

# Desire for Boundaries and Protection

by Bridgitte Ladwig



Translation into  
English:

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This is the third and last excerpt from Bridgitte Ladwig's article 'Shiatsu and problems of the Soul' presented at the European Shiatsu Congress in Kiental in 2004

The following case reports will show that in shiatsu we can answer similar requests in quite different manners that are always individually related to the person. I chose as example the wish for boundaries and protection, a question for help often found in psychotherapy as well as in shiatsu.

*Mrs F., mid-forties, holds a profession in the medical-therapeutic area. She has been for shiatsu sessions every four to six weeks for a year and a half now. Eight years ago she already came to shiatsu mainly with psychological problems. The actual sequence of sessions is mainly about requests on the physical level: knee problems, stomach problems...*

*In today's session she wants more openness. She says that these days, when riding her bike, she often feels attacked riding her bike by other non-attentive drivers or cyclists. She claims she often has to energetically assert herself with a female colleague who fails to respect her boundaries. She noticed that she was able to open up a lot during her work with patients. This, however, she finds not possible in the outside world, where she rather needs to protect herself. In our short conversation before the session, we find out that the question is not so much about not enough openness but rather about better demarcations as well as better transitions from one state of being to the other one (work-open; outer world-protecting).*

*The zones in the hara show the kidney meridian expressing itself as kyo and it reacts with the small intestine zone. In meridian scanning the small intestine meridian gives a dominant impression of a tense, held-in and over-active area in and above the head. The kidney meridian shows primarily that in the belly-hip area there is a quality of kidney energy present which is localized on the back of the body. From this side it is largely widening out to the outside while it folds up in the front part in a manner, as if the connection to the front part of the body were not stable and were too open.*

*One aim of the session is the integration of the perceived quality of the small intestine meridian into the physical body in its spatial reality as well as integration of its energetic vibrational frequency. On the other hand I want to support and stabilize the front side. Working with the small intestine meridian in the leg in the supine position, the energy reacted best with regard to the desired effect, when tuning into "centering in each cell". Before that, I tried "centering" while modelling in myself a strong middle axis. Yet this quality of touch was met with energetic resistance. So, each cell should be supported so that it can perceive what it needs and what it cannot assimilate. This tuning has the advantage of enough openness. It results in many energetic movements of release, flowing and vitalizing in the basin area and on the whole, the energy is more awake within the body space. The "tenseness" at the head releases. When holding the hara with one hand on the belly, the other under the back, the perceptions of the scanning of the kidney meridian are corroborated. With one hand in the kidney zone on the back, I work the front kidney meridian line in the belly. The focus is connection between the front and the back. My feeling is almost as if I were sewing the energy on the front side together. The outer places on the kidney meridian under the clavicles, offer a good doorway to more energy for the body space. The same holds true for the kidney meridian on the ball of the little finger. Also while working in the prone position on the small intestine and kidney meridians, the focus is always once again on the contact between front and back and on the integration into the whole spectrum of vibrational frequencies.*

*After the session, the client feels her inner core to be wider and more filled. I tell her some of my impressions and give her the recommendation to visualize the line of the kidney meridian on her trunk.*

*She remembers that when horseriding she quite automatically expresses this support to the front side of herself or can connect to it easily. On other occasions, she often gets the feeling something is missing in her chest-belly-area.*

Reflecting the expression of energy of the above described client in this session, I get the picture of a human being that is frightened. The arms fly up, the front side opens without protection while the energy in the back becomes rigid. It is like some kind of fright that is not integrated. With panic there is no integration. If something is not assimilated, it can lead to a "vulnerable point", to some "location" in the energetic system where the energy does not know how to answer events adequately. Similar energies of the outside world can easily "get hooked" on such a vulnerable point. It seems, as if the client's energy is for the time being not ready to deal with inattention and animosity as a reality of life. It is as if this should rather not exist in life.

For sure, there are yet other ways to interpret the present energetic expression. The above description is a useful working hypothesis, which allows us to connect the observations with the interacting meridian functions and to tune into the client. The small intestine meridian is solicited here in its task to assimilate and so be able to also integrate experiences of shock, while the kidney meridian is solicited in its capacity to react to threat.

In the following description of a session the theme is again to mark one's boundaries and protection.

