

GETTING MENTASTICS ACROSS TO CLIENTS

Julie C. Greene



Trager International

First paper edition: 1995 (?)

PDF revised version: June 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(PRE) AMBLE.....	2
1. THE MENTASTICS APPROACH.....	3
THE FOUR STEPS.....	5
ANATOMY OF A MENTASTICS SESSION.....	6
1. Initiating.....	6
2. Guiding/Following:.....	7
3. Contexting.....	11
4. Completing.....	11
ELICITING FEEDBACK.....	13
USING WORDS.....	14
KNOWING WHICH MOVES TO GIVE A CLIENT.....	16
RESONANCE.....	17
INERTIA.....	19
GRAVITY AND COUNTER-GRAVITY.....	20
EFFORTLESSNESS AND PLEASURE'N'PLAY.....	21
IMAGERY.....	23
COMPARING.....	24

(PRE) AMBLE

Dr. Trager does Mentastics movements with a client as needed at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of a session. The tablework exists within a Mentastics matrix that is referenced into a client's actual lifestyle over and over again. That matrix consists of movement within a process of 'hook-up' which leads a client to what it feels like to feel 'right'. The ability to feel 'right' is a capacity inherent within the client.

This process of movement in deepening hook-up (a state I think of as dynamic peace) gives clients the means to feel 'right' in any moment. They can find it through recall, and through moving with awareness in a way that is simple, spontaneous, free, effortless, full of life, 'comfortable with gravity', and pleasurable. They can walk with this feeling, sit down and stand up with this feeling, wait on supermarket lines with this feeling, get it back when it goes away, feel it as their daily life experience and be improving all the time.

Understood this way, the Mentastics approach is more than a movement form to teach clients in conjunction with a tablework session, but is about *helping clients get in touch with their own fundamental ability to access and affect their internal experience through movement*. Not only is this the propose of the Mentastics process, but it is the essence of Dr. Trager's work - we are employing this principle and this goal with everything we do in a Trager session.

1. THE MENTASTICS APPROACH

For a Mentastics session to be effective we need not know - thank goodness - exactly *how* or *why* it works (though that question is being worked on by many of us), but it does help to have an idea of first what it is, and secondly what our clients can get out of it.

Mentastics movement is not moves, an exercise form or even a movement form but is a process. It is a process...

- Of deepening awareness evoked through sensing the body with the mind via movement; That employs a movement style at once spontaneous, rhythmic, free, fluid and simple,
- That is natural and easy to do within the context of everyday life.

What it's for... Mentastics movement is something our clients can use...

- As a means to find hook-up (dynamic peace) in daily life.
- As a basic approach to movement in everyday life.
- For daily stress relief.
- To gradually release and reverse negative results of past and chronic stress and restrictive patterns.
- To promote
 - Increased pleasure.
 - More ease.
 - Better function.
- As a way to agelessness (not falling into culturally prescribed patterns of aging).

Thus we can distinguish the Mentastics approach from movement processes that do not use our movement (simple, rhythmic, etc.) as well as from style look-a-likes - dance, exercises and games which incorporate 'mentastics-esque' moves and movement elements, but are not processes of awakening and introspection.

The Mentastics approach is distinct in that it does not use external frames of reference to gauge results by, only internal ones. For example, we do not start out with an idea of what the Mentastics moves will look like done correctly or what our bodies should look like as a result of practice.

Our system is also distinguished by a lack of 'efforting' - we don't 'work hard'. We're after a state where the movement just happens, where we have let go of doing and are sufficiently open and sensitive to receive and follow sensations from movement.

We are not going for future results so much as discovering the possibilities of the present. Developing naturally, playfully and individually, an internal referent of what it is we are sensing and could be sensing moment to moment. A non-doing. Entirely now. 'Zen of movement'.

As a tutor and Mentastics leader, the questions I am most frequently asked about doing Mentastics work with clients are:

- How can I do Mentastics work with my clients when I don't have enough time for the tablework as it is?
- How do I initiate movement work with a client who expects only tablework, who jumps on the table or out the door, or who is 'all bye-bye' and non-verbal at the end?
- How do I know which moves to do, how long to do them, and what the client is getting out of them?
- What do I do when a client is 'difficult', resistant, unimpressed or doesn't seem to be getting it?

To address these issues I have profiled a Mentastics session as a sequence of 4 basic steps. You can use this 4-step structure to put together an effective mini Mentastics session as brief as 5-7 minutes.

On the next page is an outline sketch of the steps, followed by an in-depth look at a prototype Mentastics session based on them and a thorough discussion of each point below.

