

Stanley Keleman

1931-2018



Stanley Keleman's pioneering work places the body at the center of the human experience. Emotional reality and biological ground are indistinguishable.

Through his writings and practice, Keleman developed Formative Psychology: a methodology and conceptual framework for the life of the body.

Keleman founded the Center for Energetic Studies in Berkeley, California, in 1971 and was its director until his death. He is the author of numerous groundbreaking books including *Emotional Anatomy* (1985), *Embodying Experience* (1987), and *Your Body Speaks Its Mind* (1981). For decades he maintained a private and group practice, as well as an active schedule of national and international professional programs.

Keleman, the son of Eastern European Jewish immigrants, was born in Brooklyn, New York. His interest in the body was always experientially based, beginning with an early involvement in athletics and continuing in his education at the Chiropractic Institute of New York, from which he graduated in 1954. After starting his practice as a clinician, he began to observe the relationship between emotional conflict, organismic movement, and distortions of body

posture. Following his interest, he initiated a program of training and research into the life of the body. He became a member in 1957 of Alexander Lowen's Institute for Bioenergetic Analysis and was, until the 1970's, a senior trainer. He attended the Alfred Adler Institute and his thinking was affected profoundly by Adler's ideas on the relationship of the state of the organism to its functioning, the will to power, and the role of society in personality development. This education and training balanced the characterological approaches of Lowen, Freud, and Reich.

During this same time, Keleman began a personal mentorship with Nina Bull, a member of Physicians and Surgeons Hospital, Columbia University, and author of *Attitude Theory of Emotions*. He joined with her on a research project, which resulted in her book, *The Body and Its Mind*. Bull's social philosophy and neurological training established Keleman's neural-somatic model for emotions and goal-oriented behavior.

His inquiries then took him to Europe where he studied Daisen Analysis in Zurich with Dr. Dori Gutscher in the school of Medard Boss. He moved from a sexual and social emphasis to a different philosophical perspective, more phenomenological and existentially oriented.

In Germany he formed an association with Professor Karlfried von Durckheim at the Center for Initiation Studies. Durckheim offered an approach that used the human form to reveal the relationship of man to his own nature and to bigger nature. These studies led to central experiences that confirmed his concept of the body as the center of one's self. They gave seed to the experiences that eventually led to Keleman's Formative Psychology® somatic-emotional methodology.

After returning to the United States in 1967, he moved to California where he interned at Esalen Institute in group dynamics and was exposed to humanistic psychology, the leading edge of psychology at the time. There, in an atmosphere of cultural revolution, he established his form of working bodily. The interaction with many leaders of the humanistic movement – Carl Rodgers, Fritz Perls, Virginia Satir, Alan Watts and others – provided a forum for his ideas. He met Joseph Campbell, the mythologist, and began a fifteen-year association, teaching an annual

program in which they developed connections between myth and the body. These workshops evolved into the annual programs taught by Keleman in Berkeley, California, and Solingen, Germany that connect dreams, body and the formative process.

The culmination of Keleman's career was the development of Formative Psychology: a vision and philosophy as well as an original methodology for teaching individuals how to participate in their own formative process. In this paradigm, attitudes, thoughts, emotions, and feelings have anatomical shapes: somatic patterns that are processes of deep self-perception and ways of feeling and knowing the world. They affect all tissues, muscles, organ, and cells as well as thoughts and feelings. These somatic patterns become the way we recognize the world as well as ourselves and, in turn, they become the way the world recognizes us. Through voluntary effort, people can learn to influence the shapes dictated by inheritance and social learning. Keleman's Formative Psychology® methodology rests firmly on an anatomical and physiological base, as well as a psychological and mythological understanding.

Keleman developed his framework and methodology over several decades. He maintained an active private practice for individuals and led groups at the Center for Energetic Studies in Berkeley, which he established in 1971, as well as nationally and internationally. Later, he established Center Press, which continues to produce and distribute his works. He is the author of the landmark book *Emotional Anatomy*, which has been in print continuously since its publication in 1985 and translated into seven languages. A prolific creator until his death, he wrote many notable books in addition to *Emotional Anatomy*, such as *Embodying Experience* and *Your Body Speaks Its Mind*, as well as numerous articles.

For the entirety of his life, Keleman's pioneering endeavors took him into the forefront of learning how the body shapes itself over time, through all of life's stages. He applied ideas from Darwin's theory of evolution and Einstein's theory of mass and energy to understanding how shapes change over time and how the individual can learn to influence the body nature has given. Driven by his commitment to understanding the life of the body, Keleman remained abreast of changes in the fields of modern biology,

neurobiology and molecular dynamics, all of which helped him understand how the body develops and matures.

Drawing upon his vast knowledge and lived experience, Keleman contributed a significant and wholly original set of ideas to the field of somatic studies, which was widely recognized by his peers. Keleman received an honorary Ph.D. from Saybrook University for his contributions to the fields of body psychotherapy and humanistic psychology. He is the recipient of lifetime achievement awards from the United States Association for Body Psychotherapy and the European Association for Body Psychotherapy. In addition, he was the honorary president and director for research at the Zurich School for Form and Movement, the Centro de Psicologia Formativa do Brasil in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the Institute for Formative Psychology in Solingen, Germany, where he also taught.

The Stanley Keleman Papers are housed in the Humanistic Psychology Archives at the University of California, Santa Barbara.