

Integration of Dimensions

**A holistic perspective on the therapeutic process,
bringing a sense of wholeness and belonging**

by

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Introduction: Completion, not Contradiction

Contemplating the human core and personality has preoccupied philosophers, poets, therapists, scholars and others throughout history. Various periods of social change and development have given birth to diverse prisms of reference. The dynamics between core essence and personality; being seen to being invisible; being connected to separation; all these, and more, became existential questions that reflect different understandings about human nature and its development.

Tension can be felt between unity and separation, wholeness and individualism, which are often perceived as polarities. The dimension of Oneness emphasizes our deep connectedness to a more profound sense of Being, where we are linked to one another and to the whole fabric of the universe. The individual dimension emphasizes that we are separate - a human embodiment in the material and physical world. This dimension includes the psychological journey of the person and the building of self-identity.

In the field of therapy, reference to these two dimensions of existence (the dimension of Oneness and the individual dimension) as ONE, enables integration within the process itself, and affects the greater therapeutic goal - to feel whole. Working with the experiential Focusing field allows direct contact with these dimensions in the 'here and now'.

This article proposes a reference to these two dimensions of existence as complementary to the experience of wholeness, through integration between them. The understanding that these dimensions are not contradictory to each other, and that the integration of the two creates an experience of wholeness, allows a feeling of connection and belonging. Thus, the dimension of Oneness exists together with the unique and distinctive role of the individual

Background: From Communal to Individualism

In ancient tribal cultures, the holistic-spiritual perspective was (and in some places still is) an inherent part of daily life. People lived and related to the frequency and the pulsating energy of life in every living thing, and experienced the connection between them as a cosmic web of being (Teresa Moorey, 1999).

"Everything around is imbued with spiritual energy, and has importance, including all the animals, plants, people, rocks and minerals, the earth, the sky, the sun, the moon and the stars and all the elements, such as wind, water, fire, thunder clouds, lightning and rain - all combined in a complex system of dependency and mutual relationship" (Garrett J.T and. Garrett M.T, 1996).

In this reality where humans live in nature and feel part of it, they carry within them a deep understanding of the connection and relationship between all creatures of the universe, as one whole process. From this perspective, everyone and everything has a place in the world and is responsible for the 'whole of wholeness'.

Everything contributes, affects and is affected by the greater alignment. On a personal level, everyone feels that they belong, no one and nothing is left out. *"Everyone has a sacred reason for existence and a purpose in the grand scheme of the universe. We need to respect all things as they are an important part of the entire life cycle. The ratio of each part to the other parts creates the special energy flow called 'life'... Whether we realize it or not, we live in a world where every part affects every other part ... we live together"* (Garrett, 1996).

Harold Tookenay**, an Elder Indigenous traditional man from Canada, expresses this relatedness as something deeply inbred in the fabric of being: *"I have always felt and known that my people have this sense of deep spirituality that is tied to the earth whom we call Mother earth...our first mother. We do recognize that all is related in the universe and holds us to a profound sense of responsibility to maintain some sense of peace. It is a deep feeling...we know it somewhere in our body. I am remembering my mother and father how they were connected to the land and how they worked...the lakes, rivers, the animals, the birds...I think when I was growing up, all of this was natural to me...Stories have a lot to do with it and how I remember these stories and how they are told. Somewhere along the way we have lost it but we can get it back...we need to do it for the planet's survival. My belief is that all indigenous people of the world have this spirituality of being with the world...the connection...the relatedness"*.

In the past (and in certain cases in the present) this deep connection to the environment allowed humans to understand nature in all its diversity and to observe natural processes, developing a special and respectful relationship with all elements including the spirits, as part of their everyday life. The human community was an inherent part of the whole, and as a community granted a sense of security and belonging. Its members were committed to the greater good of the group.

The approach to healing was directly influenced by this holistic-spiritual perspective, and manifested in many ways. Generally, healing was not a private process between the healer and the person, but rather a whole process that involved relatives and community members, being asked to be part of the healing process. Nature was an innate part and resource for healing, as was the relatedness of all elements and spirits. In this process the person was not 'left alone'.