THE FOUR STEPS

1. **Initiating**
 - Establish rapport.
 - Check in with them (find out how they're doing).
 - Let the person know what it is you're doing/about to do together.
2. **Guiding/following**
 - Choose one to three Mentastics moves to share.
 - Maintain rapport.
 - Acknowledge and validate.
 - Elicit feedback from the client about their state.
 - Take them farther, deeper.
 - Recognize and acknowledge when they have 'gotten it' and you have come to the end of a cycle.
3. **Contexting**
 - Context the Mentastics approach into their lives (show them how to apply it in life).
4. **Completing**
 - Make a smooth transition to the next event (ex: to the tablework, or if after the session, to getting dressed or paying you).

ANATOMY OF A MENTASTICS SESSION

1. *Initiating*

- Establish rapport.
- Check in with them (find out how they're doing).
- Let the person know what it is you're doing/about to do together.

Step 1 is about getting you and the client aligned. The whole step can be accomplished in a couple of sentences as long as it is done to your satisfaction. To do Mentastics work requires good contact and cooperation between client and practitioner. If you run into difficulties with a 'resistant' client at any step in the process, you can return to this step and get back in rapport.

I believe the session itself actually starts on the phone, with your hook-up and contact. Your client finds out what sort of work you do from you. You can present the Trager Approach as a bodywork (or movement re-education) approach that includes both movement work and tablework. It's as matter-of-fact as what you charge and the location of your office. This, along with the rapport you establish and the information you learn about them by phone (all part of step 1), will help the Mentastics portion of your work flow naturally even in the first session.

For our example, let's say you decide to do a 'mini session' of 5-7 minutes before the tablework and another 1-2 minutes afterwards. The beginning is a good time for face-to-face interaction before clients get horizontal. They experience from the start their self empowerment in the work. If you need more time you have it. You can refer to the experience during the session. You don't risk missing it by running overtime in the tablework. When you do movement again at the end, it's familiar, they experience it deeper, it ties together the whole session and gives more meaning to the Mentastics experience they had at the beginning.

Step 1 can be integrated in as you've already begun moving - you can be making contact, letting them know what's happening and checking in with them even as you begin to sense your own feet on the ground, let your own hook-up deepen and start to model a Mentastics way - they may go into hook-up with you and be moving mentastically before you've given the first instructions.

It's important to check in verbally ("What's going on with you right now?" "Anything hurting today?"), and by observation. You've probably already taken a history but this is to find out what's up for them right now in their bodies ("Well, the usual tension in my shoulders and I have a sore on my heel from these new shoes") or generally in their life ("I'm frantic because of Bar exams").

While you might directly address what they tell you (perhaps with a move for those shoulders), don't feel you must give 'remedial' moves in order to lead a valuable Mentastics experience. That might or might not be your purpose in a given Mentastics session. It's essential to get the information at the start of every session, both for you to be aware of it and for them to feel checked-in-with. Take it into account, but aim first

and foremost to give them an experience, via whatever movements you do together, of an internally generated process they can use again later to 'find what it feels like to feel right' (see preamble). As you are more able to do this with a client, you'll find that, even without trying, you'll come up with the most appropriate moves for that client, often ones you wouldn't otherwise have thought of doing.

Even after the first time, it may help to orient clients briefly each session as to what it is you're doing/about to do together (ex: "Let's take a minute now to play with that little leg drop I showed you last week - did you find it helpful?"). Once they have a general sense of what, roughly how long, and maybe why, it's easier for clients to go along with you and follow your instructions.

Step 1 brings a client 'on board' and in the present with you. Even if you sometimes see clients you haven't talked with beforehand by phone, it's still possible to educate and engage them in the process with just a few words (ex: "Before we go on to the tablework, let's spend a couple of minutes doing some body-awareness and movement that you can use between sessions, okay? Let's start by just...") - it's possible, that is, if your contact with them is good and you are clear in your own mind about what, how long and why.

2. Guiding/Following:

- Choose one to three Mentastics moves to share.
- Maintain rapport.
- Acknowledge and validate.
- Elicit feedback from the client about their state.
- Take them farther, deeper.
- Recognize and acknowledge when they have 'gotten it' and you have come to the end of a cycle.

Remember that the result happens in the client's mind. It happens through a process of mentally directed movement. The body will be different because the person is different inside.

Once they feel it within themselves and get the principle, they've reached the end of a cycle. They've completed a cycle in which they had, and recognized that they had, a Mentastics experience within themselves via a process they can repeat.

It's good to have a goal for the session (being open to revise it as you go!). A fine goal is to complete one cycle. As you gain experience you might establish goals that address a condition or situation they've told you about or that you noticed. This could include challenges in their body (such as aches, immobilities or ailments), or applications in their life (such as movement in the workplace, sports, or performing arts). While you are developing those skills remember that the central learning is for them to get better in touch with their ability to access and affect their state through movement and if that takes place your Mentastics work with them has been successful.

