the morning after the session she had been awake early and had looked at her sleeping husband. In her words, François normally looks like "one of those dogs whose head only seems to consist of folds". That morning all his wrinkles were gone. François said he had a feeling of being born again. What a gift to be able to guide someone through such a process.

### **Distinguishing features of Logosynthesis**

So when Willem Lammers speaks of being "stupid and lazy and not wanting to work hard," he is partially referring to an intuitive sense that therapy can be simple and streamlined, and also to the discovery that this simple, elegant technique works, and that it is not necessary to get any more complicated than that. The other side of this coin is related to the phrase on the bumper sticker: "Meditation is not what you think."

Logosynthesis shares many characteristics with mindfulness meditation practice. Logosynthesis is meditative in the sense of an internally focused, intentional state, attending to one's internal reality as the determining experience – which permits a dissolving of the energetic structure of the problem. This is more than a change in perception about the problem, and of oneself in relation to the problem; it is a change in one's experience of oneself. (The change of perception is the result of experiencing oneself differently, which makes it a fundamentally "gnostic" process.) There are, in fact, a number of meditative techniques that could be said to accomplish the same thing. My experience is that none is as quick, easy and effective as Logosynthesis.

However, Logosynthesis is not a formal form of meditation, and is also not psychotherapy per se; it is a healing technique. Logosynthesis invites clients to come into the present moment. It invites them to shift out of the cognitive mind, out of the ego mind, and to shift to mindful awareness of sensory input,



of responses and of internal communication, with a non-judgmental attitude towards one's own feelings and thoughts – and also towards the process itself. It invites a disengagement from the narrative that the client has formed *about* what they identify as the problem, a narrative that actually *sustains* the problem, and to focus on it more with the kind of mindful attention in the present moment that meditation invites. This, alone, is transformational for many people, in the same way that learning meditation or mindfulness practice can be transformational. With some clients, that refocusing alone creates a cognitive shift with regards to their problems and their relationship with their problems.

At the same time, Logosynthesis differs from what we commonly think of as meditation because it involves a “doing” that differs from the process of meditation. (There are, of course, many kinds of meditation that do involve different forms of “doing.”) Many people diligently engage in meditative practices, including mindfulness, often without getting to the point of experiencing the transformational shift whereby what was a problem ceases to be, as the energetic structure of it dissolves – including the thoughts, feelings, beliefs and perceptions. The ideal result would be a change of perception, whereby the “problem” is now perceived differently – as a self-sustained construct, an illusion or even a delusion. Sometimes this shift is achieved, but only on the cognitive level. Sometimes the feelings and energy around the issue are suppressed or repressed, rather than released.

A caveat: I would never suggest that Logosynthesis *replaces* meditation in any way. There is no substitute for the meditation practice of *non-doing* as a practice of accepting things *exactly as they are*. Nevertheless, according to the following definition of meditation, Logosynthesis could be called a meditation technique:

Meditation is a practice in which an individual trains the mind or induces a mode of consciousness, either to realize some benefit or as an end in itself.

The term *meditation* refers to a broad variety of practices (much like the term *sports*) that includes techniques designed to promote relaxation, build internal energy or life force (qi, *ki*, *prana*, etc.) and develop compassion, love, patience, generosity and forgiveness.

Meditation may involve generating an emotional state for the purpose of analyzing that state — such as anger, hatred, etc. — or cultivating particular mental response to various phenomena, such as compassion. The term "meditation" can refer to the state itself, as well as to practices or techniques employed to cultivate the state. (Wikipedia)

There are further features of Logosynthesis that tie into meditative and transformational states. The act of speaking the three sentences – and particularly, of repeating them with the practitioner's guidance – engenders a particular feeling that can vary with the client. With some clients it takes on a ritualistic, ceremonial feel and rhythm, contributing to a light trance state. (I generally facilitate this by having clients first engage in focusing on their breathing.) With others it can take on a feeling of flow, of co-constructing the sentences, which is another form of transformational state (transcending one's isolated sense of self and experiencing a felt sense of working together on a problem).

