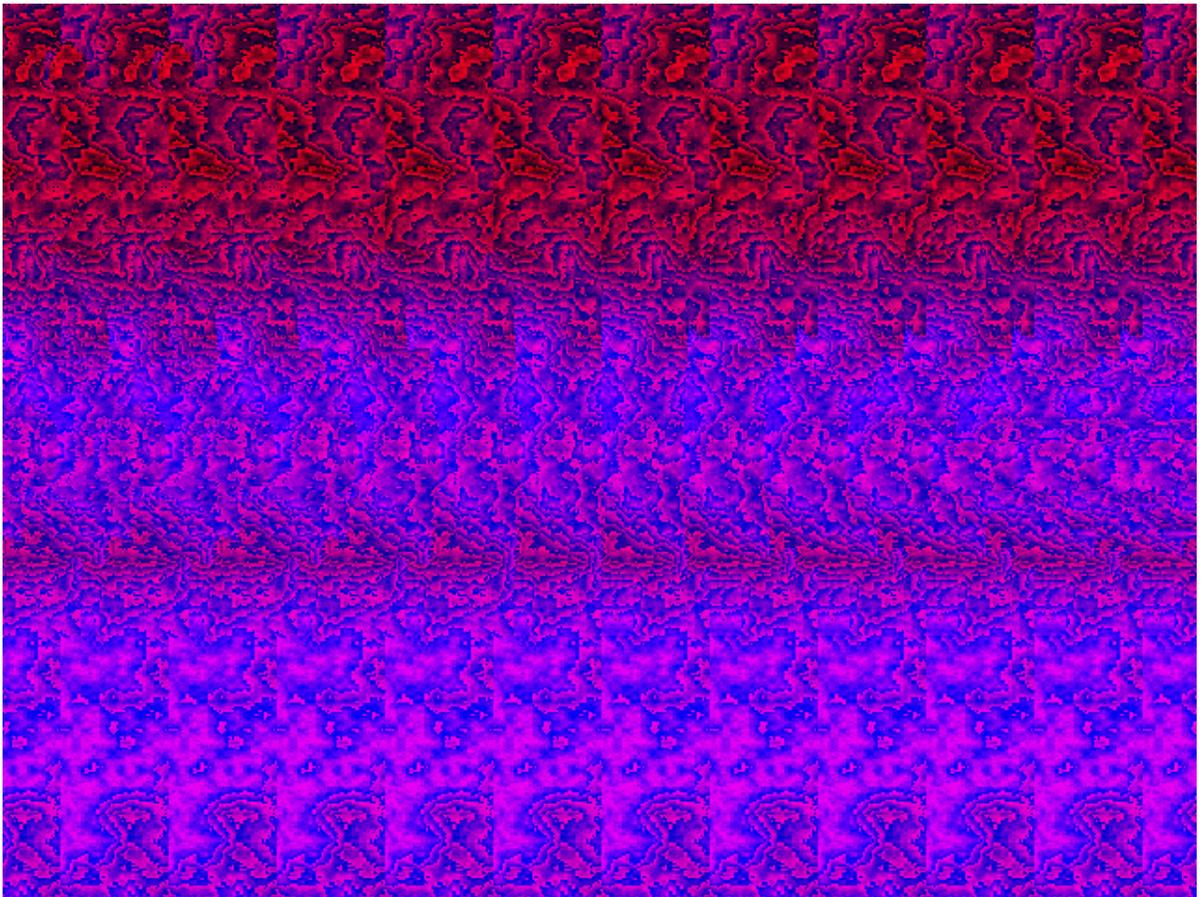


Riding the Sentient Wave

**A discourse on the challenges and benefits of
intuition in therapeutic work and everyday life**

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**A Dissertation Written As Part of the Requirement for a Diploma in
Process Oriented Psychology from the Process Work Centre of Portland
and Process Work Aotearoa**

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a theoretical outline of research on intuition as a psychological process, combined with a qualitative survey of psychotherapists in their use of an intuitive approach and an exploration of the writer's subjective experience, using intuition for 'inner work' and helping others.

Intuition is seen as a major feature of Psychotherapy in general, and a central value implicit in the method of Process Work (PW). For this reason it may be valuable for students of PW to understand the benefits and pitfalls of intuition, and develop a greater expertise in its use.

Strategies are discussed to use intuition more effectively.

The paper concludes with a view that 'tacit learning', the basis of intuition, combined with an ancient tendency for humans to 'entangle' with each other, provides an ideal healing environment. It makes suggestions for therapists and therapist training programs on how to orient themselves to take advantage of these findings .

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“The knowledge of sentient aspects of awareness has been available for several thousand years in Asia. The application of such knowledge in therapy is only just beginning” (Mindell, 2000)

When I was young my father used to take us to a river many miles from our home in the city. He would put on rubber ‘waders’ and step into the shallow rapids towards a pool over hung with willows. We would muck about on the bank while he cast his rod over and over in the attempt to catch a fish. Every so often the line would go taut and his face would furrow in concentration as he gradually worked the fish towards him. As I grew older I would attempt the same exercise, and rarely caught anything more than river debris behind me or willow branches in front. Part of the problem was that I was never sure where the fish was, and I often daydreamed of having magic glasses that could penetrate the dark flow, and show me exactly where to cast my line.

My experience of intuition is exactly as if I have been given, intermittently, a pair of such glasses when working with someone in a psychotherapeutic setting. It is a magical moment to suddenly ‘see the fish’, lying quietly in its pool, and then attempt to accurately cast my line right to that spot. Watching my father or other experienced fishermen, I certainly had the impression that they somehow had those glasses too, as they pulled in the fish, while a beginner might cast all day in the same spot and catch nothing. (My favourite visual metaphor, for such ‘seeing’ in therapy - with its underlying, luminescent, three dimensional patterns - can be found on the front page of this thesis just by staring at the image long enough, with defocused vision.)

Later when I was much older, living near a beach, I took up surfing for a while. For years I had watched surfers seemingly effortlessly catching waves and thought I should be able to do the same. It was an exhausting business trying to get myself and the board out through the white water and not be swept backwards towards the beach. Finally reaching the outer swell, with each wave uniquely shaped and quite the opposite of the uniform appearance from the beach, perfect position and timing was needed just to begin the attempt at catching them. I am proud to say that I managed to do this occasionally and can vouch for the magic feel of such a ride. However, at the end of this, short ecstatic achievement, was that long haul out through the white water. I feel tired just thinking about it, contemplating the difference between the effort it took to achieve a few successes, and the quick, efficient movements of experienced surfers. Like the seasoned fishermen, they see patterns

and move easily in the turbulent seas, repeatedly catching waves, judging multiple variables with little need for deliberate thought - their expertise belying the effort it took to reach this level.

This dissertation examines the journey to achieve such 'flow' in therapeutic encounters and everyday life.

STRUCTURE OF DISSERTATION

This paper is written in four parts:

Part I contains an introduction, the background to my interest in writing on this topic and a discussion of methodology.

Part II contains an expanded discussion of terms, and details relevant theoretical background, including a review of research findings on intuition from Cognitive Science and Neuroscience.

Part III describes my own research into intuition, including findings from my personal 'inner' work, work with others and the outcome of a survey of other psychotherapists and process workers, on their use of an intuitive, inner focus.

Part IV is a summary of the above and attempts a synthesis into theoretical and practical implications.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

In this study, I discuss a challenge that occurs whenever we attempt to help another person resolve a problem or disturbance, and particularly when using the philosophy and methods of Process Oriented Psychology (also called Process Work). How do we effectively discover a pattern or direction amongst the myriad complex signals and information flow? Finding this direction or pattern is akin to what Mindell has termed, 'catching the fish' and I am fascinated by the accomplishment of this task. It is only having caught something on the end of our line - found a pattern or possible direction to take – that the task of supporting an emergent reality, can take place.

This paper also explores aspects of our capacity for discerning what Noam Chomsky has called 'deep structure', what many would call intuition, and what Process Work (PW) might define as awareness of the 'Dreaming' or 'Dreamland' patterns underlying all appearances. I will clarify and define what is meant by these terms, and demonstrate ways we can become more conscious and purposeful in our use of such awareness. Thus I hope to inspire us to catch 'dream fish' (sudden whole gestalts of pattern recognition, powerful transformative images, metaphors, songs, memories, stories, and dances) and 'sentient waves' (the apparently effortless unfolding of events, relationships, or processes) in therapy and everyday life.

I am particularly interested in discussing this search for deep structure and the use of a specifically trained, intuitive awareness because, to me, it seems fundamental to PW, and is the main mental function needed to connect to what PW postulates is a deeper, indefinable reality underlying, and providing the source for, all that we are aware of. Such a reality is seen as naturally structured to include, and 'entangle' inseparably with, our minds, affecting us in every possible way, but reaching our consciousness most obviously through disturbances to our normal selves and usual lifestyle. Intuition could be seen as the doorway, the mental function required for us, to access this critical relationship with reality. PW theorises that unless, and until, we do this, our lives can never be complete, satisfying or indeed healthy. Therefore it could be argued that intuition is the central mental function required by PW theories of reality for us to remain fulfilled and healthy. We could greatly benefit from understanding the benefits and difficulties of using intuition, as well as the ways of improving it and training ourselves in its use.

This writing also studies how we, in helping or healing roles, can temporarily follow our internal experience more, using 'silence' as much as words, and 'space' as much as input, and how to link such an orientation to the overt following of a person's communication signals, or a more directly related style of interaction. Using such space and silence can allow a different form of awareness to be present, one that frequently connects us to the feeling tone or background themes arising moment to moment within ourselves and another person. In this way we can begin to act as a sort of channel for much that is often hidden, yielding surprising and rewarding results - visual images, stories, feelings, and 'direct knowing'. Such gifts combined with a clear awareness of how the other is responding (a critical determinant of effectiveness and safety), can allow us to offer back to another person, aspects of their world.

It is easy to imagine traditional shaman healers dropping deeply into unknown and radically different states of consciousness, perhaps deeper than most contemporary therapists or healers would ever approach, and then returning to the everyday world, either translating or not translating what they have done or discovered. (Eliade, 1951) Simply doing this journeying might be enough for healing, if not awareness raising, since there remains an element of mystery in the 'how' of healing, that all our efforts to investigate have not yet entirely solved. Although I do not investigate traditional Shamanic healing methods and their connection to intuition further in this study it is clear that I and all modern healers 'stand on their shoulders' as forebears and founders of the healing arts. Cross cultural studies in the use of intuition in healing could be the basis of further studies and Eliade's seminal work on Shamanism would be an excellent place to start.

This dissertation includes descriptions of my, and others' personal experiences of what could be called our 'Shaman' nature (as defined by Amy Mindell quoting Eliade) (Mindell 1995). "A tribal healer who is able to fall into altered states, go into the underworld or world of the spirits, discover what is ailing the client, and then bring that information back to this world so that it will be useful to the client and the community." To some extent, my task is to achieve this using the method and style of the 'left brain', analytical thinker. This is like asking a 'Scientist' to define, organise and present the 'Shaman'. For this reason I have included stories, live experiences, metaphors and sometimes a more literary style in the belief that these are the more natural ground and style of this ancient spirit.

For the purposes of this dissertation it is important to define attributes of the psychological states loosely indicated by the shorthand of 'shaman' and 'scientist'. Clearly these categories represent a simplification, more metaphorical than literal, of our enormously complex functioning.

SHAMAN

Feeling/intuitive
 Right Brain
 Dreaming/Dreamland
 Sentient Awareness
 Precognitive/pre-verbal
 Yin
 Eastern thinking
 Experiential Knowing
 Automatic (unconscious) process
 Implicit Memory

SCIENTIST

Cognitive/analytical
 Left Brain
 Dreamland/Consensus Reality
 Signal Based Awareness
 Cognitive/verbal
 Yang
 Western thinking
 Rational Knowing
 Deliberate (conscious) process
 Explicit Memory

In the study of intuition many writers and investigators have observed that our most creative and successful responses demand a combination of these different operations, where the need to integrate creative thinking with more concrete responses is paramount. For example in the history of scientific discovery, intuitive insights like those of Darwin or Einstein required dedicated logic and rational thought to unfold them into epoch changing theories. In fields as diverse as engineering, literature and dance, intuitive creative ideas almost always demand rigorous deliberations and conscious effort to enable their magic to flower. From the engineer who suddenly sees the solution to an impossible building problem or the writer wrestling with words, hammering out the details of her soaring imagination, to the dancer deliberately practising her moves there is an absolute necessity to harmonise our implicit, feeling intuitive mind with our deliberate, cognitive, or analytical intent. In the writing of this dissertation and my daily work with clients I am constantly operating in the flow backwards and forwards along a continuum, now allowing my mind to range freely, now 'pulling it in', deliberately focusing on a narrow area, attempting to harness the range of my imagination .

However, moving between these polarities presents both challenges and possibilities: this dissertation explores such experiences and the reasons for our reluctance to allow such movement in our own lives.

RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY

Personal, professional, theoretical and practical

The insights and experiences emanating from a deep intuitive approach fascinate me. Intuitive clarity can instantly free us to accomplish what previously seemed impossible, allowing us the attributes of a seer or wisdom figure.

As a result, intuitive methods also have the potential to become addictive. I notice an internal tendency to want, and even push for, this to occur. This can become a subtle demand that obscures the richness and beauty of other paths. The importance of patiently following ‘the path of crumbs’ – the specific signals in the moment can be forgotten; keeping an open, ‘beginner’s mind’, willing to sit in the anxiety of ‘not knowing’ can be lost.

The desire to ‘know’ may derive from a ‘Western’ perspective that I am responsible for events - “it is all up to me”. However, intuiting can also be misused as a strategy to avoid the stringent awareness needed to follow the structures and dynamics of human interactions, ‘in the moment’. This is a particular risk for the beginner, where the flow of so many signals can quickly become confusing and overwhelming.

This study has also been motivated by my experience of psychoanalysis and the powerful way it uses space, silence, metaphors, and stories within the therapeutic relationship. I am intrigued by the similarities between aspects of psychoanalysis and Buddhist psychology, in particular the emphasis on remaining open to ‘what is’, and the transformative power of deep acceptance. For me, these approaches create a fascinating contrast with an aspect of process work that has always appealed – noticing and encouraging specific signals, enabling the discovery of meaningful patterns within thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

In fact, for me, the contrast between these approaches has frequently been a source of unease and uncertainty and this thesis is also part of my efforts to synthesise such apparently different orientations.

While the use of intuition in PW and psychotherapy may seem obvious and commonplace, in practice a tension is often present when dropping ‘sensory’ based styles of

following signals and linear thinking, for a rather vague 'suspended attention' (Epstein - quoting Freud - 1995) - an introverted, intuitive, feeling based approach. It is the richness available from such a move, the challenge to access accurate intuitive information, and the tension involved in dropping the more familiar map, that compels me to write on this topic.

METHODOLOGY

This paper presents a theoretical outline of research on intuition as a psychological process, combined with a qualitative survey of psychotherapists in their use of an intuitive approach and an exploration of my subjective experience, using intuition for 'inner work' and helping others.

I have chosen to weave these approaches together because I believe this reflects the nature of the subject. Intuition is about possibilities and creative expression, strongly linked to imagination, visualisation and feelings, and a deeply personal process. If methods of investigation need to be shaped according to the subject studied, then combining qualitative, heuristic research with a selected literature review, offers advantages over more formal, quantitative methods. This is particularly so considering that the use of intuition in psychotherapy is more intensely personal and subjective than that occurring in a wide range of other disciplines. I have thus chosen to eschew quantitative data and attempts at 'objectivity'. Instead I have opted to embrace, observe and use my subjectivity and personal understanding with all its bias, as part of the study. For the same reasons I have used a literary style in places, as a means to convey more deeply the spirit and tone of what I am exploring.

Heuristic research engages and uses my personal framework and interpretation as an observer, relying on my tacit knowledge, some of which cannot easily be put into words. In this approach value is not laid on the notion of an 'objective' observer separate from the observed. Instead the researcher/observer is required to passionately engage with the questions raised in their study, and draw from all their experiences as sources of data. As I describe in the Introduction of this dissertation, the subject of intuition has fascinated and disturbed me throughout my training and practice as a psychotherapist. I can freely own a bias towards such an approach in my own work, alongside an intense struggle to integrate this tendency with my

previous (medical) model of an external focus and linear, analytical thinking. Remaining open to, and aware of, such a bias is fundamental to the heuristic method I have chosen.

“Heuristic design is part of a personal quest to find an individual understanding of the studied subject’s essence and [produces] less a universal truth than a unique perception of a moment in time.” (Erwin, 2002)

The dissertation is particularly reflective of such an approach when it comes to details of my inner work. I found many sources to draw from including imaginative intuitive content arising during the writing itself, from my journal, and work with friends. I was thus able to minimise examples from client work, which allowed more exposure of the details.

The survey of psychotherapists used a semi-structured interview with 15 therapists, almost all of whom are well known to me, some of them very close friends. While this could be criticised for a lack of objectivity I believe this apparent deficiency is more than compensated by the ease with which I could discuss their personal experiences and make my enquiry accurate and meaningful to them. For example, some interviewees often seemed initially hesitant or unsure about the nature of my enquiry, but as the interview progressed, such uncertainty led to richer discussions of the way each therapist uniquely framed their understanding of an inward focused, intuitive approach.

In choosing the therapists I attempted a mix of therapeutic modalities, and experience, hoping to look at differences, particularly between PW orientations and those from other psychotherapeutic disciplines.

Each subject in the survey was informed of the reasons for the interview and agreed to the details of their responses being available for publication. At times a subject would ask that a certain detail be omitted and this has been honoured. All interviews were tape recorded and fully transcribed, so it was obvious when this had occurred. As stated above I was not attempting any sort of quantitative outcomes from this survey and was more interested in gaining a depth of response from others that would prove illustrative of their subjective experience of an inward focus. For this reason I did not attempt to redirect subjects back to questions when they seemed to deviate in their answers. My expectation was that within such apparent tangents lay more detailed richness that would allow more of a window into their thinking. This can

give the reader an opportunity to compare their own experiences, and be stimulated to reflect on possible future options.

In my outline of contemporary research findings on intuition, I have changed the writing style somewhat, which reflects the efforts of the mainstream cognitive science I am describing. This outline is partly in the nature of a theoretical exposition on the subject of intuition, offering a backdrop to the heuristic research findings. In the conclusion and final chapter I weave descriptive writing with a narrative style to reflect the nature of the intuitive process weaving and integrating with analytical, linear thinking – the study subject reflected in the writing process. This final segment is also an integration, bringing together information from the various sources cited and offering implications for the use of intuition in its widest sense.

PART II

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

CHAPTER ONE: PROCESS WORK

GENERAL OUTLINE

In this section I will clarify and define what Process Work stands for and briefly outline some of the basic theory and practice of this discipline.

Many perennial philosophies claim that everyday life is an illusion or a dream, but even if that were true, how do we respond to such a situation?

We know that we can perceive an external, apparently objective reality, one that most of us can agree about (Therefore named: 'Consensus Reality' – 'CR'.) Equally clearly, many of us are familiar with an internal subjective reality that is enormously variable. Night-time dreams and day time fantasies are one aspect of this internal reality.

PW proposes that we can train ourselves to move between the external everyday familiar reality (CR) and a specific subjective internal reality, that of our dreaming selves. Just as we can take elements of our night-time dreams and work with them in many creative ways, so too we can take every element of our waking perception and respond to it, in an equally creative manner.

PW is a philosophy and method of interacting with all the elements of our everyday life as if they were parts of a dream - responding to everyday life as both an objective reality and a dream.

Many of us are particularly concerned about the disturbing aspects of our everyday life, whether these are body symptoms, relationship difficulties or other problems. When working with the dreamlike nature of life, PW also holds a belief that within disturbance lies the seeds for new learning and an expanded self identity. It posits that the disturbances themselves indicate *the manner or way* in which new learning, awareness and an expanded identity can be accomplished.

Process Work has its philosophical roots in Taoism, Shamanism, and Jungian psychology. Taoism supports an appreciation of the nature of all things and faith in the inherent rightness of events no matter how harmful or pathological they may

appear at first glance. From Shamanism comes the basic concern with the value of unexpected and unintended events, while Jungian psychology contributes the teleological approach that raw experiences may yield meaning and purpose when amplified in a manner appropriate to the situation, as determined by the constant observation of the effects this amplification produces.

Process Work takes the view that individuals find it difficult to give equal value to all aspects of their experience, and instead will identify themselves within a narrow range of what is possible. This creates a tendency to disavow parts of their experience which conflict with such an identity. A central concern of PW is to help the less valued aspects of our experience unfold and reveal themselves as important parts of our wholeness. 'Amplifying' or strengthening disavowed experiences brings them more clearly into our awareness and clarifies the reason for their disavowal. Living all aspects of our wholeness may bring us into conflict with our belief systems and the culture in which we live, and we may lack the skills needed to negotiate a way to live out these parts of ourselves in such contexts. This difficulty is characterised as an 'edge' because it represents a boundary to our personal identities. An important goal of Process Work is to help the individual explore such apparent limits and ways to live their expanded identity.

In practice Process Work is eclectic in its methods for achieving this exploration and does not argue with developmental models in psychology. However it follows the teleological view, that each of us is moving towards a final goal or purpose in life which encompasses, but is larger than, our personal history. We are as much moving towards our destiny as we are developing out of our fate.

PW posits that we can operate in at least three different levels of reality. It depicts existence developing from a narrow, formless essence of 'Sentience' or 'Dreaming' and expanding outwards to the myriad phenomena of our everyday, or 'Consensus Reality', world (Taoism's 'ten thousand things').

Awareness of the Sentient level can be likened to a 'felt sense', vague and difficult to describe in words, our experience of the basic ground from which all else arises. It can be akin to a mood state, a sensed awareness of something profound where we no longer feel conflicts or notice separate parts.

'Dreamland' is known to most of us through night-time dreams and fantasies. Our experience can now be discussed, named and written about, but remains a more changeable, magic, surreal world than our usual everyday reality. Here,

disturbances, relationship problems and body symptoms can be treated as if parts of a dream rather than simply troublesome or frightening threats to our comfort and survival.

The quality of existence that most humans in any particular culture would generally agree on, 'Consensus Reality,' is the 'normal', 'objective', everyday world so loved by our rational, measuring, naming mind. It conforms to Newtonian laws of physics and social rules of convention. Most of us think of ourselves as living in this state while we are awake.

PW argues that, for sustainable health, we need to be moving between all three levels and acting out of the insights and experiences that emerge. To live only in Consensus Reality is to condemn ourselves to a dry and meaningless struggle with fate, and our inevitable death. To stay only in Sentience or Dreamland is to lose connection with the colourful details of everyday life and miss the challenge of putting our wisdom to the test at this level.

PW has a particular commitment to observing the specific subjective experience of a person - Sensory grounded information - as compared to ideas or opinions about a disturbance. This is very important since most of us are usually quick to ascribe meaning to unknown phenomena, and the commitment of this method is to follow discreet signals. In that sense PW can be seen as pragmatic and phenomenological rather than theoretical and intuitive.

This approach requires an absolute discipline to remain open to both our own internal responses, and the other person's feedback. Feedback, both verbal and non-verbal, must guide the practitioner in deciding where and when to encourage and amplify experiences. Feedback is partly an 'energetic', felt response and requires sensitivity on the part of the observer. The quality of feedback is the deciding factor in either exploring hesitations and the reasons for 'edges', or supporting the client to free themselves from the current confinements.