You can start with any Mentastics movement you want and gently allow it to unfold. In a mini session it's fine if you show them only one thing (and not more than 3). The important thing is getting the feeling across, not the number of moves you show.

As you give an instruction, such as, "Let your arm begin to swing like this", and they cooperate, it's good to acknowledge them with a word, facial expression or sound, "um-hm", to validate that they did comply (regardless how stiffly). Then help them along one step at a time ("That's it, now just let the weight of that arm drop freely into gravity ... yes!"), continuing to acknowledge their endeavors. As you observe what happens and elicit feedback ("Do you feel that letting go now?" or, "What are you experiencing in your body now?" or, "What happened from that?"), your observations and their feedback will naturally guide your next interventions. You can keep current by checking in often.

It's a mutual exploration, you are collaborators. Be open. Don't try to know in advance what to do, let it find you. Have an 'interrogative attitude', asking "Well....?" Do the movement along with the client, let it affect you, describe your inner experience. Swing between being inward in feeling, and outward observing and communicating. With practice the two states fuse; you'll be in and out at the same time. You instruct, evoke and model (guiding), at the same time as you ask them what they are sensing, observe them, and sense in yourself the version they are doing (following). Dr. Trager 'tries on' in his own body how they are holding themselves or moving. Take them from where they are.

In my experience, it's helpful to relate the basic principles as well as specific instructions for a move. For example: That it's not about duplicating the move so much as the feeling. That it's about finding pleasure in the movement, about letting go of effort and doing, allowing rather than making the movement. That, as Dr. Trager says, they can 'be a part of the movement', be 'in' it, while letting it be spontaneous (a 'happening'). That the more tension or resistance they feel, the lighter the movement must be and the more patient they must become. That it's about simply feeling weight and letting go to gravity, or, if doing a stretching movement, about merely taking up the slack and fe-e-eling into length.

Use any means available to communicate feeling. Model the movement in your body. Touch them, move them, have them touch you or themselves. Words can describe movement, relay imagery or direct their attention. Your voice imparts pacing and feeling. Pauses and silence also convey. Transmit feeling through play, a little silliness, or drama. Illustrate movements with sounds (br-r-r-rp, sh-h-ew-w-w). Props to look at or touch may evoke the qualities of a move (springy, wiggly, fluffy).

If a client has a particularly hard time letting go, it can occasionally help to exaggerate a holding pattern just slightly. For example, if you instruct a client to lift their shoulders just a little on an inhalation, they will sometimes spontaneously experience the shoulders dropping much further on the exhalation.

If your client can't do the movements freely, either because of an inability to let go of controlling the movements or from physical limitation, it's okay. No need to be ambitious! You need only take them one layer further. What is freer for that person?

After you do a movement with your client, you can suggest they go inside to experience what happened and how they are different now (the 'echo' of the movement within them). You can do the movement again, check out their inner experience again. Allow time to contemplate the result. No need to change the move, though it will be different each time as will be the result. It's good to repeat the process with the same movement a number of times. Repeating the move takes it deeper, subtler, and the person can experience themselves inside in a new way. This can become their new level of ordinary, this is them now.

You can watch for signs of hook-up and relaxation in the client. Their movements may become finer, simpler, more spontaneous. Their breathing may change. As they go deeper you may see skin color fluctuate, little hairs stand on end, or extremely fine vibrations (it seems to me I see tissue 'humming' sometimes). They may feel heat or tingles, may become aware of ambient smells, colors or sounds. Their voice may deepen. They may drop their 'socialness', may seem more present or 'real'. They may go non-verbal. Emotions may come, usually soft ones, from smiles to tears. Allow space for whatever; stay in contact.

In my view the practitioner does not need to be an 'expert'; the client is the expert of his or her own experience. You need only explore with them. The challenge is to tolerate not knowing what to do. To trust the process to take the two of you into hook-up, letting go of performance or technique. To tolerate the uncertainty inherent in the fact that there is no right way to do these movements. To tolerate the frustration that can occur if you think your client is not moving into hook-up. To deepen your own, and practice returning to the openness, the asking which allows hookup to come. Your hook-up can help you discover the source of any blocks and provide creative solutions.

I believe the most important tool in all of this is what I think of as 'open questions' or 'hook-up questions': "What could be lighter?" "...and lighter than that?" "well...?" ... And... "how could it be?" The answer doesn't come in words or by deliberately getting lighter, but the movement becomes lighter. You can play with 'hook-up questions' regarding different qualities - softer, freer, easier, looser, lighter, heavier, more beautiful. These can, in fact, do much of the 'teaching' for you and is what clients need to integrate the Mentastics way into their life. You can do a movement, pause to ask what could be lighter (or whichever question you choose), repeat the movement noticing the difference. Dr. Trager says don't try to make it lighter. You don't know exactly how the movement will change. It gets lighter without you consciously changing it - this bypasses the conscious mind - and you might be surprised at what lighter actually is like. This, I feel, is the heart and essence of hook-up and the Mentastics process.