Speaking the three sentences also results in “naming” the introject three times. Threefold repetition is a pattern well known to have power in oratory, literature, hypnosis and memorization. When the introject is something that the person has avoided naming or acknowledging openly, this has a power in and of itself. There are times in using the technique that I have sensed or seen that something shifts within the person when they repeat and name the introject the third time. This repetition of the introject can further contribute to a ritualistic process that intensifies the perceived/ experienced significance of the experience.

There are times when the naming is indirect. For instance, it is possible to use abbreviations such as “These images” or “This thing that happened” rather than focusing on a full statement of the details being addressed and the technique can be equally effective. Perhaps this points to the involvement of both conscious and subconscious cognitive processes. It may also point to the involvement of mechanisms that transcend such concepts such as the literal shifting, or relocation, of energy.

An important aspect of Logosynthesis is somatosensory focusing: the focus is on what we are experiencing in the present moment, in our bodies and personal space, attending to the experience as-is without interpretation but with an open curiosity to the information it holds. For example, we might ask, “Is there a memory connected to this feeling?” and discover something comes up to awareness.

The attitude with which we focus on feelings – both sensations and emotions - is important. With Logosynthesis we are guided to focus on them, not with an attitude that the negative feelings are problems, but rather that they are an indication of a problematic energy structure, and at the same time, that they are a gateway to it. The technique of Logosynthesis encourages this perspective. So we are not focusing on the feeling as suffering and as a bad thing (even as we are conscious of “feeling” this way); we are focusing on it with mindful attention and curiosity about how we are responding or reacting internally. This also contributes a level of detachment from the problem feelings and a shift away from the narrative, including the narrative about how we feel.

Therefore, we are shifting to an embodied experience, a conscious awareness of what we are experiencing in the present moment, and how we are reacting – as a reaction; we are also focusing on all sensory information, not just feelings or emotions, which creates another level of detachment and awareness. We focus on *what* these sensations are a reaction to – again, not within the narrative, but within the present moment. As we do this, various aspects of the introject come to light, various aspects become clear in terms of what we are reacting to. (See case reports below for examples.) We detach from the narrative, we gain awareness and insight of our own internal dynamics, we gain awareness and insight of specific stimuli to which we are reacting. This organically will lead to where and when these stimulus/reaction patterns were originally created, especially if prompted by a question: “If you allow yourself to move back in time to an earlier time in your life when you experienced this, what comes up?”

With use of this technique, people’s perceptions of their problematic feelings and reactions can potentially change from a perception framed in psychological terms to a perception that is consciously framed in terms of energy. They achieve an organic understanding of the origins of those stimulus/reaction patterns. At the same time, they experience changes in those stimulus/reaction patterns through the use of the technique. They realize the possibility of changing these patterns in general - not just of obtaining relief from symptoms, but of consciously engaging new patterns of reaction or perception, and of changing the dynamics so that they are no longer problematic. This results in the development of an empowered consciousness about themselves, their feelings, their reactions, and about the change process itself, that has potential long term benefits. In my experience, going back to my earlier comments, this is what distinguishes Logosynthesis most from the other energy-focused approaches I have tried; it is in this conscious learning about *how* these patterns of feeling and perception have persisted, and the self-empowerment that comes from not just being free of these patterns, but from being consciously engaged in the process of creating different patterns that are congruent with one’s Self.

Logosynthesis invites the practitioner/therapist to adopt a mindful stance and to be in the present moment. As a practitioner, the challenge with this technique is not thinking ahead or figuring out what to do next; the technique is so simple that we always know what to do next. The challenge to the practitioner is, again, very similar to meditation: to quiet the thoughts and stay present to the process

– both to the client's process and to one's own internal process. This, in turn, invites clients to be in tune with their intuition, to let go of expectations and to place more trust in their self, their internal intelligence and mind-body system, than in the therapist's therapeutic skills or cleverness.