*Mrs B., late-thirties, specialized shop assistant. She very much likes her work, yet she has recently had trouble marking her boundaries, and since she is almost always ready to work more, she collected for hundreds of extra working hours. With this huge investment in her profession over a long time, she compensated for her private isolation and longing for a partnership. Yet for some time now, she is daring to take new directions and she is conquering new spaces and is feeling joyful in her private life. However, her inclination to be influenced by the desires and actions of others, remains. Originally she came for sessions with strong headaches and neck pains that were alleviated after several sessions. To her astonishment, she found that in addition her thinking had changed too, she felt freer and*

*more flexible in her way of thinking and other people noticed. Now more and more psychological questions come into focus. In this session she says that she has met a man who since then keeps calling her quite often. She doesn't find him particularly nice, but always answers in a friendly way when he calls, gets into a conversation with him and even promises to call him back. Yet inwardly she becomes furious. She is not able to tell him that he should stop ringing. The whole last weekend she felt the pressure and anxiety that he might possibly call her and she also avoided meeting some people she knows in order not to meet him. In this moment she needs much warmth. She desires protection and needs a widening in the chest and shoulders where she often feels constricted.*

*The shoulder area looks tense, as if it were higher than the rest of the body while in the lying down position. The large intestine meridian as jitsu reacts in the hara zones with the gall bladder meridian as kyo. In scanning, the quality of the large intestine meridian expresses itself as a tense constriction and it reacts during the session with my tuning into "letting go" and "space". The gall bladder meridian energy is as if it's clustering together, heavy and stationary. The distribution of energy reacts efficiently, when I colour my own energy into "following my own path". Already a short period of work on the legs shows a release in the shoulder area and after a while, the energy in general moves more, in a more refined way and no longer feels stagnated. The client felt, in the beginning, how her shoulders relaxed. She tells me that after a while she saw a bright, yellow light shining and she was quite astonished to notice that no sun was shining.*

In the conversation after the session, where I communicate some of my perceptions, she begins to clearly distinguish between fighting "at and for her boundaries" and the new feeling of "permission" to trust her own perception, her own values and her own inclinations. In this new state of being, she can feel that she has right to her own "space" and she can imagine that she is able to maintain it

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**Through the touch I consciously connect to the whole energetic field, as if my hands knew that they were getting at the same time into the body and into the field around the body. Within myself, while working, I try to be attentive to connect to the physical and spiritual aspects of the body space and field around me.**

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directly without reacting to an anticipated imagined infringement.

As the subsequent sessions proved, it would still need some more time and support, until "all the cells" understood this new way of seeing.

In the following case, with a similar question, the shiatsu answer focusses more on the integration of body and energetic field.

*Mrs M., late-twenties, at the beginning of her profession as a social educator. She comes to shiatsu because she wants support for a difficult life situation. With her new job she feels overchallenged, especially because of the aggressivity and low team attitude of her colleagues.*

*At the same time, the situation at home is characterized by a rather hostile atmosphere. In order to protect herself she closes up, though it still hurts her. Her body is delicate and I find it in a way almost transparent. I feel her open, friendly and "light". She has already experienced other forms of body- and healing work. Her concrete wish for this first session is to feel stronger. With Bo Shin and Setsu Shin I come into contact with some fine, lively, and strong energy. What is special in this case, is the impression that the physical body is not contained in this energy. It gives the impression of complete stillness, as if nobody dwells in it. My aim for the session, which develops according to her desire and my perceptions, is, to try to connect the physical body more strongly into this lively energy.*

*The kyo-jitsu reaction in the hara shows up with the following interacting meridians: spleen kyo and lung jitsu. The inner attitudes, which allow me to come into resonance with her and with which I can support an integration of the lively energy into the body, are "transformation" for spleen and for lung "condensation of cosmic Ki". Through the touch I consciously connect to the whole energetic field, as if my hands knew that they were getting at the same time into the body and into the field around the body. Within myself, while working, I try to be attentive to connect to the physical and spiritual aspects of the body space and field*

*around me. A very deep sinking into the spleen meridian was especially effective for gathering together some of the qualities that were not so well connected.*

*After the session she is beaming. She feels quite different, much more grounded. Very soon, when I worked on her legs, her heart opened once again. She recognizes her inclination to "step out of the body", but now feels again well connected.*

Later sessions further stabilize this process. From the third session onwards, the client perceived herself as taller, and a few sessions later on, she was residing more consistently in her body and seemed to be quite strong and resistant - no longer so delicate as in the beginning. She quit her unfortunate private living situation quite quickly. Being a newcomer, she did not immediately want to change her job. So the challenge of the situation there became a constant practice field for her to mark her boundaries and become more independent in the esteem of her colleagues. In this situation shiatsu helped her to gain centeredness, grounding and clarity and also to assimilate difficult experiences.

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