It doesn't take much - a few minutes - and one of the times you elicit feedback, the client may say something like, "Gee, I feel much more relaxed (or: present ... integrated ... balanced ... taller ... connected ... tingly/alive, or I feel more of my whole body, or the movement is easier to do, or my back feels better, etc.)". They've got it! You've completed a cycle (in which, as we are defining it, they have had, and recognized that they had, a Mentastics experience within themselves via a process they can repeat).

At this point in our mini prototype session you're almost done, since the last two steps,

contexting and completing, can be as brief as a few sentences. If you have more time, you can continue with the same movement and take it another cycle deeper. Or, you can begin a new cycle with another movement.

These cycles are real in that there is an actual moment when the person has 'gotten' something. They may need help identifying what it was they got, but that does not make the moment less real or the session less effective. Usually there is a palpable something both people recognize even if they aren't aware of it. When you feel that moment has happened, if you roll on to closure through steps 3 and 4 from there, most likely both you and the client will have a nice feeling of completeness and satisfaction.

So the trick, especially with less 'easy' clients, may be to recognize when they've 'gotten' it. Not all clients will give you definite verbal cues like, "Wow, that really works!" even when that's what they are thinking. Some people just say 'wow' more than others do. Then of course it sometimes happens that a client really isn't so excited about it - yet. In my experience, if I am in good contact with the person, these powerful processes do result in positive change. However, the effect is sometimes very subtle, especially in a mini session, and a client might not sense it.

If they don't recognize internally what happened, you can observe it externally and report what you notice.

3. Contexting

Context the Mentastics approach into their lives (show them how to apply it in life).

This step is to let them know they can use the Mentastics process in their everyday life and to suggest to them how it can be applied. This can be done in as little as a single sentence and does not need to be fancy but is important to include.

For example, you can propose they use it in everyday situations like waiting on line at the supermarket, washing dishes, talking on the phone. Two of Dr. Trager's favorites are reaching for a can of beans from a kitchen shelf and getting up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom. You can also show them how they can incorporate it into their particular lifestyle (computer keyboard, runner, violin player).

It can unfold quite naturally while they are identifying what they've gotten from the process and you are suggesting how they could get that again on their own. In a mini session you could then flow on to the last step (closure), and you'd be done. However, you can also interweave this step many times in small doses throughout steps 1 and 2, or in depth at any point.

"I'm in heaven": if a client comes up with specifics ("Next time I'm hunched over my desk or even initiates the idea ("Gee, I could do this between my sessions with you"). If they take the ball I let them run with it as far as they want. The more they empower themselves in this work, the better.

Your suggestions can be general ("whenever you want to feel this again", "anytime you start to feel stress") but the more specific, routine and applicable to a client's actual life they are, the more likely a client will follow through ("while you wait for that bus", "brushing your teeth", "as you walk from your desk to...", "watching TV", "at the computer", "vacuuming", "getting out of bed"). In a given session, one or at most two of these is enough.

Without making a client feel proselytized or pushed, do let your confidence in the process show. This will be easier if in fact you've incorporated Mentastics movement into your own everyday life, experienced how easy, no-big-deal and natural it is, and noticed the difference in the quality of your life.

4. Completing

Make a smooth transition to the next event (ex: to the tablework, or if after the session, to getting dressed or paying you).

Basically a finesse step, but be aware that it's you who closes. You're at a point where you could either cycle again or stop. The client may be sensing that, too. If the practitioner waffles here, some clients will tend to pull themselves out of hook-up, 'get in their heads' (inner chatter or figuring-it-out), or go into a doing or social mode. So it's good if you can shift smoothly to the next activity, leaving the client with a nice feeling of completion.

You can do it any way you want - "Thank you, that's lovely, and you can continue to move with this feeling as you get ready for your tablework" or, "So, as you take that little walk I suggested before you get in your car, just feel that jiggle, okay?" - Your own way, of course, but catch the moment.

To do a second mini session of 1-2 minutes after the tablework, you could begin as you're getting them off the table ("Now as you begin to move, just bring this feeling and this length right up with you as you sit"). You needn't make a big separate thing of it, but get them off the table quite naturally into their feeling of length, awareness of bottoms of feet, and feeling of movement as they walk around the table a few times. Perhaps suggest they can recall this feeling or walk this easily later. You could give them a specific move for their situation if you have time ("You can keep your shoulder this free by...").

