

BODY MAP SELF MAP

Consider the following conversation between a grandmother and her three year old grand daughter. Grandma pats the child's tummy and asks, "Who's this?" Her grand daughter responds with great delight, "Susie!"

"Oh, Susie!! Is Susie six years old?"

"No! Three years old. Three years old!"

"Oh, three years old! Is Susie a boy?"

"No, Grandma. A girl! Susie is a girl!!"

"A girl!! A three year old girl!! Is a three year old a baby girl?"

"No, silly grandma, not a baby girl. I'm a little big girl."

"I should have known you're not a baby girl. Look at you, how big you are. Are you a big girl?"

"No. Molly is a big girl. Susie is a little big girl."

"Is Susie a school girl?"

"No. Susie doesn't like school."

"Well, does Susie like cereal?"

"No, Susie doesn't like cereal, either."

"Oatmeal?"

"Yes, oatmeal. I like oatmeal."

"Does Susie live in Ohio?"

"No, in Portland, in Portland. Grandma Alice lives in Ohio."

"Oh, in Portland, with her mother Wendy and her father Jamie?"

"No, with Jenna!! With Mama Jenna and Dada George!"

A year earlier the two couldn't have played this game. Grandma would have patted Susie's tummy and asked "Who's this?" and she would have answered, "Baby!" and that would have been the end of it. A year hence these items will

hold no interest for her, but at three this is the stuff of self mapping and Susie is as supremely engaged with it, as she was earlier engaged with learning to roll over and then to crawl and then to walk.

Susie's body map is sufficiently established after only three years that she walks, runs, jumps, and speaks, and, in fact, these movements form the foundation for her emerging self map: I walk, I run, I jump, I speak. Her body map will be elaborated and refined as long as she lives, but it is essentially in place so that her neural frontier is no longer machinery for movement, as it was since birth until now, but machinery for life, her self map. So far, Susie is doing well. Her body map is accurate and adequate, and her self map is blessedly consistent with her body and nicely integrated into her body map. Who's this? The little big girl with this tummy named Susie who enjoys oatmeal in Portland in her family. This is the firm foundation on which everything else in her self map will be built.

Susie's body map was built in exactly the same way a squirrel's is, reciprocally, the mapping making possible movement that further elaborates the map until the little squirrel can walk and run as Susie does and leap and dig a good bit better. The body map is as far as it goes for a squirrel. In the absence of a huge brain primed by its structure and inclinations to create consciousness and language, the squirrel will never create a self map as Susie is doing now.

I do not know, and no one knows, so far as I can tell, if the self map is a literal map like the body map. If self map is metaphor, it is probably a pretty good metaphor, at least in the sense that inaccuracies and inadequacies in the self map produce pain and injury and limitation just as those in the body map do. You may remember that the body map is also known among scientists as the body scheme, the body model, and as internal representation. Certainly oneself is internally represented in some fashion, as is the body, and that self representation will determine, among other things, how willing and able one is to correct and refine one's body map. That is the point I am making here. The self map determines how willing and able one is to correct and refine one's body map.

For the past three years I have looked up self in every dictionary I have come near, making my way through all the dictionaries I could find in college libraries as I visited, producing several dozen definitions. After all that, the definitive definition, if you see what I mean, the one that best elucidates the self map for our purposes, came from my own trusty American College Dictionary: self is "the individual consciousness in its relation to itself." It is who I am to myself that matters, that carries weight, that determines what I do, not mere biography, not role, not any abstraction, not any degree or membership.

The importance of the inquiry into the role of the self map in Body Mapping became more urgent for me during my time with Lisa Marsh's Coordinate Movement Program at Portland State University. I was working with a pianist

whose recital was coming up in nine weeks. In her lesson in front of the group, I asked her to just practice for a while so that we could examine the effectiveness of her practicing. Her practicing as I observed it was without commitment, which is to say there wasn't a lot of intention happening, and I said to her, "You're not practicing like an artist." To my astonishment, she replied, "Oh, I wouldn't consider myself an artist." "You're going to play Brahms and you're not an artist!" I couldn't believe my ears. "Who is an artist, then?" "Well, like concert artists." "Isn't this a concert you're preparing?"

