

## **Openness: the role of the body**

“You must know the art of surrendering at all levels...this means that...the body must be free of the usual patterns, contractions and tensions. It is openness at all levels of the psycho-physical structure” *Jean Klein*

To learn anything, whether it is a language, maths or how to cultivate tomatoes, we must be ready to abandon our previous ideas or “prejudices”; open to the possibility of not knowing or that we may be wrong. Without this, it is very difficult to learn anything new. We all remember examples of people who stubbornly hold onto an idea, and see how this precludes their understanding and perception of reality.

In “spirituality” the same thing applies: it is necessary to be open to new possibilities, ready to abandon our previous ideas.

Although ultimately body and mind are one, for the sake of clarity we could say that this openness has two components: mental and bodily ones. At an intellectual level, the process consists in the restless questioning of our ideas and beliefs. The same thing that we do at the mental level is also necessary at the body level, because all beliefs are subtle psychosomatic patterns of tension and contraction. This is what habits consist of.

This would be the process of opening to which Jean Klein refers, one that is necessary to receive the truth and to eliminate residual ignorance after a glimpse of truth, even if it is a full glimpse. Body work is therefore necessary both before and after.

Paradoxically, in this “culture to the body” of ours, the body is relegated into a second plane. We live in the mind and the body becomes an ideal place for our half-conscious beliefs to hide. But for the very same reason body work is very fruitful, the body is like the back door to the mind, defenses are weak there, so it is an easy place to start the investigation.

In the beginning body work facilitates our opening and somehow prepares the ground, and later it allows the alignment of the body with reality (a reality which is new to the body) and transforms it in a well tuned instrument of the divine.

The main belief, the belief in separation, the false I, is a contraction of the body-mind. A “relaxed” body is a relaxed mind, an open, innocent mind. “Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” *Mathew*

Pedro Brañas