Even as little as 1 to 2 minutes of this adds a lot of value to your session. You might subtly go through all 4 steps. A nice closure might be something like, "and just continue to feel this movement in your body as you dress".

You've done it! And the more you do it the easier it'll get so that when you are face to face with a client and you think you don't know what to do, you'll find just what you need.

Below are a few more hints on communicating the essence of Mentastics movement. They are tools I've discovered or learned from Dr. Trager, other teachers, colleagues, clients and students. I hope you will find them helpful.

ELICITING FEEDBACK

It's important to know where a client is at and whether they are with you. For example, if a client falls silent it could mean they are in deep hook-up, tuned inward to a non-verbal place, or it could mean they are not following you.

Check in just often enough that you know what's happening with them. As needed, you can ask questions like, "What effect did that have?" "Tell me what you notice in your body right now." "Can you feel the weight of your hand?" "What's happening now?" "What are you experiencing?"

If you hit a rough spot in a session, check in. If the two of you are in basic rapport (establish that first), yet you think something isn't right, then you might want to make sure your assumptions about what's going on inside the person are accurate.

For example, suppose you've been playing with an image of kelp underwater, not realizing that they have never seen kelp and don't know what it is. Or, maybe you've had them feel their feet ... ankles ... legs ... trunk ... but they are still back there trying to feel their feet. Or perhaps they have a question and will be distracted until they ask it. Or they are replicating your movements just fine, along with the serene, transported look on your face, but they haven't the vaguest idea what you mean by 'feel'. Or it could be the movement is causing a pain in their shoulder they are embarrassed to tell you about.

So it's good to find out their inner experience. Any reason they didn't 'get' what you were going after is a valid reason. It's essential to take them from wherever they are.

When you want clear and useful feedback from clients and have limited time, 'direct questions' and 'yes/no questions' are usually more helpful than 'open-ended questions'.

Open-ended questions are like these:

"How are you?" "What are you feeling?" "How is that for you?" "What's happening?"

Direct and yes/no questions are like these:

"Tell me one thing you notice in your body right now?" "Do you feel such and such?" "Do you notice a difference? Tell me what it is." "Can you feel the bottoms of your feet now?" "What do you feel in your shoulder now?" "I notice such and such, do you feel that?"

An open-ended question is great when you want to elicit from the person whatever they'll come up with to tell you. But, especially in a mini session where you must control the time and still get information from them, feel free to use direct and yes/no questions frequently. Use open-ended questions when you need to fish with a net instead of a hook.

USING WORDS

Words can have extraordinary power. And they are very easy to misunderstand. Some clients may take you more literally than you intend. Or remember forever certain statements you wish you had not made. Some clients may pick up on every nuance that could imply a criticism of them. And certain expressions or ideas may be 'charged' or have a special meaning, due to a client's personal history, community or subculture. It's good to avoid such 'hot buttons' but it's not always possible. Do choose your words as consciously as you can but know that you can count on clients making unexpected interpretations of what you say, and sometimes it will be necessary to go back and find out what happened.

When you inadvertently 'push someone's buttons' or a client misinterprets your instructions, it's simply a matter of finding out what it was and rectifying it. It's important to consistently clear up these little misinterpretations as they happen, so be persistent and follow up on your hunches.

Sometimes the client's movements reveal a misunderstanding. For example, a practitioner might instruct a client to feel a little 'kick' while walking, and the client might interpret 'kick' too roughly. Of course you can choose not to use a particular word, or you can use it in conjunction with other words that say more precisely what you mean. In any case, you'll obviously be checking to see what they in fact do with your instructions, and be fine-tuning them as needed.

In trying to anticipate different ways a client could construe (or misconstrue) your words, don't monitor yourself too much - ya gotta get it outcher mouth and be yerself fer heavens sake! Let hook-up find the right words for you, be real, be present. And with experience you'll be finding ways of saying things that are less likely than others to be misunderstood.

Below are some other ideas that may help.

Have you ever had the experience of your words just 'passing someone by', someone just doesn't 'see' your meaning, isn't 'hearing' you right? It could be that the two of you are favoring different perceptual systems - kinesthetic, visual, auditory - and therefore each of you is more open to information framed in a different one of these modes.

Let's say you are talking to a client about the vibrations in an arm after doing a movement. One client 'feels' the warmth or tingling inside; another 'sees' the arm filled with light or with champagne bubbles; a third is 'listening' for the echo or humming through the limb. Most people use a combination of these and some others. Though our work is in large part about developing kinesthetic sensory awareness, a client can come to it through any of the perceptual channels. In working with some clients it may help to explore communicating in alternate modes.

