

A REVOLUTION IN HEART

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

Roy: Is it possible for you summarize the actual methods whereby you shed the seven core elements, the summation of your defensive character that is based on early experience? In short how do we do it?

Richard: Yes, but let me preface this by saying that each of my books -- every one -- contains exercises, sometimes extensively. In addition, the SAT training has extensive exercise sections, not only for your personal growth and development but for your facilitating growth and development in others. So taken together my work suggests scores or hundreds of methods. Of course there is no shortage of methods usually in any case, just merely a shortage of time, enthusiasm, and application. It is surprising how many people are able to state with sincerity that they want to change and transform, but in the end they still have to put in the work... and they may be reluctant to do so.

So to summarize. You must dialogue with your parents -- you mother and father and/or those important figures in your upbringing. You must challenge their assumptions and the way they related and reacted to you and helped to fashion you into your individual identity and sense of separation. Dialoguing is immensely powerful and you can do it internally, verbally out loud, using cushions where you sit on one representing you father, for example, and lend him your voice or simply in an inner work notebook, which has the advantage of recording the conversations so you can look back on them. Your intention is to take back your power, to resolve the unfinished business you have with each of these seminal figures from your early years, to detect where there are impasses and conflicts and ultimately to work with the question: *How am I still attached?*

This format -- for example, How am I still attached to my mother? -- can be worked out in others ways too and they are many and varied. Drawing is important and can be an emotional discharge, writing poetry, recording early childhood anecdotes in your notebook, movement and breathing, dancing and free-flowing energy work, allowing feelings and energies to move within and around your body. It is vital that you understand that freeing yourself from the past is not an intellectual exercise. You cannot think yourself to freedom. It simply cannot be done. It must be done holistically. You must embrace your wholeness in order to arrive at your wholeness. So the therapy we practice in Sacred Attention Therapy is not a mere "talking cure." You must feel, re-live, respond physically, emotionally, mentally, and energetically. You must become aware of where you experience emotions in your body, how your mental states obfuscate real experience of your senses, where you are blocked, repressed, inhibited. You must unearth the unconscious guiding life statements that proscribe your view of the world, the patterns of emotion and behavior through which you express your facade and make an impression on the world, the beliefs which underpin your sense of individual identity, the mask that hides your truth.

The three questions that should pervade your inner work and which provide you with a gauge of progress and which you should continually refer to are:

What am I attached to?
How am I holding on?
What do I need to let go of?

Your emergence out of the other side -- the further side -- of this enterprise depends on your courage and commitment. You will be guided by your primary emotional response or in some cases a mix of emotions, for example, fear, anger, sadness, hurt. Every negative-seeming inner emotional event has a positive corollary. In time everything is used by the inner journeyer to their advantage -- everything -- nothing is wasted and nothing is superfluous. There are no failures in inner work -- just ongoing learning. And this journey of release from the past is as long as a piece of string, but don't forget the piece of string does have an end!

Thank you. Now could you summarize what is essential for the inner journey? What can you not do without?

First is your desire to change. You must be solidly motivated with strong intention. You must be sincere and usually for that you need a serious reason. Dissatisfaction, crisis, a deep desire to grow and become yourself, the recognition of your inadequacies or limitations, the apprehension that your life is merely filled with repetition and reaction, that you are a puppet of life and disempowered, your primary love relationship breaking down are merely some of the reasons for embarking on the journey.

Second, you come across some teaching, a method, a philosophy that inspires you and that you can in some way apply yourself to.

Third, there is the necessity for a supportive group, a collective of like-minded spirits who support and sustain you with honest reflection, acceptance, and challenge.

Finally, a guide is necessary for the inner journey, without doubt. No one can do it alone. The numbers are so small for self-directed transformation, let alone realization, let's be uncompromising and simply say you need a mentor, a guide, a teacher, a therapist, someone to help you through the stages of development and navigate the treacherous waters with you.

But what about self-help? Do you discredit that?

Self-help is useful to a certain degree of course... I have no wish to denigrate it. But if you truly want to get somewhere with your inner work, find yourself a therapist, an inner guide, or a teacher.