Discussion followed, as you might imagine. It turned out the same musical culture that gave my student Brahms plus a fine technique teacher and even a Body Mapping course also gave her a social hierarchy that deprived her of the self map she needed to take full advantage of any of it. Remember our working definition of self, the individual consciousness in its relation to itself. As this woman practiced for her concert, her individual consciousness in its relation to itself wouldn't presume to be an artist. I asked her to change her mind, and I offered her my dictionary's definition of artist, "one who produces or expresses what is beautiful, appealing, or of more than ordinary significance." Brahms produced the beautiful, appealing sonata of more than ordinary significance, and the student must express the beautiful, appealing sonata of more than ordinary significance. Both must be artists in order to accomplish that.

The student practiced again, this time like an artist, with commitment and attention and intention. The effectiveness of the practice increased dramatically and nine weeks later she played a fine concert, as an artist, because she changed her self map to secure what she had earned in changing her body map.

Do you see that if I had merely asked for more commitment or attention or intention, I would not have come to the heart of the matter, the self map that denied her the status that would automatically produce commitment, attention, and intention? I am very, very lucky that I gave her feedback in the form I did, "You're not practicing like an artist." If I had framed the feedback in any other way, I might never have learned the power of the self map in these matters.

Some have worried that we Andover Educators might be usurping the province of the therapist if we inquire into our students' self maps. Certainly, there are vast areas of the self map we have no business exploring with our students, and no need or occasion to explore, just as there are significant areas of the body map we do not question because they are irrelevant to our task as teachers, but I believe we have every right to inquire about a student's self mapping as it pertains to being an artist and a musician and an instrumentalist, singer, conductor, if we suspect that disadvantage is coming to the student from inadequacy in the self map.

I recently asked a badly injured musician who did not seem very committed to her recovery whether she felt she had a vocation in music. "Oh, no," she said,

“not really. I think my vocation would probably be in public health or in research science.” Well, no wonder her fidelity to her recovery was so lame, and how would I have learned what she was thinking if I hadn’t asked? I consider that it was my job to ask that question and to describe to her just exactly what people do who actually recover full function after injury as musicians so that she can exercise a genuine choice about her future.

Amy has very wisely made the theme of this retreat honing our visual skills. I’m suggesting that an aspect of our skill is learning to listen, too. When we look at a student, our foremost concern is the body map that is governing the movement that we see. We could, of course, try to change the movement without changing the map, but that would be like constantly correcting a note as the student plays-- No, no, please play B flat there instead of the B you just played--rather than just correcting the score. That would make no sense. With Body Mapping, we correct the score, as it were. I’m recommending that you augment your concern for the student’s body map with concern for what self map is governing the student’s relationship to everything that is happening in the studio or the master class. “Oh, I wouldn’t consider myself an artist,” represents devastation in the self map just the way mapping an axial radius in place of an axial ulna represents devastation in the body map. Both can be changed, and both must be changed for success.

I have come to believe that the question of the self map is relevant not only to individual students but also to our approach to groups of musicians. In the early years of Andover Educators, we have been eager to deliver our good news to all musicians, but we may now be able to better target our information to those with the self maps consistent with what we have to teach, or that can become consistent.

Please do this thought experiment with me. Suppose we give a presentation about Body Mapping to a hundred people at a music convention. Among the hundred will be a few with perfectly adequate body maps. We hope those happy few will understand from our presentation that their success derives from their exemplary body maps. They can use Body Mapping to learn to value their body maps, to protect their body maps, and to teach from their body maps.

We know from experience that all the rest of the hundred people will be suffering injury or pain or some degree of limitation from the ways in which their body maps are faulty. Among those, there will be some like you who leap at the information, come to understand it, assimilate it, and use it forever to steadily improve to the point of mastery. I’m suggesting that a self map is in place in people like you that not only allows you to recognize the information you need but also supports your acquiring it and using it for your own benefit and the benefit of your audiences.

There may be two or three in our hundred people who reject Body Mapping due to their self maps. When David Nesmith and I taught the International Horn

Society convention a few years back, a man looked at the materials at our booth in the exhibit area and said scornfully, "Music is competitive enough already. The last thing in the world I want is other horn players knowing how to play better. Anybody who figures out how to play better is a fool if he doesn't keep it to himself." This man clearly wasn't going to learn anything from someone he considered to be a fool, and his individual consciousness was principally focused on competition in his relation to himself. I am in competition trumping, at least for the moment, I am an artist. Out and out rejectors are few in number and each rejects with a different motivation. I think we can forget about the rejectors for the time being and let them stew in their own juice, as my dad would have put it.