In the same manner, some clients will want to learn a movement mostly by seeing you do it, for others it will really sink in best when you touch them, still others will need to listen to you describe in words what you want them to do. Even though most individuals get more out of one way than the others, in my experience it's effective with most clients to simply

use a combination of these approaches, being aware of alternatives.

But there are some for whom words will tend to take them out of their body awareness - and with them you might want to keep instructions or descriptions as simple and succinct as possible. Some people need to understand intellectually before they can participate wholeheartedly, others do not. If you tend to get excited about ideas, be alert as to whether you may be losing or boring your client, or whether they may be getting 'into their heads' and out of their body awareness. If so, you might want to drop the why, whither and how, and go straight for the what.

If, on the other hand, you are someone for whom the experience itself is its own self-evident meaning ... be aware that some clients may need you to offer them more of a conceptual framework than you might naturally. Some people use ideas for the inspiration to get into their bodies or into the present.

When a client is in hook-up, sometimes what you say can be planted very deeply in their subconscious. That's great when it's in the service of empowering them to move with more awareness, pleasure and ease. But be aware of the danger of 'negative suggestion'. As an example, suppose a practitioner says, "You don't need to hold your shoulders up around your ears like that."

Since some clients, thinking of you as a 'body expert', may define themselves by what you say ("Oh, that's how I am"), such a statement from you can make it even harder for them to change. I've worked with clients who've hung on to a negative body image for years because of something a previous bodyworker said I'm 'tight as a rock' here, I have a 'block' there, I hold my shoulders up around my ears").

Additionally, when someone is in deep hook up, such a statement may actually plant an instruction to keep their shoulders up there, because the unconscious mind registers only the positive statement ("You need to hold your shoulders up"), not the negative one (in this example, the word, 'don't'). It works the same way as saying, "Don't think of elephants". Did any of you reading this find it to think of elephants?

Another danger is subtle 'trip-laying' on a client. In the above example, if a client infers that you think they 'need' to hold their shoulders up, they could assume that you are analyzing them. In such cases, a client could veer off from simply experiencing the movement into reacting to you or into a thinking mode ("I wonder why she thinks I 'need' to do that?"). Or they could imagine that you disapprove of them for being like that. In the same example, the overstated phrase 'up around your ears', which may have been merely a colorful way of speaking, could also be interpreted by a client as derogatory. A client who feels judged can shut down inside without either of you quite realizing what happened.

So I suggest staying with positive instructions and positive suggestion. "Just let your shoulders drop like this." "Did you feel them drop?" "You can feel that again any time you wish". And using neutral, non-evaluative words and objective, straightforward description wherever possible. If you speak mainly of your own experience, and ask them to tell you about theirs, you will very seldom inadvertently 'lay a trip' on a client. When you want to tell a client something you observe about them, you can make it clear that it's your experience of them and ask them if it matches their own.

KNOWING WHICH MOVES TO GIVE A CLIENT

Students ask, "How do I know the right moves to give a client for that shoulder, that elbow, that psoas muscle?" The ability to choose the most appropriate move right now for this client develops gradually from training, experience and hook-up. By all means take trainings, Mentastics classes, Mentastics tutorials, utilize Dr. Trager's book and videotapes - whatever is available. Do Mentastics movements for yourself during your day. Deepen your personal experience of the moves through regularly teaching the Mentastics process to your clients. And whenever you get sessions, be sure the practitioner does some Mentastics work with you - ask for it if necessary.

When students tell me they don't know enough moves, I usually find that they could be getting more out of the moves they do know. Any of the moves can be used in the core process of *helping clients discover their ability to access and affect their state*. If your repertoire is still modest, simply use what you have in depth. With some clients it is the basics - sitting, standing and walking; feeling weight, lengthening, playing with balance - one will want to work with over many sessions regardless of one's repertoire. If you also know some loosey-goosey, jiggly moves, a springy bounce, a free swinging movement, some light tosses or gentle drops, you've got lots to play with. Think of it this way: if you only knew one move, and repeated that same move every session from hook-up, it would take both you and the client deeper each time towards the profound benefits listed on page 1. As Dr. Trager says, you can take it to whatever depth you feel it in yourself.

In the meantime, remember that in the Trager world, even though we learn specific moves that do effect specific areas, we don't apply them by formula. It's a process, something in the moment. Right now as you read this, feel your weight, let your spine lengthen and your limbs drop. Let go to the natural sway or little movements, the ones that are just there if we don't hold ourselves still. Let your body find a more comfortable way of being, a way that just somehow feels more 'right' to you. *Notice the changes*. This is the kind of process we want a client to be able to do in daily life. If you let yourself go deeply into the process with a client, your unconscious pool of everything-you've-ever-learned, will reveal to you the most appropriate moves available to you for that client right then. Within the context of this process you'll increasingly address your clients' specific conditions and lifestyles with individualized movements for them to do in your office and on their own between sessions.