The healer, having a higher level of holistic-spiritual awareness, was able to experience reality in multiple layers, knowing that humans exist in many dimensions. Communicating with the spirits, the healer performed ceremonies including trances and speaking with the spirits. Above all, there was a general belief that the whole universe was in support of the healing process.

Individual Development: Specializations and Divisions

For centuries, there has been a process of distancing from tribal life and the closeness of man to earth. Affected by extreme traumas and crises, various populations have found themselves separated from their natural roots and way of life. These events have deeply damaged the sense of wholeness and relatedness.

This process of distancing was greatly accelerated during the Industrial Revolution in Europe in the 18th century, with the shift from rural to urban communities, a shift that involved massive industrial and scientific development. These changes led to tremendous innovations and the deepening of many fields of knowledge. The development of resources for mass production of new technologies has had a huge impact on the environment. Encouraging professional expertise, this process has created splits between different fields of knowledge, leading to the formation of endless categories and subcategories. People have become distanced from understanding the unified whole.

On an individual level, humans have gone through internal and external processes which have led to the development of a unique sense of self. Willing and able to express and realize themselves in society, humans have gone through an internal process of self-discovery, from wanting to know

who they are, to being independent and to developing things in a unique way. At the same time, they have distanced themselves from being able to see the world in a broader perspective, to discerning the deep interconnectedness of all things. A separation has been created between outside and inside. The individual has moved away from the whole and no longer feels an integral part of his surroundings. His life no longer seems to depend on the close community around him, and he no longer senses himself as a full partner in life's processes. The holistic-spiritual perception has been broken. The perception of being connected as One is almost gone.

Opening a void for self inquiry, the field of psychology developed out of a desire to address the loneliness and emotional difficulties that man faces. A whole field of information about self development opened up, bringing understandings of how the fulfillment of our innate need for belonging and connectedness is crucial to the development of the individual.

Indeed, psychology has brought deep knowledge and comprehension of human personality, of development of the self, and the importance of personal development for fulfillment in the many roles that we hold.

Different approaches and techniques have been developed in this area highlighting specific aspects within the therapeutic process. This has created specialties which have deepened existing knowledge, but have also generated boundaries between the fields. The natural feeling of an inherent connection between things has been damaged. The individual receives a therapeutic space, where there is room for self-development and creativity, but has lost the understanding of the relationship between him and the community, and the mutual influence of this relationship on the wellbeing of both. To a great extent, we meet at this stage a person who is concentrated on himself, unaware of his influence on the environment, and who doesn't know how to act from, or be supported by, the greater connection between himself and his surroundings.

Over the years, some leading practitioners have had unique insights, sensing the wider space and expressing it in their work. Carl Jung brought the terms 'archetype' and 'collective unconsciousness', while Carl Rogers, the humanist, spoke on several occasions about "those special moments within the therapeutic process, where you can feel that there is a wider field of experience and connection". Despite these sparks of understanding, the sense of spiritual connectedness has still not permeated regular life, as a natural dimension. The inner knowing of being connected and belonging to the whole has almost been lost, leaving a person feeling alone in his life process.

Today, we live in a time when society is waking up, out of a sense that something is missing, yearning and longing to be complete. Both patients and therapists are looking for ways to expand the sense of being connected and to belonging to something bigger, a desire to heal the shared experience of loneliness.

Path of Life: Longing for Wholeness

We begin our individual journey within our families, continue in external relationships, with friends and peers, in the education system, and more. Through personal life experience and partnerships, we build our identity, develop perceptions of life, create meaning and fulfill ourselves. Via the body we can feel our emotions, think and connect to the holistic-spiritual dimension. Indeed, all levels: body, emotion, mind and spirit help us to get through this life process, to connect, interrelate and develop. These various levels of existence are interconnected in one dynamic matrix.

