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The Imaginal Body: A New Frontier in Energy Healing

By integrating Imaginal Bodywork into clinical practice, practitioners can offer innovative and deeply impactful tools for healing.

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Energy healing is evolving, integrating ancient wisdom and contemporary practices to harness the human body's full potential. Central to this evolution is the concept of the *Imaginal Body*—an energetic blueprint of our purest, untarnished self. Through the pioneering work of Elaine Valois, who studied with Jean Houston, Robert Masters, and Moshe Feldenkrais, the Imaginal Body has been woven into a multidimensional framework incorporating dance, healing movement, and deep imagination to transform our physical and energetic bodies.

ELAINE VALOIS: THE PIONEER OF MODERN IMAGINAL BODY WORK

Elaine Valois stands at the forefront of Imaginal Body exploration. With a background in dance and healing movement, Valois studied directly with Jean Houston, who champions the imaginal realm as a gateway to human potential. Robert Masters, whose research analyzes the ancient Egyptians' use of the imaginal body for progression. She also worked with Moshe Feldenkrais, whose method of mindful movement forms a cornerstone of her approach.

Drawing from these rich influences, Valois developed a system that integrates guided movement, visualization, and ancient healing practices. She describes the Imaginal Body as a bridge between the physical and energetic selves, offering a pathway to reclaim wholeness and authenticity.

What Is the Imaginal Body?

The term *imaginal* transcends the notion of the "imaginary." Drawing from entomology, it describes the incredible process within a chrysalis, where imaginal cells orchestrate the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly. Similarly, the Imaginal Body represents the energy blueprint of our physical form, untouched by the effects of trauma, stress, or injury. It is an innocent, subtle version of ourselves, free from judgment, shame, or blame and open to the wonder of what is possible.

Valois expands on this concept, blending Masters' insights into the healing practices of the ancient Egyptians with Houston's work on deep imagination and Feldenkrais' focus on somatic awareness. She describes the Imaginal Body as an ancient healing tool and a modern avenue for renewal.



By connecting with the Imaginal Body, we activate a conscious force for transformation. Through guided movement, meditative practices, and intentional focus, we align this subtle body with our physical form, opening channels for balance, growth, and healing.

THE HEALING POTENTIAL OF THE IMAGINAL BODY

The Imaginal Body offers profound healing potential. Unlike the physical body, which carries the imprints of life's challenges, the Imaginal Body exists in its purest, most aligned form. When we work with this energetic blueprint, we bypass limitations and tap into the body's innate capacity for self-correction and harmony.

I've had the honor of having Elaine Valois as my mentor, helping me study, experience, and teach the concepts of the Imaginal Body. Elaine emphasizes that the imaginal is a place of boundless potential where we can access our higher capacities. She integrates this perspective in her teaching, encouraging us to explore our Imaginal Body as a source of healing.

Through my work with the Imaginal Body, I've observed extraordinary results:

- **Eased Discomfort:** Clients often report significant reductions in physical pain and tension.
- **Improved Balance:** The Imaginal Body fosters greater stability and alignment both physically and energetically.
- **Peace and Well-Being:** Movement and meditation with the Imaginal Body promote a sense of calm and holistic healing.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR CLINICAL PRACTICE

Incorporating Imaginal Bodywork into clinical practice allows practitioners to offer clients a holistic approach that addresses not only physical symptoms, but also emotional and energetic imbalances. Here are practical ways to integrate this modality:

1. Pain Management

- **Guided Movement for Pain Relief:** Encourage clients to visualize their Imaginal Body moving freely in the areas where they experience discomfort. For example, someone with lower back pain can imagine their Imaginal Body performing fluid movements in the affected area, promoting relaxation and reducing tension.
- **Visualization Exercises:** Pair visualization with gentle physical movements to stimulate healing and reduce pain perception.