RESONANCE

There are many different qualities of resonance. Our bodies can:

*quiver, shimmer, flow, flop,
slither, flutter, flap,*

*pulsate percolate
undulate,
resound, vibrate, oscillate,*

*reverberate,
wiggle, wriggle,
waggle, wobble,
bubble, burble,
bobble, jostle,*

*jiggle, jangle,

ripple
rattle, rumble, dangle,*

spring, swash away, sweep

woosh, shake, stream

rock, roll, bounce and swing

You can suggest to a client that they feel for resonance and vibration while moving - and afterwards! It's a tuning-in to the sensations of waves of movement, either locally in specific areas or globally through the body.

Local, a client might notice their thigh muscle bouncing, upper arm tissue shimmering around the bone, or finger bones rattling.

Or you can suggest they feel for the global reverberation of a movement traveling all the way through their body ("Can you feel the little bounces from that leg-drop percolating up in your sacrum?").

Remember that the lighter and finer, looser and freer the movement is, the farther the resonance can usually travel and be felt. And it will often travel farther or be sensed traveling farther as your client continues to do the Mentastics process.

Any holding will block resonance, so sensing and allowing resonance has: 1. a powerful letting go/releasing effect where there's tightness (too much energy), and 2. a delicious warming/enlivening effect where there's thickening or under-use (too little energy).

INERTIA

In moving rhythmically, I have noticed that the more a client can let inertia take over the movement, the more they can let go of effort (inertia is a natural law that says, in part, once a thing is in motion, it tends to stay in motion). Letting go to inertia is important because in Mentastics movement, as well as in the tablework, we're playing with gravity in ways that allow muscles to be stretched without having to actively do any stretching per se. We're passive in the sense that we don't do the movement, we let the movement happen (we're not so passive that we 'leave town', we're still there experiencing, feeling).

For clients it seems to work like this: Once they get a rhythm or pulsation going that feels 'right' and easy, so that it has its own momentum, the rhythm itself seems to take over the 'doing' and the client can be in the mode of just receiving and following sensation. For example it's possible to experience an arm swinging as if on its own ("Hey, wow, this arm doesn't want to stop").

Clients often can just 'let go to the movement' or 'surrender' to it (without collapse - so that it is not a giving up, giving out or giving in). Use of 'hook-up questions' can be part of this process ("What could be easier...? Hmm...?"). It can help a client let go to inertia if they are willing to let the movement's own rhythm become faster or slower, have greater or less range or force, or move in a different direction than expected. In the moment when one surprises oneself - surprised by the way one's own movements have found to become freer, easier, looser - in that moment, yes, that's it!

The beautiful thing is that these principles can be used in daily life to make ordinary activities like walking, sweeping the floor, even stirring a cup of coffee not only easier, but more pleasurable. We normally tend to continuously add in effort, when instead, we could let the movement go on doing itself while we simply enjoy the feeling.

GRAVITY AND COUNTER-GRAVITY

In this 'weight training' process we play constantly with clients becoming sensitive to feeling weight, letting go to gravity, and becoming 'friends with gravity'. It can also be wonderful for clients to experience being lifted and supported by 'counter-gravity, 'the upward force'.

As they sense their weight pressing down into the earth, they can sense the earth pressing back (with an 'equal and opposite' force). Imagine a pebble dropping into water, the water rising up around the pebble. A barber shop pole with the white stripes curling down while the red stripes curl up. A fountain with the core of water flowing continuously up, even while the water showers down. As they drop their weight down through their feet, feeling for that place of balance that feels 'right', clients can sense their spine lengthening upward, automatically, effortlessly.

If you lift a client's arm so they feel its full weight in your hand, that same arm may be able to lift itself as effortlessly afterwards - if 'on its own', or perhaps as if on a rising stream of air from below, as if operated by a puppet string from above, or as if suspended and wafted within flowing currents of water. The more the client lets it go to gravity, the more they can experience the arm rising effortlessly.

Or they could experience the 'counterweight' of the elbow failing while the hand rises in a corresponding 'equal and opposite' motion. Or the arm might behave like that type of cupboard door you push in to pop it open. If they can let go to the weight of their hand itself hanging in gravity, and then fall slightly into that feeling of weight, the hand and arm can effortlessly spring upward as if its catch were just released.

Or, as they stand they may experience a force moving up through - their legs and trunk, lifting and supporting them. As they notice and let go to it, it may lift and support them even more. Or, in standing they might experience how, as they subtly shift weight and balance, their micro-movements are keeping them erect in a kind of subtle dance, a constant gentle interplay of tensional forces (the body's 'stringing') holding them up without effort. I feel this as a 'continuous falling up'.