INTUITION AND PROCESS WORK

In this section I expand on the links between intuition and various aspects of PW theory and practice. From a theoretical perspective I look at the similarities and differences between intuition and the particular states of awareness that PW theorises we need to notice tiny or momentary signals from our environment. Such apparently insignificant phenomena are regarded by PW as offering critically useful

information about our world and our place in it. The means to access them and to uncover their riches is thus regarded as vitally important, and I explore where and how intuition plays a central role in this endeavour.

I also reflect on the balance needed in PW practice between a deliberate, focused awareness on explicit signals arising within ourselves, others and our environment, and the more diffuse, 'defocused' awareness so necessary to reach beyond the everyday world of appearances. This latter state of mind, historically the terrain of Shamans, mystics and even the so called mentally unwell, is increasingly available to a contemporary healer using the training and concepts of PW. Such training is, I argue, in large measure, the development of a specialised intuition combined with sensory based, deliberate, observational and analytical skills.

For example a person may feel identified with features of the natural world as a part of themselves, feel close to nature, and even gain a sort of sanctuary in such a knowing but never consider taking the experience further. They have not been trained to follow more deeply into the experience of 'becoming a flower' or 'imagining myself as the mountain', let alone intuit the essence of these states before they had even materialised into a 'bird' or 'mountain'. Such awareness requires training, perhaps not dissimilar to that of Zen Buddhism with its injunction to meditate on such matters as "the shape of your face before your parents were born", to unfold the deepest meaning and connection in such a path.

As I write, a brown autumn leaf is flicked 'by the wind' through my open door. I am momentarily distracted before turning back to the writing. My 'Shaman' mind is suddenly attuned to the small visitor, even as my more everyday self urges me to 'keep focused' on the task. As I contemplate the leaf I am drawn to its beauty, veins in its brown skin, shadows from its curling edge and ridges. I realise how busy I have been and how softly the leaf announced its presence. In a reverie I am falling, slowly circling to the ground – paper fine, weightless, there is almost nothing of me, certainly nothing for me to do. Death is around, as is the preciousness of life, and its beauty. My body relaxes, and my fingers flow more easily over the keyboard. 'Enjoy your time here,' my leaf nature whispers back to me - perhaps to us all.

Without encouragement and training to detect and unfold small disturbances in our everyday life, such relieving, 'meaning making' is forgone and we are condemned to a drier, narrower, altogether more prosaic existence. This training seems to require a

development of our intuitive abilities along quite specific lines. Perhaps most fundamentally we develop a capacity for openness to strange, disturbing or eye catching events that we would normally ignore. Such openness is further refined by a willingness to 'follow into the unknown' of such happenings, to let ourselves be led by them, having the surety of a tested method to do so, and experiences of rewarding meaning arising from following such experiences.

In a PW exercise we are asked to turn around until we sense a certain direction to follow, then walk in that direction until we sense the right place to stop. We then turn slowly around again until we discover another direction to follow, and another path to walk until we sense the place to stop.

Such sensing, from the perspective of a more concrete, linear thinker might seem to be completely arbitrary, a random stopping at any point rather than a specific process where we sense a direction to follow. The training in awareness is to pick up and act on that sense - in other words to pick up, and act on our specific intuition of the direction to follow. PW supports us to remain open to the puzzling and uncertain path of acting on such initially vague intuitions, as we gradually develop increasing sensitivity to the subtle 'intentional currents' within us that we may never have previously recognised.

I am working with a friend who has a body symptom. She is experienced in PW, quickly discovers polarised roles, and begins a role play between her known self and a 'symptom maker'. I feel flatness within me around this dialogue, and a disinclination to follow it. Instead, I feel more excited about her stance moments before – feet planted apart, solidly on the ground, face staring ahead, arms searching for something behind her. It represents something evocative and unusual to me, though I have no idea what. As the dialogue peters out I ask my friend to return to this stance, hold it for longer and play with its movements. I have a strange confidence and surety, willing to follow wherever the position or movement leads us. Within a short space of time she is excitedly picking up a sense of mystery, feeling energy not present before as the stance becomes alive – an explorer jumping into the deep unknown of life, leaving behind comfortable, familiar scenes of home and everyday work.

Although this illustration leaves out as much as it demonstrates, it is an example of how we can 'sniff out' the atmosphere while following a process. Using a 'felt sense'

of interest, enthusiasm or confidence to guide initial choices is a particular use of intuition gained through experience and training. At the time I have little idea of the reasons for my responses though on reflection I can more easily see they are partly based on sensing what is more (or less) known and therefore what I imagine will lead to more energetic, interesting outcomes. At the time I am only aware of an almost visceral feeling that determines my responses alongside such other guides as client signals and feedback. However having taken such a path my task is both easy and still challenging – easy because I have now committed to a specific direction, more confident of the rhythm and flow in this process; still challenging in that I am nevertheless required to deliberately focus on and follow the specific outward signals that will take us to an unfolded, differentiated outcome. Intuition is, once again, critically combined with sensory grounded awareness to reach a ‘satisfactory result’.

Levels of Awareness

As described above, PW sees each of us as potentially operating on at least three different levels of awareness – the everyday Consensus Reality (CR) level where things are much as they appear to be, a Dreamland level, the world of dreams, daydreams, and imagination where conditions can generally be talked about but can operate under very different rules, and Dreaming or Sentience a realm that is more difficult to put into words, but can be sensed as an awareness of something profound.

The more concrete, left brain, logical world of CR awareness has little interest in intuition, ‘sensing’ and the imagination. It nevertheless plays a critical role in evaluating the results of these approaches, and perhaps more importantly, in the integration of such results into our everyday lives.

‘Dreamland’ on the other hand is an awareness level much more conducive to intuitive, imaginative thought. This level is the natural home for much of our ‘untrained’ intuition, although the initial sensing, unknowing quality of beginning intuitive processes will still challenge this level of our awareness. Only as an intuition differentiates out from an initial vague sense, perhaps to the level of a visual image or insight, can dreamland awareness grasp and interact with such a process. As with the CR level of function however, dreamland can be crucial in developing an initial intuitive sense. Without such differentiation, much richness, knowledge and wisdom remains trapped in unintelligible signals, and lost. (Some authors have argued that famous, intuitively orientated people like Einstein were so important in developing

human knowledge, precisely because they were also able to translate their intuitions into meaningful ideas, concepts or creations. Such authors have speculated on how many other potentially brilliant and creative people have been tragically blocked by their inability to translate intuitive knowing into a form that others can grasp.) (Schulz, 1998)

The Dreaming or sentient realm finally seems more completely the home of intuition, particularly for those people trained in awareness to the point where they become lucid of this aspect of reality. Such expertise allows for the unknowing, vague sensing of 'flirts' and fleeting signals, hunches and tendencies, and the ability to stay with such unknowing to the point of deeper awareness emerging.

Since awareness of the Dreaming or Sentient realm of reality requires the most advanced form of intuitive functioning, it seems pertinent to discuss this in more detail and in particular the concept of 'Lucidity', defined by Mindell as the 'mindfulness and concentration' to 'catch actions and thoughts as they are arising from the background of subtle tendencies...' or 'awareness of sentient experience, and also awareness of subliminal, flash like dreaming' and 'sensing tendencies as well as actualities, and the undifferentiated field'. (Mindell, 2000)

An Example of Using Lucid Attention

A client notices the colour of my red jacket and the fact that it seems a bold colour to wear. I encourage a focus on that boldness and she imagines a matador out in the ring in front of thousands of people. I wonder aloud how the matador might move and she imagines a dance that takes her back to a recent memory of running on a wild, west coast beach - Piha with its black iron sand and wild, white water crashing on 'Lion Rock'. As she imagines the dance and goes more deeply into its 'felt sense' she contacts the freedom and power of the sea. Momentarily at least, she can become this sea, rolling endlessly onto the black sand, sky and clouds overhead, while a lone red dancer pirouettes on the 'stage' in front of her. There is a sense that can barely be articulated as she 'becomes' the sea, something wild and untamed, beautiful and merciless, unconcerned and impersonal.

How could we understand such an experience? At a CR level we could say that she has exercised her imagination - which would not do justice to the strength of her feelings and where it left her, full of renewed enthusiasm and interest for addressing certain issues she was struggling with in her relationships. Imagination, creativity and

intuition might all be cited as ways she has managed to reach a state of power and grace that Jung might have called numinous. Particularly as she 'became' the sea, and let herself experience a 'rolling in and sweeping out' sense, Mindell might say that she became lucid of an internal flirt, as the movement of waves caught her attention and she was able to feel into the subtle background pattern behind the appearance of 'sea' or 'waves', the essence or distillation of such phenomena before they arose as parts of our world. Outside of the specialised language of PW we might say that she intuited this sense, that intuition was the manner in which she was able to sense into such a state.

Lucidity and Sentience

Reaching the state of Lucidity requires training, to perceive and differentiate aspects of the 'Sentient world' the subtle world of possibilities and tendencies, a place from which all phenomena, 'the ten thousand things' of our everyday (CR) world arise. To experience Sentience directly, from a Process Work perspective, is to enter an altered state of consciousness, our subjective experience of such a realm, through an intuitive sensing of possibilities. Some aspect from this subtle background reality is said to initially catch our attention in the form of a 'flirt' - perhaps a brief internal feeling experience, a fleeting vision, external signal, or outside world phenomena, and pricks our lucid attention into action. The 'flirt' is the first step in Lucidity, and the awareness training required is that of both noticing such subtle signals and having the capacity to follow their underlying tendencies.

Sentience is defined by Mindell as, 'The automatic awareness of subtle, normally marginalised experiences and sensations' (Mindell, 2000, p 36.) It might be important to note here that 'Sentience' does not necessarily imply that an organism is *consciously noticing* these experiences and sensations. The awareness of such phenomena, in this schema, is reserved for the state of 'Lucidity' which implies that a person is now at a level of consciousness, training, and experience that they are consciously aware of 'Sentient' experiences.

It is interesting to me to reflect that intuitive sensing deals in probabilities rather than a final outcome, and that this might be equated with the Quantum Mechanical idea of a Probability wave, where our initial 'not knowing' and sensing into a situation might be the beginning of the Quantum Wave function. In the 'middle' of such a process little can be measure or assessed, even by the subject, and limitless outcomes or trajectories are possible. The final outcome, where our initial felt sense or vague

intuition has become differentiated into an insight or enlightening new perspective, felt as a resolution of sorts, might be a form of the collapsed probability wave. At a CR level we experience perhaps a relief of 'knowing' now, but also a narrowing down of the previous infinite possibilities.

The concept of Lucidity seems to refer to a much wider variety of mental states than simple intuitive knowledge, or insight. Lucidity is, however, perhaps *an aspect of* general intuitive functioning.

In this sense our intuition may represent a doorway into such altered states, a way to shift our perspective (Castenada's 'assemblage point'), and may be the essential first step to move beyond 'Dreamland', and certainly beyond Consensus Reality levels of awareness. It is difficult to imagine that anyone could develop awareness of Sentience without using intuitive functioning. (Much of the thrust of becoming lucid of 'Sentient experience' in Mindell's writing has to do with an initial 'not knowing', and preparedness to remain 'fuzzy', without a clear pathway or idea of direction. This of course is similar to the description of allowing intuition to emerge in us – to drop our 'left brain, naming tendency, and our need to know ahead of time what will happen, our tendency to analyse,' (Schulz, 1998)

However, to give one example of many possible intuitive experiences, insight can occur without any developed awareness of the subtle realm of Sentience, let alone a following of such awareness to an unfolded, differentiated state. Although it might seem to over-lap with Mindell's *unfolded or differentiated* 'Lucid' experience, insight remains distinct from these in that it lacks any awareness of a pathway.

In summary, although lucidity seems largely dependent on intuition, and while most lucid experience could be framed as a specific intuitive awareness, the concept of intuition covers many other experiences, and has a much broader meaning. (Intuitive insights and pattern recognition also occur outside of lucid awareness, at a CR or Dreamland level.)

On the other hand, intuitively unfolding lucid experience will often lead to a deeper sense of meaning, connectedness to self, others and the world, than simple pattern recognition would normally confer. This seems to confirm the possibility that, like Zen or other mindfulness training, Lucidity is a form of advanced, specialised intuitive practice. It is interesting to consider that mainstream research is only just beginning to address the probability that such developed functioning constitutes a qualitatively different situation to that of untrained awareness, where different rules and outcomes might be present. (Davidson, 2005)

What then is 'internal knowing' or 'pattern recognition' and what if this were also a form of 'flirt', 'trying to catch our attention'? Are such 'gifts', always present in me and as I train myself to grow quieter, I become more able to receive them? Another way to frame this is to see developing awareness as the lowering of a threshold to access knowledge, ceasing to marginalise the knowing that is already present. Such knowing may thus be seen as a flirt, similar to a feeling experience or visualisation. (Mindell, 2000, p54)

'Hidden events rise to the surface. Not really hidden, really they are submerged, embryonic, waiting to be unfolded. Later on you think you did the observing.' (Mindell, 2000, p68.)

Does our task become one of increasingly opening ourselves to such awareness, acknowledging 'intuitive insights' as simply one aspect of our ability to pick up 'flirts' from the Sentient realm, in this case 'flirts' arising from our internal world, just as an itch or fleeting vision might also arise within us. At root, as Ken Wilber might argue, such inner 'flirts' arise from the seamless whole that includes all outer world flirts as well. (Wilber, 1981)

While the discussion above has largely focused on Lucidity and its relationship with intuition, it should be noted here that a great many of the pathways and techniques used by PW are intuitively based, even when there is a solid core of linear, sensory based theory and practice to follow. Intuition is thus a major feature of PW and could be seen as a central value implicit in the method. For this reason alone it may be beneficial to any student of PW to thoroughly understand the nature of intuition, its pitfalls and benefits, and how to develop a greater expertise in its use.

CHAPTER TWO: AN OVERVIEW of INTUITION

DEFINING AND DESCRIBING INTUITION

Intuition is a concept used so widely and loosely that it becomes almost meaningless unless taken in context.

Cognitive psychology equates it with the vast amount of 'parallel processing' of information that occurs unconsciously in all of us, and also as a feature of implicitly learned, automatic expectations that can so frequently turn out to be erroneous. Both these meanings may be further contrasted with the insights that can occur in such wisdom trainings as Zen Buddhism, where intuition is a primary tool for contacting reality directly and where the most sophisticated awareness is operating – a qualitatively different situation to a common 'hunch'.

In philosophy, Encyclopaedia Britannica defines intuition as, 'the power of obtaining knowledge that cannot be acquired either by inference or observation, by reason or experience. As such, intuition is thought of as an original, independent source of knowledge, since it is designed to account for just those kinds of knowledge that other sources do not provide'

The word 'intuition' comes from the Latin 'intueri' (to look at, contemplate), implying 'insight' or 'inner seeing' and a far cry from a hunch, 'gut feeling', or expectations drawn from surface observations. It is also a radically different notion from the intuitions of an expert ball player or improvising jazz musician, who somehow know exactly the physics of objects in motion or chromatics of scale.

Common understandings of intuition seem to involve directly knowing something, often quickly and with a degree of certitude. They imply or state directly that logical analysis and rational thought is absent, and that there might be some access to a store of knowledge somewhere, but that the process is mysterious. There seem links to insight and expertise though clearly these do not define intuition. For many of us intuition is strongly linked to emotions, these being one of our most common entry points to the intuitive world where, getting 'a sense' of something is often the first step we make towards the insights offered by this side of our minds. Consequently, initially at least, such awareness is hard to define and insights may seemingly arise, 'as hunches that are difficult to put words to'. (Schulz 1998)

In summary intuition often starts with vague, feeling toned 'sensing' that is hard to articulate, but often leads to sudden 'whole gestalts of knowing' (Schulz 1998), where knowledge seems self evident and certain, even as the path to achieve it remains a mystery. Finally many of us associate it with empathy, our ability to step into another's shoes, and to feel out their world, and a paradoxical effortlessness, a seeming gift from somewhere within us where there is 'little or no conscious deliberation' (Hogarth, 2001) required of us.

Another way to understand this notion is to look at the process and content of intuition: The nature of the process seems covert where we lack awareness around how we achieve intuitive results. We frequently (but not always) feel confident around insights achieved, even though the process of getting there cannot be defended logically. It seems an automatic process, where results cannot be guaranteed and getting there cannot be fully controlled. Sometimes it can be speedy, delivering results much faster than rational analysis, and often intuition can handle complex, ambiguous information flows more effectively than laborious analysis.

In terms of content, intuition enables us to weigh up the contributions of different pieces of information and make connections via possibilities, implications and principles. We can discern patterns and be less bogged down with details. Intuitions may come from a stock of knowledge built over a life time, our 'cultural capital.' This information is usually not questioned until one meets a different 'culture', whether in personal relationships or groups, when our assumptions and beliefs are often strongly questioned.

Outcomes from intuition can be approximate and initially experienced in terms of feelings rather than words, while intuitively derived beliefs are often not well delineated. This lack of precision can affect the quality of feedback we receive from the environment and thus have a significant impact on learning available. In spite of these apparent limitations, feelings and vague senses remain vitally useful in many situations, particularly if acute observation of feedback is used to balance our perceptions. Finally, it is frequently very difficult to discern how much intuitive or analytical thought is being used at any one time, and the validity of what emerges usually cannot be rigorously tested in everyday life.

HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

Intuition has been important in the Western intellectual tradition at least since Plato's time, and many sentinel thinkers have seen this trait as central in the human endeavour to gain knowledge of ourselves and the world around us. However with the rise of scientific empiricism, and later the development of 20th century psychology with its intense effort to prove itself a valid, empirical science, the place of intuition in the pursuit of knowledge has become more doubtful from the perspective of many modern, particularly mainstream, intellectuals.

The gains made by the empirical sciences were so powerful that many saw them as the final nail in the coffin of classical metaphysics, particularly as it pertained to the material world, because the evident proofs from the new sciences undermined many of the central elements of the old schools. Only in the area of the mind was there still some room for metaphysics to operate and it was in this context that Descartes sought to deal with the disparity between the obvious 'truths' of the modern sciences and that of philosophy and metaphysics through his idea of the separation between the mind and the body. He was committed to an intuitive approach in the search for truth offering such famous statements as 'I think therefore I am' as an "immediate and indubitable innate intuition". (Gaarder, 1994) Some have characterised this approach as similar to Gnosticism where an intuition leads to a revelation and the unfolding of a whole system of knowledge. He earned his place as the 'father of modern philosophy' because, although many later philosophers rejected his dualism between mind and body, it enabled philosophy to reclaim a vital area of enquiry, separate from the mechanistic sciences—the area of the human mind. It was this movement that began the philosophical discipline of Epistemology – the study of how we come to know what we do.

"The traditional ideal from Platonic 'noesis' through to Cartesian clear and distinct perception.....has been to ground core philosophical beliefs in some sort of self justifying intuitive insight. Much of our contemporary lack of philosophical confidence is the ultimate outcome of the scientific revolution, from which we learned that our intuitions about nature (allegedly insights into the essences of things) often told us more about ourselves than about the world, and that genuine access to the world required methodical empirical testing that frequently refuted our 'insights'. The subsequent history of philosophy was a matter of our coming to see....that intuitions about the non-physical world (introspection, conceptual analysis) were similarly questionable." (DePaul, 1999)

Intuition in philosophy, like the discipline itself, thus shifted from the central privileged position of a 'direct truth', 'self evident' and possessing an inherent certainty to, at best, an expert opinion (at worst a hunch). It is now a place to start, to be tested 'in reality', rather than the last word. In this sense some have argued it is still a valuable tool and still offers philosophy a possible way forward. This situation could be mirrored in PW where using 'sensing' approaches might be compared to the empirical pathway of discerning communication signals. The power of intuition might lie in our ability to *start* with an insight and then empirically test it out through signal feedback much like the scientific method.

'Intuition' contrasted with 'Reason' can be understood in terms of another social and historical movement – the swings between so called 'Romantic' and 'Enlightenment' philosophies. (Do we detect a bias in the naming of these philosophies?) Process work and similar therapies can also be seen in this broad historical context, swings of thought that have occurred in 'Western' philosophy and the arts, centred on the beliefs that are more central in any particular historical period.

Romanticism was originally characterised by a belief in the essential goodness of the individual human spirit and the capacity within each of us to find deep truths from within ourselves. These deep truths, discovered in individuals, when taken collectively, offer hope to humankind for the way forward.

The Enlightenment movement on the other hand saw hope in the rational shaping of large masses of people by ideas and 'truths' broadly discovered about the external world. Thus for example, the discoveries of the new sciences in Newton's time led many thinkers to conclude that our world and everything in it could be finally understood by rational investigation and analysis. This led to the perception that human behaviour could also be understood and guided by universal 'laws' and 'truths'. The task, from this perspective, was to discover these laws and put them into effect. A parallel example might be that of Marxism in the first half of the twentieth century, where a theory of how society could be organised was taken up and attempted on a grand scale, involving millions of people.

'Closer to home', the ideas of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy could be seen as an 'enlightenment' perspective, where rules emanating from a theory are applied to the task of helping people with their problems. A program of guidance is directed to the individual on the strength of 'objective' research ('truth') about how humans function. Process work, like many other therapies (such as 'Client Centred Therapy' or Gestalt

Therapy) could be characterised as coming more from the romantic movement where truth and healing is understood as emanating from within the individual. The task of the therapist is more to facilitate the unfolding of the truth and wholeness already always present, implicit and embedded in each individual. ('Gestalt' means 'whole' or pattern, pointing to an implicit background patterning, a further indication of its allegiance to the Romantic or Platonic heritage.)

To understand the relevance of naming therapies in this way, it seems instructive to notice that the Western world has been firmly in the grip of an enlightenment movement for most of the last century. Only in the last third of twentieth century has a gradual disillusionment with such an orientation begun to gather strength. This is not a new phenomenon in the history of Western thought. The French Revolution was a part of the enlightenment perspective that many thinkers had hoped would offer a way forward out of rigid thinking and regressive social conditions. The bloody horrors that followed the French Revolution led to the beginning of disillusionment with such an approach and a renewal of the Romantic Movement in the first half of the eighteenth century. Such a swing away from rationalism and the reliance on external laws and theories was relatively short-lived however, and by the Mid 1800s, thinkers like Darwin and others, had drawn many back to enlightenment thinking culminating in the extraordinary rise of science in the last century.

This study of science finally led to what has been characterised by Charles Tart and others as 'scientism', (the absolute belief only in observable, measurable phenomena), and has often been used in the service of hideous wars, annihilating technologies, or the astronomical profits of a relative few. Perhaps as a consequence many people began to turn back to the 'Romantic' perspective around in the Mid 1960s. Psychotherapeutic theories and methods are not immune from such movements, indeed they are completely embedded in them. It takes extra effort to observe the nature of a movement in which the observer is embedded, but this effort is easily offset by the rewarding perspective gained by noticing how our endeavours are part of a massively bigger movement.

Perhaps in recognising that process work and other 'humanist' theories and practices, are part of a swing towards 'Romanticism', following disillusionment with 'Enlightenment' perspectives, we can more easily remain open to both perspectives, knowing that sooner or later there will be another swing back. Our 'truth' becomes relative to other perspectives, and in this way can, paradoxically, become more

reliable. In such a way, intuition and reason can both be respected. As will be shown in detail below, such integration is at the heart of effective mental functioning.