2. Stress and Anxiety Reduction

- **Meditation for Emotional Balance:** Lead clients in guided meditations that visualize their Imaginal Body in a state of balance and calm. This practice can be especially effective for those with chronic stress or anxiety.
- **Breathwork Integration:** Combine breath awareness with Imaginal Body visualization to create a deep sense of relaxation and mental clarity.

3. Rehabilitation and Recovery

- **Post-Surgical Healing:** Support clients recovering from surgery or injury by helping them visualize the Imaginal Body, repairing tissues, and restoring physical function. This mental rehearsal can accelerate recovery and enhance optimism.
- **Physical Therapy Adjunct:** Collaborate with physical therapists by incorporating Imaginal Body techniques into rehabilitation exercises, enhancing mobility and reducing fear of movement.

4. Trauma Healing

- **Addressing Emotional Scars:** Use the Imaginal Body to explore movements free from the limitations imposed by trauma. Clients can experience a sense of liberation and safety as they visualize their subtle bodies moving without pain or fear.
- **Restoring Trust in the Body:** Encourage clients to imagine their Imaginal Body as whole and unburdened, helping them rebuild a positive relationship with their physical form.



5. Chronic Illness Support

- **Energy Blueprint Work:** For clients who were diagnosed by a doctor with chronic illnesses like fibromyalgia or autoimmune disorders, focus on aligning the physical and Imaginal Body to promote energetic balance and reduce fatigue.
- **Empowering Self-Healing:** Teach clients to engage with their Imaginal Body daily, fostering a sense of control and partnership in their healing journey.

HOW IT WORKS IN PRACTICE

The Imaginal Body bridges the gap between ancient wisdom and contemporary energy healing. Practices include:

- **Guided Movement:** Exploring upper body, lower body, and core/spine movements in tandem with the Imaginal Body to dissolve blocks and enhance freedom.
- **Meditation:** Visualizing the Imaginal Body moving in harmony with the physical body to strengthen the mind-body connection and promote energetic flow.
- **Simultaneous Directionality:** Engaging the physical and Imaginal Body in different, intentional movements to stimulate creativity and authenticity.

These practices stimulate the mind-body complex in ways that traditional approaches often cannot. The result is not only physical relief but also emotional and spiritual empowerment.

ANCIENT KNOWLEDGE MEETS MODERN TECHNIQUES

The concept of the Imaginal Body has roots in ancient practices. The Egyptians called it KA—the subtle double of the physical body. While their exact methods remain unknown, they understood its significance as a conduit for restoration.

In the modern context, the Imaginal Body helps us navigate our evolution. It serves as a reminder of the body-self, untainted by life's burdens, and as an agent for healing and transformation. By reuniting the physical and Imaginal Body, we acknowledge our

potential to move with authenticity, free of ego-driven thought, and empowered by self-acceptance.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Valois's work, inspired by Houston, Masters, and Feldenkrais, invites us to reimagine energy healing as a multidimensional practice. Movement becomes a language of change, the imaginal realm becomes a gateway to healing, and ancient wisdom merges with modern modalities to empower the individual. As Jean Houston said, "The great story of ourselves is waiting to be told." By engaging with the Imaginal Body, we rewrite this story with grace.

By integrating Imaginal Bodywork into clinical practice, practitioners can offer innovative and deeply impactful tools for healing. Whether addressing pain, stress, trauma, or chronic conditions, this modality empowers clients to reclaim their innate potential and experience profound transformation.

Let us embrace this future and co-create a world where energy healing shapes lives—starting with our own. €

***In Memory of Elaine Valois:** A "force of nature" with passion and high energy, who died peacefully on Christmas Day at the age of 96. She was a huge influence in the field of dance, especially in relation to healing the body, which led her to create the Imaginal Bodywork. Her legacy continues with her teachings and those she touched in her healing work who carry on her mission and vision.*
Dance On, Elaine!



Find out more about author Debra Reis by visiting her website: www.debrareis.com

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