All this is in the service of finding "what is zero effort?" As you play with these experiences you'll probably find other ways of describing/feeling them. I have found that even first-timers have been able to experience these forces to some degree. It can be a revelation!

EFFORTLESSNESS AND PLEASURE'N'PLAY

If I would venture to discuss the Mentastics experience in terms of energy, I would say it increases energy, releases energy and harmonizes energy as appropriate. To further speculate, I would imagine that those aspects of Mentastics movement which are playful and pleasurable would add energy and increase energy flow through areas needed.

Qualities of effortlessness would release it where it's being used unnecessarily. And the whole process could be experienced as generally balancing our energy by improving our relationship to gravitational forces and the surrounding electromagnetic field.

If so, then other benefits would follow. We could perhaps say that Mentastics movement:

Maximizes pleasure and play, and therefore:

- Increases energy or lets it flow where needed, through appropriate movement and micro-movement, in areas that have been under-used or become thickened or frozen,
- Thus increasing flexibility, function, sensation and aliveness,
- Thereby maximizing self-expression, renewal, ability to receive sensation from ordinary movements, and ability to sense an increasing richness of inner experience.

Minimizes effort, and therefore:

- Releases energy in areas of overload by reducing unnecessary muscular contraction, overuse and tension patterns,
- Thus maximizing economy and ease of movement,
- Thereby leading to more efficient and graceful functioning, relaxation and a sense of effortlessness.

Improves our relationship to gravitational forces and the surrounding electromagnetic field,
and therefore:

- Promotes energetic harmony within the life-sustaining energy field (the 'vast ocean of pleasantness') and the forces of gravity (and, perhaps, 'counter-gravity'),
- Thereby maximizing our sensitivity and responsiveness to those forces and that field within which we live and function, and which affect us continuously,
- Thus leading to more appropriate posture, structural balance and harmony, better coordination, comfort, well-being, wholeness and connectedness.

What this suggests to me is that an extraordinary range of benefits can flow from a very simple process of playing, moving, noticing my inner experience, and following the trail of pleasure and ease. I need not look for something more to 'do'. The power of the Mentastics process really does lie in its simplicity.

IMAGERY

Imagery can be a powerful way to get across the Mentastics feeling (our logo is a 'dancing cloud'). Through experience, you'll collect, invent, and hone visual, kinesthetic and auditory images. Some of the images with which many practitioners are familiar include: the image of the glamorous actress (Juliet Prouse) putting on her stockings with the feeling of her long, beautiful legs, the image of sinking into a 6 inch rug while walking; the image of being like kelp floating underwater or like a bird gliding up on a current of air; the image of a hand shimmering as gracefully as a butterfly; the image of saying to someone, "Aw, go on" while tossing the arm, the image of swinging a lantern.

Imagery can be an especially important tool in communicating effortlessness. For example, I have found no better way to convey what I call 'letting go without collapse' than via the sky cord image.

That's the one where a client imagines being supported by a cord from way up high ... and someone's up there winching it a bit higher ... and it lifts them just a trace higher through their spine ... while the rest of them actually gets to drop from above. Then, without stretching upward from inside (in fact they let go inside even more), if they imagine being lifted just a smidgen higher again ... they can completely let go as if they would drop on the floor ... and at the same time be lengthened without strain, precisely because they are being suspended and lifted from above ... All with less effort than it took to just stand there. In my experience this is very easy for clients to incorporate into their lives and can have a miraculous effect.

When an image that rings true (makes sense) for a client is connected with a kinesthetic awareness, it completes an integrated triangle of image/sensation/meaning, creating a wholeness, or gestalt. The experience 'feels right'. This process can enhance pleasure, ease and function in the moment, and it enables a client to easily 'recall' the entire experience at any time through evoking the image. I believe it's important to let clients transform or create an image in any way that has more meaning for them or better elicits the desired body state. They are more likely to use the image and it will more powerfully evoke the feeling.

COMPARING

This can be one of your most important tools in helping clients become kinesthetically aware. If a client does a movement, then pauses to feel sensations or ask a 'hook-up question', then repeats the movement, you can have them notice the difference from one repetition to the next. If they do a movement with one arm or one side only, you have an opportunity to let them sense the amazing change that can happen from 'a little nothing movement'.

Also, if you start the session by having them check in with their bodies, you can have them compare how they feel at the end of a Mentastics session to how they felt at the beginning.

At the same time you can assist them to really be in the present and incorporate the change as real. Some clients may unconsciously be defining themselves as be in the old way, and therefore regard this new feeling they have right now as no more than 'something special they may feel for awhile'. Dr. Trager says, "This is you, this feeling". You can help them realize that the one they feel now is them now.

Thank you, Milton!

