

# *Shifting States of Consciousness: The Re-Creation of the Self Approach to Transformation*

by Jon Eisman

## Introduction to Falling Awake

In my article on *The Categories of Wounding*, I outlined the three kinds of psychological woundedness that clients present, based on the arena of neural activation and patterns that are formed through experience. The three are the Neuro-logical wounding of Attachment displacement and Trauma; the Fragmentation of Consciousness; and what I call Derivative Experiential Content [DEC]. I described them this way:

*Neurological* wounding refers to issues of self that are specifically lodged in the Autonomic Nervous System (trauma and attachment issues; Perry & Pollard, et. al, 1996; Karen, 1994) and must be resolved neurologically (as opposed to developmentally). *Fragmentation of Consciousness* is the entranced identifications of Self that we form to adapt to stuck experiential situations. And *Derivative Experiential Content* refers to all the attitudes, behaviors, habituated perceptions, posture, gestures, impulses, moods, etc. that are generated by our neurological and fragmentational wounding (Ledoux, 1996).

All of these are held by *neural patterns* in the brain and body: habituated collections of nerve cells that over time have formed structural and functional associations that generate particular experiences (Siegal, 1999). Patterns interact to create neural networks, and so a variety of experiences become linked (e.g., tightening the shoulders, feeling fearful and having the thought “They won’t let me...”).

These patterns are “use-dependent,” so that the more a neural sequence fires, the stronger the links between those neurons become, and the more likely they are to fire together again. Use a particular pattern, and its presence and tendency to fire is reinforced (Morgan, 2004). Stop using it, and it begins to diminish, and the experiences of that pattern (the feelings, sensations, thoughts, impulses, etc.) become less likely to occur. In this way, in high school, I learned to read and understand Latin through repetition,

and then lost my Latin over time when I stopped using it in any regular kind of way.

It is this particular neural fact - that sustained use reinforces the likelihood of an experience - that creates the kinds of woundedness that clients report as having control over their lives, and that psychotherapy processes seek to transform.

In the *Re-Creation of the Self (R-CS) Model of Human Systems*, the primary form of woundedness addressed is the Fragmentation of Consciousness. R-CS holds that “to manage difficult or impossible situations, the Self divides itself into substantial and consistent sub-selves, each a distinct state of consciousness and identity, resulting in a complex, confusing and painful sense of personal fragmentation” (Eisman, 2005).

Each of these “self-states” is a neural network, comprised of specific thought patterns, somatic tensions, postures and impulses, moods, etc., and formed to embrace a particular limited orientation to being in the world: the seemingly undeniable fact of one’s unlovability, say, or the strategic need to charm others in order to be liked. R-CS identifies four general kinds of fragmented self-states: “*Hurt Selves*, holding the experience of being somehow inadequate or shameful or fearful; *Spirits in Exile*, containing the wish for a desired experience, but not daring to pursue it; *Strategic Selves*, steering the person away from pursuing specific experiences to avoid the Hurt; and *Survivor Selves* continuing to lobby for a person’s right to be oneself fully” (Eisman, 2005b). Self-states form around each significant wounding experience, leading a person to have multiple internal identities, a veritable “inner committee” (Eisman, 1989) of Self.

Underneath these fragmented aspects of Selfhood, however, is an innate, spiritually based blueprint and drive towards Selfhood called the *Organic Self*, which both recognizes our basic connectedness to all other life, and also has the specific purpose of expressing and maintaining the unique individual qualities of each person. In fact, the Organic Self is actually the only permanent aspect of Selfhood, the default mode of Self, if you will. It is the Organic Self that

puts itself into the various trances of the self-states, in its attempt to reconcile seemingly impossible experiential situations (such as, say, both holding a core sense of lovability and being ignored by one's mother. . . .)

Unable to successfully free herself from this pain by remaining true to her instinctive wholeness, the child resolves this bind by fragmenting her consciousness. Instead of maintaining a single identity as a whole self, the Organic Self puts itself into a series of trances, each trance, or self-state, representing and holding an aspect of the stuck situation (Eisman, 2005b).

