



How Ortho-Bionomy Works

The founder of Ortho-Bionomy, Arthur Lincoln Pauls, D.O., described how it works this way: “Injury or disease result from what I call ‘misunderstanding’. Ortho-Bionomy brings understanding to the person, so that he or she may respond appropriately, rather than by habit or fear”.¹

The miracle of the body and the treasure of information it holds for us seems limitless. One of the great joys in sharing this work is the self-discovery that takes place for the practitioner, as well as for the client. The nuts and bolts are that the body does have an operating manual, a language, if one is willing to listen. If the oil light comes on in our car, would we put a tape over the light? However, we override our body’s messages all the time. Eventually it gets our attention, but by that time we may have forgotten where the problem came from. This is where Ortho-Bionomy comes in, and as Dr. Pauls said, removes ‘misunderstanding from the body.’

The Founder of Ortho-Bionomy

Arthur Lincoln Pauls was born in the province of Saskatchewan in 1929. He left Canada when he was a young man and moved to England, where he became a Judo Instructor, and subsequently a Doctor of Osteopathy. During this time he read an article by American Osteopath Dr. Lawrence Jones entitled “Spontaneous Release Through Positioning”.² As the story goes, a man who had been suffering for months with lower back pain came to Dr. Jones’ office for treatment. He could not sleep at night for more than a few minutes at a time, and previous adjustments had failed to bring relief. Dr. Jones used cushions to make the man as comfortable as possible on the treatment table, and let him rest there while he worked on other clients. Upon returning twenty minutes later, he found that an excellent self-correction had taken place, and that the patient was almost free of pain.

The Development of the Work

Dr. Jones went on to develop the manual therapy known as Strain/Counterstrain based on this experience. Dr. Pauls blended the Osteopathic principles of structural balance, the information received from Jones, and the energetic and philosophical principles of the Martial Arts to create Ortho-Bionomy. He defined Ortho-Bionomy as meaning ‘the correct application of the laws of life’. From the early seventies until his death in 1997, Dr. Pauls devoted his life to teaching Ortho-Bionomy throughout Canada, the United States, Europe and Australia.

The Principles of Ortho-Bionomy

Ortho-Bionomy is often referred to as ‘the Homeopathy of Bodywork’ because the two modalities share the same principles. Both approaches

- exaggerate a pattern to stimulate the body’s self-healing reflexes (let likes cures likes)
- use the smallest adjustment or dose necessary to bring about a healing response (less is more, the minimum dose)
- may have an effect within minutes, and
- work on all levels; physical, mental and emotional

Working within the comfort zone of both the client and practitioner is one of the most important principles of Ortho-Bionomy, as creating resistance and tension is counter-productive to healing. Practitioners learn to track the person's energy and 'go with the flow'. They follow principles based on respecting, honoring and accepting each individual's inherent healing wisdom without judgment. Rather than trying to 'change' people physically or otherwise, the intent is to help them become conscious of what is going on within their bodies. This increased awareness helps them participate in their own self-correction, and enables them to regain their original patterns of balance and wellness.

How Ortho-Bionomy is used in a Session

During an Ortho-Bionomy session, the client is fully clothed; the practitioner acknowledges the person's areas of discomfort, and has the client give feedback during the release process to make sure that the work is comfortable. The gentle movements and subtle pressure used result in deep relaxation, and loosening of the tight muscles around restricted areas. Having been activated, the body's self-correcting reflexes naturally bring the structure and energy back into alignment. Unhealthy tension patterns often resolve, while circulation, flexibility and range of motion increase. Rhythmic movements and isometrics or integrative exercises are used to help re-educate the body and reinforce the work.

Benefits of the Work

Through Ortho-Bionomy the body is literally learning, so that the cumulative results tend to be long lasting. Although one or two sessions may relieve specific symptoms, for chronic problems several sessions over a longer period of time may be necessary to release the body's adaptive reactions, and re-educate it to more natural and healthier responses. The outcome will be higher levels of wellness and resiliency within the body. This light-touch work is a unique system of body re-education for pain relief and self-healing; it teaches people to be more at ease physically and energetically, and may also produce changes in their attitudes and emotions.

Conditions Which May be Addressed

Ortho-Bionomy is gentle enough to use on newborns, and effective for pain relief for both acute and chronic states. Some of the many complaints that Ortho-Bionomy has addressed successfully include:

Neck and Back Pain
Scoliosis
TMJ Discomfort
Frozen Shoulder
Sciatica

Knee Injuries
Shock and Trauma Resolution
Rib Problems
Headaches
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

The Founders and Directors of the Ortho-Bionomy Association of Canada

1. Pauls, A. audio recording from a course taught by Dr. Arthur Lincoln Pauls, 1980
2. Jones, L. "Spontaneous Release Through Positioning", *The D.O.*, January 1964

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