This mindful stance is transformational for both client and therapist. It took me at least a year, if not more, of working with Logosynthesis, to learn to give up trying to be clever or creative with it. Deliberately manipulating the process just caused me to be less present for the client and more involved in my ego, in my striving for results, and to complicate the process. Since training in Logosynthesis involves a substantial amount of time experiencing it as a client – not as role playing but in actively working on relevant and significant issues – practitioners are aware of the client's experience from more than just observation. This contributes to greater attunement, as well as “buying in” to the experience of co-creating the process.

Between the sentences, as previously mentioned, is time for processing. We usually give instruction for the client to allow and observe whatever form of processing takes place, and to let the practitioner know when they feel it is done. This allows for the uniqueness of the individual's process, which can take seconds or several minutes. While many experience a concrete or literal processing of images and emotions directly related to the issue at hand, some experience the processing as a somatosensory experience – literally feeling energy impulses and exhibiting twitching and spasms - while others describe colours and lights moving and shifting.

Being in control of the processing time also facilitates a sense of ownership for the client, that it is one's own unique process in which one is engaged. It lessens the sense of having a technique administered, and increases the sense of being actively engaged in one's own process. It also cultivates respect for the uniqueness of one's own internal experience – particularly because we do not interpret that experience and we accept however it presents itself.

The processing often results in spontaneous cognitive shifts and reframing. People experience relief from the symptoms but also express changes in how they perceive the (no longer) triggering introject and their relationship to it. The results can include greater self-confidence, reduced internal conflict, greater clarity and an increasing sense of wholeness. The more issues are resolved in this way, the more there is a sense of integration, of recapturing lost parts of the self. This is the ultimate and explicit goal of Logosynthesis, to reclaim and re-integrate dissociated parts of the self and dissociated energies of the self, thereby reconnecting one's ordinary sense of “self” with a higher, spiritual “Self.” As a core and explicit goal, this is a fundamental aspect that distinguishes Logosynthesis from most other psychological and energy psychology approaches. This invites a comparison to the shamanic approach of soul retrieval, or rescuing and reuniting lost parts of the soul.

## **Mechanisms Involved**

My experience of using Logosynthesis – along with that of many other practitioners I know, is that it is consistently and reliably effective; not just for symptom reduction, but for symptom resolution. Or, rather, resolution of the identified “problem”: that is to say, the constellation of thoughts, perceptions, beliefs and physical and emotional responses that constitute the problem. I give examples below to illustrate its application and its effectiveness. The mechanisms by which this occurs are currently a question of hypothesis and subject to discussion. That discussion is beyond the scope of this paper. However, I would like to offer a few thoughts I believe are fundamental to this discussion.

First of all, there is the hypothesis that Lammers (2009) offers: that is to say, that we are doing exactly what we say we are doing, that the mechanism by which the results are achieved is that the intentional expression of the sentences relocates stuck energy from an energy construct, and

dissolves the construct and therefore the problem. Although from the point of view of scientific materialism this hypothesis may be hard to entertain, it is not so far-fetched in relation to what we know – even within the realm of materialistic science. For example, in discussing the mechanisms involved in the more prevalent types of Energy Psychology technique (EFT and TFT) David Feinstein (2012) explains how the concepts underlying these mechanisms are grounded in demonstrable and measureable electromagnetic fields, waves and signals affecting neural activity. There is also significant research showing the efficacy of meditation on changing brain structure and functions (Goleman, 2004; Davidson, 2012; Grant, 2010), as well as showing the effects of prayer on producing changes in humans, animals, plants and other organisms. (Dossey, 1993).

A discussion about mechanisms should be based on features of the technique itself, as well on observation of the results. There are a number of aspects and features to the Logosynthesis technique and process, and I have observed each one of these to appear to have a critical impact - but at different times, in different ways with different clients. There is no aspect that I have witnessed being consistently critical – except for the speaking of the sentences themselves.

Clients consistently report that Logosynthesis brings about distinct changes:

- Memories that once triggered significant psychological and physiological reactions no longer do so.
- Situations in their current life that triggered significant stress reactions no longer do.
- People or situations that elicited confusion now are met with clarity.

