

Body-mind Centering® by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen

(edited version from www.bodymindcentering.com)

Body-Mind Centering® (BMC™) is an ongoing, experiential journey into the alive and changing territory of the body. The explorer is the mind -- our thoughts, feelings, energy, soul, and spirit. Through this journey we are led to an understanding of how the mind is expressed through the body in movement.

In BMC, “centering” is a process of balancing, not a place of arrival. This balancing is based on dialogue, and the dialogue is based on experience. The study of Body-mind Centering® (BMC ®) includes both the cognitive and experiential learning of the body systems -- skeleton, ligaments, muscles, fascia, fat, skin, organs, endocrine glands, nerves, fluids; breathing and vocalization; the senses and the dynamics of perception; developmental movement (both human infant development and the evolutionary progression through the animal kingdom); and psychophysical integration.

In BMC we use the maps of Western medicine and science -- anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, etc. -- but Body-Mind Centering is being influenced by the philosophies of the East as well. It is a study coming out of this time of East and West merging, so we are working with the concepts of dualities blending, rather than sets of opposites conflicting. We are constantly looking at relationships and are always recognizing how opposite qualities modulate each other.

An important aspect of our journey in Body-Mind Centering is discovering the relationship between the smallest level of activity within the body and the largest movement of the body - - aligning the inner cellular movement with the external expression of movement through space. This involves identifying, articulating, differentiating, and integrating the various tissues within the body, discovering the qualities they contribute to one’s movement, how they have evolved in one’s developmental process, and the role they play in the expression of mind.

The finer this alignment, the more efficiently we can function to accomplish our intentions. However, alignment itself is not a goal. It is a continual dialogue between awareness and action -- becoming aware of the relationships that exist throughout our body/mind and acting from that awareness. This alignment creates a state of knowing.

As a set of principles and as an approach to movement, touch and learning, BMC is

currently being applied by people involved in many areas of interest, such as dance and movement arts, bodywork, physical, occupational, movement, dance and speech therapies, psychotherapy, medicine, child development, education, voice, music and visual arts, meditation, yoga, athletics, martial arts, and other body-mind disciplines.

While the basic material of Body-Mind Centering was well established by 1982, the principles continue to be elaborated on and refined, and changes made as new viewpoints arise.