The individual journey involves many challenges, struggles, successes and more, enabling us to build our identity and inner self, to find our unique path in the world. Through the different stages of our lives we continue to shape our identity and release the unnecessary. We invest much effort in the separation individuation process, to separate ourselves from emotional entanglement and find our inner voice. We have the need for self manifestation, to recognize and accept our unique fingerprint. And the world needs our special color, input and energy, in the same way that nature needs many kinds of trees – oranges and lemons, oaks and pines – each one a valuable part of the whole.

In our essence we contain a non-physical dimension, which is often called the spirit or inner being, our essence or our soul. This place has a special frequency, very refined, very delicate. It is not another place inside of us, it is another state of being, another state of existence, which resonates with the unified space of the universe. In this place there is no 'I' or 'you' as in the individual dimension. Here we can feel ONE with everything, a unified field where we all participate. When we directly sense our connection to the unified field, we feel that there is something bigger than us, and the feeling is of expansion and relief. The qualities of this state are pure, not connected to any 'story' or event. There is pure love, bliss, peace, life energy, freedom, and more. From an aware connection to this dimension we feel deeply connected to our being, without the fragmentation that we experience as individuals.

And the universe has special ways of awakening us to this state of existence. There are many moments in our daily life that reflect this knowing to us, like meaningful coincidences and unexpected synchronicities. At these moments, we feel that there is something more, something more than we can see. We get an experiential glimpse of being part of a large interconnected web.

It is possible to see it in the image of a huge web, like a spider's web, with very delicate threads. Many shapes reflect from the web, many colors, in a gentle vibration of life. We are part of this web, located and moving with it, like quartz stones transmitting energy, through thought, emotion, intention, imagination, words and more, all appearing like a kind of energy, a kind of light. The web is nourished by the individuals of many shades and frequencies, each one affecting the web and being affected. We all have a place in this world, and together we create life movement.

In his philosophy, Gendlin takes us step by step into a deeper understanding of life processes, and to the inseparable connection and affectedness of things. In this space, everything is interaffected by everything (Gendlin, 1997).

There is a huge amount of information in this alive web, generated all the time in the life process. We all contain much information in an implicit way, crossing each other and all living things. Our connectedness to this shared field is happening all the time, in the present moment, in the now - a connection that contains the history of our infinity, as well as the next step, as individuals and as a society, as a whole.

The information within the web is not stored as separated content, or as stories, but as it is embodied in the present moment. The 'me' in the present includes all the many elements that have participated in the process, as described in the wonderful example written by Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist teacher:

"Just as a piece of paper is the fruit, the combination of many elements that can be called non-paper elements, the individual is made up of non-individual elements. If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud there will be no water; without water, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, you cannot make paper. So the cloud is in here. The existence of this page is dependent on the existence of a cloud. Paper and cloud are so close. Let us think of other things, like sunshine. Sunshine is very important because the forest cannot grow without sunshine, and we humans cannot grow without sunshine. So the logger needs sunshine in order to cut the tree, and the tree needs sunshine in order to be tree. Therefore, you can see sunshine in this sheet of paper.

And if you look more deeply, with the eyes... of those who are awake, you see not only the cloud and the sunshine in it, but that everything is there: the wheat that become the bread for the logger to eat, the logger's father- everything is in this sheet of paper...in the same way, the individual is made of non-individual elements."

Many people are not aware of being part of something bigger, because they live in a culture which encourages the development of individualism and acknowledges personal achievement, less emphasizing the interdependence we have in each other. Personal history and life circumstances; unmet basic needs, particularly those of connection and love; traumatic events - all these created fragmentation and the repression of emotional parts, which damaged the sense of wholeness experience by the individual.

Emotionally, this process has led us to feel incomplete, lacking, afraid, unprotected and lonely. The sense of being incomplete and separate has created inner anxiety. Anxious not to fit in or to feel isolated, we hide these feelings in the race to achievement, in the desire to please, to accommodate ourselves to external norms, to be accepted and feel a sense of belonging. Many people repress desires and needs that are perceived as unacceptable out of a fear of being different and excluded, of not belonging. Statements like, 'I'm not good enough', 'Something is wrong with me', 'I do not have what it takes' and more, are mechanisms of external and internal criticizing processes, which prevent and limit personal development. The person no longer feels a valuable part of the web.