ZEN – A SUPREME DEVELOPMENT

Zen Buddhism could be seen as one of the most sophisticated and highly developed uses of the intuitive mind to emerge in human societies. It is an advanced systematic training to bypass the conceptual limits of our analytical, logical minds and experience ‘the mystery and beauty of life, in the moment, to be perceived wholly and directly, and with pure objectivity’. (Bancroft, 1971)

Zen could be seen as one variation of the ancient Eastern meditative tradition, aiming to experience what Ken Wilbur calls a ‘no boundary’ state - beyond that of our usual labelling minds. (Wilbur, 1981) From Zen’s point of view we are usually hypnotised and bewitched by our apparent cleverness in apprehending what is actually a surface level of reality, and particularly by the political and technological power our conceptualising, naming mind offers us.

“There never was a fish that swam out of the water or a bird that flew out of the sky.....yet if there was ever a bird that first wanted to examine the size of the sky or a fish that first wanted to examine the extent of the water, and then tried to fly or swim it would never find the way.”Dogen AD 1200-53

Our need to explain and measure is confused and challenged by the paradox and apparent non-rationality inherent in Zen’s use of the Koan, an impossible question, which confounds and confuses our usual rational way of approaching reality. ‘What is the sound of one hand clapping?’ or ‘what did your face look like before your mother and father were born?’ are instruments of paradox which stimulate a profound shift in perspective when considered from a prolonged state of concentration.

“If you take up one Koan and investigate it without ceasing, your thoughts will die and your ego demands will be destroyed...you face death, a vast abyss opens up. You will penetrate, without fail to the infinite source of your own nature.” (Hakuin AD 1686 – 1769)

Intense meditative (i.e. intuitive) concentration on a concept leads out of the conceptual cage of our usual experience to a direct realisation of our deep nature.

Poetry, movement, painting and meditation are also widely used in Zen to bypass our thinking selves and directly experience reality. Each of these modes are meditations in their own right as exemplified by the Samurai tradition of sword play or archery, and the activities of calligraphy or pouring tea. The practitioner is aspiring to let go of conscious control and allow the intuitive mind to work freely to the point where there is no distinction between actor, instrument, and action, just an authentic flow happening independently of any sense of self. In the Samurai tradition, the Zen of battle was taken to an ultimate conclusion where the warrior was encouraged to let go conscious control and 'ownership' of his abilities to become completely at one with his style, unconcerned about protecting his own life – an extreme example of deliberate intuitive functioning.

This stage was seen as the ultimate challenge:

"The way of the Samurai is found in death. Meditation on inevitable death should be performed daily.

Every day without fail, one should consider himself as dead. This is the substance of the way of the Samurai." (Tsunetomo, 1716)

If the Samurai's head was to be suddenly cut off he should still be able to perform one more action with certainty. If one becomes like a revengeful ghost and shows great determination, though his head be cut off he should not die. (Tsunetomo, 1716)

Zen and many other mystical traditions from the significant religions throughout history are more or less united in their unshakeable conviction that a state of union with reality is our natural heritage, and fundamental reason for existence. It is seen as our highest goal and most simple, our homecoming, and almost every tradition relies partly on our intuitive faculties to realise it. As for many other mystical paths, it means a life lived with full awareness of every moment:

"when you try to think about it, it is already missed"(Shunryu Suzuki AD 1905 - 71).

Instead there is an immediate seeing into the nature of things and into a full identity with infinite reality.

"Just as the boundless emptiness of the sky embraces the ten thousand things of every shape and form...the emptiness of your original nature is just like this....The

infinite ground is not for one second, apart from the everyday world of phenomena.”

Hui Neng, AD 637-714

It is an instructive example of how far intuitive training can take the human experience, and enables us to view one perspective of intuition that is not usually noticed by mainstream science – what happens when we focus explicitly on training intuition itself, to a high degree. It is particularly relevant in the context of this paper because training intuitive awareness may create a qualitatively different form of mental functioning and human experience. Similarly, PW attempts to train and develop intuitive functioning far beyond that generally used by most people in their everyday lives. It also yields a richness of experience, normally unnoticed and thus not appreciated by anyone who is unversed in such efforts.

PERSONALITY TYPES

Intuition can be understood from a completely different perspective using Jung's ideas on individual's innate, fixed tendencies.

In his view some people have a *tendency* to use 'Intuition' to perceive aspects of their world, compared to others who are more drawn to focus differently, using 'Sensation'. These functions are polarities on a continuum along which any of us can be placed.

According to this model, those based at the Intuition pole will tend to focus on possibilities rather than facts and specifics. They are more abstract in their thinking, trust gut instincts, and tend to be imaginative and innovative. They like to create new ways of doing things and can be erratic in conversations, happy to move from topic to topic, unveiling possibilities, making diverse connections, and seeing subtle patterns in the flow of information.

They will be more aware of 'what could be', how different facets are related, and what things mean. They are more likely to see subtle patterns, connections and implications that may elude the more literal and practical minded person.

The recurring theme obvious in this schema is that someone operating intuitively tends to a future orientated sense of possibility, and is interested in connections between seemingly disparate bits of information - the presence of patterns hidden in the detail. The implications of this are obvious to anyone attempting to follow another person's myriad communication signals. Perhaps a less obvious implication is the potential error inherent in our 'meaning making' or 'pattern finding'. People tending towards the intuitive type of functioning may be particularly in need of the balancing 'Sensation' function. At this pole people tend to use their outer senses (particularly

sight, hearing, and touch) and are more pragmatic or 'concrete' in their approach. They are more likely to follow the 'path of crumbs', signals perceived directly through their senses, and rely on these for their 'reality'. Using such 'here and now', sensory grounded information, can thus provide a much needed back up to check perceived meanings or patterns.

AUTOMATIC INFORMATION PROCESSING

Introduction

It was not until the middle of last century that the discipline of mainstream Psychology finally addressed its anti-Freudian rejection of the unconscious and decided that unobservable mental processes could affect behaviour. This led to a mass of studies over the next fifty years showing how the vast bulk of our mental functioning is unconscious and highly functional.

In the 1970's the rise of computers created a further Zeitgeist, shifting thinking on the functioning of our minds to the idea of information processing. From this perspective, intuition is a much more straightforward process than the mysterious operations of a 'universal mind'. A huge amount of research has now been carried out over five decades, in part looking at how intuition might operate, how accurate it is and where it seems to let us down.

Much that is now known about the intuitive process has arisen from the investigation of people's decision making processes. Historically, the development of empirically testable, formal decision making tools, where analytical problem solving could include human subjectivity, enabled increasing accuracy in assessing the outcomes of different decision making strategies.

However one of the interesting outcomes of the research and teaching in formal decision making is that most of us continue to ignore its implications and rarely use the tools that have been developed. For most of us, the context of a decision and how we feel about the underlying issues take much more precedence than following formal rules, even if these can produce demonstrably better results. (For example it has been shown that following algorithm rules on symptoms and signs will allow more accurate diagnosis of many medical and surgical conditions, than can be achieved by most doctors. Yet even in formal, clinical situations, use of such rules catches on very slowly.) Most of us are not trained in formal analysis or decision

making, and many decisions have time or other constraints limiting the possibility of doing so. Finally it has been repeatedly shown that, for a majority of people, there is a strong belief in the accuracy of their intuitive judgements, a belief that often carries a sense of certainty, even if some critics have seen this as simply a smokescreen for lazy or sloppy thinking.

For the above reasons and the fact that intuitive decision making habits are used so continuously by all of us in our daily lives, for the multiple small (and sometimes large) decisions that we face, it becomes a matter of importance to understand more fully how we come to intuit what we do, how accurate we are in our intuitions, and what chance we have to improve our skills in this area.

Dual information processing– Headline News

Cognitive Science (CS) argues that the really big news of research into how the mind functions is the idea of Parallel Processing - the vast majority of our mental processes occur outside of our awareness, and outside of our control. ('Automatic Cognitive Processing'; 'Tacit Information Processing' versus conscious 'Controlled Cognitive Processing', 'Deliberate Information Processing') While this is actually not news to depth psychology the findings of CS reveal an 'unconscious' that is far more efficiently geared to directly support our everyday functioning than that envisaged and understood by many depth psychologists. Such an unconscious is capable of extraordinary feats of calculation, learning, memory and perception and also contains rigid, distorted, perceptions, beliefs and analyses. It is this latter content that can make the intuitive process so inaccurate when overly relied on for guidance and where it has frequently received a bad name, in spite of its obvious importance in creativity, expertise, and success in ventures as varied as business, science, mysticism and art. (Perhaps this is more like the mind that depth psychologists would recognise as familiar, well studied for over a century, and widely written about.)

From a certain perspective, human beings can be viewed as having multiple information processing systems that can be broadly subsumed under the two headings of tacit and deliberate. Particularly within the 'tacit' automatic system are many other interacting processing mechanisms, most of them hidden from us, and often 'hard wired' into our biology. For example our genome, coded within our DNA, does not merely ensure our initial form and function as we develop from a single fused cell at the moment of conception. It continuously communicates with our environment to maintain physiology and shape our functioning. Similarly our

hormonal system, initiated from deep within our brains, spreads throughout the body in a constant feedback loop, sending and receiving chemical information to and from target organs. These are only two of the many systems, from our immune function to the regulation of temperature or wakefulness that are in constant operation outside of our awareness. (Other examples where the effects may be more apparent to us include brain neurotransmitters affecting mood and physiology, and neuron networks automatically assessing temporal-spatial interactions.)

In spite of its sophistication our innate information processing capacity is *not* necessarily an optimally organised system to handle our contemporary environment. We are the result of millions of years of evolving 'accretions' in information handling systems, developed in response to our ancestors' environments – that is, our ancient past. What works well in one environment does not always work well in another, and this is one reason why immediate intuitive knowing cannot always be relied on for accuracy, no matter how certain we feel about it. In this sense CS would adamantly disagree with authors who claim that intuitive insight is, by definition, always 'correct', for a given environment, since such 'rightness' would always be contingent on the evolutionary adaptability in different contexts. An obvious more immediate example of such a changing environment affecting the accuracy of our automatic thinking is the shift from our early family of origin to our contemporary relationships.

Another finding from CS is the relatively small part played by our conscious attention. While our 'deliberate', intentional awareness may be crucial it is nevertheless also 'like a candle flame burning in a stormy night'. Conscious attention appears to have severe limitations, not the least of which is its inability to focus on more than one thing at a time, and its limited, linearly based, 'working memory'. For these reasons it appears as if we are constructed on a 'scarce resource principle' minimising demands on our conscious attention. Information is rapidly forgotten or automated to leave our 'working memory' - the basis of our attention and therefore usual conscious experience - free to attend to whatever is current.

The implication of this scarce resource principle is that our tacit information system is geared to keep taking in data, independently of our intentions, based on the need to leave a maximum space for immediate information processing by our deliberate, conscious system. Deliberate processing is costly in terms of effort and opportunity. It takes effort to concentrate on any particular task, and because of the exclusive nature of attention, there is always the opportunity cost of that which cannot be

attended to in the meantime. Thus parallel, automatic processing operates to offset these limitations, in much the same way as my computer is able to download and process data, automatically and out of sight, often independently of my intent, while I type these words.

In summary it can be said that automatic processing includes all mental activity occurring outside our working memory. It requires no effort on our part, is largely out of our direct control or even awareness, and involves multiple, information processing systems, interacting with each other, that have evolved over millions of years. We are endowed with a dual processing system, where memory, learning, knowing, attitudes, feelings and expertise are all featured in both a conscious awareness and an unconscious automatic ('tacit' or 'implicit') process, the latter of which is working as continuously and 'effortlessly' as our heart, liver and other internal organ systems.

Conscious Attention – a Limited Commodity

Colloquially 'intuition' has been used to describe situations where the subject knows something without being able to say how they know, without being able to explain the source of their knowledge. The irony of this view is that because our conscious mind is biased to believe that it knows, understands, and controls much more of our functioning than is actually the case, knowing without being able to explain how we know, appears to us as a mysterious phenomenon. Intuition may function like a bridge between non-consciously processed data and conscious thought, or as another writer put it: connecting a parallel (non conscious) mind to a serial (conscious) mind. (Myers, 2002) It is as if our conscious self acts as the Chief Executive at the top of a large organisation, where only the most important information is passed to us, and where our choices for affecting the functioning of the organisation are more limited than we imagine. 'What you do not know you know, is much more important than you know' (Myers, 2002)

As noted above, conscious attention is almost always completely selective for most of us. We can focus on only one thing at a time, (in spite of the fashionable 'multi-tasking' trend – itself shown to reduce efficacy within each task attempted), as can be recognised when viewing the well-known silhouette image of a vase that becomes two faces looking at each other. We can either see the vase or the faces, but not both at the same time. Multi-tasking is actually only possible because of automatic processing's capacity to operate independently of our direct focus of attention. Unlike the selective, binary mode of conscious attention, unconscious scanning attention is

continuously picking up multiple signals and able to range across a number of fields selecting out what might be important. Hearing our name mentioned in a crowded room, and instantly paying attention, even though we had not been aware of anything other than the immediate conversation we were having at the time, is indicative of this background scanning. Alone in a house at night reading a book, we hear a strange sound and are immediately alerted - our minds are tirelessly 'aware' outside of our awareness. (In his book 'Dreaming While Awake', Mindell discusses the Buddhist system of Abhidhamma, as an ancient wisdom explaining some of this ability. See Mindell, 2000.)

Intuition Based on Learning Environments

According to dual processing theory, each of us has learned a monumental amount without any memory of having learned it. Such unconscious data storage and learning is named 'Implicit memory', seen in our ability to rapidly assess extremely complex spatial dimensions or our preference for familiar social structures and people. Another reason we cannot consciously remember large amounts of early learning is that explicit, or conscious memory generally requires words or symbols, thought to be stored in the 'hippocampus' structure of the brain, and this is one of the last structures to develop – after we are born. Much of our early learning is pre-verbal and pre-symbolic and there is difficulty encoding such experiences in the form of conscious memory.

From the embryonic level onwards an important feature of tacit, implicit learning, is feedback from within the organism and without. This feedback is only experienced consciously much later in developmental terms, and even then a great deal of other feedback is occurring outside awareness. The critical implication of this fact is that the vast majority of all learning for human beings is occurring outside of our consciousness. Most human learning is automatic, outside our direct control, and almost entirely dependent on whatever 'learning environment' we happen to find ourselves in. This is not to deny that deliberate learning also occurs but even in such situations, the quality of the learning environment will crucially determine what is taken in. Furthermore most deliberate, conscious learning is effortful and temporary. Because our working memory space is so limited and the process so linear (we can only focus on one thing at a time), and because information taken in such a way tends to decay rapidly, much information that has been acquired is quickly lost. (How much of this writing could you remember after one reading, especially if several hours had elapsed between reading and trying to remember?) Without repetition and

motivation, most deliberate learning is hard work and relatively fruitless. However the converse is also true— if we deliberately learn some knowledge or way of doing things, have a ‘kind’ learning environment (See below), where benefits are impacting, or the learning is repeated, it becomes tacit within us, and automatic. It no longer requires a deliberate effort to recall or think about the task, and our conscious attention can be focused elsewhere. Most of us have numerous experiences of such a process, from basic tasks such as speaking through to driving a car, or playing a musical instrument.

Thus, because most learning is ‘tacit’, the validity of much of the knowledge we have acquired and use every day is conditioned by the quality of our past learning environments. This has basic relevance to our intuitive responses since most, if not all our intuition, may emanate from our automatic information processing system, developed through tacit learning. This holds true even if we initially learned the information deliberately, and through repetition or importance the knowledge was retained, migrating to our automatic ‘long term memory’.

So, what can be said about such learning environments? Some investigators have described two basic types, according to the manner in which they shape learning – ‘kind’ and ‘wicked’. (Hogarth, 2001) Kind learning environments are those where information received is consistent and coherent, and where feedback is rapid, relevant and exacting. Wicked learning structures are where the information received is the opposite to that just described, and where the feedback is irrelevant or delayed, (especially if it is delayed to a variable degree), and/or where the consequence of errors is not exacting. An example of a wicked learning environment might be found in many social situations where the feedback is often delayed or even distorted, where the errors are often relatively inconsequential (unless repeated or extreme), where our motivation to ‘get it right’ is variable, and where self fulfilling intuitions are the norm. Compare such an environment to that of a tennis match, surgical operation, or weather forecast where feedback is usually rapid, accurate and consequential, with self fulfilling intuitions much less evident.

One important corollary to the concept of kind and wicked learning structures is that the quality of our intuitions is largely based on the quality of the environments in which they were acquired. The crude but accurate aphorism of ‘rubbish in, rubbish out’ aptly applies to much of our intuitive knowing. However there is also hope for those of us interested in developing our deliberate conscious awareness since we can use deliberate learning to retrain our intuitive responses. Because distorted

intuitions, gradually over time, lead to increasingly strong feedback from our environment we get a second chance to learn alternative strategies and insights, and consciously chose 'kind' learning environments. (See below under 'Training intuition.) Disturbances may then lead to both increased awareness and more effective intuitions.

Another significant implication for how we learn and acquire intuitions is that most tacit learning is based on what is experienced even though what is *not* experienced may be crucial. Much may be important and necessary to learn but is not available for experience. In other words our choices are self reinforcing and tend to create the environments that stabilise and reinforce prior learning, not necessarily new or creative learning. Furthermore this state is not easy to shift, particularly because we have relatively little access to the sources of our knowing, and our strategies are often self reinforcing. When we act on the basis of a belief or intuition, our behaviour can make it harder to discern alternatives apart from the belief that motivated it. An obvious example of this is the strategies we discovered and practised in childhood, and the 'constructions' we developed to adapt and get on in life. Many of these were tacitly chosen, and although we may feel confident about their validity, this confidence is not necessarily well founded when we apply them to our contemporary environment.

How then do we come to learn important new information, particularly about social matters? As was stated above, we have rich opportunities in life's diversity with new potential learning opportunities constantly arising. Our motivation to remain open to these opportunities is improved by the fact that much new learning occurs in the context of disturbances. On the other hand contemporary life also presents widespread ways to effectively minimise discomfort and disturbance and this means our opportunities for new learning are reduced. In this regard our conscious choice of learning environments and how we interact with them becomes important - for example, choosing to be around those who think differently to us or regularly meeting with an experienced mentor and writing down our thoughts or experiences in relation to that person. In this way we have deliberately created the beginnings of a learning environment and consciously chosen a means to make it more impacting. The alternative is to continue to live with the intuitions and beliefs formed passively through our vicarious experiences, with no certainty that the original learning environments that spawned such 'truths' were 'kind' or relevant to our current environment.

Intuition as a Mode of Thought

Historically intuition has often been paired with its apparent opposite, reasoning or analysis, as two different ways we order experiences and construct our realities. Intuition can be understood as a 'narrative' mode of thought where stories, especially when involving vivid imagery, have a powerful appeal to us, perhaps partly because we feel connected to them through earlier experiences. While rational or reasonable arguments may be convincing they have a certain narrow, one dimensional character and are often less appealing. This ability of stories to connect to our earlier experiences and 'cultural capital' partly explains why metaphors and analogies are so useful in our communication.

Another reason for the power of the 'narrative' mode of thought, linked to intuition is so called 'script theory'. Because we have learned throughout life that there is frequently a predictable flow and pattern in social situations, and because this learning has become automatic we now expect certain outcomes to any situation. This story-like quality to life and our expectations mean that we often connect more easily to the narrative mode of function rather than the more symbolic, abstract analytical side of thinking. Such learning has led some researchers to the concept of 'heuristics' or so called 'natural reasoning' strategies, used to explain some decision making characteristics of human beings. In this model we automate much of our choice making capacity, following simple rules that work much of the time, even if such a strategy frequently lacks the precision and rigour of conscious deliberate thinking. (Often such qualities are unnecessary for many of the simple tasks of daily living.) Heuristics offer efficiency over strict accuracy, and form the basis of many human perceptions and behaviours, including stereotypical behaviour, judgements, generalisations, and misconceptions. Many of the errors associated with intuitive thinking have been shown to arise from the use of these mental shortcuts, providing plenty of material for critics of 'sloppy, lazy thinking' and 'thoughtless responses'. These ubiquitous and probably essential (given the complexities of modern daily life) 'natural reasoning' strategies underline once again, the importance of previous learning environments where most of heuristic rules and expectations are formed. The difficulty altering such strategies continues to lie in the limited access we have to the beliefs and motivations that drive them - residing in our automatic, unconscious memory.

Finally, some researchers have argued that intuitive choices can frequently be based on multiple imperfect cues that give us an approximate result close to an average value. In this model intuitive choices give close approximations to the 'truth' more frequently and usually do not stray far from such averages. (This is particularly the case where the intuitions may have been gained in 'kind' learning environments, but less so in 'wicked' ones.) Such a strategy can be particularly useful where the environment is complex and speed is important in decision making. Analysis however, more often uses a few strict, explicit rules, and in this case errors tend to be rarer but larger. (A rather dramatic example of this was shown in the case of the crash of a space vehicle attempting to land on Mars, where scientists had failed to notice that various different analyses of landing velocities and trajectories had been formulated from both imperial and metric measures.)

Expertise and Intuition

Expertise and intuition can be seen as similar in that both are 'domain specific', applying only to certain areas of experience or learning and not to others. A doctor won't necessarily have expertise in fixing a car and the mechanic's intuitions on your body symptoms may not inspire confidence. To put it another way, one of us can have expertise in physics but not sociology and can be extraordinarily intuitive in music but not necessarily in tennis. Both are acquired through experience, tacitly and through deliberate learning.

However there are significant differences between the two states and in summary we might say that intuition is one aspect of expertise. (Conversely, I will argue later that expertise can also be an aspect of intuition, in that we can develop expertise in our intuitive ability though this is not commonly recognised.)

Experts frequently use conscious, deliberate, analytical thinking in addition to intuition – that is, they use both deliberate and tacit processing of information. Experts will have intuitively sourced ideas and insights but know what analytical or other deliberate processing tools to use in maximising the benefits of these insights.

There are also many levels of expertise but intuition is usually based on a choice or style on the part of the individual rather than a level of development. (This is only partially true as we will see later.) Intuition and expertise are validated differently, the later being externally verifiable and socially recognised whereas the former is more informally and implicitly validated. Finally we are using intuition in almost all our activities and yet cannot be said to be experts to such a wide degree.

Expertise can be seen as the combination of learning through experience and training, effective recall, and automatic unconscious processing of information, often understood as 'intuition'. Studies have shown that experts not only have access to larger amounts of information in their memories but also can organise new information more efficiently than novices and will see patterns where novices see disparate pieces of data. Experts can 'chunk' knowledge and get around the limitations of working memory and attention by doing so. They don't hold so much detail in working memory and their attention is freed to attend to the overall pattern, or the critical differences that require more complex responses. Experts often rapidly assess a situation and simulate possible strategies and outcomes in their imagination, almost without knowing they are doing this, whereas less experienced operators attempt to gather more information in a conscious, explicit effort to 'work out' what might need to be done. The latter process is often mirrored in structured learning situations where the learner begins with linearly arranged steps that they later drop as they develop expertise. Another way of seeing this is that experts quickly recognise patterns and almost instantly have a range of simulated scenarios to compare with the situation they are facing. Novices on the other hand start with a goal in mind and then work laboriously back through the details of the problem to arrive at some response. (Klein, 1998) This latter approach is far more costly in terms of working memory and attention taken up, than that used by experts. Experienced doctors, for example, 'float' various diagnoses in their minds within seconds of speaking to a patient. With each new piece of information or examination detail they are confirming or discarding possibilities. This is very different to a medical student who has to hold all the details of the consultation and consciously work it through to a tentative diagnosis.