Neurologically speaking, we have a neural network that holds the collective, expansive experiences of being in our Organic Selves, and we have, over time, developed parallel neural networks that generate the more confined experiences of our fragmentation. When any of these networks is activated, we experience the specific experiential components - the specific postures, thoughts, attitudes, etc. - around which those patterns were formed (Fosha, 2002).

Hakomi, and most methods of therapy, engage the *derivative experiential content* of these patterns, and work to evoke, embody, illuminate, explain and transform this content. In Hakomi, we begin by creating a loving, accepting, compassionate, therapeutic relationship to allow the client's unconscious to trust us as a container for their experience and core material (Lewis, Amini & Lannon, 2000). We then assist the client to immerse in and study his present experiences (the derivative experiential content), as a way to discover the core formative memories that have created limited, habituated beliefs. We then offer a missing experience, which stands in contrast to the habitual one the client expects to have, and so provide a new way to organize one's orientation to life (Kurtz, 1990).

In neurological terms, we are gaining the client's trust so that we can safely activate the neural patterns holding their perception of woundedness; allow them to feel the raw, unfiltered pain of their core neural pattern that generates all the somatic/emotional/cognitive content; and then provide an experience not contained in or derived from this core pattern, thereby requiring the client to use a different or new sequence of neural activation to hold this new experience (Shore, 1994). The newness of this event is what generates the sense of *aha!* that inspires clients, and forms the basis of what Hakomi calls *transformation*. We then go on to work carefully with the client to integrate this new pattern, because, as we know, all such patterns are use-dependent, and the more the client uses the pattern (practices the new belief and generates the new set of thoughts, emotions, postures, etc.), the more solid and habituated the new neural network becomes. Voila! Changes happen!!

In examining this highly effective process, we can note an interesting, almost mechanistic curiosity. Because we orient around our identifications with experiences, we tend to

regard them as real - that is, the fact of experiencing an experience (feeling an emotion, having a certain thought) makes us believe in the absolute quality of that event. If I feel sad often, I must be a sad person; sadness is part of my make-up in the same way that being short or tall or blonde or dark haired may be.

When we look at our experiences from the neurological perspective, however, we can see that if we are sad often, it does not in itself mean that we are a sad person, but only that we have a habituated tendency to activate the particular neural pattern that generates the experience of sadness. Such sadness does not exist until those neurons fire in sequence together. Because we fire them frequently, we assign fact and identity to them, as if there were some reservoir of sadness inevitably within us. In fact, there is no such reservoir, only the frequently or even consistently employed ability to generate that feeling.

Reifying the content of the networks - making them into concrete entities - is the mistake made by earlier practitioners of the expressive therapies. Catharsis was seen as a way to drain such conceptual reservoirs, and, of course, ex-pressing that felt pain had a definite momentary satisfaction to it. But it did little to dismantle the generative neural pattern - in fact, we can hypothesize that such catharsis provides repetition of use, and so more likely serves to reinforce the pattern. Ron Kurtz once described to a group of us a client he had seen who had been doing Primal Scream for nine years! In that client's very first session with Ron, he achieved a sense of peacefulness that he had not previously experienced in all that time, not by wailing and writhing, but through Ron's gently embracing the distraught, actual inner needs of the client.

This example leads us to an equally important perspective: In the same way there is no reservoir of sadness, there is also no inevitably present inner child; only, again, a complex neural network capable of and habituated towards generating the experiences of feeling young, holding one's body in a youthful way, etc (Eisman, 1989). The limbic feeling state of being a child, the skewed perceptual orientations (things look bigger, language gets simpler) and so on, make us believe that we do indeed have a younger self lodged within us; but the physiological truth is that our inner child, no matter how tenderly or not we may feel him or her or them, is actually one more momentary eruption of our incredible experience-making machinery.

All of this clarifies the true nature of transformation: change is perceived when we locate in (i.e., activate) a neural pattern different from the one we expect. If we trust someone, and they do something we feel betrays us, we form a new neural pattern around that behavior, and we move from confidence to suspicion in our dealings with them. In therapy, change happens when a neural network parallel to the old limiting one, becomes the new staging ground for the client's experiences.