It appears that significant cognitive changes occur – changes of perspective, reframing of perceptions, new insights and understandings, decreased personalization of meanings, as well as changes in physiological and neurological states. Aspects of the techniques themselves suggest some similarities to hypnosis and that some of the similar mechanisms may be involved, including subconscious suggestion. For instance, Cojan (2009), studying the neural mechanisms of hypnosis, "demonstrates that hypnosis does indeed lead to increased activity in areas of the brain involved in attention, as well as in other areas involved in mental imagery and self-awareness. It can therefore exert control over bodily movements by enhancing mental representations of the self (or self-imagery) and focusing attention on them" (Science blogs, 2013).

However, hypothesizing about *what* is changed does not answer the question about *how* - i.e. the mechanism by which - it changes. We can observe that in using a technique there are observable changes – behavioural, cognitive and emotional. We can postulate changes in the brain that are related to the changes observed. But we cannot say which is the primary mechanism for causing these changes. I believe that close analysis of this question, and attempts to explain changes on the basis of known mechanisms, will always lead to some gaps, holes and unanswered questions that can only be answered by hypothesizing direct manipulation of energy, as does Lammers.

See Larry Dossey's excellent article in *Explore* (Dossey, 2012) in which he cites Robert G. Jahn and Brenda Dunne of the Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research Laboratory from their book *Filters and Reflections*: "We... regard the brain as a neurologically localized utility that serves a much more extended "mind," or "psyche," or "consciousness" that far transcends the brain in its capacity, its range, endurance and subtlety of operation, and that is far more sophisticated than a mere antenna for information acquisition or a silo for its storage."

For example, I have noticed that whereas there is a clear and definite effect with Logosynthesis statements such as "I retrieve all of my energy bound up in..." There is no comparable effect from stating "I stop thinking about..." It is also interesting to note that the technique works even when people are quite puzzled about the sentences, expressing and exhibiting confusion about the words even as they are repeating them. For example, on many occasions after repeating the sentences, I

have had an individual frown in puzzlement and say, "I don't know where the right place within me is." On many of these occasions, before responding to that, I have checked with the person to see if the sentences have had an impact – if their response to the introject has changed – and on almost every occasion it had.

It is further interesting to note that people experience the processing between the sentences in very different ways. There are people who experience changes visually, in terms of fairly concrete or literal images related to the issue at hand. Other people experience the processing visually, but with images that are not obviously or literally related to the issue. Other people experience processing visually, but in what are apparently abstract manifestations of light and color (although these may be symbolically representative, or possibly manifestations of energy.) Others experience processing somatically or kinesthetically, including pulsating feelings, visible twitching, physical jerking motions and tension or reporting felt sensations of "energy" in their bodies. People may also describe the changes they experience as a result of using the technique in emotional, cognitive and kinesthetic terms.

Any discussion of mechanisms has to satisfactorily account for these various phenomena and forms of experience. My impression is that if the more "mainstream" Energy Psychology techniques such as EFT and TFT challenge prevalent paradigms in science and psychology, Logosynthesis does so even more. Even if analyzed in terms of what may, in reductionist terms, be considered some of its "parts" – known techniques such as meditation, focusing and hypnosis – what is known about these does not fully account for or explain how Logosynthesis works. To explain the mechanisms by which Logosynthesis works, we may need to account for its particular use of words, specifically, intentional statements about relocating energy, or for the synergistic effect of its parts.

### **Further detailed examples of treatment with Logosynthesis**

To further illustrate the application and effectiveness of Logosynthesis I offer the two following case studies, one of a single session, and the other of the process over 11 sessions.

#### *Example 5: Single Session (Philippe Isler)*

I have been working with John (assumed name) for some time, both on the turbulent intimate relationship he is in, and on the underlying issues triggered by this relationship, which trace back to interpersonal trauma within his family of origin. We have made considerable progress over time, and today he comes in without any specific focus for the session, other than to continue working on underlying, core issues. I guide John in doing an internal focusing and he identifies a pervasive feeling of anxiety as a focus for our work. As we continue focusing, he identifies that he feels it in the middle of his chest, and that it is a reaction to "responsibilities weighing on me." (This is the introject.)