Insight, Creativity and Intuition

Insight on the other hand is one aspect of intuition, a fascinating example of tacit information processing, and historically accorded great importance in the unravelling of human problems.

Cognitive science understands insight as gaining access to information already stored in long term memory but hitherto unavailable for conscious use. Throughout history many people have reported strong experiences where they were able to see differently about the nature of some problem they had been wrestling with. This different perspective then set off a seemingly sudden process of knowing, a resolution of a difficulty, or the opening up of a new discovery. *Seeing* the problem differently somehow enabled this process to occur.

There are often three separate steps in the many descriptions of intuitive insights. Firstly the person is usually working hard, thinking through or about a problem. The issue is important and carries weight for the person and they are strongly motivated to reach new conclusions. Secondly it is reported that they put the problem aside for a while and let it go, ceasing to think about or work on the issue. While in this state of apparent forgetfulness something will trigger an awareness of a new way of looking at the problem and typically this will appear as a sudden, emotionally impacting, insight. Often they feel a sense of certainty and relief, sometimes exhilaration and awe at the apparent effortless and brilliance of the process in which they themselves seemed only a passive observer.

What is really happening after we have struggled with a problem let it go and then had a moment of insight, inspiration or wisdom to discover a resolution? Clearly this is not a consistent phenomenon since if this were the case there would be no need to ever spend time and effort consciously solving a problem. If insight requires both seeing a problem from a new and different perspective and making new connections between different ideas then creativity may be about the generation of many different 'thought trials'. Since this is hard work we tire of it quickly (i.e. thinking up new ideas) and we also tend to circular thinking, going over the same ground, or digging a deeper hole, looking for treasure buried elsewhere. Many creativity techniques encourage imagination and the use of metaphor to stimulate connections in our minds. Similarly the blocking of criticism at least temporarily does the same thing. Taking time out also means that chance events observed may trigger new connections in our imagination. In fact chance may play a huge and unappreciated role in suggesting useful associations of ideas in problem solving. Whatever the details, it may also be true that for every successful 'insight' achieved in such processes we hear much less about the multiple dead ends where luck, serendipity and creative 'thought trials' never combined sufficiently to create anything.

How then does intuition relate to creativity? If creativity is concerned with our capacity for producing novel and valuable ideas then there is no doubt that, as Louis Pasteur famously stated: 'Chance favours the prepared mind'. Creativity is enhanced by experience, and the more learning, knowledge and expertise we can accumulate the more likely it is that our intuitive, parallel processing, unconscious will offer back something of significance— in the area of our expertise. Intuition is about possibilities, noticing patterns and making connections that can then be tested out by our rational minds, wondered about and discussed with others. Creativity seldom flows in

isolation – most creative people work in a milieu where they are mentored, challenged and supported by others, in an environment where they have the time and resources to attend to their efforts. This connection with others is a frequent, crucial determinant of success, for very specific reasons as we shall see in the final chapter of this dissertation.

Intuition and Emotions

Both emotions and affect (such as moods) can obviously induce responses in us, just as intuition can. In that sense both are part of the non-conscious automatic processing facility we possess. Similarly feelings can be like intuitions in that we may not 'know' why we are being so affected, we may not even be able to name the feelings we experience, particularly if we have received little encouragement or training in such an exercise.

Because we cannot always explain feelings they are often experienced as intuitions. Complicating the picture further is the fact that feelings are often the first signal we get of a deeper intuition and indeed our experience may not be differentiated further than this into some clearer meaning or awareness – particularly without training. CS also points to daunting research, repeated many times, that our reasoning is mainly a meaning-making function after the event. We decide the 'why' of things as an afterthought, though this is decidedly not what we often imagine. Rational thought may be more the courtier than king or queen.

Summary of Cognitive Science's Findings on Intuition

We now know that each of us functions using dual processing, parallel minds - with a small but important conscious awareness, and a huge unconscious mental system, effortlessly processing complex data flows. We often assume an illusory centrality of our consciousness and therefore find the results of our non-conscious abilities mysterious and puzzling.

The accuracy of intuitive knowledge is greatly improved by expertise, which is itself dependent on repeated experience, memory and learning, as well as innate ability and an environment that supports exacting but non-punitive feedback.

Much of our amazing capability across a wide spectrum of activities has been learned without our intention or awareness, at a very early age and before the structure for explicit memory was fully laid down in our brains. Implicit learning leads to our non-conscious implicit memory, and for most of us is inextricably linked to simple, 'reflexive', emotionally powerful loci beyond our ability to directly access or control.

Nowhere is this state of affairs more obvious than in our social intuition. Time and again it has been shown that that our non-conscious, automatic attitudes control and drive our behaviour and judgements outside of our awareness. Our conscious reasoning and awareness is almost always produced after the fact, and is part of an almost compulsive meaning making effort, hidden behind an assumption of knowledge and control on the part of our conscious selves. It is both the deep implicit attitudes and the attempt, after the fact, of our meaning making that will so often be implicated in our errors of judgement.

In the matter of how intuition errs it needs to be clear that the intuition referred to is that part of our mind's capacity to make quick shortcuts in thinking and analysis that seem to offer a possibility of an evolutionary advantage. Because such shortcuts, known to cognitive scientists as 'heuristic thinking' are almost always outside of our awareness, they can be seen as part of our intuitive ability. Short cuts are an efficient way of dealing with large volumes of data, and the tendency at this level is to jump first and ask questions later. It is not difficult to discern evolutionary advantage in such a strategy, particularly when an environment offers repetitive opportunities/challenges and at the same time can be unpredictable and potentially lethal. So too in the matter of our memory it needs to be understood that we can make frequent, quite predictable 'errors' when we assume that memory is a documentary record of past events rather than a dream-like collage of narratives, more suited to the understanding of present contexts than the past. (For example, it has been shown by John Gottmann, a psychologist researching long term relationships, that an excellent predictor of an intimate relationship continuing is the partners' memories of their early meetings. Those who remember such events as difficult and less than optimal, are much more likely to separate than those who see the early times in a rosy light.)

Why should it matter whether intuition is accurate or not. Partly it becomes important when we recognise that tacit information processing is the rule for the great bulk of our mental functioning. Furthermore, although many of our intuitive decisions may be trivial, over time they add up to an entirely consequential pattern that significantly affects the quality of our lives. Finally the habits we acquire in the small decisions we make in everyday life frequently operate in the more major decisions.

In assessing how accurate are our intuitions a simple guide is to look at the learning environments that formed them. If the learning environments were kind – giving us

timely, accurate and consequential feedback in a way that we could accept, then our automatic learning and thus our intuition *in this area*, is likely to be of high quality. Obviously there always remains the proviso that just because we know something well, and practise something well, it does not hold that we are privy to all that *can be known* in this particular 'domain'. What lies outside our experience and observation may still be crucial – and thus openness to new learning and even radically different ways of operating remains a central value if we are to keep growing. The so called 'beginner's mind' or 'no mind' principle.

Intuition needs to be seen in the broader context of the information processing systems in humans. Our intuition is based on the automatic learning that occurs in all of us all through our lives, a process that is highly effective, but only in learning environments that offer accurate, motivating, and relatively quick feedback. The problem with such tacit learning is our high levels of comfort and confidence in what we intuitively 'know' irrespective of its more objective congruence with 'reality', the tendency for such knowledge to lead to self fulfilling behaviour, and our difficulty embracing change that may lead to more optimal outcomes. In that sense the huge benefit of deliberate learning, using language and symbols is that we gain access to worlds outside our direct experience. We can bypass one of the inherent limitations of automatic learning - that it only teaches that which we come in contact with, that which we perceive around us. This benefit of conscious learning is made all the more potent through the gradual migration of knowledge and ability from effortful, deliberate activity to automatic habit, over time. Deliberately learned knowledge over an almost infinite range of possibilities, can thus become automatic and 'intuitive'. This might be one of the goals of 'consciousness'.

How to Improve Intuition

Based on the above it can be inferred that there are a number of ways that we can address the strengths and weaknesses of our intuition, based on the unconscious learning and information processing system that underlies it.

In summary, we can actively choose our learning environments, seek timely, accurate and motivating feedback, and impose 'circuit breakers' to limit self reinforcing cycles of thinking and behaviour. We can develop our capacity to recognise and follow our emotions as vital and often neglected data, and practise the exploration of possible connections in our thinking and imagination to gain access to knowledge that is not readily apparent initially. We can accept and confront the

conflict that is inherent in any conscious choice or decision and train ourselves to observe phenomena more carefully, make conscious hypotheses on such observations and test these out. We can train ourselves in the above ways until such behaviour becomes automatic and again part of a now improved intuitive system.

One of the central messages around improving our intuition is that *just being in an optimal learning environment will improve our intuition in that particular area*. Just regularly showing up in a 'kind' learning environment in an area that interests us is sufficient to enable our tacit learning system to operate and take on board the learning. In that sense it is a far easier and less effortful process than deliberate training or learning. On the other hand it is also obvious that to fully maximise our potential this later activity will have to take place, since so much is possible through symbolic learning and potentially all of this can gradually be automated, and become intuitive. The flip side to the above observation is that there is a huge opportunity cost in not actively selecting the learning environment that we immerse ourselves in. The people and structures I choose to spend time in, will inevitably and inexorably etch themselves deeply into my being.

Another crucial implication of tacit learning is that the quality of feedback becomes fundamental. There is an inherent problem in developing our social intuitions when those around us do not accurately feedback their reactions to us. One way to improve this bias is to actively seek and give feedback from and to others, and therefore improve the timely, accurate and motivating new learning we need to ensure accurate intuitions in this area.

Finally it can be seen that because intuition is 'domain dependent', based on particular areas where we have experience, we need to prioritise where we want to develop this and thus more consciously choose the learning environments that will maximise our exposure.

CHAPTER THREE: STORIES FROM SCIENCE

THE MIND MADE PHYSICAL

This morning starts with a 'flirt' while finishing a phone call. I am planning a day dedicated to writing, and yet find it hard to start. As I rise from the bed I have been sitting on, my lower back suddenly hurts with the usual deep ache I have now felt for a year or so. I realise how familiar this symptom has become, and how I take it for granted. This morning however I feel like contacting it again. I bend over several times to get the renewed sense of it, and as I do so I find I make noises, "ahhhhhh, ouuuuu", in a soft, dreamy sort of way. My movement is more like a plant or seaweed waving in the wind or water, and instead of following my slightly rushed, ambitious plan for the day I am suffused with gentle warmth. Although the sense is vague and difficult to pin down, I can gradually glean a tendency to spend time with myself, and to move in slow and graceful ways. At the same time my eyes are spotting tasks that need to be done – putting out the vegetable peelings, picking up that coffee cup, and getting that writing completed. These contrast with a slower, softer, more gentle relationship with some part of me that seems to beckon, and the lines of a song rise in my thoughts: 'Thinkin about you, thinking about me, I'm thinking 'bout youuuuu'. With those lines it is as if I feel a little in love with someone inside who reaches out for my hand, who waits for me while I move so busily about, who longs for my touch, my attention, and who loves to give this back to me. I notice I have calmed down and am confident of the writing tasks for the day. I am also moved to ring my father and brother who have been unwell and in hospital – just to make contact and hear their voices. Is my back is teaching me the magic of connection, and at the same time opening up the way to completing my tasks?

What has happened in this process? How has it operated and what makes it more likely that I can follow through with the implications of my body's 'message'.

There are many ways to understand our experience and many ways to tell others about it. Different stories can be created and each one will describe what happened from a different perspective, partly based on an underlying value, perhaps essence, within the story. Perhaps in some way stories 'tell themselves' and arise within me from sources more distant from my intention, or conscious will, than I realise.

Depending on the story and degree of interest, I may begin to see reality differently, and be altered. My 'assemblage point' or perspective will shift and I become

'constructed' in a different way. While this may seem fanciful to some, in fact there is every possibility that this is what does happen at a physical level within our brains. This last statement is also part of a story, possibly enticing to some of us, coming as it does from 'scientific' sources, carrying the weight of contemporary myth, where 'science' now stands for 'truth' much as Christian theology once stood for the same thing in medieval Europe.

Looking at my experience in one way I could see what happens in simple terms as an exercise in my imagination. On the surface I seemed to use intuition to discern some meaning or importance around my back pain. Actually this is only partly true. Using previous training in awareness to focus on a body symptom and follow the subjective experience that arises when I do so, I *start* with the pain in my back. The knowledge of how such subjective experience can be differentiated into specific 'channels' and intensified in these channels, seems to lead from pain to noises, movements, a feeling or mood shift, music and poetry, and finally relationships. In the process I feel altered, and emerge with a sense of meaning and purpose to my day. This is a more or less factual description and its 'truth' cannot be seriously challenged.

But such a description is minimally interesting and, depending on your degree or angle of interest, begs further questions.

We can also look at what happened in terms of how science might see this, and in particular how Cognitive Science and Neuroscience would explain it. Cognitive Science (CS) and Neuroscience (NS) might describe my experience in the following ways. Firstly I become aware of sensory stimuli from my low back. The reasons for such stimuli could be seen in terms of damage to my lumbar spine, with the resulting inflammation and muscle spasm, activating pain nerves when I attempt to rise off the bed. Because of my prior learning and implicit, non-conscious memory, I make a particular response to the stimuli, the framing of which is based on values and meanings that have been implicitly and explicitly learned from my previous experiences. While I subjectively experience myself as 'deciding' to 'work' on my body symptom, CS offers the view that such a decision may be partly an illusory explanation, after the fact of a decision already reached below my awareness. 'I' only discover myself 'deciding' after the process has already been initiated - it is by a cognitive sleight of hand that 'I' determine agency of the act. How could this be true?

In fact repeated experiments have demonstrated how our feelings, thoughts and behaviours are often determined prior to our awareness and control- conscious awareness and control of our mental processes is the exception rather than the rule.

Neural Nets – The Physical Manifestation of Mind?

One model of how we 'decide' to act is based on the notion of a 'pre-conscious' screening of all stimuli, both externally and internally based. (Hogarth, 2001) Such a screening will determine whether operations take place automatically and outside our awareness or whether we will become conscious of the stimulus and/or the response. Depending on further feedback stimuli from both internal and external environments, further operations may occur, which we may or may not be aware of, again depending on the pre-conscious screening function. Expanding on this idea and using models from computers and 'information processing', is the still partly theoretical notion of activated 'neural nets' operating around 'attractors'.

The theory of such 'attractors' may offer a possible link between concepts of mind and the physical brain:

At a biological level are networks of neurons (nerve cells) in our brain, linked with each other in complex webs. Each link is a synapse where specialised nerve endings from one neuron release 'neurotransmitters', biochemical substances that have specific effects on receptors on the neighbouring nerve(s). The theory postulates that individual networks of neurons are thought to be activated by certain stimuli (like pain), feelings or even thoughts containing concepts, and ideas. As the network becomes 'excited', electrical impulses move down individual nerves and across multiple synapses, spreading outwards within one network and linking with other networks, often scattered in different areas of the brain, at a staggeringly fast rate, seemingly instantaneously. In the case of my symptom work described above, a network of neurons could be the physical manifestation of such an 'attractor' as 'back pain' and be receiving nerve endings from neurons in my low back. Such a network could have links with hundreds perhaps thousands of other networks (we have literally billions of synapses) including ones organised around learned patterns like 'tracking signals', 'amplifying', 'noticing feelings' etc.

One of the most intriguing and perplexing puzzles in theories attempting to link mind and brain is how to account for choice. Who or what within us decides that certain pathways will be followed and not others? For example, at the moment I rise from the bed and feel my back pain, how is the choice made between various alternatives. Instead of deciding to embark on a mental – emotional exercise to 'work through' or work out my symptom I could have ignored it entirely and got on with my busy day. I

could have ruminated about the pain, worrying about frightening possibilities of serious disease and the need to visit a doctor. I could have felt annoyed at the inconvenience of such a symptom and seen it as a sign of my ripening years! What made me choose the first path, and was it even 'me' that chose?

One response to this question from the theory of attractors and neural nets is that certain networks have been 'trained' through experience to activate around key stimuli and have dominated the other possible responses to the stimuli of pain. Such dominated other networks might be those that lead to the switching off of my awareness of the pain, or those that stimulate me to imagine a worrying illness and a visit to the doctor, or irritation at this 'breakdown' in my otherwise reliable body.

Neuronal networks constellated around 'attractors' could be one aspect of our automatic information processing system and possibly operate according to the law of the jungle, where 'might is right'. Whatever networks are most often activated will tend to dominate and shut down opposing or contrasting networks. On the other hand, networks that have similarities will be enhanced and activated to their degree of closeness. The more a network is stimulated and used the more dominant it becomes, and this continues outwards to other networks with which it has some degree of affinity. This self reinforcing cycle may be experienced by us as force of habit. In spite of such dominance we may not be aware of such a habit as evidenced by my usual response of ignoring and not even noticing my back pain. By implication I have at least one dominating network that operates like this and maintains my experience of a functioning back that does not trouble me. Conversely networks that are dissimilar, particularly those that are more opposite will be actively inhibited or shut down by the dominant network through inhibitory neuronal connections. (Stimulation and inhibition is one of the fundamental mechanisms in biology, and particularly present in any of the myriad feedback loops that operate in living organisms.) The idea of 'use it or lose it' assumes a new perspective when it comes to our 'attractor' system and its nerve webs.

The fascinating implication of neural networks and implicit learning is that whatever we spend time thinking and doing most, will self reinforce and be experienced by us as familiar truths, the way we are and the way things are. As has already been discussed these truths may or may not accurately reflect an optimal perception or experience and, almost by definition, will tend to preclude other possible realities. Nevertheless they become the basis of our intuition, our implicit knowledge.

It could thus be argued that the basis of my beginning to pick up and work with the pain in my back is not, as I so fondly imagine, that I decided to do it, but that the networks around 'attractors' such as 'awareness of back pain' and 'dreaming methods for working with back pain' were activated and, for whatever reason dominated other networks constellated around 'attractors' of 'ignore back pain' or 'worry about diseases to do with back pain'. In other words my awareness of all these things was an afterthought, as if 'I' am informed, out of courtesy, about the completed workings of the organisation.

What about after this event, after the initiation of this play of imagination, learning, practise, and apparent intent. As various networks activate, they spread to other networks, particularly those where the pathway has travelled before, preferably many times before. I am more likely to follow that which I have followed previously. I am a creature of habit, and this particular habit has been explicitly learned, and implicitly memorised through my experience. Once 'activated', I follow a somewhat predictable course even though the actual content and outcome is unique each time. The process is relatively similar. I will start with raw sensory 'input', move in my awareness around different channels or modes of perception (experience), until somewhere they will seem to coalesce around a threshold or edge of who I consider myself to be. If this threshold is not too difficult I will find a way over it to a renewed sense of myself, usually with a strong sense of meaning and value in the experience. Even the feelings I experience are somewhat predictable. Initially I will start with a sense of disturbance or irritation, perhaps interest or even excitement. I will usually move to a sense of confusion, not knowing, uncertainty – sometimes there is considerable discomfort and frustration, to the point of giving up, but if I persist there is almost always a sense of relief at an insight, a gratitude and joy in attaining some new awareness. I usually feel energised, more confident, and ready for what life will now bring – enthusiasm. These basic pathways are now well trodden and are part of what entices me whenever I contemplate such 'work'. It is not difficult to see how the combination of sensory disturbances, recognition of a learned process or strategy to follow, then imagination, feelings, and insights could lead to a new perspective and become a repeatable skill.

Such a 'story' may also 'explain' PW concepts of primary and secondary processes, where dominant networks of neurons repeatedly maintain patterns of subjective perception and self reinforcing behaviour. Secondary processes within us may reflect

less dominant, perhaps 'immanent' patterns of 'attractors' that need support, recognition and encouragement to become activated. With stimulation, repeated over time, reinforced through such repetition, new behaviour patterns gradually become permanent, no longer part of an identity edge for us, now 'primary' and, within the brain, dominant features of our 'attractor' terrain.

THE ENTANGLEMENT OF RELATIONSHIP (Or How Human Beings are Created to Affect Each Other)

So far I have discussed the process of what happens as I attempt to work on myself alone. What about when we work with another, aiming to facilitate or unfold dreaming patterns within them? It may be of value here to review my own experience in the client role with my therapist.

First of all I recognise how strongly affected I am by his presence, by the expectation of talking with him, even on the phone. I am alert, even anxious as I approach the session. He carries great 'Mana' for me, prestige and personal power. In PW terms he has considerable rank, being my teacher, an enlightened one, my guru, someone I hugely respect and also fear a little – what he will see in me, what will be exposed in me during our conversation, aspects that I am barely aware of? His stature in my eyes, his 'Mana' and rank carry a great deal of weight and influence. Often I can become like a child in relationship to him. I start to think and act a little more as I perceive him to be. This perception of him, the aspects of him that catch my attention would also be seen in Process Work terms as 'Flirts', aspects of my dreaming that signal to me. I notice in him what is inherent, immanent in me. In this way he is actually an aspect of me, as I am for him. In more mainstream psychological terms I 'project' various patterns onto him, perhaps partly from my past, and partly based on such immanence. The background pattern already inherent and waiting within me, is reflected back to me, heightened and highlighted. But this may not be all that happens. According to consensus reality 'scientific' perspectives he remains 'separate' from me, a different organism who nonetheless greatly influences me at a cellular level – the neurons in my brain - partly independently of his intention. My neuronal networks are stimulated according to my relationship with him – via words, paralanguage, rhythms of dialogue and a host of other signals. As certain networks are stimulated so certain 'attractors' become more dominant, new pathways are opened up and certain networks activate more often. The more these hitherto less developed networks operate, the more likely they are to do so in the future. This is

the magic of influence. According to the theory of 'Limbic Resonance' this is the engine of change in relationships, and perhaps in human life itself. We all hypnotise each other, all the time- we are constantly affecting each other. However certain relationships have a great deal more influence, and in certain cases the influence is far enough outside our usual habits and pathways that it begins to show up as significant change within us.

Perhaps this is one reason why I hesitated for over a year, after I had decided I wanted to work with my therapist, because I intuitively knew he would greatly influence me. I would be changed by him. I know this, after all, because I am a therapist and I see how others are influenced by the process of seeing me - they are influenced by me whether I intend it or not. This process cannot be neutral, cannot be only me working on myself, him only a facilitator of my process. As Quantum Physics would argue – we are always 'entangled'.

Writing persuasively about the essence of what happens in a therapeutic relationship the psychiatrist, Thomas Lewis, talks about love and attachment between a client and therapist, helper and helped, and how the bond formed between the two is matched by an evolutionary development whereby our so called mammalian brain, our limbic system is completely orientated towards strong attachments and loving connections. (Lewis, 2000) Combining this thesis, with the new awareness of how we learn implicitly from others, he argues that much of what we think we do with another is a cover for a more potent process affecting us both. Thus while I am sitting with another, perhaps unfolding an apparently important dreaming experience (as in the 'inner work' described above), I am simultaneously engaged in a deeply affecting relationship process that may be the more significant engine of change in consciousness, identity or behaviour over time.

