



Trager Applied to Muscular Dystrophy

by Tom Molatore & Jeanne English

(EDITOR'S NOTE) Tom Molatore works as a mental health counsellor and biofeedback specialist in Oregon. He has limb-girdle muscular dystrophy. In October 1981 Tom began seeing Milton Trager M.D. Jeanne English, Tom's friend, accompanied him. Here are Tom's comments about his Trager experiences:

Being Tragered by an entire class of advanced students in May was quite an experience for Jeanne and me. This was our first contact with Betty Fuller and Trager students seven months after receiving sessions from Milton in Honolulu (what we jokingly refer to as seeing Milton at the Hilton). I felt my muscles respond to each student's individualized resistance movements expressed in a state of hook-up and gave the students feedback on whether or not their movements created feelings of being active, light and/or free. Although each student had a slightly different approach, similar feelings of my muscles being more active and freer were imparted to me by each student.

Since my 12 sessions of resistance work with Milton in Honolulu I have experienced changes on many inter-related levels. On a psychological level I feel confident that by practicing Trager Mentastics® on a regular consistent basis I am able to arrest the progressive muscle weakness that can occur with limb-girdle muscular dystrophy. The Psychophysical Integration sessions also accomplished the removal of emotional blocks such as frustration resulting from muscle weakness, fear of progressive muscle weakness, and depression resulting from feeling helpless and hopeless. My belief system was changed in the direction of a positive expectancy of health (muscle strength) away from the negative expectation of progressive muscle weakness conditioned by the medical prognosis that your muscles will continue to become weaker as time goes on no matter what you do. On a physical level I have gained 20 pounds whereas previously I was unable to gain weight regardless of what or how much I ate. I feel that this weight gain indicates a change in my metabolic processes. One unanticipated side effect of this weight gain derived from increased muscle mass was that it made it more difficult to walk. However I am stronger working on the therapy table. I am currently on a diet to lose weight which may help me walk better in the future.

Two weeks before and two months after seeing Milton and Emily in Honolulu, I had my creatine phosphokinase (C.P.K.) blood levels measured at the local hospital, and had isolated muscle strength tests done by the registered physical therapist working with the Muscular Dystrophy Association. The objective results indicated that my C.P.K. level decreased from 543 international units per liter (i.u./liter) to 430 i.u./liter, indicating that this neuromuscular enzyme became more concentrated in the muscle tissue where it belongs, rather than remaining unused in the blood. Normal C.P.K. levels are from 0-83 i.u./liter. Six months later my C.P.K. level continued to decrease down to 355 i.u./liter. Isolated muscle strength tests indicated that 12 out of 18 muscles improved in strength, 4 stayed the same, and 2 became slightly weaker. Also, the hearing in my left ear improved 10 to 20% as measured by an audiologist. Before seeing Milton, my doctor was considering surgery to improve my hearing.

After I returned from Honolulu, my doctor decided not to perform surgery because of the hearing improvement. I attribute the above psychological emotional and physical changes to the process of being put in touch with what healthy tissue feels like and the neurological

patterns associated with healthy tissue. In this respect my body, through Trager movements, re-educated my mind to perform the necessary neuromuscular and metabolic functions of healthy tissue. On a spiritual level I feel much more aware of the vibrational frequencies correlated with healthy muscle responses.

Two other techniques that I have found helpful are the nutritional counselling provided by Jack Schwarz and the practice of creative imagery. Jeanne and I have been practicing Trager resistance exercises four times a week on the average for an hour each session since October of 1981. We have divided the exercises into three groups and alternate the practice of each group which gives me a chance to rest some muscle groups in between the practice of the other muscle groups. Jeanne and I have found it very useful to periodically review the V.H.S. videotape that was recorded during our Honolulu sessions to remind ourselves of Milton's unique meaningful spoken phrases and effective techniques.