You present a model of three stages of human awakening and in your books *Your Essential Self* and *Dharma Sky* in particular you map out the sequence and the events that define each of these three stages. We have spoken about first-stage awakening at length now. Mostly it is to do with healing and releasing the residue of the past, specifically the early childhood conditioning and awakening into what you have called "the blossoming of a human life" and allowing your heart to lead you through authenticity and compassion in a world of choice and emotional, and later spiritual, freedom. What I want to ask you now is: what are the challenges of the second stage of awakening?

The realization that the self and the other are one, that compassion and love are impersonal, that you are united with existence, that the heart can be trusted absolutely, that the discovery of choice in your life is also the acceptance of choicelessness, that there is only truth and that truth is that awakening, love, wisdom, and joy are one, that you can actually be happy and that happiness doesn't rely on anything you go and search for or possess or acquire, that life has no purpose beyond or other than itself and that your individual "purpose" is always revealing itself to you, that sacredness is the natural state and way of life, that fear is unnecessary, that there is nowhere to go, nothing to do and no one to do anything...

What about the challenges of the third stage of awakening?

Well, before those there are the steep challenges at the end of the second stage and they are substantial. Our relationship to motivation, separation, division, purposefulness, investment in our actions, relationships and life trajectory, our sense of self and presence, self and other, cultivating devotion, love, offering, surrender, perpetual awakening, discipline, and so on. In the third stage of awakening, the notion of challenge, like all concepts, ideas and particulars that are brought over from the first and second stages are either irrelevant or they are brought up through a process of metamorphosis to assume an entirely fresh significance.

Has there ever been a therapy, a psychotherapy, or psychology, a transpersonal approach as comprehensive and full as Sacred Attention Therapy?

I don't think so, I don't think there is one. There are profound methodologies and philosophies, but I don't believe any have drawn together and adequately charted the real relationship between the human and the Divine, the secular and the sacred, the psychological and the spiritual. I have learnt and drawn on the teachings and the inspiration of the past, but my principal thought about this is that, insofar as the previous schools of psychology and spirituality succeed, would that success not culminate in a brimming over and the breaking of the vessels of wisdom we have inherited, so that a new lineage of wisdom and understanding can be established? What more can we want from our lineage but that the past is ultimately destroyed on the crest of the tsunami of wisdom that it gives birth to?

Perhaps an analogy would be the Japanese practice of *Kintsugi* in which broken vessels are repaired with gold or silver lacquer to highlight and celebrate the imperfections of the vessel and emphasize the sense of lineage and acceptance of change.

What change do we need to embrace individually and collectively in the world today?

Without doubt the principal change we need and are being urged to make is the ascent into the heart chakra, the energy center of compassion and love. What is missing from the world today, as well as kindness and empathy, is an impersonal compassion. Not the sentimental, bland impulse of divisive, ego-based consideration, but the powerful and strong urge to compassionate action and relating to the world about us in an intelligent and wise way. This is predicated on non-separation, I suggest, and non-divisiveness. Tolerance is called for. Cooperation is sorely required and without these, peace cannot be a reality. Outward peace is founded on inner peace. There is much more people can do in the outer world, but I have no doubt that the most powerful act is to cultivate inner peace in the most profound way. This we are all empowered to do and it involves withdrawing projections and prejudice, cultivating acceptance and understanding, and extending compassion and deep consideration

from a non-separated, non-separative and divided, impersonal place in ourselves. This place is Truth itself. It witnesses the non-involvement of any sense of individual self and acknowledges our connectedness in the realms of time and space. In time we can draw the eternal realm into a relationship with the temporal. For any of this to happen... it involves a revolution in the heart, both individually and collectively, a revolution in the heart of humanity. The key is undoubtedly realizing the fiction of ego identification -- this is the root of all un-Reality or what we perceive as evil or abhorrent actions based on ignorance. Without ego-identification the soul of humanity can take flight and soar. It all depends on a revolution in heart.

"A Revolution in Heart, Part 2" goes on to discuss further levels of the SAT online Training.

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>