Being affected by a therapist may involve such an 'imprinting' process, but deliberate learning also occurs. My therapist is picking up, reflecting, highlighting, and 'amplifying' my own unfolding background pattern. In PW theory, such recognition and support is all that is required for me to notice and act on what is already present within me – an expanded, diverse experience.

Conversely, from the everyday perspective, PW can also operate like any other teaching, coaching or training. While it remains true that that we cannot remove the coach/teacher from the process it is also true that, via explicit learning, gradually the information will 'migrate' from temporary residence in my working memory to implicit

processing, implicit automatic memory, habit, and expertise. I can learn and even partly automate the skill to pick up the phenomena of dreaming. Through the repeated activation of specific 'neural nets' within my brain - complex, widely spaced networks of neurons - I can 'travel' repeatedly down the 'attractors' of 'dreaming' and 'sentience', with all that this entails. The more I learn from others and practise myself, the more these nets will activate and dominate less used pathways. I become changed at a neurobiological level, at least for the present, but probably permanently, as the activity becomes a habit, repeatedly reinforcing. This process is intensified and further reinforced by the relationships I create with others who practise a similar path. This could be another reason why I chose the 'scary' teacher, because he can already do what I am looking for. I am hoping he will help me to cross my edge faster. In the case of my learning around PW, as I connect with many others in the local and wider PW community, sometimes briefly, sometimes deeply and in a prolonged way, so my limbic brain helps to orientate my attractors to view reality, relationships and my own being along certain lines.

What is this 'Limbic resonance' (Lewis, 2001) and how does it operate to affect my perspective so deeply. Around the 1950's an evolutionary Neuro-anatomist called Paul McLean developed the idea that humans and other mammals possess a 'three in one' or 'triune brain'. This consists firstly of our basic 'reptilian' brain, a 'bulbous extension of our spinal cord' (Lewis 2001), which performs hundreds of critical tasks from regulation of sleep and appetite, to fear, fight, and flight responses. It is largely automatic, functions below our level of consciousness and if damaged to even a small degree will normally result our death, such is its basic foundational nature. Wrapped around this bulb is an evolutionary development absent in all creatures except mammals, the mid-brain or limbic system and within its billions of neuronal connections lies the mammalian propensity to relate to, connect with, and depend on other individuals. The limbic brain is also the seat of our ability to dream, and more particularly is the area in which emotionally important data is processed. Social or emotional intelligence could be equated with limbic intelligence. It is here that complex inputs from within and without us are collated for their social and emotional importance. Perhaps most significantly our limbic brain is responsible for our extraordinary tendency to attach to, and be affected by others. The final level of brain development, our Neo-cortex or forebrain, is a uniquely large, ballooning mass of tissue - the basis for our extraordinary analytical and symbolic intelligence.

How does this all work? While writing these lines I also happen to be involved in an online auction for some small tables I am interested in buying. At this moment the time is 8:37 in the morning and my auction will complete in six minutes. My reptile brain is determined to get these tables and my Neo-cortex has worked out that if I wait until the last 30 seconds of the auction I may have the best chance of beating the other buyers to the post. My limbic brain feels some remorse and concern for the other buyers who I imagine will feel disappointed at the loss, and perhaps irritated at this attempt at a last minute coup. I can feel both the coldness of my intent to grab this little prize, irrespective of the other's wish (reptilian), and sorrow for the disappointment of the other bidder (limbic identification, or resonance). My forebrain also reasons that I may yet lose the deal since other buyers can come indefinitely as the auction will be extended by two minutes each time there is a new bidder. It seems fair after all, reasons my Neo-cortex, so sit back and enjoy the play. (Limbic function)

What happened? I won! (And with the excitement comes a limbic remorse that the other buyer missed out, and even worse, this particular auction didn't seem to extend and thus give the opportunity for others to make further bids. My neocortical reasoning can't help me out of my guilt. Deeper down is the cold satisfaction of a successful 'grab'. The crocodile is alive and well within me.)

Perhaps what is most important in the above illustration is the obvious intermingling of the three functions. My ability to imagine the other buyers is clearly both neocortical and limbic, while my drive to succeed is definitely mammalian as much as it is reptilian. As many later investigators have pointed out, and as modern brain imaging techniques have demonstrated, any function or activity we perform tends to engage large areas of the brain simultaneously, and it is simplistic to assume that most functions are based in any one region. Nevertheless there are real differences between the limbic and neocortical brains. For example the cellular structure of the limbic areas is fundamentally different from the architecture of the neo-cortex - and far more primitive. The two areas have different immunological markers and some chemicals can destroy limbic tissue while leaving neocortical areas unscathed. Perhaps more tellingly, whole segments of our Neo-cortex can be destroyed and we can still function in the world. Destroying limbic areas can leave us still able to feed and walk about, but we become completely unable to interact socially, or show a shred of empathy towards others.

The concept of limbic resonance ties together a number of key ideas developed in this writing such as the theory of tacit or automatic learning and its relationship to intuition, and how neural networks within our brains may provide the physical basis for information processing systems. It starts to piece together a puzzle of how we come to learn and be affected by each other, particularly in certain key relationships, and how this learning is linked to our intuition in ways that we are only just beginning to understand - how automatic learning through key relationships forms the basis of our deepest and most important beliefs and intuitions.

PART III

INTUITION IN PRACTICE: THERAPY AND PROCESS WORK

CHAPTER FOUR: INTUITION IN TRAINING AND THERAPY

I am in a training group and the topic turns to the noticing of odd experiences and how to use such disturbances in therapeutic work . Using me as an example the trainer notices a strange impression or fantasy that I seem to have something like a chimpanzee sitting just behind me or on my shoulder. She had no idea that a childhood nickname of mine was 'Chimpy', that I identify with being a monkey trickster figure, or that I was born in the Chinese year of the monkey. Noticing my immediate and strong feedback she was able to support a further unfolding of this 'aspect' to a challenging point where my 'monkey nature' meets my more compliant, socially adjusted self, and the implications arising from this for my work and relationships.

There are various ways to understand such a visual 'flirt', but certainly it appears that she began by taking seriously, her intuitive sense arising from no particular signal she could identify at the time. In taking it seriously she was able to act on it and then follow my feedback to unfold her initial impression to a much more differentiated state. The intuition here was a door into a creative dialogue between us, where she was able to use highly developed sensory, integrative skills to match her initial intuition and follow my feedback. Simply noticing my 'Chimpanzee nature' might have been fun and interesting but it was the unfolding, sensory based skills that enabled full differentiation to a place that was meaningful for me.

In therapeutic work with another it can be very difficult, particularly for beginners, to follow multiple signals operating in an interpersonal field. (See above, for the way that experts 'chunk' information and therefore have more ready access to what is important, as well as more skills to deal with that material.) There may frequently be an urge, even a need, to drop out of the sensory gathering of information or a laborious reasoning/analysing routine. Using intuition in this context becomes attractive but there are problems in doing this, not the least of which is the quality of insight and awareness available, particularly for novices. As discussed above, the

quality of information gained through intuition is directly related to the level of expertise we have developed within the 'domain' we are operating. (Hogarth, 2001) In the case of therapy, insights will, for novices, mainly come from social intuitions gained in learning environments earlier in our lives. The quality of such learning environments is extremely variable and this has a major impact on the accuracy of our intuitions. (Hogarth, 2001) Furthermore there is often a tendency to quickly translate what might appear as a pattern or way forward, into action (such as an intervention), rather than being able to tolerate uncertainty, which would lead to a deeper or more creative process emerging. Such early interventions can thus create a sort of self-fulfilling validity to insights that may or may not be accurate.

Of course, many times intuition will anyway emerge in any of us, without particular training, in the form of a vague feeling that cannot easily be named. So often we can feel a pressure to 'know' what is happening within ourselves and in relation to another, so that it takes practise to trust staying with such vague feelings as long as possible. When we do this, there often develops a deeper shift in our felt experience to the point where meaning emerges spontaneously, along with other positive aspects, such as a sense of connection to deeper possibilities, and even union with the wider 'whole'.

In talking with a friend I am unable to find my way through the details of a complex story and I am becoming confused and puzzled. I decide to consciously drop my focus on the details, stop following so closely and tune into a sort of 'no-mind', suspended attention. I go still, look down at the floor, and 'know nothing'. Then I hear something about 'the beat of a different drum'. For some reason it grabs my attention and, as if I had caught my fish, I am pulled to comment on such an evocative phrase, encouraging the other person to stay with the sense of such a drum beat. They give immediate feedback, relating back to their youth in Africa, with a vibrant image of 'African rhythms' and 'fireballs', dance movements and 'ecstasy'. The previous complex story seems to dissolve in front of us, as if a path now opens up, showing a way forward for their work in a challenging institution.

In this situation I have received no 'insight' at all. Instead the intuitive response comes in the form of an impulse, a sudden excitement or inspiration to grab something the other person has said. I have no idea in that moment what they will do with it, if anything at all, but suddenly I am moved to act, and this seems to make all the difference. The rest feels easy, following feedback, staying present with signals,

bringing the fish home. Is this an example of an intuition supporting a signal awareness that was previously drowned in my efforts to follow the details of content?

Sitting with a couple and listening to their complaints about each other, I am also attempting to drop out of an over attentive attitude, and wait for insight to emerge. As I do this, I feel a pressure to come up with something useful in response to their increasingly acrimonious encounter.

Various bits of sentences that each is saying to the other float around in my head, as do the ones I have noted down on my paper. I attempt a few interventions around re-framing what they are saying but not a lot is 'working' and I feel a deepening mood of despondency and frustration emerging..

From apparently deeper somewhere inside me I suddenly 'see' in their complaints, focused on the past, their hopes for a way to be treated, a 'high dream' of relationship. Furthermore it now seems clear (from somewhere) that the difficulty accepting these 'hopes' lies in a sense of compulsion, a duty, a 'having to do it - or else..'. I find myself suddenly 'knowing' and saying, "what if you never had to do what the other wants but could just take in that this is what they believe and would wish for, from a deep place?"

As they do this, the atmosphere is relieved and they then begin to address each other's disappointment with a little more space and possibility.

It seems to me that part of what 'worked' in this response was a sense of my own confidence motivating me to make a congruent intervention, whether or not there were other more elegant or useful possibilities for me to unfold. There may not have been a great deal that was so 'right' about my insight, but it was enough to lift me out of my stuck state, and enough that it met something in the other people, sufficient to shift the gathering escalation. This may not seem very inspiring or profound but, in my experience such energising possibilities frequently lead to creative outcomes, as if the process has received a shot of oil, and everything moves more smoothly. In the beginning of sessions, I find that 'stuckness' is often the norm, and consequently I am frequently searching for lubricants from within and without.

This morning my client is telling me his troubles, how lonely and desperate he is and how close his thoughts of suicide remain. I feel helpless, unable to see a way past his despair, or see much of a pattern in his distress. I 'drop out' of the conversation and notice a bird silhouetted in a tree 30 metres away. Against the sky the bird looks

suddenly more like a rat to me— its beak, the rat's nose sniffing the atmosphere, as if standing up on two paws.

I am intrigued with this image and decide to 'beco me' this rat, sniffing and sensing in my mind for a way to go. As a rat I feel more confident for some reason. I can wait for a scent on the wind. This does not come immediately but gradually the conversation shifts as I catch a drift in his words. He is talking of aloneness, his struggle and how people tell him he needs to learn to live without a relationship, to live alone.

A memory pops up of a conversation I once had in Indonesia with a student while we were passengers on a ferry crossing between islands. He asked me why Westerners liked being on their own, when this would be a sign of mental illness where he came from. When I relate this story, my client immediately responds and we have a lively discourse on his views of community, and how passionately he believes in relationships, and the need for more community living. As he develops this theme he becomes increasingly lively, and we talk of the ways he might achieve this dream. He remembers an old uncle of his, who was apparently always bothering others with ideas and strong feelings, and with whom he felt a strong affinity. This seems a way for him out of loneliness and despair, and indeed by the end of the session is talking of a political activism around such a stand. He has discovered a sense of meaning and purpose in his situation and, for now at least, his despair has vanished.

Looking back I can see that initially I was caught in a need to somehow relieve my client of the pain he was in, to act empathetically enough, and kindly enough to lift his spirits, and in this task I was failing. Not only that but I was becoming tired and dispirited myself, lost in my need for him to feel better, and acutely aware of my impotence. When the 'rat' came along, he relieved me of this impossible and useless task. Together we were able to wait, sniffing the wind until we found a track in the flow of words and feelings, the intensity. Without this support it would have been much more difficult for me to let go the need to rescue him, and the need to know what was going on. Both those pressures would likely have maintained a state of dryness and impotence within me, giving me the well-known cramp in my Gluteus muscles as I tensed against inevitable 'failure'. With my 'rat's' help, I could instantly relax and wait, thus allowing the second process to occur, a memory popping up, seemingly from no-where, a story to relate that my friend responded to. This memory came around the same time as I was beginning to sense the pattern, the scent on the wind, but it's telling clarified things immediately.

This seems an example where, the initial act of picking up a 'flirt', and shape shifting into it, creates an immediate change in my assemblage point, where I am no longer

in the same place. The power of this 'sentient level' of functioning set the stage for a second process to occur, the spontaneous arising of a memory that led to a shift in both of us. This second movement felt equally gratuitous at the time, a gift from a wisdom figure within me, one who appeared to accurately assess exactly where this process was heading, before I myself was clear. It is such experiences that leave me feeling elated and humbled, excited and grateful, and not a little puzzled as to how and where they arise from.

I notice a feature of my being with others where I can often directly feel what another person is beginning to notice, often seemingly a little ahead of them. This is particularly so with states of sadness and sorrow, and has a peculiar sensation for me in that it mostly contains a certain bittersweet quality, quite distinct from the definitely bitter quality inherent in most experiences of personal sadness that I have known. The sweetness comes from feeling close or connected to the other person. At other times I can feel the anger inherent in their manner or coolness in their demeanour.

At times such emotional intuitions and the responses of others can create an atmosphere of tremendous closeness between us, an intense sort of intimacy. I feel as if a great beauty and love is around, as if we were looking into the face of God. Although such intense feelings rarely last outside the session but I am often left uplifted, energised and strangely cleansed.

In the midst of the encounters named above I have a fantasy that we are back in our original selves before we ever began constructing personas, and adapting to circumstances. In that moment I see us as healing a split that came about when we could not simply express sorrow, pain or frustration to someone who really mattered, someone who could accept us in that state, and reflect back our beauty.

The feedback from clients is varied. Many report a huge relief to talk at this level, a 'blissful relief'. They describe wanting to be held, wanting more of this in their lives, and sometimes bitter disappointment that they did not experience this as children. Some clients are initially uneasy with such closeness and give negative feedback long before any intimacy is reached. Many sessions can be spent exploring an intense ambivalence towards feelings, both longing for and dreading such experiences. Some people move away from the directness of feelings to painting, songs, movement work, internal images and altered states. Others report that sorrow, despair, 'feeling a mess' has been forbidden to them, that it has seemed the

very thing they could never allow themselves to feel, let alone show another. To do so is the most risky thing in the world because it will confirm their unattractiveness, their messy unworthiness. Still others report feeling frustrated that such feelings can be allowed in the therapy room, but not out in the world, and some see no point in having such feelings at all, since 'they cannot achieve anything.'

I am aware of a powerful flow to such situations, a potential that seems to occur whenever I move more into this sensing, feeling mode and don't censor it. Equally apparent is the need to refine the expression of such feelings, to make it useful to the other person, rather than a disturbing distraction or off-putting, frightening, over-load. Clearly client feedback is the critical element, both in the moment, later in the session and following sessions. Some people are clear that they do not find such experiences useful while others are initially uneasy and then later give strongly positive feedback. I am still exploring possibilities here and aware that this 'channel' opens some doors and closes others, so there is a need to monitor other approaches might be equally useful outside such a 'relationship' orientation.

A friend rings up in a 'state'. He is agitated and tense, feeling there is so much in his life, so many things he sets up and then has difficulty controlling. He names himself as an addict to busyness, and asks me to play the role of critic for him, to give him some clarity about how and why he gets into these states. I know this addiction to busyness only too well, and start to explore how I might 'criticise' him, but quickly get a sense of blankness, and a vague disinclination to even begin. We talk some more and I find myself more and more withdrawn from the conversation, as if a part of me is not at all interested. I am staring out the window at raindrops dripping from the feathery leaves of our courtyard tree. Glossy, thick, ginger leaves droop nearby and white trumpet flowers poke into the side of my vision - Christmas Lilies planted in a blue pot outside the window. All around me is soft spring rain, gently drifting down on our garden, and I am drawn into its silent beauty. I have no great insight for my friend but start to speak from this other place, describing the scene and letting him know how it feels from this side. As I do so he is intrigued, quickly giving me positive feedback. I now see that any talk of 'critics', and strategies to relieve his distress, will draw me in to the same level or energy of the 'addiction', and will be of less value than this new state I have entered. I find myself breathing out a long sigh, which he picks up and sighs himself. We laugh at this and one sentence comes to me that sums up his difficulty: "There's no problem with all your projects and busyness, it's just that you forget to breathe out!"

Obviously in this instance, intuition began with a vague feeling that barely registered. It is a good example of the 'not knowing' that often occurs initially when following a non linear, 'sensing' approach, and even well into the altered state I still had no clear idea of a direction to follow. Only in retrospect could I see the 'why' of such a response from this part of myself.

I had been meditating a lot, and for some reason did not feel like talking when I began a session with my own therapist, although I did not mention this to him at the time. Beyond a brief greeting I didn't speak and for twenty minutes neither did he. Instead I sat with my feet up on his old sofa watching the shadows from the late afternoon light, slowly creep up the wall. I drifted off to sleep and woke again to a delicious sense of peace and contentment. He seemed completely willing to sit with me, with no pressure to get somewhere or 'achieve' anything, and the longer we sat the more relaxed and contented I became, as if I had received the most sublime massage or meal, and nothing more was needed. I felt replete. I don't particularly remember anything of what we said after that, but the experience strangely stands out as one of the most significant moments in my adult life, and has profoundly affected the way I sometimes sit with people in many different contexts.

Non-rational, non-linear and intuitive approaches to psychotherapy are exemplified by the way some practitioners use silence as a sort of 'anti-intervention', brought vividly home to me by this experience earlier in my life while in therapy with a Jungian analyst. The space created the acceptance of my silence and the willingness on his part to sit for a prolonged period, knowing little that was going on for me, created a deep, long lasting impression. It provides another example of the power of 'not knowing', the intuitive sensing that now is the moment to *not* speak, to wait and trust that much can be gained through the space. In this case the silence did not lead the therapist into some insightful wisdom, nor offer him the pleasure of seeming to resolve some dilemma or problem of mine— it was as simple as it was profound, for this particular client at this particular time. It is not a recipe so much as an inspiration, and perhaps can only be used, intuitively, by someone who has experienced themselves, the deep value it offers.

From a somewhat different perspective, comes the experience of 'Focusing', a method developed by the American philosopher and psychologist Eugene Gendlin, where 'sensing tendencies' is also central - a person learns to notice bodily

sensations particularly in their chest and abdomen, and senses into underlying feelings. (Gendlin, 1981, 1996) This process is also one of sitting with unknown experience, having caught a physical sensation as if it was also a 'flirt' and then unfolding this intuitively to a named feeling connected to whatever they were currently discussing or thinking about. 'Lucidity', in PW - the awareness of sentient experience - is a much wider process than simply picking up body sensations, and the underlying belief or theory behind it is an altogether more radical and less linear conjecture than that envisaged in 'Focusing'. Nevertheless it may be instructive to note that, on a practical level, intuitive methods of sensing, and following a tendency have been thoroughly investigated by 'Focusing' based research groups at universities in Europe and the US, with large numbers of participants. (Hendriks, 2001) These studies present data indicating that the use of such 'sensing' leads to significantly improved outcomes for people attending counselling and psychotherapy.

CHAPTER FIVE: DIFFICULTIES CONNECTING TO INTUITION – INNER WORK

I am drinking my tea in the early morning, after most of the family have left the house. I can't remember my dreams from the night but my 'hay fever' has returned in a mild way. Going into the symptom I feel the usual reluctance to step out of knowing what will come next, and the usual doubt that I will succeed in unfolding this 'body dream', even having done it countless times before. It is as if I have surfed these waves or caught these fish for years, and yet I am overcome with doubt and even scepticism, each time I push out for the line of breakers, or step into the pool. I have to will myself forwards with encouraging words and empathetic questions from my inner process worker.

He encourages me to notice exactly what sensations I feel in my nose, and to keep my left brain scientist calm, he notes that we are in the 'proprioceptive channel', (where I am aware of internal feelings.) This works, and soothes my need to know what we are 'about'. After a moment I pick up a sort of cool freshness and wetness in the front of my nose (choosing this out of several different sensations, causing consternation to the scientist, who wonders on what basis we have chosen one signal over another. My inner helper reassures this rigorous enquirer that we will likely come back to this symptom many times and that we can always choose a different aspect, in the next experiment. Indeed, the aspect we are choosing this time seems a little different from others in the past, so the scientist is happy that we are pursuing an original line of research!)

Spending time with this cool, moist freshness (doubt returning as nothing seems to be happening) suddenly yields a sense of the wet nose of a dog, and how sensitive such a nose is. A memory arises of one of my supervisors telling me his vision after I had complained about my hay fever. He had seen the nose of a sea elephant, a wonderful bulbous organ of exquisite sensitivity, and imagined me sniffing the atmosphere to decide what was needed next.

I have reached the parallel world, and my Shaman and Scientist are both happy and relieved. Becoming more 'sensitive' in the moment, I notice the rain pouring down outside, dripping off all the lush spring vegetation, light over the sea beyond my house, catching the white horses of a squall moving through. I 'know' what is happening, the 'meaning' and dream of my symptom, and can enjoy the delicious moment of openness to all around me. I can take out the rubbish, feeling the ground under each step, and eat my toast, savouring each bite.

Looking back, my doubt and scepticism once more banished, I am almost puzzled as to what the problem was in beginning to work with this body dream.

However a moment later I pick up a flirt and am faced with the same, actually even stronger reluctance to go into it. Light is catching my eye through some shrubs and a loosely woven fence of willow sticks. As I move my head differing depth perspectives of the branches of the shrubs and the willow sticks, interplay with the light on the other side to create a strange impression of almost musical proportions. It is definitely eye catching, but equally off putting in it's apparently meaninglessness to my linear, everyday mind. Again I feel a strong reluctance to go further, a sense of great difficulty and pointlessness in exploring this as a portal to somewhere. Most of me would rather get on with the morning dishes and the various ordinary tasks of the day.

However, as I persevere, moving my head back and forward to create this musical light dance, I get the impression of a saw, moving back and forwards over wood, and have an image of two men using an old 'push -pull' hand saw. Indeed they seem to be cutting first a tree, and then planks of wood, and as my fantasy continues I realise they are creating a sort of Zen temple. I smile with pleasure as this vision ties in with the earlier symptom work, feeling this morning, my body and my life as a temple, where each action is sacred, each moment to be savoured and offered up as a sacrament.