Channels of Connection: Awakening to the Holistic-Spiritual Dimension

On a personal level we have the ability to experience life, to go through processes with awareness, to reach understanding and create meaning. The four dimensions: body, emotion, mind and spirit, are channels that allow us to go through a complete process of connection. The body is the primary channel, pre-language and concept, sensing life and the environment directly. Through the body we can feel sensations and emotions, a whole world of feelings that help us to connect to ourselves.

The mind makes it possible to expand our awareness, to explore things, to observe, to create order and meaning. The spirit penetrates and unites all the channels, holds us in form and joins us with the undivided universe. Through the spirit we can expand and connect to something that is wider than the individual self.

All these channels work as one in a dynamic matrix, and not as separate units in collaboration. They enable us to move with a sense of wholeness. Indeed, the process of life evolves through these channels: every day we experience things, create, express ourselves, work, learn, think, are involved in relationships, and more. This multi-dimensional processing contributes to growth in our lives, allows us to change and create transformational steps. Through this process we create meaning and feel complete.

Some people experience the world through a limited perspective since channels may have been partially or completely blocked. Affected by personal history and how they learned to deal with life events, the messages they received from the environment, the values they assimilated - these difficult experiences were so hard to contain that survival mechanisms were created, blocking channels. For example, there are people who predominantly react from emotion, but are less able to use clarity of thought to process their experiences and see the broader picture. They will often find themselves in emotional flooding, unable to contain the experience. Others, who are primarily 'in their head', approach things in a logical way, with minute access to their emotional world or the body. Furthermore, there are people who have open access and spend much time in the spiritual dimension, but neglect their body and ignore their emotional world, sometimes due to difficulty in containing reality, using the spiritual world as a diversion.

Clearing channels that are blocked is an essential step for knowing ourselves and creating a more complete feeling, since we need all of these channels to experience our life journey in wholeness. In the therapeutic healing process, the opportunity often exists to open and expand blocked channels, and to create a more complete balance between them. In a healing way we can meet hurt, neglected, and undeveloped parts - vulnerable parts which were split or repressed. By meeting past events experienced as traumatic and overwhelming, we can release heavy baggage from our body, emotion, mind and spirit, and contain them in a new way in expanding channels, expanding self.

The Therapeutic Space: The Role of the Therapist

As human beings we have a wide range of awareness and the flexibility to move between various dimensions of existence. Through the channels of body, emotion, mind and spirit, we experience different levels and layers of Oneness with the universe. The therapeutic process, which is based on the person as a whole and the process as a whole, enables expansion of the channels through gentle inquiry of the current experience.

The relationship between the therapist and the client is integral and multidimensional. When the therapist, who is also on a personal journey, is open to the various dimensions of being, he can hold these dimensions within the session. 'Holding of the whole' is what creates the difference, bringing to the meeting a sense of open space and respect for both the personal process and life processes. The attitude of the therapist, his presence and approach, have an enormous impact on the process. From the perspective that both therapist and patient are part of **one web where all are interaction**, there is a joint journey. When the therapist is in an open state of awareness, he invites himself and the patient to be present in a state of mindfulness - a place of curious listening and observation of all that comes up in the process. This listening holds the qualities of compassion, love, giving, attentiveness, respect, acceptance - facilitating the creation of a safe therapeutic space, enabling the inner experience of the patient to develop and unfold. This awareness and consciousness nourishes both the patient and the therapist, who learn to allow the process to move in an organic, holistic way.

States of Awareness: Individual and Unified

The therapeutic process can invite us to move between states of awareness.

The individual state: At this level patients meet themselves, their history and narrative, how they act in this world, their emotions, their relationships and more. In this state, the patient learns more about himself and can reconnect to parts that were repressed. It is the place where blocked channels begin to open. Working within this state of awareness is crucial for self development and a sense of fulfillment.

