"ONE OF THE THINGS THAT I THINK IS ESSENTIAL WITH SENSING, IS THAT WE REACH A POINT WHERE WE BECOME CONSCIOUS AND THEN WE LET IT GO, SO THAT THE SENSING ITSELF IS NOT A MOTIVATION; THAT OUR MOTIVATION IS ACTION, BASED ON PERCEPTION."

CQ: You talk of 'embodiment' often in your work. Could you say something about it?

BC: A good example is a newborn infant. Their hand goes across their face and at first there is only a momentary recognition of something going across their eyes. After awhile, as they develop a little further, the hand will go across their eyes and they'll follow it, but there's not the recognition that it's their hand yet. One day, they follow it and they turn their head, and they move their hand back and they turn their head back and you see something in their eyes when they start really manipulating the hand. Another sense opens up that this hand is me. And then comes the play between the two hands, and the play of the hands and the eyes.

Embodiment is, in a way, separating out. It's feeling the force that is in this body. But in order to embody ourselves, we need to know what is not ourselves. It's a relationship. A child that only embodies its hand, for instance, might be considered autistic. If it's carried too far there's self-absorption; there's a certain awareness that this is me, but not an awareness that you're you. If it's just about what's me and not what's not me, then I don't think it works; there's no counterbalance, no definition. What I would call balanced embodiment would include, 'This is the end of me; this is the beginning of something else.'
"IT'S DIFFERENT IF YOU SENSE SOMETHING, THAN IF YOU FEEL IT, THAN IF YOU SIMPLY DO IT."

CQ: What's the difference between the traditional way of learning/teaching anatomy and the process of embodying it?

BC: Generally, when anatomy is taught as I learned it, and as I see it taught elsewhere, you're given visual pictures of it. We have an image of it, but we don't have the kinesthesia of it within ourselves. Maybe we'll even say, "Oh, I have this bone or this muscle in me," but it's an intellectual concept, rather than the information coming through viscerally from the proprioceptors of that thing itself. The information is always coming in viscerally, but each person is selective in terms of what they choose to acknowledge. The studying that we're doing at the school [School for Body/Mind Centering] is highly selective in terms of receiving input; we go from one system to the other—now we're going into the senses, now we're going to acknowledge the information from the skeleton, now from the eye, now from the muscles, now from the organs, from the glands, the brain, the blood, etc. By acknowledging each one, we see that they are channels that can be acknowledged by choice. Once they've been acknowledged consciously, we can utilize that information without it remaining primary. One of the things that I think is essential with sensing, is that we reach a point where we become conscious and then we let it go, so that the sensing itself is not a motivation, that our motivation is action, based on perception. What often happens is that once we become aware of perception, we forget about the action. The perception becomes the key thing; what am I perceiving. Instead of eating, what becomes important is: how does it taste, what is the texture. Instead of just walking it's: how am I walking, what foot's going in front of the other, how are the bones falling. All of that is important, but there is a time to just simply walk, or simply eat for nourishment.

CQ: Then what is the value of embodying? If you can walk anyway, then why bother knowing how it feels in such detail, or getting so involved with it?

BC: If we didn't inhibit any natural functioning, there probably wouldn't be any need. In fact, you see that people who don't have a lot of problems, who are fairly well integrated, don't spend their time on integrating; they spend their time in some action. Most of us in this work come into it because we have problems; we're inhibited in some way that prevents us from functioning in the way we feel we should be able to. By becoming conscious of the processes, we eliminate our unconscious inhibitions, and can function normally. Once we have removed the obstacles and are functioning efficiently, there's no need to keep looking for obstacles. It's not that we're never going to need to be aware again, but there are moments when we can become wholly active, and not have to monitor our activity.

CQ: Another benefit of this kind of work would be that you could perceive and deal with subtle imbalances before they become major problems.

BC: Certainly it leads to awareness; it is awareness. But I also see that often we, in this work, concentrate so much on the juggling of systems, whatever we happen to be studying, that we end up being sick a lot of the time. I think it has to do with some part of us identifying with the system or the imbalance that we're studying. So in fact we go from one unbalanced state to another. Certainly we become more well or potentially well by balancing all these different things, but what I'm exploring now is how we can come to some whole image, a whole state of mind that we would identify with. Then the exploration of each system would be a study, but we wouldn't attach our basic self with the study. Then I think we could become aware of the imbalances without becoming ill.

CQ: How do you see the 'whole image' evolving?

BC: I see our work going into a transition in the next couple of years. It will go into another kind of approach that will have an overview based on what we've gained from having gone rather innocently into each system.

The next stage will be more mind-based, rather than body-based. Both will be there, but just as the mind is in the body area now, the body will be in the mind area.

CQ: What do you mean by 'mind-based'?

