

What about emotion in Shin Somatics processes and workshops?

“There might be no other place as good as where somatics can take you.”

“Joy is a moral emotion.”

—Sondra Fraleigh

In this setting of intention, we find the Shin Somatics transformational approach to emotion. *Movement* is our educational medium and avenue for somatic experiencing. We are guided by creative processes of movement arts, not by emotional expression *per se*. We love movement and work through this medium toward engendering positive outcomes for people. Our work is student and client-centered, thus students and clients also have a role in our success. We work in community, and uplift each other in our working together. This somatic way fosters positive emotions, harmony in group work, and transformative learning for individuals.

About Somatic Movement Arts

Somatic Yoga is rich in emotional content through the imagery from nature and the colors and meanings of the chakras that inform our style. Qualities of flow encourage emotional responsivity as participants pay attention to their own feelings in class and workshop settings. Our style is communal, yet personal, both meditative and invigorating, and emotion manifests as part of motion and flow.

Intuitive Dance might seem a totally open conduit for emotional expression, but we remember that the medium is dance. Emotions are tidal in dance, they move. We dance in order to experience more and feel more, but not as raw display or acting out. Shin Somatics dance methods exist at an intersection of art and healing, and in a strange, wonderful way can lead one past controlling, self-centered instincts. We dance in community, relating self to others and often to the wider world of nature. Intuitive dance is not primarily about self-expression; it is about exceeding the limits of self in dancing with others and nature.

Creative processes of movement arts also guide Shin Somatics® Bodywork, even as it is informed by structures of movement patterning and has educational goals. We conceive bodymind and emotion as one in *Shin* (Oneness). Oneness of body and emotion guides us, and mind is always present. Through this sense of the whole, we develop *emotional intelligence*. Clients express how they feel at the conclusion of a bodywork session, but this is often left unstated as well. The feelings are in the dancelike happenings of movement facilitation, not in the resulting statements, even as these are welcome. Shin Somatics bodywork is mainly nonverbal, but it has verbal components. Joy and sorrow often arise, for instance. Emotions are not bad actors. They are what we are supposed to have, and people can learn how to

expresses them productively. This is what *emotional intelligence* is all about, and we aim to cultivate this.

In learning bodywork in workshop settings, students have two interrelated roles.

1. *Being a bodywork guide and practitioner:* Listening and learning through doing. This involves practicing movement patterning, learning the values of holding presence, and learning how to teach through touch.
2. *Being a bodywork client participant:* Practicing receptivity.

Both of the above roles require listening skills, and so we practice *listening hands* as movement guides, and *deep quiet listening* in the role of the client recipient. *The client* role is a receptive one, open to vulnerability and change. At the same time, the guide asks for initial requests and states that any client discomfort should be communicated as bodywork progresses.

Once the client is on the table, bodywork protocols proceed mainly nonverbally with patience and openness toward unknown outcomes. The bodyworker has the potential to become an artist in this work. It takes time and patience in classwork and much goodwill as people learn. We respect each other and learn from each other, facilitated by teachers and assistants. We welcome mistakes and learn from them. We know that emotions will be present in all of our work as part of embodied life, and we also know our limits. We refer people who exhibit emotional problems to outside professionals.

Code of Ethics for Workshops: At Eastwest Somatics Institute, we foster ethical interactions in our educational environments. We give priority to group safety in learning. In context of group awareness and in light of somatic processes, people sometimes cry in workshops and express a range of emotions, but we bear in mind that our work always exists in contexts of somatic movement methods. Emotional venting, as in screaming, temper tantrums, loud distracting sobbing, or aggression toward others, whether fellow students or teachers, is not permitted in our workshops.

Sondra Fraleigh