The unified state: Connects and opens to the 'shared space', to an expanded and vaster field. This is a pure experience of connectedness, love, freedom, and more. We can see it as a space where the skies encompass all, containing in an open and infinite way. Opening up to a unified state of awareness opens our narrow experience of self and relieves loneliness.

Moving between states of awareness - As human beings, moving between states of awareness exists as a possibility, since we contain and are part of both. Developing the ability to be in 'awarefulness' (being present in awareness), clears a potential flexibility

within us to move between the different states. In the therapeutic process there are moments when we can work with both states of awareness - the individual and the unified - to reach a deeper and more profound healing.

Osnat is sitting in front of me. We are 20 minutes into a focusing process, where she is meeting her loneliness, her lifelong effort to please in order to be loved. In this space she meets 'Osnat, the little girl', who struggled for so many years for attention. She feels the tiredness in her body.

I invite her to stay with the felt sense, with the tiredness in her body. After a while a new movement comes.

Osnat: "I sense a new energy of freedom".

*I ask her to give it space, to pay attention to the experience in the body. There is silence. Knowing that this is a new experience for Osnat, who has spent her life caged in pleasing patterns of behavior and efforts to fit in. After a few moments I check in with her: "How is it to feel yourself **as someone** who has this energy of freedom?"*

Osnat nods and says: "It's exciting to feel this way, to know that I have this". I ask her to deepen the experience, to let herself be with the felt sense.

*At this intimate point, I sense that we can move to another dimension. I sense inside my body, that there is something opening, something which wants more space. I ask her if we can try something and she says yes. I invite the next step: "Let's see if it's possible, only if it feels right, to put aside for a moment all the stories and patterns, all the content that has come up, to put it all aside just for a moment and to **be** the energy of freedom itself."*

*Osnat nods. She is there... **she 'is' the energy of freedom itself.** And I am silently in that space with her. Very slowly a movement is coming in, a small movement in her body.*

I check in with her, if from within this expanded space she is able to observe 'Osnat, the little girl'? (the one she met in the beginning of this process). She replies: "Oh, 'little Osnat' wants to dance and I want to dance with her".

At the end of the session, I ask Osnat what was meaningful for her in this process. She

replies that it was mainly the fact that she can now feel pure energy, unrelated to any story. "It was for a moment. I couldn't stay there for a long time, but I was there". And when she says this, tears come to her eyes.

Within the therapeutic process each state of awareness has a significant place, enabling us to expand ourselves and our experience of existence in the world. When the therapist acknowledges both these states, he can, on some occasions, actively invite the patient to move between them. The possibility of moving between these states may be invited according to, and in keeping with, the patient and the process.

With some patients the therapy process takes place exclusively within their individual state of awareness, building their observer selves, helping them to reconnect to suppressed and fragmented parts of their unique selves, and more. Moreover, for some patients becoming aware and allowing themselves to sense the unified state of awareness may be experienced as threatening and unprotected. Sometimes, leaping too soon into the unified state of awareness can create a diversion within the therapeutic process, at the expense of patients meeting themselves, their emotions, their difficulties and more - of truly integrating. In general, moving between states of awareness can facilitate therapeutic processes and expand the 'self'. It is an invitation to expansion and reconnection to our human nature, our shared existence in the larger system.

The starting point in therapy is the patient's inner experience, contained and accepted through empathic response. With 'awarefulness', movement can take place between the 'individual' to the 'unified' and vice versa - creating a sense of wholeness. These moments bring deep expansion and release. Through experiential exploration, we can discover the space that exists beyond things. And when this happens, the patient opens up to the understanding that he is not the stories he tells, nor the pains and hardships.

Ronit, a young woman, tells how she continuously and obsessively checks her email inbox to see if she has received a message from her ex-boyfriend, a response to the mail she sent him a month before, where she expressed her feelings. She finds herself constantly checking, unable to let go and put it aside.

In this process, feelings of her 'being an annoyance' come up - a familiar experience in her life, as the first born to a mother who wasn't there for her, but busy with her career.