So far in our hundred people we have the well mapped, we have the people like you who will leap at the information, we have the rejectors like the competitor, and we have the others, who are still in the majority. Who are they? Why do they not leap at what will help them, as you do? I submit that the answer lies in their self maps, who they are in relation to themselves, who they think they are, who they say to themselves they are and will sometimes reveal out loud.

Much of what I have learned so far about the self map is anecdotal, to use the scientific word for an inquiry at this level, but the term anecdotal is not pejorative. Much that was once anecdotal is now proven and constantly used, electricity, for instance. Benjamin Franklin had a high enough regard for the anecdotal to tie his key to his kite string.

Some anecdotes, then, from The National Association of the Teachers of Singing convention in New Orleans last summer. In my final session of three I encouraged the teachers to continue to sing and to perform throughout their teaching careers, not merely because students learn so much from a teacher who can demonstrate, but so that teachers stay true to their vocation as artists and go on experiencing the joy of singing and don't become disheartened or disappointed. I have had feedback from some of the teachers present that they took my advise and have been much happier now that they are singing again, singers again in their own minds. This is what I had hoped for, so I was pleased with their feedback. I had done my job, as I saw it, raising the issue of the self map as well as the body map.

Then on a recent trip I met a teacher who had attended the same presentation with a very different result. She said it had made her very angry. She couldn't wait for this chance to tell me that my advise was very bad advise for her and, in her opinion, for most of the teachers present. I had been speaking that day, she claimed, to a tiny minority of the membership, to those who really are singers and should belong to some other organization, the National Association of Singers, or the National Association of Singers Who Teach, who really shouldn't belong in her organization, the National Association of Teachers of Singing. She said she is writing an article to submit to the NATS Journal arguing that a Teacher of Singing is a legitimate self map in its own right, a job in its own right, requiring in

no way that one had ever wished to perform or ever identified oneself in any way as an artist. "Teachers aren't artists," she said, "they are teachers. We singing teachers have much more in common with math teachers and reading teachers than we do with singers and artists," she said, "and this organization is for us, not them." The more she talked, the madder she seemed to get.

She went on, "We don't have to be singers anymore than a math teacher needs to be a mathematician or a teacher of reading a writer." This seemed to be her main point. "Furthermore," she said, "any attempt to persuade Teachers of Singing to use Body Mapping for themselves will be doomed to failure if it tries to address them as singers. They are not singers," she said, "and they would care about Body Mapping for themselves only insofar as it helps them as Teachers, sitting at the piano all day, things like that. That would be helpful to us" she said, "how to sit at a piano all day."

She's on a roll now. "I don't need my own pharynx correctly mapped to teach." she insisted. "A singer," she concluded, "would need everything you are teaching. A Teacher of Singing does not. Go talk to the singers," she said, "and leave us alone to do what we already know how to do."

If this woman is bravely speaking, as she claims, out loud what others like her are thinking and feeling, then we may have an answer about an unknown portion of our hypothetical hundred. As I listened to her I realized that I had heard milder or apologetic or regretful versions of the same self map, things like, "Well, you know Suzuki teachers are teachers, not artists," or "I'm a piano teacher, not a pianist." I didn't register these statements earlier because they so contradicted what I had supposed, that all who are drawn to sing or play musical instruments as children do so because they are inherently, intrinsically artists. The Teacher of Singing claims I am dead wrong. Notice that the issue is entirely one of self mapping, of internal representation, I am a singer being a significantly different self map from I am a singer who teachers and, if my informant is right, radically different from I am a Teacher of Singing.

One alarming consequence of assuming I have heard the truth from my informant is that I have no more interest in her than she has in me. I have no mission for helping people sit at pianos all day or any other of the menial tasks she would put us to, like how to reach up to turn a page of notation. I am interested in artists and in the great contribution of Body Mapping to making music. Music didn't seem to figure much in this woman's world except as something for kids to do after school, like basketball. In its current form, her self map will preclude her ever learning or using Body Mapping. Alas.

So far in our hundred people we have the well mapped, we have the people like you who will leap at the information, we have the rejectors like the competitor, we have those who will gradually use Body Mapping as they begin to sing or play again, we have those so identified as Teachers that any suggestion that are

artists annoys or angers them. If this latter group is indeed large and constituted as my informant insists, then we can learn from her and use our energy learning to identify and target people like you who can and will use what we have to offer.