I guide John in applying the sentences to "This perception of responsibilities weighing on me." This leads him to a clearer perception of the feeling of anxiety within him, and a connection with a sense of "This other me" that he carries within him. We had previously touched on and done a little work with this "other me." He had identified it as "toxic and full of hate." Its presence and its energy frighten him and overwhelm him and he has built it up in his mind as something dark, scary, threatening, overpowering and to be avoided at all cost. I guide John in applying the sentences to "This other me." This leads to an intensified awareness of sensations related to this.

Based on my experience of working on these intense issues with John before, I want to "change things up" to avoid getting bogged down in an impasse, a standoff. So I employ a Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) technique of "mapping" where I write these two "selves" or roles or positions

on separate pieces of paper – one with his name on it, the other with "The other me" written on it – and have him place these on the floor. As he looks at this from a third, detached position, he feels a sense of an insurmountable, irresolvable conflict. As he steps into the position of "The other me," he tunes into a sense of the anger, violence and hatred he perceives there, and of a resistance to releasing these feelings. Nevertheless, I have him do the Logosynthesis sentences sequentially on various aspects or introjects that come up. He used the full set of three sentences, with processing in between, on each aspect or introject, and this led to a clear statement (referring to 'the other me'), "He's angry that his feelings aren't being acknowledged."

I then have John switch to the other position (his name) where he initially feels intense fear and anxiety, and the perception of "The other me" as almost life-threatening. We again apply the Logosynthesis sentences to various introjects that come up. At one point there is a perceivable (to my eye) shift in his body and in his energy, and he seems to me like a child. So I ask him how old he feels at this moment, in this conflict, and he says, "Seven," and describes feeling full of sadness.

I then guide him in applying the sentences on behalf of his seven-year-old self on the sadness. By the end of the process, John is feeling a sense of parental love and compassion for his seven-year-old self, "The other me" whom he experienced as such a threat only minutes before. He no longer feels a sense of conflict, anger, anxiety and self-loathing. We spend a little time processing the experience and helping him to clarify his understanding of how he had locked these feelings away as a child, and then developed immense fear of experiencing them. This issue not only created intense conflict within himself, plus a dynamic of self-rejection and self-judgment, but severely affected his relationships with others and in his life choices. This core structure, this core dynamic has now been changed.

In subsequent sessions, John reported that he no longer experiences this self-critical voice, or this sense of "The other me." This aspect of himself has been integrated. The result is manifested in changes in how he deals with issues in his relationship; when problematic feelings are triggered, he reports that he can now witness what is occurring – himself reacting – and manage his perceptions and reactions in a much more productive way, without becoming overwhelmed. It has also led to his realizing that although he always perceived his partner as lacking in empathy, he himself was so immersed in his own reactions that he displayed a lack of empathy to her. This new awareness has led to a cognitive shift that, in turn, changes how he interacts with her, as well as changing his perception and experience of himself in the relationship.

#### *Example 6: Process over 11 sessions*

Jim (assumed name) was referred to me after he had been hospitalized for severe Depression and suicidality. He was 18 years old and in Grade 12. Jim had been diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome in childhood. He had a history of feeling anxious and being easily overwhelmed by various stressors, and this had been severely triggered as he approached the end of High School, prepared for his exams, attempted to qualify for university scholarships, and applied to University,

Jim discussed how he had developed a sense of being different from others early on in school. He became very sensitive to this as his peers began noticing and reacting to these differences. This led to him being mentally and physically bullied on a daily basis. "Those were the most scared, embarrassed, awful years of my life." Jim became very "angry inside" and much of his coping became focused on a fear of failure and on avoiding embarrassment. By the age of 18 Jim was dealing with severe and pervasive anxiety regarding any new situations, associated with intense fears of failure and embarrassment. He also has significant difficulty - related to his Asperger Syndrome - of managing emotions and sensations of stress. As a result, he does not get along

well with his parents. Jim describes that from an early age he reacted negatively to his parents' authority and power, and this has developed into a very difficult and "touchy" relationship.

