



Wolfgang Luthe, MD (1922-1985). Physician, scientist and psychotherapist. Born in Germany, he immigrated to Canada in 1945. He brought to the attention of the English-speaking world the immense amount of research and clinical work that had been done on Autogenic Therapy, a self-regulatory medical treatment well known to European clinicians, but practically unknown in North America. His work was fundamental for incorporating this therapy into psychosomatic medicine, clinical psychology and psychiatry.

Luthe was instrumental in the formation of ICAT, the International Committee for Autogenic Training and Therapy, and actively engaged in teaching, publishing, and organizational work in furtherance of Autogenic Therapy.

He made frequent visits to Japan, where he was scientific director of the Oskar Vogt Institute and visiting professor at the Kyushu University School of Medicine and Hospital. The Oskar Vogt Institute emphasizes multidisciplinary research in psychophysiology and neurophysiology as well as in autogenic therapy.

Wolfgang Luthe was Born in 1922 in the Baltic city of Lubeck, a Hanseatic port dating back to the early Middle Ages. Luthe came from an old seafaring family. He attended the universities of Kiel and Hamburg, receiving his M.D. degree at the latter. He served during the Second World War as a junior medical officer on the eastern front. During his period of residency training, he came in contact with such outstanding figures as Kretschmer, Brodmann, Hess, and Schultz. Luthe was favorably impressed by the psychophysiological treatment approach embodied in the autogenic training of J. H. Schultz. His first book, jointly authored by Schultz and himself, appeared in 1959 and bore the title *Autogenic Training: A Psychophysiologic Approach in Psychotherapy*. This was the first book-length systematic presentation of autogenic training in the English language.

After immigrating to Canada, Luthe built up an extensive clinical practice in Montreal, a large part of which was conducted in French. He was a member of the International Institute of Stress, founded by Hans Selye, where he demonstrated the stress-reduction effects of the autogenic exercises. He carried

teaching activities in both l'Université de Montreal and McGill University, where he cooperated with postgraduate Training Programs in Psychology and in Psychiatry. His training center by the Lac du Deux Montagnes, near Montreal, attracted many international students, like Malcolm Carruthers, founder of the British Autogenic Society, and Luis Gonzalez de Rivera, founder of the Asociacion Española de Psicoterapia.



In 1979, Luthe moved to the West Coast city of Vancouver, British Columbia. In this city of bays and islands, he was able to indulge regularly in the sport of sailing, an abiding passion with him since his boyhood days in Lubeck. He continued with clinical work and writing, was associated with Simon Fraser University, and was actively involved in the application of autogenic methods to competitive athletics.

Luthe authored many articles and books on autogenic training, of which the best known is his six-volume series titled *Autogenic Therapy*. The first three volumes he coauthored with Johannes Schultz, the founder of autogenic training; the last three were written independently by Luthe following Schultz's death. He conducted extensive research on the application of autogenic training in a great many disorders, such as essential hypertension, diabetes, hypercholesterolemia, anxiety neurosis, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. In 1961 he described the therapeutic significance of "Autogenic Discharges", until then considered as mere "training symptoms" or side effects of basic Autogenic Training. In Luthe's view, nature has provided Man with homeostatic mechanisms not only for the regulation of fluid and electrolyte balance, temperature, blood pressure, wound healing and so forth, but also for the readjustment of more complicated functional disorders of cognitive and emotional nature. He considered autogenic techniques a means of stimulating and better applying the natural homeostatic mechanisms of the brain. Luthe contributed a number of innovations of his own, adding to the corpus of autogenic therapy the techniques of autogenic neutralization, autogenic abreaction, and autogenic verbalization.

During the late 1970s, Luthe worked extensively on methods for the mobilization of the individual's creativity. This work, growing in large measure out of his research on autogenic therapy, is described in his 1976 book *Creativity Mobilization Technique*. At the time of his death he was in the midst of preparing an extensive German edition of *Autogenic Therapy*, as well as writing a biography of Oskar Vogt, the celebrated Berlin neurologist and brain researcher who, around the turn of the XX century, had made observations on the effects of autohypnosis that were to be pivotal in Schultz's formulation of the autogenic standard exercises.