Some other subset of our hundred member audience will be in the category of failed artists whose grief and disappointment is too great to bear or examine. These people generally sit stony faced through our presentations. It is for the sake of these people that I have encouraged every musician who is recovering from injury, pain, and limitation to carefully and fully document the process. Only a few do, of course, but these accounts will accumulate as a resource for the hopeless. We need to continually address these people in their hopelessness, for there is hope. They failed in the past because their rotten body maps limited their movement, not because they weren't good musicians or didn't have what it takes or any such thing. I hope those of you interested in research will continually bear these people in mind. They may eventually dare to try what is proven to work.

Two more anecdotes from the NATS convention, which I use because it has been so much on my mind and because it was so rich in matters to contemplate. As some of you know, there is a NATS competition, and singers want to win the competition, of course, for the boost to their careers. I have had students in the competitions from time to time and I have seen their comment sheets and I have shared their frustration. The criteria by which the singers are apparently being judged differ so profoundly from the criteria an audience member brings to a performance of an opera or an oratorio or a recital that it seems almost impossible that winning could actually boost one's performing career. Winning, in fact, seems more likely to land you in a judge's chair ultimately than on an opera stage. I hope you see the irony of this and the relevance to our mission. Body Mapping has little to contribute to sitting in a judge's chair. It has everything to contribute to singing on an opera stage. We are very good at helping musicians please audiences; we may not be so much use in helping them please judges.

A man named Richard Miller, a well-known and well-respected pedagogue, gave the keynote address of the New Orleans convention. His subject was singing technique as a complex coordination learned over time under close supervision, all well and good. What struck me as not well and good was his repeated use of the word elite as it applied to this complex coordination and the music that requires it. Elite. It struck my ears as very, very odd. Rock singing is a complex coordination--just watch Mick Jagger for a while--Tuvan throat singing is a complex coordination, but nobody calls them elite. Is Don Byron doing something elite when he plays Mozart but something else when he plays jazz? He doesn't think so. Is there a classism in classical music, I began to wonder, not for the first time, hearing that sad word elite. There are several trainees and prospective trainees who declined to come to this very retreat because they said they didn't think they would fit in with the classical musicians present. They might as well have said, "I won't know which fork to use."

I have known from the very beginning what I wish for you present here tonight with regard to your body maps: that they be accurate, that is, completely congruent with the territory, that they be adequate, that is, sufficiently refined and detailed to get the job done, that they be secure enough to keep you free from tension, that they may grow comfortably and reliably as you learn new skills. Now I have a much clearer idea of what I wish for your self maps: that you are artists in your individual consciousness in its relation to itself, that you are a card-carrying members of that world wide communion of artists that includes all who produce or express what is beautiful, appealing, and of more than ordinary significance, including actors, painters, novelists, and film makers. That you are mapped as musicians, not narrowly, not as elite musicians, however complex the coordination you enjoy, but as broadly as possible, including the dead as much as the living, so that you feel at one with the person who first made a flute out of a thigh bone or a drum out of a skull, at one with the humans who almost certainly sang before they spoke, perhaps were able eventually to speak because they sang, and at one with those who aren't here because they were afraid they wouldn't know which fork to use, looking to the day when your inclusion of them will be reciprocated.

I am ending this inquiry tonight with a story of hope sent to me by Molly Slotter about her friend Jeanne, whose cancer and cancer treatment had resulted in her no longer being able to play the piano, which Jeanne had repeatedly described as "not being able to be a musician any more." Molly talked with Jeanne for the last time on Tuesday 7 December 2004. "It was my last day of classes at Bradley," Molly wrote. "I was in no hurry. We had a great talk about a couple of minor issues for me, but then here again came the subject of her not being able to be a musician any more. After six years of getting to know this lovely woman, I thought the time seemed right. I had told her LOTS about body mapping, but this was when I decided to share the idea of my self map. My crucial discovery about my self map was the fact that the self map included musician and the separation (for me) of musician being part of who I am and piano player being something I do. Absolutely, playing the piano has become the talent that I have used most to express myself as a musician. But if something happened making it impossible for me to play any more, I would STILL and ALWAYS be a musician. That's who God made me. And no one can take that away. And it's only one part of a vast map that makes us each so incredibly individual."

The following Saturday, Jeanne send Molly a beautiful basket of fruit with a card expressing her gratitude. Jeanne had found peace at the end of her life that she could still be a musician in her relation to herself even though she could no longer play the piano. In her new peace, Jeanne died on Christmas night a musician. I wish for you all the peace of being fully the wonderful artists you are and fully the wonderful musicians you are, without reservation.