

A REVOLUTION IN FEELING

Part 1

Roy Street interviews RICHARD HARVEY on the recently launched Sacred Attention Therapy (SAT) Online Training Course. SAT training represents an entirely new kind of psycho-spiritual paradigm for therapists and counselors, people who want to train to become counselors, and serious students of inner work

Richard: Now something has to happen alongside the revolution in awareness and I mention it here because you asked me before if awareness is enough. We have to wake up. We have to be more present. We have to guide ourselves to the issues that demand our engagement in the inner realms. This necessitates awareness primarily. But after that we have to learn to feel again. Feeling is not only emotional -- it is holistic, total, the entire body -- or bodymind as we used to call it -- has to learn to experience by being present and feeling and living vibrantly.

Roy: Is this a spiritual experience?

Now this is a very important point, because, no, it isn't a spiritual experience. For two main reasons. First, it is an elevated human experience. In fact most of what happens that appears to us as spiritual is so far out as we open the pathways up in the inner world that we are so elated we pronounce them extraordinary, euphoric, of the nature of rapture, epiphany, bliss, and so on. But really they are no more than completely ordinary human experiences.

When I say completely ordinary I don't mean everyone is experiencing this level of being ordinarily. In fact ordinarily people are mostly depressed -- energetically, physically, and emotionally people tend toward the lower end of the energetic spectrum and the reason is we are conditioned in early life to suppress our life force. Children feel too much, express too much, are too excitable -- over-excited! -- too unpredictable, impressionable, spontaneous, and happy! We have learnt as parents to suppress this -- to oppress children and ourselves -- to make life manageable. We tame the wildness and turn the whole level of experience through excitation, stimulation, and the life force down, down, down... until many of us are just blinking on and off, others are running on very low levels of energy indeed, and still others of course are extinguished, emotionally, energetically, mentally, or physically -- or a mixture of these.

So when you turn on the human life force it is so unfamiliar, such an experience of otherness because you have been so long without it that you project it into the stratosphere and pronounce it spiritual, divine, other-worldly, because you are in such ecstasy -- comparative ecstasy really -- and you become hysterical and disproportionate in your reaction to it.

No, to be human is amazing, wonderful, extraordinary, but nonetheless merely human. Being spiritual is an entirely different matter and this is the second point. There is no such thing as a spiritual experience, in fact part of the spiritual discipline you have to undertake to develop your spirituality is losing your attachments. You must be able to perform tasks and work and strive and create and love with no attachment to the outcome whatsoever. Everything is done in service, in discipline, awareness, and devotion... and your actions, your sense of agency and will become impersonal. The event is rather like realigning yourself. You simply come

back into balance and go beyond the interaction of action and reaction, action and reaction... that has inhabited your life for so long.

This repetition is the fallout of your survival strategies. This is how they manifest in the present life and prevent you feeling, experiencing, and being human -- fully human and creative, sensual and passionate -- enthused and en-spirited -- about life: feeling alive.

The seven core elements of Sacred Attention Therapy itemize and break down these strategies into the areas for our attention and healing. Family beliefs are the shared collective judgments and prejudices that appear in a family grouping. Life statements are the sense we make of our experience of the world when we are very young. Emotional-behavioral patterns are our habitual and defensive reactions to past events projected in to the present. Emotional suppression is how we learn to inhibit the natural process of arising feelings and prevent our experience and expression of emotions. Sub-personalities are the inner separate parts of our perceived whole self vying for place, disagreeing and conflicting, occasionally harmonizing and uniting, as we struggle to present an homogenous exterior.

Character strategies are our structured reactive patterns to stress, which calcify over time as our primary defenses to life and relationship, and finally... the Central Character Dynamic is the very heart of the total figure of survival strategies, the fundamental kernel of defense. We offer ways to work through all of this thoroughly and efficiently in the SAT training.

Does working through all this lead to real feeling?

Yes. It is to some degree incremental, but when you have let go all of this highly complex arrangement of self-sabotage, anxiety, and anger then, yes, you can feel, at last.

And everyone has these complex survival mechanisms?

Well yes, that's how they made it through. Not everyone does: we are all survivors, those of us here are the winners. If you are going to say, so does everyone have to do therapy and inner work, then I'd say in a sense yes, but practically speaking of course you can't sell this idea to people who just aren't interested... and that's OK, just let go and trust that all will be well.

Who are the people who do get involved with inner work, as opposed to those who don't?

It's an immense variety of people on the surface you know, but deeper down they are people who are either intensely curious or who have suffered -- and who know it.

Tell me about authentic feeling -- authentic feeling I believe is in your book *Your Essential Self* and in the SAT course perhaps also?

I sometimes describe the difference between conditioned feeling and authentic feeling as like comparing a 1940s black and white TV set to high-definition twenty-first century audio-visual technology, like the microchip versus tubes and valves. You can't possibly get it or know the difference until you've seen it, experienced it, and been there.

But why is authentic feeling such a leap in quality of experience?

What usually passes for feeling in our lives is merely repetition, action-reaction, simply mechanical and the emotions and their function are drawn from the unfinished business, the learnt behavior and ultimately survival strategies of our early life conditions. Look closely at people and try to see if and when they are genuine, spontaneous, real -- at all!

But what can you do with that insight? It must be quite alienating to see through other's behavior and step outside consensus reality, isn't it?

Now you're getting it! Of course it is! And that's the whole point. You realize that this usual and habitual way of going about living is wholly unsatisfying for you.. and you become determined to do something about it. So maybe this is a good definition of the person who is attracted to inner work and who is destined to succeed in attaining transformation.

And you can gain transformation by doing this course?

The SAT training is all about your own personal transformation and guiding others toward it for themselves.

"A Revolution in Feeling, Part 2" goes on to the subject of transformation, relinquishing the seven core elements and the role of compassion and authenticity in the final modules of the Sacred Attention Therapy (SAT) Online Training Course.

For full details of the course see <http://www.sacredattentiontherapy.com/SAT-Online-Training.html>

For the original version of this article see <http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/about-richard-harvey.html>