In this particular meeting I feel that it is possible to try to take another step, to meet with a broader awareness.

When Ronit is in an experiential connection with her felt sense of 'the baby that feels that she is an annoyance', I ask her if it is possible to try something... she nods.

I ask Ronit to try to go back in time, to the moment when she was born, to a sense of feeling whole, just a moment before she met her 'always busy mother', before she learned that she is a disturbance. She nods again and lingers with this feeling in an experiential way.

Ronit: "Yes, I can feel it...but hold on...already, in my mother's womb I feel myself as a disturbance"

I ask: "Can you try to go back even more on the timeline?"

Ronit: (amazed) "Is that possible?"

"Just try... maybe to the time of your conception."

Ronit takes her time, sensing the experience through her body.

Ronit: "I need to go back even more...to when I was a soul...before the conception..."

I invite her to go there. After a while I feel that something has changed... something has opened up in the space between us, in her body. She talks very slowly.

Ronit: "Everything is whole...there is light... the sensation in my body is very wide...I sense that as a soul I was very independent, for good and for bad,...that's interesting"

I observe Ronit. Things are happening in her body. Her skin color changes, her body language becomes softer. I am holding the space with her. Towards the end of the meeting, she opens her eyes, observes me and says: "Something happened - I don't know what, but something has changed".

In the following meeting Ronit says she has decided to let go of the relationship with her ex-boyfriend, and that she has stopped obsessively checking her mailbox.

Use of a timeline allows 'pre-split' experiences to arise and be reached. These 'split points' hold memories of the whole which can be reached and illuminated. Timeline questions are asked from an experiential space, when the patient is in connection with his body, in the 'here and now'. This experience can lead the process to the exact moment of split, to the painful place where the whole

was fragmented. This is a deep experiential moment, very alive and authentic. When this experience happens at the right time, it feels natural and brings motion.

David, aged 55, has been in a relationship for several years. In this meeting, he tells of how he still finds himself taking a plastic bag with his things, whenever he goes to his partner's home, even though he has everything he needs there. He knows rationally that he has everything there, but cannot stop himself from taking the plastic bag, which he usually does not even open.

I help him to meet this 'information' in an experiential way...after a while, he recalls endlessly traveling to his father's house in the north of the country, and to his mother's house in the center - a small boy with bags, traveling reluctantly, not feeling at home anywhere.

We stay with the experience, as it is now, in the body... and once again past feelings of how his home fell apart, of how he fell apart arise. We have been with this experience many times, each time returning a small part of the experience to David. However, in this meeting I feel it is possible to expand something there. I check with David if we can try something. He agrees, and I very gently ask him if he can move back on an imaginary timeline, to some time before things fell apart, to the David that felt that everything was still complete ... After a few moments a picture arises....

"I am four years old, going to a field of yellow flowers, in nature ... I am walking among the flowers ...I feel them ...it is all so beautiful, quiet ... and full of color."

I invite David to stay with this experience and he continues: "I feel one with nature ... I do not think about anything ... quiet ... I did not know I could be so peaceful."

Several minutes of silence in the room... then David opens his eyes, looks at me and says: "I miss this quiet so much". A few seconds later, he says: "I think it's okay for us to end the meeting now."

I look at the clock and see we have another ten minutes left. To that day, David had almost always succeeded in extending our sessions, each time for another five minutes - as if he wanted to "take back" some time from his missing experience. This time it seems like something was filled inside.

The therapeutic process comes from the private and the personal, connecting bodily sensations that arise and are related to scenarios of our lives. Sometimes there is a shift which opens to seeking a meeting with the 'larger body', the entire universe. The body has a central place in this process, as a channel through which we can feel both ourselves, and at certain moments, the whole universe. The body knows its needs, knows what is relevant to the next step in the process of life. The felt sense is pre-verbal and in a holistic way contains different dimensions that are gently revealed to advance the life process. The felt sense connects us to the 'larger body', to the shared space, to the universe. Through it we can immerse ourselves in the Oneness. This movement enables change in the physical body, its motion and place in the world. Gendlin expresses this bodily connection to the whole in a profound way:

"The physically felt body is in fact part of a gigantic system of here and other places, now and other times, you and other people – in fact, the whole universe. This sense of being bodily alive in a vast system is the body as it is felt from inside" (Gendlin, 1978. p. 88)

Gendlin offers us steps, in which the first one is always to meet ourselves, our body. Then we may be able to sense the entire universe.