BC: Each individual goes into an area of study with a certain mind, and we usually keep the same mind throughout all of our explorations. What I'm doing now is trying to help people recognize the mind that they're approaching something with, as compared to [the mind of] the material itself. For example, some people might feel things more through the bones, another person more through the muscles, some say they're more into the senses. It's different if you sense something, than if you feel it, than if you simply do it. Sensing is related to the nervous system through the perceptions. Feeling and flow are related to the fluid system including the circulatory, lymphatic and cerebrospinal fluids. By approaching everything with the same mind, you are constantly initiating activity from the same place. For example, I think that a lot of people in the Contact work are working with sensing—sensing where they are, feeling weights; they're using their perceptual systems to initiate from, in particular the weight perceivers and the movement perceivers. But there's a funny thing when you do that. The fluids are a counterbalance to the perceptions or the nervous system. So if the perceptual system is always initiating or being the mover, then the fluids are always having to be the support. There becomes a time when you want to reverse that balance, when you want the perceptions to go quiet, to become the support, and let the fluids become the mover. That's when you go into simply moving, without sensing anymore, trusting that the senses have gone unconscious and will support you without them being conscious. When I say forgetting them, I mean letting them go unconscious and letting the fluids become the control.

Take a very large group of people, have them move in a very small space and have them move 'sensing'. They'll slow up; when people sense, there's this slowing up of the fluids. Then have them drop that and move very quickly in a tight group with no sensing. What you'll find is that you're safer under fast movement with no sensing than you are under the slow sensing. However we've developed,
we move best, more automatically, and more efficiently when we move quickly with fluidity, where the sensing goes unconscious and the fluids take the initiative rather than when we move slowly with sensing. It happens over and over again. People are surprised that they feel safer under this fast moving than when they are sensing where each person is. And they're less likely to bump into somebody and have an accident. Now if you take a group of people who have never sensed, and have them running quickly, they'd probably be bumping into each other all the time. They'd be running into each other because they don't know where they are.

CQ: So you're using the senses as a support for the fluids and if the senses have never been developed they can't be a very stable support?

BC: Then the fluids have never been a support for the senses. It's a balance. It's not to choose one over the other but to have this balance. We have a tendency to get one-sided.

CQ: You said something about 'sensing, feeling, and doing'. What's the difference between sensing and feeling? Where do you feel from?

BC: The fluids. If you're sensing, it's not such an emotional space. But if you're feeling, then you get the emotions and you escape from the emotions. It actually represses emotional integration if it's not balanced. Personally, having been fast moving than when they are sensing, it gets long and tedious unless you have these moments where someone breaks out and that's when you find your good contactors. You've seen break out of sensing, and they simply are acting. It's very exciting and you get a rush from watching it and I'm sure you get a rush from doing it. You only see it with people who feel secure, who've sensed enough to know they can let the senses go. Certainly, if you get me out there, in the beginning there's no way I'm just going to respond because I don't know how to respond. I'm going to go very slowly and I'm going to want to feel every little part of my body and where it is and then at some point I'll just go and roll with it. There's no holding back.

"A LOT OF SENSING WORK IS AN ESCAPE FROM THE EMOTIONS, IT ACTUALLY REPRESSIONS EMOTIONAL INTEGRATION IF IT'S NOT BALANCED."

CQ: At that point you'd be flipping systems, from sensing to acting? from nervous system to fluids?

BC: Things are not scseaw-like, with one end here and one end there. What happens when you go into sensing is that you regard the breathing or respiration, because you're retarding the fluids. The importance of the blood is that it's carrying oxygen to the fluids and carrying away the wastes. It's basically about oxygen, which is breathing. So here you have another system coming in, respiration, to be studying in relation to the blood. All of a sudden someone will take a deep breath and you know the fluids have been released. The fluids are the internal respiration as compared to external respiration, the air; which we normally think of as breathing. The external respiration is governed by the blood flowing internally.

CQ: Often in doing sensing work, gravity and relaxation work, at each level of relaxation a deep breath will come, a release of some sort. I've wondered what that was about.

BC: By sensing, we release the restrictions. It's a beautiful distinction whether it's muscular or whatever, which releases the blood. The breath follows. When you feel that deep breath, something has been re-patterned into the nervous system.

CQ: Do you feel that in working with one area, such as the eye, that you are also working directly with each of the other systems?

BC: I'm trying to do that with the vision class. I'm trying to do that with the vision class—sensing the skeletal and muscular system of the eye and nervous system. It was a form of perceptual work, but what I've been trying to bring out is that vision is not this, that's not how the eye was developed. It was not developed to be perceived, it was developed to have an action. It was developed to be active. Perception, when it's working, is an action, it's not a perception; it's not a perceiving of itself. Those of us with visual problems can, by sensing, become aware of, say, which muscles are pulling a certain way. That information becomes part of our repertoire. It can go into our unconscious. But when you go to look, don't try to move your muscle or your bones, but let the eye respond to the light that's being reflected. We even try to perceive light; how do you perceive light, how do you become receptive to that phenomenon? Once you become receptive to that phenomenon, let go of the reception as your mover or as your purpose and let that become the support for seeing. Evolutionarily, the visual system was developed to see, not to be a perceiver of how it sees. And if everything was working well, there probably wouldn't be any need for such self-consciousness. However, we have been given problems and the ability to perceive them, which offers us the opportunity to transform this self-consciousness into self-knowledge. But without action (outer looking) to balance the inner self-looking, this transformation cannot take place.