My scientist is pleased to have reached somewhere, even more pleased to have 'coherence' with earlier experiments, but wonders about different paths we might have taken. He is pleased with himself to map out that we have picked up a 'flirt' and moved 'up' into 'dreamland' where there are distinct images, parts and a story. He wonders what would have happened if we had simply gone more into the impression of the musical light dance, let that take us over and even become it. (Another voice in me says, "It's a bit rich coming from him since he is always so keen to reach known territory, but perhaps he is more of a quantum physicist than I knew.") Anyway he and I are both in agreement that it would be useful to also study the repeated reluctance to jump into flirts and body symptoms, dreams and 'dropping out' of Consensus Reality (CR). Given the repeated experience that we usually reach fascinating other worlds, where does this unease and uncertainty come from each time we approach such endeavours.

Actually as I write this and feel a creative flow, I notice a reluctance to stop and attend to some tasks in the CR world. I recall that much of the pleasure of writing this dissertation lies in such a 'flow' where I feel unimpeded by logical rules, indeed feel bugged by the need to attempt to tie in all that I write into a coherent whole. It seems

as if in this moment I am unwilling to shift out of the right brain flow into a more linear logical world, a practical 'doing' world. However this impediment is mild compared to the rather intense unease I feel each time I start to drop out of CR into a dreaming portal.

There are several components to the anxiety and unease I feel at such moments. The two most intense relate to the sense of uncertainty, and the sense of getting nowhere. There is this strange experience of a pull back, as if I can't face the waves, as if I will never make it past the white water out to the clear breaks and the awesome rides waiting for me. On the one hand it is like the moment before plunging into water on a hot or chilly day, or waiting on the beach, looking at the waves before piling out of the car and into the surf. Perhaps it is no more than my reluctance to make a state change, to go through a transition. On the other hand this reluctance is compounded by a horrible sense of pointlessness. There is this almost overwhelming sense of uselessness to even bother to go into unnameable phenomena, sensations and states. This seems the more powerful inhibitor, and can be very off putting. It is as if some significant part of me, someone with considerable rank in my inner world, finds the business of 'not knowing', distasteful, even offensive - as if I am suddenly a senior official in the Office of the Inquisition, and am addressing Galileo and his dangerous experiments. At such times, other parts of me wonder how any normal person can be expected to use their inner Shaman, if after all these years I still face such internal opposition to dreaming and the unknown. Aligned to such opposition is a dread that I won't 'get anywhere'. Written down, this fear seems trivial, banal and, given my experiences, so patently unlikely that one wonders why I bother to raise it. But the threat of not getting somewhere is actually much more impacting that it seems in the light of day. Somatically it feels like a deep nausea, or sickness, such as one might feel from an acupuncture needle stimulating the 'right' spot.

It occurs to the scientist that each of these states could be explored from a dreaming and a sentient level and perhaps there has been a marginalizing of such states in my enthusiasm to be more of a Shaman. Again, as I write of this exploration, the nausea, fear, and reluctance to return to the unknown begins again.

I am reminded of some sailing trips I have done, that seem incredible in retro spect, and how the thought of going out to sea again, leaving my comfortable study with its books, garden outside, music and endless cups of tea, seems singularly unappealing.

Picking up this dreaming I become aware again of how much I love my study, my books, writing at my computer, my son shuffling in the kitchen with his melancholy music playing, and his jokes about it being "a bit too early in the morning to handle

your quantum minding". (The very same dream figure who doesn't want to go sailing or swimming or surfing, the one who is still sleepy, needs 'breakfast' and doesn't want to go exploring – its too early for that!) A recent dream comes to me of my wife and I sailing, rain and wind starting to develop, and passing her my books to protect and put out of the rain. We face a rough 'beat' up a narrow channel and I notice our motor is not on the boat. In the dream, we decide to pack up and tow the boat home - just leave the rough water and go back via the road. What a relief.

Is this a dreaming of the pleasures and ease of domesticity, of CR family life, of gardens, home, tea and even comfort? Perhaps I continually marginalize this in my enthusiasm for excitement, risk and the unknown? Do I need to appreciate how much goodness and joy there is around me in my own home? Going more deeply into this gives me a shivery feel throughout my body, like a cat stretching, or waking on a lazy summer Sunday. It is the feel of my 17 year old, plonking himself down on my lap for a cuddle before pushing me away and wandering off around the house, avoiding his own study! It is the joy in simply being alive, loving and being loved, and having life 'work', temporarily free of dramas and uncertainties. No wonder there is a group in me with a jaundiced view of 'dangerous and pointless experiments!'

Process Work therapists have a choice to drop out of Consensus Reality, the everyday world of the senses at any time, and into the irrational, dreamlike nature of life, to catch whatever is catching or 'seeking' their attention.

For them, the idea and training for such a move is already present. What stops us from doing it more?

Using myself as an example I notice that I do often move to this manner of inquiry, but there are several drawbacks that make this road more difficult and even off putting.

Firstly I notice a definite reluctance within myself to drop the 'knowing' aspect of my normal thinking processes. Thinking is familiar, fast, often rapidly satisfying to me, albeit on a somewhat more superficial level. To drop this and move to a position of 'not knowing' is quite uncomfortable. Furthermore there is no guarantee that insight will be forthcoming, and meantime I have to sit in a disconcerting ignorance of everything. This ignorance can be quite exquisitely uncomfortable, especially if I am expected to come up with some sensible response to another person – say in a therapy session.

Secondly to drop discursive thought is to move into the world of my feelings. More specifically, it is to move into an often unsettling world of tension, anxiety, inferiority,

inadequacy, and doubt. Remaining here is to remain in a (sometimes) prolonged state of being unsure, of fogginess and an inability to see very far forward or even around about. I may be able to stay in this place for a short time but it takes a lot to train myself to put up with this state of affairs for more than a few minutes. I still feel very much a beginner in this matter.

Thirdly, my normal thought style does not take matters lying down. This 'thinker' is quick to intrude upon any 'silence' I impose and so I find myself, as any meditator knows, with the monkey on my back. This 'monkey mind' is formidable and tenacious.

One response to this dilemma is the meditator's refrain of naming the intrusion and re-focusing on the task in hand, i.e. waiting in silence.

Another method I have found that actually does make a difference, particularly when I am alone and have some space to practise, is to identify my 'heart' as 'thinking' and to maintain a focus on the area of my body where I know my physical heart to reside. I commit myself to an awareness of the physical experience, the physical feelings of living in my body and particularly the physical feeling in my left chest. Usually when I do this I notice a slight ache in this area and this, not unpleasant feeling, helps maintain my focus. Sometimes I will extend this focus throughout my whole body and attempt to 'sense' the issue or interaction I am having, particularly with another person.

Either way, I call the process 'thinking with my heart', and am interested and pleased how often I am then led to the deeper insights, awareness and clarity discussed in the last chapter, through the use of PW methods and attitudes. (See also Gendlin's ideas of 'Focusing'. Gendlin 1981)

In the following chapter I explore how other therapists approach intuition and its use in therapy, how they might deepen and extend such experiences described above.

As I do this, certain questions arise:

How to use intuition in the practice of therapy, in conflict facilitation, and group facilitation?

What are the implications of such a path, and can it be studied, learned, or taught to others - am I talking about cultivating a certain attitude or is this a specific skill?

Is it the beginning of becoming clairvoyant, or a 'seer'?

How might it relate to Shamanic or Buddhist practices?

And further to these wonderings:

What is my hesitation around introducing clients more to lucidity, to a tolerance for the unknown? Is it because I myself often struggle to handle not knowing and that I want to rush through things until I can get back to the familiar?

Am I embarrassed by the irrational, the feeling world of 'not knowing'?

These questions make me think of a mainstream outlook that does not tolerate non linear, non rational thought pathways. I recognise that this intolerance has a point, in that skills based, signal following is critically important, especially with beginning therapists, who need to develop their capacity in this area and learn to pick up verbal and non verbal feedback signals. Signal based awareness has other advantages that need to be acknowledged. There is objectivity in observing and acting on overt signals, something that can be repeatedly observed, demonstrated and, perhaps more importantly, taught.

CHAPTER FOUR: SURVEY ON THERAPISTS USE OF AN INNER FOCUS

INTRODUCTION

If PW is an expansive study in the theory and practice of combining our intuitive, creative spirit and mind with a rigorous use of our perception and thoughtful analysis, then how do we most easily enter the 'parallel worlds' offered through such intuition and perception, and make such worlds intelligible to others?

In exploring a movement between two such states of mind, I notice I can operate in a sort of discursive type of process where I actively think about things, relate to others and the external world, consciously notice external signals and make logical connections to them. I can also move to a more feeling, 'sensing', introverted, 'no mind' approach, where I no longer follow so much the external, but look down or away into the distance, become initially 'clouded' and then aware of my body sensations, internal images or my emotional state. This movement frequently rewards me with insights into the nature of whom or what I am facing - insights that leave me feeling richer and more fulfilled, often excited and clear about a way forward with a particular puzzle or problem.

My interest in such an approach is not just because of its apparent value, nor just because of Process Work's orientation towards non linear, intuitive practices, but also because I struggled for a long time in my work with an unease at the way I sometimes used silence, stillness, and a 'clouded' awareness as an alternative to my ordinary senses and analysis, in following the structure of someone's process. Only in the last few years have I felt more settled with this way of operating and have been increasingly able to integrate it with following signals and remaining aware of process structures when sitting with myself or another. I am thus interested in the experience of others, particularly therapists training in Process Work or other modalities, and how they regard such a 'letting go', even temporarily, of their thinking, assessing, labelling mind. I am also interested in the difficulties of following such an orientation, and what makes us reluctant to follow 'flirts' and sentient impulses in everyday life, even when we identify with a training and orientation towards such practices.

THERAPIST SURVEY

Fifteen therapists took part in an interview (approximately one hour long for most subjects) discussing their use of a more inward focused, intuitive approach to working with others. Interviews were conducted by phone or in person with a range of practitioners, practising in New Zealand, Australia and USA, that included the following:

- Five men and ten women
- Five process work diplomats
- Three process work students
- Three informal process work students
- Two psychodynamic therapists
- Two 'Client centred' therapists
- One Hakomi therapist
- One Gestalt therapist

Most of the subjects (11/15) had been trained and practicing some form of counselling or psychotherapy for over fifteen years, and about a half of these for over twenty years. I was interested in reviewing a range of therapist attitudes and orientations to an inward focused approach, taking into account therapeutic modalities (with a weighting of those using at least some Process Work), and years of experience. I was not primarily concerned with gender differences in therapist responses to the questions and none seemed apparent from the survey.

All interviews were taped, transcribed, and the transcriptions stored in a locked filing cabinet. The tapes will be destroyed once this thesis has been accepted.

I found all the participants generous and open in their answers to the questions. Where subjects seemed to stray from answering the question directly I sometimes asked them to clarify their responses but, in general, left each person free to follow whatever line of thought was stimulated by the question. While this approach could be criticised as producing less accurate and uniform data, I believe the potential deficiency is more than compensated by the richness of the material that was offered. This is clearly a qualitative study but it nevertheless offers a window into the thinking of a range of often very experienced practitioners. Questions arising from the

outcome of the study are addressed and tentative possibilities for training and practice are outlined in the conclusion.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. How much, if ever, do you make a conscious decision to 'drop out' of focusing on what your client is saying - look away or down, or attend to your body sensations, internal mental images, or emotional state? (To stop directly relating to the other person, and follow more your own internal process.)
2. If not a conscious decision, how much do you find this happening anyway?
3. In general what do you notice if anything, about client responses to your 'dropping out/defocusing'?
4. What difficulties might you have, if any, in achieving or maintaining such a 'defocused, unrelated, meditative' state while working with clients?
5. In what situations would you generally adopt such a stance?
6. Has your practice changed in this regard, as you have become more experienced?
7. If/when you achieve this defocused, less inter-personally related state, what do you gain, if anything?
Do you ever notice strange, even bizarre phenomena that may or may not apparently relate to the client or yourself?
8. How much, if at all, do you bring in any personal experiences you might have had during your phase of 'dropping out/defocusing'?
9. Would you have any other comments to make about such a style of 'dropping out/defocusing' and its place in your and other's psychotherapeutic practice?

SURVEY FINDINGS (Note: Each respondent is identified by their main practising modality, with a number if there is more than one such practitioner in the survey. Gender is shown as 'F' or 'M'. Experience, denoted by (< or > number of years) is related to years of practice after qualification in the main modality used. For a number of practitioners this will not necessarily reflect the years they have been working as a therapist prior to qualifying in their current modality.)

I have summarised the findings from each question, and included quotes from participants that illustrate the thinking of therapists as they approach the topic. A full summary and discussion follows after this.

1. How much, if ever, do you make a conscious decision to 'drop out' of focusing on what your client is saying - look away or down or attend to your body sensations, internal mental images, or emotional state? (To stop directly relating to the other person and follow more your own internal process.)

Unsurprisingly everyone identified with at least a partial focus of attending to their internal processes rather than remaining solely attending to the client. There was wide variation in the way therapists framed such activity, with a number (25%) of mostly senior practitioners clearly stating that they generally managed some sort of regular 'dual awareness' of their own and the other's processes at the same time. These therapists did not experience their practice as a 'dropping out of focus' on the client, since they experienced themselves as remaining in a more or less continuous dual awareness of themselves and the other. (The least experienced member of the group identified with an attempt to do this.)

The language used in this question was both problematic and valuable. Many people reacted negatively to the concept of 'dropping out' but were then able to clarify more explicitly how they practiced. Throughout the survey this initial question was a stumbling block, but for the sake of consistency and its tendency to stimulate discussion, I left it in. Language more aligned to most subjects' thinking might include such concepts as, 'inward focused', 'inner focus', 'intuitive style', and 'Sentient based' (for Process Work Diplomats or students) rather than 'dropping out'.

"It doesn't feel like dropping out. I am in that double mode practically all the time. ...its like having a screen and, on the one hand the screen is being projected by the patient's story and what is going on, and on the other side are my internal images that come to the same screen and I look at that screen and often its like so automatic that I don't even recognise that I am in that way. But it doesn't feel that I am dropping the person away. It feels more like walking with a child for example, holding his hand, and at the same time talking about something else and having another story going on, like what is coming on in the landscape.

It's more like listening to the process instead of listening to the content.

When you talk about this question an example comes to me of when I was doing psychodrama. I was directing, and my teacher says to me, 'come back, come back' - to create a physical distance, and then I was able to see instead of clinging to the patient. It's true that it is like creating space between me and the other person, and also it's having a reflective space between myself and what is going on in my mind, keeping that alive. I am like the object of my own observation. Like protecting that reflective space where the work happens. Keeping it clean, like a mirror."

- Psychodynamic Psychotherapist (1) (M) (>20 years)

"I never do one or the other. I always follow both me and the others. The only time that I only focus on myself is if that thing that I follow in myself becomes so contradictory to how I'm behaving. Let's say for example that some part of me says something is not going in the right direction, or I see it, then I say, "I don't feel this is going in the right direction" and the other person says, 'yes it is.' Then I say, 'ok, then I'll follow you', then the other person says, 'a b c...' then something in me says 'no, wait a minute, I can't follow your lead yet, I have to work on the part that says 'no', because otherwise I can't follow you congruently'. I notice it when my inner experience and the outer thing that happens, starts to diverge. And then its like second nature, I don't have to think consciously, 'I am going to follow myself and then the other person.'

I find I need to go internally less and less over the years. It happens only rarely now. With more and more experience over the years.

Actually if anything I have to pull myself out towards the client more!" (laughs) "Yeah I have to say to the client, could you repeat that because I have not been following the content of the story. I have been more in my sentience."

- Male Process Work Diplomat (1) (M) (>20 years)

"I go fuzzy, and then I feel, or let an image [come,] or feel my body, I let a feeling float up. The best way to describe it is, I let myself open up and I seek a reaction as if I was water and I was going to flow into a form. That is how it feels like, I let myself go and I flow into a form. I see what kind of form is there, and then once I get it or feel it then I put it together with the process structure that I know of. So I say, what is this form? Is it a role, or a feeling or a reaction – who is it in relationship to, how has it already come up, what signal did I see it in, how does it relate to what we were talking about, what is it?"

- Process Work Diplomat (2) (F) (>20 years)

"I use my body a lot for reference and I think it is very important...like deciphering a language, and it's quite intangible in a way, and bringing it into some sense of being, body being, psychic being. Talking about it I realise I probably do it more than I maybe said earlier. It's more a flow rather than a pulling back."

- Psychodynamic Therapist (2) (F) (<10 years)

The majority of mostly experienced therapists believed they shifted their focus between the other and themselves depending on a number of variables. The most important feature cited was the relationship with the client, and particularly whether the therapist was experiencing any difficulty with understanding or rapport. In such cases several Process Work therapists used a 'defocused' more sensing, intuitive approach when they were having difficulties with grasping the client's process structure.

"Where I feel I don't get the process structure or don't get the rapport, then I like to use it [a 'sentient', defocused, introverted attitude] to connect to the client and create more rapport, and train my mind to be in a quiet place, because if I don't have the structure then I get anxious."

- Process Work Diplomat (3) (M) (<10years)

"More and more, otherwise I get caught up in content and feel we never get very far. I check in with my body or the environment and check what attracts me. It's like relaxing in to another state, trusting that what's here is important beyond the actual words. I find it exciting because it is so unknown."

- Process Work Diplomat (4) (F) (<10 years)

One experienced practitioner worked in reverse, identifying a more usual practice of working through an intuitive sensing of themselves, the relationship and the other, and only using signal work overtly when experiencing uncertainty or difficulties.

“Essentially my method of working is inward, getting insight or how I’m feeling in relationship with the other person. How I’m feeling about the person’s issues as opposed to signal work. So if I notice things are not flowing, and we haven’t picked up the deep process and I’m missing something, I will use signal work. So within my perception of the other is already a whole lot of signal awareness and I only consciously revert to that when I have to ask, ‘well what is going on, let me see.’ I find working with a set of rules and structures, personally, when I’m working with people, not satisfying. My tendency is to use signal based orientation when I’m stuck, as opposed to an ongoing basis”

- Process Work Diplomat (5) (M) (> 20 years)

Other tendencies to use a defocused approach include when working with couples who are tense and arguing a lot, and with someone who is experiencing strong emotions such as fear, anger, sadness or grief. Finally a number of respondents expressed views consistent with the following:

“If I make a conscious decision [to defocus] it’s because I have been too consciously focused and I’m struggling, and trying to work something out and the way I work I don’t think that is useful. So I would just change my focus, look down or out the window, or let myself blank out internally.”

- Process Work Phase 2 Student (F) (10 years)

2. If not a conscious decision, how much do you find this happening anyway?

Generally the more senior practitioners were more acknowledging of the regularity of such an event and offered strategies to pick up and use their awareness when this happens. (More than one therapist acknowledged an instance of them dropping off to sleep during a session and having to respond to the client’s reaction to this.)

"It happens in the session that I find that I have lost it, and gone into my own dream world but it's a different story then. [From what has been said above] When I stop functioning as a therapist, I go away, and then often it is possible that I can catch up later. 'This little outing I did, somehow relates to this, what is going on there', but its much harder to keep it together and it feels more like a disruption of the connection, an absent mind."

- Psychodynamic Psychotherapist (1) (M (>20 years))

"It happens a lot. I would say it does happen to me often, and then I catch it and that's part of it too. I'll either feel like doing it or I'll notice it happening anyway."

- Process Work Diplomat (2) (F (>20 years))

Several people believed it almost never happened since they felt they were so identified with staying client focused. A number of people reported feeling self critical when they noticed how they had ceased directly following the other, and one person thought it tended to happen if they were feeling irritated or critical towards the client(s).

It may be noteworthy that the many of the other answers to this question, did not seem to relate directly to what had been asked. Instead there were a number of tangential responses given at this point, concerning other unrelated aspects of the therapeutic process.

3. In general what do you notice, if anything, about client responses to your 'dropping out/defocusing'?

There was a definite interest in this question with many people expressing diverse experiences of client feedback to a more introverted, 'defocused' (cf direct relating and overt following of the client) approach. A common implication in many responses was the awareness of how the client might experience a withdrawal from direct relating. There was a range of therapist expectations, from that of the client becoming annoyed or disappointed at feeling unattended to (abandoned) to an experience of clients appreciating the therapist acting in such a way.

“They could be mystified or have other reactions – They might be annoyed, ‘hey I am the client and you are the therapist’, or they might get angry, or frustrated, if they don’t spot it happening but they pick up on the fact that I am not right there with them.”

- Process Work Phase 2 Student (F) (<10 years)

“Some clients will want to hold my attention... and I’m busy engaging them around that, and I’m also busy not getting hooked in, also doing pattern interruption. I say, ‘just stop for a minute or two and take some time, and let my unconscious tell me more about this terrible problem you have got’.”

- Eriksonian Therapist (M) (>20 years)

“They don’t seem to mind, especially if I consciously drop out, because I usually announce, it. It is an easy withdrawal, and both of us are comfortable. They seem quite relaxed when I come back.”

- Gestalt Therapist (F) (>15 years) Informal Process Work Student

Apart from the awareness of how clients experience the shift in the relationship dynamics, respondents also noticed or expected other responses in clients

“I sometimes notice a client taking a deep breath and they seem to slow down. I have a belief in the coupling effect of the oscillator, where there is symmetry in my responses and theirs, and I notice this happening.”

Process Work Diplomat (3) (M) (<10 years)

“With certain new clients I notice I am pacing the connection. Almost as if sometimes I sense my focus can be too intense for new clients, and I back off a bit. The defocus is to give them some relief from too much intensity of relating. Giving the client space. Backing off. I don’t know if it’s related to their intimacy issues, but that is my sense.”

- Hakomi Therapist (F) (<15 years)

“The clients do more work, seems to be a deeper session, stuff [that] arrives seems to be deeper. They seem to discover more, come to more insights.”

- Holistic Therapist (F) (> 15 years)

"Somehow it is inspiring and encourages them to do the same."

- Psychodynamic Therapist (1) (M) (> 20 years)

4. What difficulties might you have, if any, in achieving or maintaining such a 'defocused, unrelated, meditative' state while working with clients?

This question seemed to link with the issues discussed above around how the therapists perceived client responses. As above, a common difficulty was the perception that the client would feel let down, or think that the therapist was bored, uninterested or even unprofessional. This issue was raised in most (but not all) of the answers.

"If there was any difficulty it would be initially feeling guilty because I should be focusing on the other, 'that's my job, that's my responsibility, I'm getting paid for it, and you know a bad therapist does that. We've heard about them and I don't want to become one of them'."

- Process Work Phase 2 Student (F) (>10 years)

"They [clients] can project 'unprofessionalism, or distance, or not interested."

Client Centred Therapist / Informal Process Work Student (F) (<10 years)

"Sometimes I feel a pressure building up in me, as if the client is saying, 'hello, I don't know where you are'. I just have to say 'I am just dropping out for a moment'."

- Process Work Diplomat (3) (M) (<10 years)

"It's a bit of an edge for me to do it because something in me says I need to keep relating and connecting. It's a projection of mine in relationship that the other expects attendance, and it's edgy for me to disconnect and pull away, even though it's actually a disconnection to go into another level. It's getting easier and yet still a challenge. As a woman, I think there is still a gender thing there to be open, warm, connected, relating – got to be relating, whereas with [a male therapist] you may have more freedom around that socialisation process.

I could also relate it to my training where the focus is on building the relationship and that the relationship itself creates the healing so a lot of effort goes in this and I have

a tendency to relate rather than practice more inner work, which I think is anyway more marginalised in psychotherapy.”