When I first met Jim, he had dropped his last semester of school as a result of his episode of depression and was planning on going back to finish High School in the autumn. Jim reported that he had seen "many" counselors and/or psychologists throughout his life and that he felt he had never gotten much out of it. He had especially been "confused" by CBT. However, he was willing to try again to get help in order to try to resolve his issues with anxiety.

Our first two sessions were focused on taking the history of, and exploring these issues, as well as establishing rapport and communicating my intention to work with him to resolve these issues. It was important to signal to him that we would be actively working on effecting real change to realize his goals. In our third session, as Jim expressed a desire to "get to work," I introduced him to Logosynthesis. Given his history of disappointment with counselling, I wanted Jim to have an experience that would give him substantial hope that changing how he felt was possible.

I guided Jim in focusing and asked him to go to a memory of feeling embarrassed when he was younger. He related a memory from the age of 10 where he was harassed, bullied and attacked by peers. It elicited significant but not overwhelming sensations of anxiety. After applying the three Logosynthesis sentences, he reported: "I'm not feeling anything now," when thinking of the memory. We then addressed another memory, with similar results. After this, Jim found it impossible to access any similar memory that would elicit any negative reaction, which he found "weird." He now described a "positive anxiety" at this sudden change in his responses.

I then had Jim focus on a current stressor. He chose a pattern of reaction he has to assigned tasks, of "automatically feeling like it's a big task" that is overwhelming, which triggers strong negative stress or anxiety reactions in him and often leads to avoidance. After applying the three sentences, he could no longer connect with those negative feelings and in conclusion said, "Wow, that's really helpful."

From this point on, Jim was "sold" on working with Logosynthesis and came in every session highly motivated to work on changing his negative reactions to various types of situations, memories and other triggers. Each session led to a resolution of his reactions to that particular issue, which he would confirm at our following session. Jim subsequently made the comment that within each session, and immediately after the session, he found the shifts in feelings, reactions and perceptions to be very strong. Over a period of three weeks there was a degree of "creeping back" - of the problematic feelings, followed by a spontaneous, sudden clearing up or full resolution: "And then it's gone, not a problem any more."

I did not see Jim over the summer. By the time I saw him in September, he expressed looking forward to school, having less conflict at home, and feeling more comfortable with himself. As we proceeded with our sessions, Jim wanted to work on his "fear of feeling fear," in other words, on the secondary structure of reaction that had developed to repeated experiences of overwhelming anxiety, which contributed to many avoidance responses. Focusing on this led Jim to remember panic attacks he started experiencing at age two or three. We applied the Logosynthesis sentences to the introjects that came up. By the end of the session Jim could not connect with a feeling of fear of fear. He was now able to summon and feel the feeling of fear – not of something, but the feeling itself – but he experienced it as a manageable sensation, and nothing to be afraid of.

This process was particularly interesting. When Jim focused on this fear of feeling fear the introject that came up was an image of "a tiny, floppy disk – a fraction of an inch – with energy coming from

it. It gives the illusion that it is huge." When we applied the sentences to this "tiny floppy disk," Jim reported: "Experiencing something I haven't felt since I was younger than 12 years old – what I felt after a panic attack." I had Jim do some focusing on this feeling. He first identified the physiological sensations, and then said, "It's a reaction to reality, to what we are, what we are doing here..." We then applied the sentences to the introject, labelled as "this issue of reality." Jim reported he "experienced fear – truly, truly afraid, but not overwhelmed...probably for the first time in my life.... I feel more centred and calm."

When I then had Jim refocus on "This issue of reality" he now accessed a feeling of anxiety "in reaction to what happens after, at the end of the road... Death." So we applied the sentences to "Death, and all that it means and does to me" (a phrasing I have borrowed from John Diepold, in his Heart Assisted Therapy). After this, Jim reported that his feelings of anxiety in response to the introject of "Death" were fading, and were replaced with the thought "Everything dies. It's natural."