"The physical body is continuous with the universe...to enter it... you start with quite an ordinary experience, you start in just the same place where you are hungry or scared. Starting with this ordinary body, you get a wider, at first confusing, murky... sense that we're taught to consider as nothing. But a felt sense comes..." (Gendlin, 1992)

The examples in this article offer a glimpse into these processes. They do not describe the long-term interaction with the patient, but come to illuminate moments in the process where the therapist can guide the movement between states of awareness. When this invitation comes at the right time, it will create an experience of expansion and tangibility in the experiential-physical process.

Sometimes in the therapeutic field it is possible to plant a new statement (coming from the unified field, extended and without stories) with an invitation to check in and inquire whether the physical system can accommodate such a step.

Anat, 31 years old, constantly collapses under self-critical processes, related to her still being single. Anat has a basic underlying feeling that something in her is wrong, that she is not good enough, that there's something lacking in her, and because of this she feels unsafe in this world. Many times we have met these places, each time giving

room to a new spot. In this session I feel that we can move on to something new.

In this specific therapeutic process, at a certain moment when I feel that it is appropriate, when Anat is connected with her experiential field, I ask her if I can echo a sentence that resonates in me, to see how that meets her. Anat agrees, and I echo to her: "You have a place in this world... you have a place in this world... you are part of this world..."

After a few moments Anat reports the following: "Something in my body is opening up now..." I invite her to be with this sensation. Her shoulders straighten up, something in the body responds and expands. Anat continues: "I feel as if a door has opened, and a lot of light is coming in now..." I invite her to give this experience space... to be present within what is happening...

I feel that here, she is crossing over from her individual dimension (lonely, tense, afraid to fail) to the unified dimension, where there is a place for everything, and everyone.

Five weeks later, after she described an event that happened that week in her life, and while she was deeply connected to her felt sense, she said to me: "I have a place in this world, and it doesn't depend on someone giving it to me or not... It doesn't depend on my mother, if my mother sees me or not, or on anybody else"...After a while, she continues from the felt sense: "It is like coming home" and then she corrects herself, "It is not coming, it is Being at home."

These active invitations allow patients to cross states of awareness. When possible, it is important to notice how this 'crossing' can create change in the conflict or issue with which the patient is dealing.

There are countless ways of tapping into the unified state of awareness, all of them requiring the therapist to hold an open and accepting field, able to contain any step that the patient may take, any information that comes to the meeting. There may be moments of a sense of a greater partnership in life, one that I have personally experienced in my work with bereaved families.

Liat is a small woman with restless energy. Since her son passed away, she needs to find strength every morning to live her life anew. She has promised herself to continue living for the rest of the family even though she doesn't really want to.

At one meeting, Liat says: "Ron is here in this room ... he is here" ...

I feel it, his presence ...I sense in my body the presence of another aura in the room, sensing the larger space where there are no boundaries of time, space and form. Ron, her son, is not here on a physical level, but he is not separated from the fabric of the whole and is here in this moment, in a different way than we are used to ... The meeting between mother and son is possible, extending her conception, and mine, of life. A complete dialogue came about with her son Ron, here and now, a meeting which led Liat to report that she received much strength to continue, awaiting his next 'visit'.

The following case enables us to see our connection to the broader human field, and how this sensation relieves the sense of loneliness.

"Outwardly, everything looked fine. I was a good girl, neat, a good student, as though everything was fine. But at home there was chaos ... I felt I had to hide it, so other people will not see ... I was so afraid, that my home would fall apart ... I held on very tight. My parents, everything that happened at home ... they were too weak to handle it - I had to do many of the things they should have done".

