Les Todres's *Embodied Enquiry* is a particularly useful book to transpersonal researchers because of its embodied methodology and perspective, a perspective often lacking in transpersonal research. Todres situates “the lived body as the ‘place’ where intimate understanding of both experience and language happen” (p. 5). Acknowledging his debt to the philosophical writings of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Eugene Gendlin and the phenomenological research methods articulated by Amedeo Giorgi, Todres builds a strong philosophic base for extending the embodied dimensions of established phenomenological research practice. Todres’s embodied approach to phenomenological research has been strongly influenced by Eugene Gendlin’s Focusing methods. For example, he proposed that researchers use language that “presences” the phenomenon of study as it is experienced, facilitate the informant’s task by opening to “the possibility of seeing something together” (p. 39), and present research analyses that evidence the “more” to which words refer.

Todres also extends his discussion of embodied enquiry in terms of its relevance to psychotherapy and spirituality. He discusses how embodied understanding occurs in the process of psychotherapy in which clients are able to increasingly experience themselves as “more than” the ways they have objectified themselves and more spontaneously in accord with their own human vulnerability. According to Todres, such a view of psychotherapy
welcomes psychotherapy clients to the human realm as wound and freedom. Such “wound” and “freedom” is not merely historical and social but is given, and can be taken up and lived in more welcome ways. There are “wounds” and vulnerabilities that can be avoided or can be “healed,” but there is a great vulnerability that cannot. There are many freedoms that can be taken away or fought for, but there is a great freedom (with its responsibility) that cannot. An existentially oriented psychotherapy may give deep permission to clients to encounter and experience a kind of “settling down” into these dimensions as they come through in the unique vicissitudes of their own life, and to take them up and live them forward. (p. 110)

Todres also takes up the themes of existential wounds and freedom in relationship to spirituality and transpersonal psychology. Quoting Leonard Cohen (1972), “There is a crack, a crack in everything, it’s how the light gets in,” Todres suggests that in our longings are the seeds by which we connect one to another.

The Author

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