By our eighth session, Jim reported that he was doing well and that he had not been suffering from any of his patterns of worry or anxiety about potential or future situations. However, he did want to work on some ongoing patterns of anxiety responses to specific triggers in the present. I spent a session with him exploring this, which led us to identify that the anxiety was in fact related to a perceived risk of conflict or confrontation, which led back to his childhood experiences of being bullied and of being perceived as different. So the next session focused on resolving the memories of how others perceived him, judged him and rejected him. By the end of the session, he could not access any memory or thought related to any of these past experiences that triggered negative feelings. I then had him imagine future situations that involved a risk of confrontation, and he reported no anticipatory anxiety or negative reaction. "I just get an assertive feeling... It's not a big deal."

By our 10th session Jim reported that he was doing well, experiencing little or no anxiety regarding the past or the future, that there was less arguing at home. He now wanted to work on his issues with "people in positions of power or authority." A combination of exploring through focusing and twice applying the three Logosynthesis sentences led to resolution of his reactions to the situations he was focusing on, and a narrowing of the issues related to his father. Therefore, our next session was focused on his anger related to introjects of his father and the history of their relationship that were interfering with his ability to have the kind of relationship he said he wanted to have with him in the present. By the end of the session he reported feeling that he had "let go of the past" and fully believed that he could now see his father differently and have a better relationship with him.

Jim began University this autumn, and as of this writing, has not needed to return to see me.

This is only a superficial summary of our sessions, of course, and only focuses on the application of Logosynthesis. My therapeutic approach is an integrative one and I draw from various approaches and techniques at various times. However, Jim is the client with whom I have probably used the Logosynthesis approach most consistently throughout our sessions. Each session in itself would merit a closer study both in terms of the overall therapeutic process and relationship, and of the application of the technique.

Jim's process is unusual in the proportional place of the Logosynthesis work we did, as opposed to the other elements of psychotherapy. Generally, my use of Logosynthesis is much more interwoven with other interventions such as supportive counselling, cognitive therapy, teaching mindfulness, and psychodynamic psychotherapy. I think that there are a number of reasons why this process was different, related to Jim's history, and to his personality type/ autism-spectrum disorder. Both of these led him to want and appreciate a process that would minimize cognitive-level discussion and would



lead to tangible results. Jim was a particularly open and sensitive subject for this process. I wonder to what degree this could be related to tendencies associated with Asperger Syndrome of literal thinking, which might lead to interpreting the sentences more literally than others. I have had other clients diagnosed with this disorder with whom Logosynthesis interventions were equally, rapidly effective.

### In summary

Logosynthesis is still in its infancy, with only eight years since it was first conceived, and therefore is still in developmental and experimental stages. Nevertheless, it has become an integral part of my approach because of its usefulness, its effectiveness and, of course, because of its good "fit" with my background and my intrinsic tendencies as a therapist. As I mentioned earlier, I bring an integrative approach to counselling and psychotherapy and therefore, at all times, my use of Logosynthesis is integrated into a broader process. Within that process I may use Logosynthesis as an occasional intervention or as the primary approach to working on issues. This varies with the configurations of presenting issues, the therapeutic relationship and the openness of the client to utilizing such techniques.

I have found it effective in dealing with issues underlying depression and anxiety, as well as with the symptomatic feelings of depression and anxiety themselves. I have found it effective in dealing with trauma, in reducing or resolving traumatic responses to past events, as well as in resolving generalized traumatic responses to present-day triggers. It has been an especially useful and effective tool in helping people to explore, address and resolve patterns of response – that is to say, patterns of feeling, thought and behaviour – that cause them stress, distress or even functional difficulties. Logosynthesis is a very streamlined and efficient approach to identifying what I sometimes refer to as "the pieces of the puzzle" or the "structural elements" that have created and sustained these patterns, and to systematically extinguishing them.

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<sup>i</sup> For more information about Lammers see <http://www.iasag.ch/index.php?id=482> .

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