We were able to be together in the experiential field, with the felt experience of holding tight. The holding of an entire family, the holding of the parents. In this place huge pain occurs. Great pain and loneliness... I reflect to Efrat (aged 45) the care and looking after that she did there, for her family ... and whether she can acknowledge the level of empathy that she had as a child to see and care for them...

After some time in this place, I invite Efrat to the expanded state of awareness, to feel for a moment that there are many children in the world, who like her, need to keep their family emotionally together. Children who feel that there isn't someone mature that can hold the family together. I invite her to see if she can sense this group of children, if she can sense her belonging to this group of children who also took parental roles. I ask her if she can sense them. I invite her to feel the shared experience ... "You all know what it is like to hold it together on your own ... You all know the same existential fear ... Try and feel how you are not alone in this ... that you are part of a community ...".

Efrat reported at the end of the meeting, that she could feel for a fraction of a second that she was part of a larger group. For a moment she could sense that she was not alone. Something from that moment reassured her inside.

Oneness holds all. We can lean on this in a therapeutic way. For many people, nature is a space experienced 'as wholeness' and 'as part of wholeness'. As such, it brings nourishment and opens to the larger space. Surrounded by nature, we can use it as a resource in therapy.

Tal (aged 49) is aware of how stressed she becomes inside when things 'go wrong' in her daily life. In one particular session, Tal could feel that she is holding great pain and anxiety in her body, and she realizes that these feelings do not completely belong to her. It becomes apparent that she is holding intergenerational pain, connected to her mother's side of the family, her grandmother and all her family that was killed in the Holocaust. She is carrying their fear and their cries...

I ask her to slow down with this bodily information and to sense where it is in her body. Giving room to this sensation, I ask her how it is for her to meet it. It is very powerful and meaningful to her to feel that she is the carrier... she feels it is a sacred role...

After holding this sensation for while, I ask her if she wants to release something from this intergenerational pain and anxiety in a way that will show respect to her family. I suggest using nature as a space that can contain this memory...taking her time to sense this possibility in her body, she feels she can let go of the fears and the heaviness that she has been carrying for so long.

I invite her to sense a place in nature that can hold these memories for her and her family. After a while she says: "The sea...I can put them in the sea, where they can gracefully move to the larger oceans". I ask her to slow down to see how she can do it...

She imagines going to the shore (a familiar place that she loves to go to), sensing the open space and releasing the memory in a respectful way. After a while, a deep breath comes from her body and she says, "Now, I can sense how this feeling has been given a place in the universe".

At the end of the session she reports feeling enormous relief and gratitude to this life.

Looking Ahead: Therapists as Agents of Change

Today, we have reached a turning point. With the massive changes and developments taking place in modern society, a door has opened and together we can step through it towards a new stage. We are empowered and strong enough to hold both states of awareness, the individual and the unified – to embrace the multi-dimensions of this world. We can simultaneously hold and develop our separate individual selves AND our connection with the bigger space – our Oneness with the greater whole. The integration of the individual and unified will take us another step forward both as individuals and as a society.

On our 'psychological journey', we require enough 'self' to be able to develop a sense of individual independence and to contain our shades of difference as unique individuals living in society. From this place, I believe we are able to embrace our non-individual self, with no sense of discomfort or threat. On the contrary, we can embrace it as an expansion of our self. We have an open invitation to integrate and join parts that split from the whole, from our sense of wholeness – to reach a complete and expansive Being.

On a therapeutic level, we have an invitation to explore and deepen the movement between states of awareness and dimensions of Being – to do this out of a willingness and need to contain them as a whole, to contain our patients and ourselves as whole beings, participating together in the many levels of this world. This invitation invites us, as therapists and healers, to expand our perspective and see ourselves beyond the therapy room and our private practice – as potential agents of social change and development.

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***Harold Tookenay, I have the honor of participating in an open dialog with Mr. Tookenay, Pipe Carrier and traditional Indigenous dancer, regarding the issues included in this article.*

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