- Process Work Diplomat (4) (F) (< 10 years)

“I feel guilty if I do it unconsciously and then catch myself - maybe it’s my anxiety that they can tell straight away.”

- Hakomi Therapist (F) (<15 years)

Common responses were also clustered around the client’s state of mind or development, and how open they are to looking at themselves.

“It feels a lot that it varies according to the person - that is the crucial thing. With some people you travel so nice and it’s so easy. The mutuality and the flow of the ideas is soft and easy. There are no distortions and disruptions. And with some people it’s a constant struggle. Some people have that sort of way of relating that is like a fight. I have seen that happen for years. It’s like a constant fight, and it needs a holding back not to go into that. Then it needs much, much more work [to find that spaciousness.] Especially with my reactivity, my tendency to react, to that sort of provocation, to stay steady with myself. It helps enormously if you have a little bit higher charge for those people, 10, 20 50% higher charge.”

- Psychodynamic Psychotherapist (1) (M) (>20 years)

Getting drawn into the client’s story makes it more difficult. Easier if it’s a client I know well, or if they are productive, then it’s easy, much easier.

- Eriksonian Therapist (M) (>20 years)

There were a number of other difficulties raised. Certain clients who seemed to need a very direct relating style from the therapist became agitated if they experienced the therapist as withdrawing attention in any way. Also if the therapist was preoccupied with personal issues unrelated to the therapy relationship they found it difficult to maintain the dual awareness of their own processes and that of the client. Other challenges included the following:

“In a business group I said I needed to check in [with myself] and the group laughed, so it was an edge for them... I value inner work, and what is happening in me is

happening in the field. In [the] corporate world this is unusual, and therefore potentially harder.”

- Process Work Phase One Student (F) (< 10 years)

“[It’s] harder if people are really in conflict, or head stuff, or not ‘inside’ at all. I am either trying to hold the more internal position or get really swept up and lose myself. [It’s] easier if people have a willingness, a sense of wanting to understand themselves, then I’m not holding it up any more, they are already wanting to go there. I’m not having to mirror stuff back so much - when they have picked up the skill of taking back their projections, able to observe their stuff more.

- Holistic Therapist (F) (>15 years) Informal Process Work Student

“I have lots of difficulties achieving this state. One difficulty is with an inner critic, ‘don’t go too long defocused, you might miss the train.’ In fact the opposite is true in that the real risk is losing the deep mind or centre. Another difficulty is that intense feeling states can throw me out of an inner meditative awareness...”

- Process Work Diplomat (3) (M) (<10 years)

“Sometimes it’s actually kind of a pleasant state, it’s very meditative, and it can be very compelling to be there in a less than focused way. I don’t know how to explain it, but something like I can hang there sort of suspended. And there is a temptation that you have to be a little vigilant to not sort of drift around. It’s like an opiate, poppy field, very pleasant, so I have to bring a lot of awareness to test it and go into it and be disciplined in my awareness there. Not to drift into some somnambulant haze.”

- Process Work Diplomat (2) (F) (>20 years)

This last statement is discussed in more detail under the ethical and training issues around such states. It implies the wider potential risk of the therapist misusing such an approach and daydreaming about unrelated matters in the guise of a more inner focused method. In this sense it is the enactment of many clients’ fears that the therapist is disinterested, bored or neglectful towards them. Remaining transparent to ourselves, as therapists, is one antidote to such a problem, which anyway occurs reasonably regularly in my experience, at least for brief moments. Rather than taking a punitive stance to such events, it is obviously more useful to reflect on their significance to the therapeutic relationship, and the possibility of ‘dreaming up’ (or ‘projective identification’) reactions occurring. This issue was also raised by one other

therapist in terms of the need to assess and screen new clients before giving themselves the freedom to 'defocus'.

5. In what situations would you generally adopt such a stance?

There were widely different factors named by the therapists as influencing their decision to use such an approach or not. This variation seems interesting to me in perhaps indicating how uniquely each of us practises as a therapist or at least how differently we perceive the conditions affecting the work. The breadth of difference extended to some therapists using more their internal responses as their usual stance to others who would only adopt such a position in certain extreme or limited circumstances, such as couple work with a very conflicted situation or with individual work where the clients are very upset and emotional. Again it needs to be acknowledged that most of the very experienced therapists anyway identified with using a constant 'dual awareness' in their work and did not see themselves as shifting between an internal, less related position and directly following, relating to the client.

"I think possibly I might tend to do it if somebody is a little more engaged in something very consensus reality. I may deliberately try to use it to go somewhere deeper. Yes I will tend to use it more where I feel something is deeper that is not really coming out enough. Someone might be telling a story and they are going on and on, and they don't know what they are focusing on, or it could be that I am confused with what is going on and I can't follow it linearly so I have to use that method."

- Process Work Diplomat (2) (F) (>20 years)

"If I am under attack or need to find my way more. Particularly if I am feeling frazzled, needing to find my centre.

Noticing breathing makes a big difference. Any state where I feel I need my deeper connection to the person I notice I am breathing fast and more shallow. Deep breathing brings me back to my deeper mind, closing my eyes, turning away, not looking at the person"

- Process Work Diplomat (3) (M) (<10 years)

"When a client is very defended or frightened, then I would be checking in more with myself to see how I can form a connection."

- Psychodynamic Psychotherapist (2) (F) (<10 years)

"The more well, content, centred and more I like myself, the more likely I am to check in with myself. More free to do this. [I] will not have to be so attentive."

- Process Work Phase 1 Student (F) (<10 years)

"If I'm really stressed, tired or had a really big day, I actually do it better.

Because I haven't got this thing that says you have to be with them."

- Holistic Therapist (F) (>15 years)

6. Has your practice changed in this regard, as you have become more experienced?

Almost all the therapists felt that, with experience, they had changed towards becoming more allowing of themselves to follow their own internal processes without such concern about how it might adversely affect the client.

"In the beginning of my practice I would never have let myself drop out of following the client, in fact I wouldn't have dreamed of doing it."

- Hakomi Therapist (F) (<15 years)

"I would have been more concerned about what clients thought it earlier in my career. Now I don't really notice that they have a particular response.

Earlier on it felt like a discreet process, where there was discontinuity when working with someone. I felt like it was happening or I needed to do it, and was less integrated into the flow of my work.. Now it's just another tool, it's nothing more."

- Process Work Diplomat (2) (F) (>20 years)

"Earlier on there was a lot of my own anxiety in the sense of getting it right, and in the sense of wanting to achieve something and needing to achieve something, so there was a lot more of 'me' in there. ...I trust the whole process much more, and moving away from the need to achieve something, and working much more as a vessel, or vehicle rather than an agent"

- Psychodynamic Therapist (2) (F) (<10 years)

Another experience of change over time for therapists is the integration of structure into a natural style of following themselves that was already present in the beginning of their work. This was mentioned by a number of people and can partly be seen as a training and development issue in that they identified going through phases in their career where parts of themselves were less available while in training, but gradually came to the fore again, with more experience.

“Initially I tended just to follow myself and then slowly over the years to integrate process work into everything...it [Process structure] has become more accessible over time...but I am never particularly inclined that way.”

- Process Work Diplomat (5) (M) (>20 years)

“I remember as a child I felt I was very much into intuition and feelings but I didn’t have my rational, intellectual mind developed. It happened more spontaneously before I went into the therapy training. And then I was much more aware of myself as a trainee, and more involved in signals. Now I am relatively at home with the process structure and can notice more easily where I am and I don’t have to grasp for all the learning, what is primary and secondary. I can allow myself to go into the deep process.”

- Process Work Diplomat (3) (M) (<10 years)

7. If/when you achieve this defocused, less inter-personally related state, what do you gain, if anything?

Do you ever notice strange, even bizarre phenomena that may or may not apparently relate to the client or yourself?

Almost everyone clearly regarded this state as sometimes offering distinct gains over a more directly related, extroverted approach. Even those who identified themselves as remaining in a dual awareness rather than shifting back and forth between different perspectives were obviously benefiting from their ability to tune into inner states.

Most people felt that some withdrawal to a more introverted position allowed them to sense more accurately their own feelings and more marginalised experiences for both them and the client. Therapists were able to pick up elements of process and

structure, allow images and metaphors to arise more easily, and often to experience a deepening of the work.

"If I do drop out then I am not so caught up in the story - so in there. I reckon that it does, at times, progress faster and more easily. Because I have less attachment to what is going on, to what might eventuate."

- Client Centred Therapist (F) (<10 years) Process Work Student (Informal)

"There seems to be value in dropping out, and coming back in with whatever, whether [or not] it is with something specific. Makes me think of when babies are little, and they are crying in one state, and everyone is having a go at holding the baby, who doesn't settle, and then someone takes the baby out, and the baby stops crying and comes back in and goes to sleep. It creates a gateway of opportunity, something different to come in, so you are not stuck on the same track. The same track is often the known track."

- Process Work Phase 2 Student (F) (<10 years)

"It gives me a better sense of the person and what they are bringing, so if I 'drop out' more, I can see more and bring out different parts, more marginalised parts. So useful to get that overview. [It] is very useful to get in touch with myself as an important part of the field, if I am sensing things then this is important. And unless I drop back I am inclined to not notice that and am more focused on them and may marginalise my own impulses."

- Process Work Diplomat (4) F (<10 years)

"I have emotional or physical feelings very commonly. I follow my own body signals and I am often picking up what I believe are marginalised, emotional or physical symptoms of the other person, or issues in the background of that client. I also get tingles running up my knees then legs, and even up my back, when there is something happening, when there is something extremely profound or important and I take it to mean, 'you really need to pay more attention to this'. Consciously I say in my head, 'Really? Oh ok, alright!' Because it has been around for so long and is so accurate I take it seriously."

- Gestalt Therapist (F) (>15years) Informal Process Work Student

"That state is useful because I'm not focusing on every single word... but just noticing the little bits that are different and don't fit, and give a clue where to go next."

- Process Work Phase 2 Student (F) (>10 years)

"I get more metaphors if I drop out. [I] will get visual metaphors, or they will be named, described. Usually not pattern recognition, mainly metaphors."

- Holistic (F) (>15 years)

"Suddenly you see what happens. Like it is a visual thing that happens, you see the pattern and it suddenly becomes very simple, you couldn't understand before and suddenly it's there.

It's true, exactly, that such an experience is like a gift for us and creates gratitude, an awe, it doesn't come from me, just from somewhere.

It's totally impersonal but just 'thank God' sort of feeling."

- Psychodynamic Therapist (1) (M) (>20 years)

"Getting my mind quiet and deeply listen[ing] to sensations, subtle sensations inside myself and it takes my mind even deeper and something is welling up. I use it [in] a situation where I am asking myself, 'what is he talking about?'"

- Process Work Diplomat (3) (M) (<10 years)

"One of the things I gain, is a distance from the goal or the agenda, whether the client's goal or my goal, succeeding or helping or solving, or the trauma of the particular [problem], the systems identification. I gain a great deal of distance from those very pressuring goals, and the pressure of an agenda, whether it is mine to be a great therapist or theirs to get somewhere. And then that affords me a greater view, a more detached objective view, a big overview, almost like connecting to a more spiritual perspective on something. It gives me a lot of space, and compassion, like a spiritual feeling of 'oh yes, the person is struggling with this, but also it's perfect, there is nothing there to do'."

- Process Work Diplomat (2) (F) (>20 years)

I was interested to notice how most of the therapists in this survey tended to downplay clairvoyant or psychic type experiences, one person saying directly that they were cautious about discussing such matters since they could easily be misunderstood. In general the therapists seemed to take a rather down to earth, pragmatic attitude towards phenomena that arise when using an introverted, intuitive, perspective, and to be more interested in ways they could use such material for the work, or alternatively to be mildly amused at strange coincidences.

'The more sentient you are, the more you understand the meaning of connections between things. Synchronicity tends to go into the background. You don't need it because everything becomes a synchronicity. Synchronicity is another way of saying that you were unaware of a connection.'

8. How much, if at all, do you bring in any personal experiences you might have had during your phase of 'dropping out/defocusing'?

As might be expected there was a wide variation of responses to this question. Some people regarded self disclosure as routine and of great importance while others are much more circumspect in their use of such an approach. Many of the therapists I spoke to would agree with something like this (see below): *"With somebody, often and almost anything, and with somebody [else], practically nothing. It totally depends on how much intimacy there is."*

The value of how such an approach might benefit the client and further the work seems to underlie the thinking of therapists in this survey, irrespective of the decision on how much to disclose. Two therapists will make radically different choices based on the same value. Clearly it all depends on what they see as most furthering the work and how effectively they can use disclosure or containment of their internal experience. *"Other people are much better at sorting out that. I don't know, it messes me up, and I find it awkward, so I've just developed[a] style where I don't do that. I don't do it well, so I tend not to do it."* (See below).

I think it is in the nature of therapy that people chose us at an unconscious or subliminal level partly because of our edges, or we have gone over those edges. People chose us because they know that we are inspiring around the areas of their edges. I remember working with a woman who came in to see me and I was in a bad mood. And I apologised for this in the next session and she said, 'No, no. The very reason I come to see you is that you give me freedom to bring up my moods and my issues.' I always bring in such experiences. Bringing myself in and having a pure interaction with the other keeps me vital and work s better for clients. It works for people.

- Process Work Diplomat (5) (M) (>15 years)

In general I think it builds the relationship and frees us both up when I share what I notice is going on within me. They are more trusting of me because of that.

- Client Centred Therapist (F) (<10 years) Process Work Informal Student

“With somebody, often and almost anything, and with somebody [else], practically nothing. It totally depends on how much intimacy there is. This will apply to anything that comes up in me, (including metaphors, memories, images, stories). Somebody who is very greedy, and in the beginning is very, like, primitive and operating from a kind of badly ingrained false self, they are so keen to take anything, anything that they can have, to patch their terrible false system, and then you have to be very, very with-holding which is terrible. It’s a horrible, horrible situation, which can go on for a long time before something starts to change.

One idea on when the therapy is ready to be finished is ... when the patient is able to meet the therapist in all the therapist’s vulnerability. There is nothing else to be met.”

- Psychodynamic Psychotherapist (1) (M) (>20 years)

“I bring them in if I feel they fit in with the overall process they [the client] offered beforehand, with the data they brought, otherwise I leave it, as another cluster. The data I get from within myself, might be my stuff, it might be that there is still so much unknown at that moment that I feel uncomfortable around the other. I need to check the process structure. Is it appropriate; are there abuse issues in the background? After all they come to me for support and direction, therefore what I bring in, I hope will be sustainable for their process. It needs to feel right.”

- Process Work Diplomat (3) (M) (<10 years)

“I never bring it into the sessions until I know [what it means], that’s my thing. I don’t bring things out as a blank access. I feel for me personally, (not that this is a judgement on what other therapists do) the rank of my role adds too much to the blank access, and by saying I’m feeling this, it is not always easy for people to differentiate your feeling it, as in: “Is this your emotion, are you having a feeling about this, or are you telling that is how I am feeling?” Like there is all this unspoken stuff around the relationship and the rank and it’s too much for me to sort through. Other people are much better at sorting out that. I don’t know, it messes me up, and I find it awkward, so I’ve just developed[a] style where I don’t do that. I don’t do it well, so I tend not to do it.

I don’t like [to] put out my feelings, I like to put out the pattern. I like to put out the dreaming experience and not just the raw feeling.”

- Process Work Diplomat (2) (M) (>20 years)

"I often feel that when I bring in myself like that, it feels as if I am playing with the wind. Kite flying is like that. If I am really connected to the other energy of the client, I love it. The client is like the kite, and I see that the kite is sometimes going one way or another, and I hold the line, and let it go a bit, or hold it tight to the wind. It feels like a wonderful privilege to be connected to an incredible force on the other side."

- Process Work Diplomat (3) (M) (<10 years)

9. Would you have any other comments to make about such a style of 'dropping out/defocusing' and its place in your and other's psychotherapeutic practice?

There were a number of interesting comments here on the use of 'defocusing' and its implications for training and ethics. While many people are very aware of the implications for clients in appearing to be less interested when 'dropping out' of direct relating there was less awareness of the potential power imbalance that arises whenever a person operates from their introverted, intuitive base. (See below).

Another issue that was often raised is the different needs of therapists at differing levels of experience and expertise. A number of respondents alluded to the need for training therapists to focus on maintaining the therapeutic alliance and the building of skills to accurately follow the client. This seems to run counter to an introverted, intuitive approach, which is a development that may need to wait until there is expertise in accurately picking up client communication signals and the vital skill of noticing feedback. While such a personal style may come more naturally to some beginning therapists, it may have to be temporarily tempered while other skills are developed. Several of the responses below are clearly illustrative of these issues.

"Well two things come to mind and one goes to the question of what are benefits of it, and the other goes back to the thing about preventing the raw feelings versus a processed feeling.

It has personal benefits for me because it is a very meditative practice, so it has been incredible learning to work like this. It's an incredible training in awareness, and that has been a tremendous benefit to me.

The second thing I want to say is that I think it does require quite a bit of training. It's a great thing to have and to use and at the same time it can be something like the

[fact that the] realm of one's inner world is not accessible to anyone else, so it can be used as a protection, a therapist ploy, a way that the therapist uses to protect themselves from feeling they don't know what to do. Or they can hide behind the notion that 'well that is just my intuition.' There are power issues in there that just need to be thought about and considered, and how it's done.

There is room for misuse and I've seen that. Everything has room for misuse. I just think there is a professional fear around ineptitude and not knowing and the whole profession privileges wisdom and knowing and insight and having the superior viewpoint on everything. And if the therapist feels suddenly they don't have it, they can get really anxious, it could be really provocative and so I notice that in training people, that there is a tendency to reach for a perch where they are back on top and sometimes this [inward focus] can be used in that way. It's a much larger problem I think of knowing and not knowing, because it's a very privileged way of knowing, where no-one can really dispute it because it is your privileged realm."

- Process Work Diplomat (2) (F) (>20 years)

"In terms of ethics I think we are still learning a lot about how we deal with power in groups, and this includes teaching groups. This is an area we are still growing in, in the process work community... I do think that feedback is really central"

- Process Work Diplomat (5) (M) (>15 years)

"There are huge differences between beginning therapists and more experienced ones. Some people are like natural therapists, it comes naturally and for some people they never get there. I believe it relates to an ability to tolerate pain, psychological pain and pressure. Some people defend themselves all the time, they have to keep it away."

- Psychodynamic Therapist (1) (M) (>20 years)

"I've thought about that in my own practice and as a teacher of psychotherapy, if you could train psychotherapists to go there straight away [to access inner wisdom/insight and still be following the client]... but my belief is that the best way is to start out paying good attention to the client and good attention to what is happening in you, and be able to distinguish the difference, and after you've done that a lot, and after you've done a lot of work on yourself so that you can pick your own distress, then you can start trusting and doing things that allow the intuition to come. If you do that before you've done the hard yards, you'll be wrong, and you'll do some damage, and you'll spend a hell of a lot of time waiting for inspiration to strike. Meanwhile you

could be doing some really useful empowering and practical useful things with the client.

- Eriksonian Therapist (M) (>20 years)

"I think that [there] is a big training issue in the background, and I think we are just waking up in our supervision to include that also into the training... All formal training has a test where you pass...and the training teaches you the instructor's view of what it takes...and [in] the final exam, you have to measure up to the instructor's view of how to [do this], and that might be very different from your particular ...style. But that is beside the point, because that is what trainings are... regardless of whether you need it later or not, regardless of whether it is one of your strengths. If they decide that that is what you need to do, then you learn, even if it goes against your style.

[So you are saying that is the nature of the context of all training?]

Yeah, it's unavoidable, otherwise why have an exam? That is what the word exam means - to accommodate or comply with an outer standard.

I think we are starting to address this issue with Arny's idea of 721 feedback, [where the inner attitudes and experiences of the person, including their 'inner supervisor' are brought to bear on supervision issues.]

One of the problems of this [exam focus] is that the person gets very alone in their process with their inner supervisor. So after their training they don't have a very effective relationship with an inner supervisor, who might say: 'Well how did that go? I thought there were some good things, but this and this didn't feel so good.' And the person might say, 'mmm, I thought that went well, but perhaps you are right about the other bit, and maybe it would be good to go and discuss that with another person, who might have some ideas, what do you think?' And the inner supervisor says, 'yes, lets go and discuss this'.

This doesn't happen. Instead the person says, 'let's just forget it'. And that means the signals have to get stronger, and end up with the clients having to do the supervision through a law suit or something.

- Process Work Diplomat (1) (M) (>20 years)

Summary of Findings

All those taking part identified themselves as operating, at least some of the time, from a more inner focused awareness, but there was a wide variation in the way people framed such an experience. Generally the more senior practitioners (with over

20 years of general psychotherapy practice, or specific Process Work practice as a diplomat) saw themselves as using a dual awareness where there was no clear line between an inner and outer focus. Most of the other therapists experienced a shift back and forth between a more direct relating, extroverted, following of clients and a more introverted, sensing, inner direction. Two very experienced Process Work diplomats took this later orientation as their normal approach and one of these workers tended to use a more structured, signal based style, only when they were having difficulties.

Very experienced practitioners were more likely to acknowledge the regularity of unconsciously dropping into a supposedly non therapeutic inner focused state, such as daydreaming or 'blinking out'. Such people generally had a policy of checking how such a 'disturbance' was a part of the therapeutic process rather than feeling self critical or punitive towards such 'unawareness', as described by a number of others. (As was noted above, an interesting feature of this part of the survey was how many people seemed to have difficulty actually answering the question of how often they became inner focused without intending to, perhaps confirming a blind spot in their awareness.) A few (mainly less experienced) practitioners believed that they almost never lost awareness of the client and the therapeutic alliance since they felt so strongly that their task was to remain attentive towards the client.

The following situations were all named as factors leading some therapists to purposely take an inner focused approach:

When clients are:

- Caught in story telling or were very focused in 'Consensus Reality'
- Attacking, frightened or 'defended'
- Feeling intensely, particularly fear, sadness or anger

When therapists are:

- Having difficulty grasping the structure of the client's process
- Having difficulty developing rapport with the client
- Becoming caught in client content rather than process, where the session seems superficial or directionless
- Feeling under attack or agitated for whatever reason
- Overly focused or working too hard to understand or be 'useful'

The difficulties of maintaining or using an inner focused awareness while working with clients mainly concerned a perception of client reactions and the clients' development or personal communication style. The most common anxiety expressed was that clients would perceive the therapist as neglectful and unprofessional if they remained too inward focused. There were a number of other problems, noted by some practitioners that did not involve the client.

Identified problems involving the client (or the therapist's perception of the client) included:

- Extroverted style or culture, in some groups, couples or clients where an inward focus is foreign and disturbing
- Extroverted clients who appeared disconnected from themselves, their feelings, and their inner world – therapists found it harder to maintain an inner focus
- An apparent need in some clients for an intensely focused relating style where they feel neglected, rejected or even abandoned when the therapist takes the focus away from them or the therapeutic relationship – caused an inhibition of therapist's tendency to use an inner focus
- Therapist anxiety that a client will feel annoyed, irritated or neglected if the therapist doesn't maintain a more or less constant attentiveness towards the client and the therapy relationship – inhibition of therapist's tendency to use an inner focus

Identified problems that did not appear to involve the client:

- Therapist self criticism, particularly the concern that they would miss important information or necessary interventions
- Therapist's personal life issues or crises intruding on their thoughts – making a therapeutic defocused inner approach more difficult
- The temptation to use an introverted approach to 'drift pleasantly' but unproductively with the client, through the session
- The temptation to daydream and become inattentive, in the guise of an inward focus – to use the session as a rest or down time from a busy life
- The difficulty making objective assessments of the quality of therapeutic work since an inward focused approach cannot be so easily measured and reviewed

- The power imbalance resulting from interventions arising from an 'intuitive', inward approach that does not have to be otherwise justified— how difficult it becomes for a client to disagree with a therapist's 'intuition'.

The above problems clearly concerned a majority of the therapists in the study, although perceptions of how acceptable the therapist's inward focus will be for clients, seemed much less of a worry to more senior practitioners. It was striking to me how concerned most other therapists were, with clients' reactions and how the need to maintain the therapeutic relationship seemed to often over-ride an inclination to become more inward focused. As has been noted above, fewer respondents seemed aware of, and therefore concerned with, the issues raised in 'problems' not involving client reactions. This last point has significance in training programs and supervision since the quality of therapist's work should ideally be reasonably transparent and we know from the research discussed above, that the accuracy of anyone's intuition is extremely dependent on the 'learning environment' in which it was gained. Furthermore, intuitively gained insights and behaviour often carry a sense of great subjective confidence that is not necessarily related to more 'objective' accuracy.

Most therapists noted that their practice of using an inward focused approach with clients had changed significantly over time, with a general relaxing of the need to remain so outwardly and overtly attentive to clients. A number of experienced workers felt that they had been able to integrate an inward and outer focus so there was less distinction between the two, and more of a seamless weaving of both into one practice.

Issues for training and development arise in this context when several respondents noted their apparently natural pre-training intuitive style was less available to them and less evident, as they grappled with understanding structure, and discovering communication patterns with clients. Only as they became more expert at recognising common themes and only as their learning became more automatic were they able to let go of a rather intense outward focus on clients. This coincided with more confidence in their ability to be with clients and handle reactions to their own (inward focused) style of doing therapy, without feeling inadequate or unprofessional. Training of therapists was thus seen by some people to involve an initial necessary outward focus on signals, structure, technique and attentiveness to the client before more intuitive, introverted approaches could become safely and effectively used. An

alternative view to this was also enunciated with the observation that therapy training programs and exams created distortions in the thinking of therapists, such that, on graduation they are disturbingly less likely to seek outward opinion and feedback on their work. Supervision, and guidance in training, that implicitly include the natural style of trainees and involve an 'inner supervisor's' views such as that advocated by Mindell's '721 Feedback' approach go some way to addressing this concern.

Therapists perceived the gains from an inward orientated approach as enabling them to more accurately ascertain, or connect to:

- Marginalised experiences in both client and therapist
- Internal feeling states in both therapist and client
- Elements of process structure or general therapeutic themes
- Therapeutic images and metaphors
- A deeper therapeutic relationship and more profound therapeutic experiences
- More space and compassion
- Less pressure from an agenda to 'get somewhere'

There were many statements made by therapists that highlight their views on a more inward orientated approach to their work, and their words convey with much more immediacy than the above list, why they value it so highly, even though it remains a frequently challenging stance to adopt. They talk of having a 'gateway of opportunity' where 'something different can come in', where they are 'less caught up in the details of the story' and have a generally 'better sense of the other person'. There is often an experience of 'awe' at a process that seems impersonal and not coming from them - 'like a gift' – where they experience a relief from 'very pressuring goals and an agenda to get somewhere'. Such a relief often creates a sense of 'space and compassion' in the therapist and a 'detached overview', a 'spiritual feeling' where they can congruently say, 'oh yes, the person is struggling with this, but also it's perfect, there is nothing there to do'.

When asked about 'strange or bizarre phenomena' that they may have encountered when taking a more intuitive, introverted approach most therapists tended to downplay their experiences, preferring a pragmatic and more utilitarian attitude, perhaps more humble and private. There was concern among some that they would be misunderstood if they disclosed unusual experiences, particularly so called

psychic phenomena although several people were quite candid about such phenomena occurring. My impression from talking to most people was that many therapists are mildly bemused by such events, attempt to use them in the service of the client and prefer to concentrate on what they see as processes that support the work.

Reviewing the results and the general themes that have emerged, it is clear that using an inward, intuitive approach, at least some of the time, is the norm in most people's practice in this survey, at least within the range of different therapeutic modalities encompassed. (I.e. depth psychological, humanistic or experiential traditions.) Reflecting on differences of practice, therapist experience seems a much more defining variable than therapeutic modality, with seasoned workers generally more comfortable to use an inner focus, with less concern about client reactions. Furthermore such veterans tend to frame their approach as a weaving together of an inner and outer focus rather than using a specific approach in certain circumstances. Training and ethical issues have been highlighted, particularly the need for training therapists to develop sufficient technical skills in following clients and picking up feedback perhaps before using more intuitive approaches. (This view has also been questioned on the basis of a distorting effect that may inhibit graduates from seeking feedback.) An intuitive approach creates a number of ethical issues, not the least of which is the difficulty assessing accuracy and developing transparency in our work, especially when intuition tends to create a sense of confidence in those who rely on it that may, or may not, be well founded.

A full discussion of the implications from this survey (combined with the findings in Part II of this paper) for therapists in training and supervision is outlined in the following concluding chapter.

PART IV

CONCLUSION

Where have we come to at this point and what can we say about intuition and our use of it, when working with the challenges and problems of people we want to help?

After all these words, ideas and explorations, how closer have we come to “more easily catch dream ‘fish’ and sentient ‘waves’”?

Intuition is clearly a broad term encompassing many attributes of our functioning. From the standpoint of cognitive science it represents the mode we use to access unconscious, automatic, parallel processing information systems in our mind. Such processing is only partly accessible to us so that, without training it does not seem as consistent a source for our conscious decision making as our more obvious deliberate reasoning faculties. Furthermore, because such processing is largely dependent on prior passive learning outside our control, the resulting information flows and outcomes are as diverse as the learning environments we have lived through. Nevertheless, depending on such environments, throughout our lives we will become able, if not expert, at a huge range of tasks and, to quote Dr Everett Scott in the ‘Rocky Horror Picture Show’, will ‘know a great deal about a great many things.’ Furthermore, we will have added to our tacitly acquired knowledge and abilities, a more deliberate, conscious learning, either directly from our experience of life or derived through other people and a wide range of media. Where we have had sufficient teaching, practice and accurate feedback we will have developed expertise in areas as diverse as sport, art, academic excellence or spiritual development.

Expertise is linked to intuition in some interesting ways. Almost by definition a true expert will have had a ‘kind’ learning environment that enabled both active and passive learning. Such learning leads to high quality, rapid, automatic decision making, where the outcomes consistently integrate with external conditions. In other words experts have more access to higher quality intuition more rapidly and consistently than novices, leaving their conscious deliberate reasoning free to grasp overall patterns and strategies while they relax, enjoy their work more and develop creative responses - catching dream fish and sentient waves.

Expertise was obviously the main defining variable in the Survey of Therapists' use of an inward focus in their work. Expert practitioners were comfortable to the point where they experienced a seamless weaving between an inward and outward focus, used an inward focus more than they did earlier in the careers, and were less concerned about difficulties. Several of the most senior workers were much more likely to orientate themselves to a 'defocused' 'dual awareness' almost all of the time, confident that this would give them the most useful and accurate information on which to base their responses.

Another feature of the survey was the concern expressed by most of the senior therapists about the tension between developing skills in an outer focus on client signals and possessing an innate inward or intuitive orientation. There was a belief among some therapists that the outward following of signals needed to be developed before an inward, intuitive approach could be safely and effectively used. This is consistent with training in many different fields where a step by step, overt learning process, gradually gives way to more intuitive, automatic responses in the advanced trainee. This may represent the gradual migration of deliberate learning to automatic processing where a trainee's 'working memory' can now access sufficient knowledge automatically. Their conscious attention is again freed to attend to an overview, and the development of creative possibilities.

What then of 'Lucidity', 'Sentience' and the use of intuition in PW?

It is possible that 'Lucidity' is both a learned skill and a specialised state of mind - a development in intuition itself, sufficient to enable the practitioner to access a state beyond our normal tendency to name, number, label and separate aspects of our world. Does this let us connect to what Wilbur has called the 'No Boundary' state, where knowledge of ourselves, others and the world becomes implicit rather than derived from sources supposedly separate from ourselves? Does Lucidity result in us directly and consciously accessing the world of parallel information processing in a reversal of the usual situation where knowledge gradually migrates from deliberate learning and working memory to automatic processing? Is such a meditative state partly the direct awareness of our parallel processing mind, the same inherent 'No Boundary' mind that anyway exists in all of us all the time but usually outside of our awareness or access? Paradoxically, remaining in such a state requires effort, holding a deliberate defocused, 'clouded' awareness, partly because our usual mode of conscious attention, focusing on one thing at a time, otherwise moves stepwise, linearly, from one signal to the next. Concentrating on remaining 'clouded' means we can be both *conscious and open* to the world of parallel processing, the 'No

Boundary' world. Subjectively this feels like an altered state, much as any new and strong experience will result in us feeling 'altered'. Only later can we go back with our analytical, naming, separating dreamland or CR level of consciousness, and think about the meaning and implications of such raw experience.

If Lucidity is an advanced training in a specialised intuition, then what are the ways that we can develop this skill, and indeed other intuitive abilities useful in PW? Using the criteria cited above for the development of expertise we might look at the sort of learning environments that would foster high quality implicit knowledge. We might need to spend time around those who are proficient in this way of operating, becoming students, apprentices, and novices around those who live this truth to a high degree in their lives. We would need to seek feedback from such people, from our peers and indeed most importantly from our own signals that inform, guide and correct our learning, both deliberate and passive. We would need to practice assiduously, using such approaches as much as possible, testing them out in the everyday world, as much as the more specialised worlds of our learning communities. According to the research and theories outlined above, such behaviour would give us the best chance to allow deliberate learning to migrate, join its powerful cousin, tacitly gained knowledge, and together create expertise and thus high quality intuition *in this domain*.

There are a number of theme and issues that have emerged in this paper, concerning intuition and the training or development of therapists and Process Workers. These are listed below as statements inviting further discussion and reflection.

Intuition is a broad term encompassing a range of mental processes and functions.

It is commonly accessed via introversion or an inner focus or the use of feelings or 'sensing', at least initially, and there can often be a reluctance to consciously embrace the initial uncertainty of intuitive approaches.

Using intuition tends to allow possibilities in thought, imaginative leaps of awareness, empathy, increased confidence, inspiration and enthusiasm.

Intuitive insights and judgements, as well as intuitive actions or responses are usually based on 'Prior Learning Environments' (PLE) - highly variable life experiences *plus* any deliberate learning/training previously engaged in.

The quality of any intuition will be absolutely dependent on the quality of various PLE from which it was formed in any particular 'domain'.

Deliberate learning is initially resource intensive, difficult to retain and often uncomfortable for a variety of reasons, not least of which is the need to tolerate mistakes and a sense of incompetence. This is particularly so in areas of social functioning where much of what we do is taken for granted, implicit, intuitive. However with supportive training and repeated practice deliberately learned knowledge, skills and awareness will migrate to long term memory and become embedded as implicit knowledge, part of our intuitive awareness.

The implications of the above in the context of Psychotherapy and Process Work may be the following:

Initially most trainees' intuition will be based on previous social learning environments, highly variable in quality. Some trainees will have a tendency to use an inner focus more, and rely on tacit knowledge (intuition) more than overt signals or sensations. While the effectiveness of such reliance will be mostly related to the quality of their PLE, a crucial possible variable may be the trainees' capacity to accurately assess feedback from others. (See below)

Many trainees may experience some discordance with new ways of assessing and responding to others, including clients, particularly when they cannot so easily rely on their previous intuitive assumptions. Developing a new overt awareness and practice of signal based skills may often mean 'unlearning' deeply embedded patterns upon which they have previously relied for social competence and security.

Because intuition is based on learning environments the quality of any training environment is crucial to deliberately learnt skills/knowledge gradually migrating to implicit knowledge. Furthermore because automatic learning is also taking place regardless of our intent, training environments need to be aware of the messages and practices becoming automatically embedded via role modelling, non verbal cues, background implicit themes and atmosphere etc. This embedding occurs alongside any migration of deliberately learned skills, and because it is automatic, requiring no effort on the subject's part, can be all the more impacting.

Ideally, 'kind' training environments need to provide timely, accurate, consequential but non-punitive feedback to trainees, with maximum opportunity to practice. One example of this might include the regular use of live practice sessions or audio or video tapes, examined with an empathic but rigorous and experienced coach trainer. Over time with such learning environments and repeated

practice, hard won deliberately learned knowledge can become implicit – intuition now embedded and reliable, to both assess patterns and produce effective responses

Although the above is one approach to training intuition, a more fundamental skill may offer a distinct advantage over the need for a trainee to let go of previously important intuitive knowledge. (That is, implicit knowledge automatically or deliberately learned in one context now being applied in a different environment.) The capacity to accurately and effectively respond to client feedback means that intuitive responses, learnt from any source can be used much earlier in a trainee's development. With this one, albeit challenging task mastered, the trainee can more safely use intuitions as possibilities and quickly drop those that are inaccurate or inappropriate for the context, depending on feedback. Similarly it may not be too simplistic to argue that in one step therapists gain a quality assurance measure for any of their intuitive responses. Rather than imposing some arbitrary judgement on what implicitly learnt intuitions are satisfactory, quality assessment can be based on rigorous skill development in monitoring and acting on feedback.

The learning of this basic skill might mean that a trainee can be more supported in their various natural styles or idiosyncratic approaches to working with clients, including their social intuitions from PLE. Intuition can continue to be used throughout the trainees' course, offering numerous advantages such as the ability to think in possibilities, use metaphors or imaginative leaps, inspiring approaches etc.

Such early support of the trainees inherent implicit knowledge means there may be less risk of distorting an inner supervisory process with an inner critic, a risk that has significant implications for the later practice of the therapist who may more readily discuss disturbances in the therapy with others if they have already developed an effective relationship with an inner supervisory figure.

The skill or metaskill needed to accurately monitor and respond to feedback needs to be reviewed in detail, since it is such an important foundation stone for the work of supporting a developing therapist's learning. Can an attitude of humility and openness be learnt, let alone taught? How can we most inspire the transparency of a dispassionate witness role within the trainee that is a necessary prerequisite to any skill in picking up feedback? Role modelling, direct teaching, monitoring through videos and audio tapes may all have a part to play, but in the final analysis, it may not be completely controllable by any teacher, reliant instead on the trainee's 'character' itself hugely affected by PLE.

Further Training Issues Worthy of Research and Discussion

Intuition needs to be further defined and elucidated, as a term covering different strategies to understand client processes and unfold them. There are many aspects of intuition used in therapy and PW - clarifying what we mean by these different aspects will allow clearer guidelines and discussion on what is possible with this remarkable gift. For example the use of implicit knowledge and the means we acquire it, or the ability to access inspiring perspectives and metaphors with which to frame experience both arise from 'intuition'. Intuition can allow a sudden insight into patterns, or provide a pathway for rapid tangential tracking of possibilities (lateral thinking) that can then be checked against client feedback. 'Mixed' intuitive states of mind that include simultaneous feeling, sensing, and 'knowing' provide rich sources to draw from, for clients and therapists. Intuitive sensing also allows a hierarchical ranking of possible directions or responses in therapy – what direction seems to have the most 'juice', the most energy, out of a range of possibilities, and how connected, flowing and creative is the therapeutic relationship at any one time.

In a similar vein it may be worthwhile for trainees and supervisees to clarify their more dominant style of practice when it comes to either introverted and/or intuitive approaches. Unfolding our already acquired implicit knowledge and responses mindfully, may allow us to discover new directions to follow, rather than assuming that this source, in its 'raw' form, is always 'right' for our contemporary environment.

Identifying therapeutic contexts in which intuition and/or an inner focus can be most effectively used, as well as teaching on its difficulties and pitfalls could be added to training programs. Based on therapist responses on the use of an inner/intuitive focus in the above survey, the following situations may be worthy of further research and focus for training/supervision:

When clients seem caught in 'story telling' particularly when focused in 'Consensus Reality' or when they are in strong feeling states, particularly anger, fear and sadness, or if they seem attacking of the therapist.

When therapists are having trouble grasping the structure of the client's process, developing rapport, or getting caught in content of the client's story. Also when the session seems superficial or directionless or if the therapist is 'working too hard' to understand or be useful.

Of particular note is the frequent concern expressed, even by some experienced therapists, that clients will not easily tolerate the therapist becoming more inwardly focused. Supporting therapists to explore this concern and practice ways of attending to the situation may be of great value in improving the use of intuition since an inner focus is an important means for most of us to gain access to

this function. Part of this exploration could be about the effects of client expectations and the 'inter-subjective' field effect upon therapists, particularly with clients who themselves seem 'disconnected' or dissociated, or who operate in a very extroverted or seemingly 'needy' manner.

Supervisors and trainers need also to attend to potential blind spots in therapist awareness around the power inherent in using the 'privileged' information arising from intuition, the source of which cannot be easily scrutinised. They also need to help therapists remain alert to 'daydreaming' or 'drifting pleasantly' in client sessions under the guise of an inner focus. This latter task must not create a deepening of some inner critic role. There needs to be, instead, an awareness-raising, 'inner supervisor' who can support the therapist to remain transparent to themselves during sessions. Many therapists in this survey already tended to a self-critical, punitive attitude when they noticed themselves unconsciously disconnecting from the client, and were less likely than the very experienced therapists, to enquire dispassionately into what was useful about such awareness.

Teaching therapists more about the research and current understandings of intuition will enable more of us to understand its benefits and limitations, helping supervisors to be alerted to the issues raised above. Further research could also look at the perceived gains of using an inner/intuitive approach in therapy, in particular how much such a perception equates with effective following and responding to clients. (As measured by tape recorded sessions, 'objective' or standardised outcomes, client satisfaction etc.)

Overt teaching in the use of intuition might become more part of core teaching in psychotherapy and Process Work, particularly since it seems such a widely practiced approach, increasingly used by therapists as they become more experienced. This fact and reality of intuition as an access to implicit knowledge gained through automatic learning, or migration from deliberate learning, means that intuition in its many forms may require much more overt focus in training and supervision in the future.

Final Thoughts

As we now know, automatic learning leading to implicit knowledge is occurring continuously in all of us, virtually all the time, at least at some level. Nowhere is this more so than in the emotional encounters between each other where communication signals flow back and forwards in the 'inter-subjective' space between us as we interact. As we have noted above, central to understanding the basis of this space is

the Limbic brain, the seat of our emotional and social intelligence, the very essence of what makes us 'heartful' humans, (even as our Neo-cortex is the seat of our ability to reason, make language, and think abstractly.) From an early age we attach and depend on our caregivers, usually our parents, and our limbic system is affected by almost everything they stand for and do. There are now many famous studies in attachment by Bowlby and others, that outline how such imprinting occurs, and how damaging is the lack of 'empathic attunement' when we are developing. What of the ongoing attachment we make to others even as adults and how does this affect our development? One area where this is apparent is in any relationship where one person attempts to help another work out difficulties or challenges in their life or is in the role of teacher, or healer. Colloquially, in the Western world, this is often known as counselling or psychotherapy but these settings are merely the formalised extension of many other contexts in which humans attempt to help each other through talking or other interactions.

One implication of the limbic system is that the results of such human interactions become contingent upon the people involved. Our ability to connect to one another, to affect and be affected, is based on the limbic tendency to attach and imprint, a tendency millions of years in the making – an ancient, slow learning through repetition, in the context of an engaging relationship. Just as Socrates was 'unable' to teach a rich man's son because the boy did not love him, so we are only able to support change in anyone to the extent that there can be a mutual attachment, that is to say 'connection' present between us. Only in this context will our neural attractors slowly alter in self reinforcing cycles, where our physical brain structure encodes lessons learned and memories formed. Only one other process has perhaps equal power to this one on one bond – the multiple bonds that are formed in community, when we chose to spend time interacting in groups where certain values and ideas are enacted. Such groups, initially our biological 'tribe' or other families of origin, have an extraordinary power to transform us through the emotional importance we place on them and the learning environments they provide. The fundamental process of knowledge gained passively through learning environments, coupled with our limbic inheritance and the power of neural networks, may be the basis of how groups and other individuals operate to change us all, and why community is the most important and potent 'change agent' around. Actively and consciously choosing the community we identify with, being challenged and loved within such a group, with all its imperfections and problems, gives us the best chance we have to develop beyond the narrow confines of our automatic, self reinforcing habits.

Humans are changing the world we live in so fast that the environments we find ourselves in will not remain the same as the ones we tacitly learned from. This means that many of the more sophisticated intuitions we have developed may have a relatively short shelf life. We cannot necessarily rely on them in new and changing environments. We need to remember that our intuitions are based on our automatic learning anchored to the past and, crucially, that they do not allow us to learn from what we don't see or perceive. Because our conscious attention is the most important scarce resource that we have, it becomes crucial in such a rapidly changing world to actively manage our thinking process if we are to maintain and develop our adaptability and thus our capacity to thrive. This may be a life or death matter, and is certainly a crucial determinant of the quality of our life. Mindless living means we will operate at relatively low level, driven by the decisions of others, and the random forces moving around us. Becoming mindful offers us freedom from such a prison and, as many spiritual teachers have said for thousands of years, gives us the chance to lift ourselves above the suffering inherent in the absence of true choice.

So, finally, how do we more easily catch dream fish and sentient waves?

Perhaps, after all our efforts, through the power of entanglement, limbic resonance, and tacit learning, the fish find us, and the waves catch us - *if we let them*. If we can let relationship do its work and, through the security of accurately perceiving feedback, let ourselves be fully ourselves, the underlying flow and structure will feed us, and take us where we need to go. The likelihood that tacit learning and limbic resonance are as much the engine of psychological growth and change as deliberate learning and the procurement of new information, has profound implications for therapists and any of us interested in supporting such movement. Remaining aware of such powerful processes, working largely independently of our moment to moment intent is perhaps to be prepared to let their magic influence us, and our work. The alternative may be to remain in a view where deliberate, explicit learning by the 'client' becomes the only goal, distorting and obstructing the healing entanglement and resonance between two souls mutually affecting each other. Such a potential crisis is, I believe, often present in modern psychotherapy and is poignantly reflected in Donovan's famous song.

*"In the chilly hours and minutes of uncertainty
I want to be
In the warm heart of your loving mind
To feel you all around me and to take your hand, along the sand
Ah but I may as well try and catch the wind.*

*When sundown pales the sky, I want to hide awhile
Behind your smile
And everywhere I'd look, your eyes I'd find
For me to love you now
Would be the sweetest thing, would make me sing
Ah but I may as well try and catch the wind.*

*When the rain has hung the leaves with tears
I want you near, to kill my fears
To help me leave all my blues behind
Standing in your heart is where I want to be
And long to be
Ah but I may as well try and catch the wind."*

Ironically it is the ability to connect to our deeper 'parallel mind', the basis of our intuition, and link with each other through the magic of limbic resonance that may finally allow us to catch the wind of dreaming processes just as a sailor trims the sails to ride nature's sublime forces. Donovan was only half right in his lyrical melancholy – we may indeed try, and it may indeed be possible, to at least temporarily achieve such a state and be effortlessly carried forward.

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