As stated above, Hakomi and most therapies do this by assuming the validity of the experiential content, and evoking it to provide an arena for a parallel so-called “missing experience”. In R-CS, the notion is held that such parallel networks *already exist*: the innate, always present Organic Self. R-CS therefore pursues change not by engaging fully the experiential content of the limiting patterns [the narratives, the tensions, the feelings, the memories, etc.], but by assessing the state of consciousness present that is generating the content (the *who*, as well as the *what*), and then moving as quickly as possible to the already existing parallel neural track of the Organic Self. The content of the limiting pattern is engaged only enough to allow the client to recognize that this pattern generates a state of experience that is unpleasant, and so become motivated to seek a more preferred state and set of experiences.

We can see a similar process involved in our relation to dreams. While we are dreaming, we are located in a particular set of neural patterns and immersed in the experiential content those patterns are creating. The dream seems real to us. When we awake, however, we move into a different state of consciousness that is engendered by a different neural network. From this waking state, we recall the experience of the dream differently - now it does not seem real, now we are not able to fly, or need to find our way through a vaguely familiar train station - now it is “just a dream,” and we believe in the reality of our present state.

In this way, attending to the content of our fragmented self-states is like trying to understand and manage the elements of a dream, as opposed simply to waking up. The thoughts, gestures, feelings, etc. that the client presents, the sense that he or she has a reservoir of sadness, or an ignored inner child, are all part of the dream of those fragmented self-states, and, in this context, working with them constitutes dream management. In contrast, R-CS pursues “falling awake.” It seeks to engage those experiences just enough for the client to realize he would prefer to wake up, and then, rather than helping the client learn more about the nuances of that dream - all the experiential content held in that neural network - it pursues the immediate shifting of consciousness from the contracted trances of the fragmented selves back into the already present, expansive and experientially preferred state of the Organic Self.

This orientation towards preference is essential to this process. It is based on the perception that the Self’s main mission is to prefer and pursue, at any moment, the next self-relevant experience that gives it pleasure of some sort. This impulse towards preferred experience is called the *Organic Wish* (Eisman, 2005b). It applies both to simple momentary urges like “I’m laying on my left side, and now I think I’ll turn onto my right,” as well as complex, multi-year projects like, “I think I’ll become a therapist and go to school for 36 years...”

In Hakomi terms, the Organicity of the client is seeking a preferred state, and so pursues therapy as a means to that end. Hakomi engages the existing state, gradually working towards a parallel experience. R-CS directly employs this *Organistic Impulse*, and allows the client to recognize immediately the nightmare quality of their habitual networks. R-CS, for example, rather than explore the reasons the client has for coming to therapy, might right away pursue the aspect of the client’s Self who believes she deserve something better.

Also essential here is the distinction between the derivative experiential content and the trancelike *states of consciousness* from which (along with trauma) such content derives. I call these *feeling states*, since they combine both the emotional and kinesthetic senses of the word “feeling” (*I feel happy; I feel tense*) along with the distinct qualities of states of consciousness. Feeling states are primarily limbic; more implicit than explicit, more mood than concept, more impulse than plan, more instinct than sensation. We experience them more as a kind of bodily knowing, a sense of being, a mood-framed “world,” than as a well articulated phenomenon (Eisman, 2005b).

In shifting from one neural network to another, what is important is not the embracing and clarification of the details of the states, but the felt *preferred* sense of the feeling states themselves. In a debate about flavor, the question would not be whether you like chocolate or vanilla, but whether you like talking about flavor. In therapy, not whether you are lovable or not, but how do you feel when you are processing each of those options. That is, when you are immersed in the feeling state of the perceived reality that you are not lovable, do you like existing this way - would it be ok with you if you were always feeling this way? When you are in the feeling state of *I deserve to be loved*, how is the overall sense of being in that place - do you like it or not? Which way of continuing as yourself would you like to sustain?

Often with clients I will ask them to decide the following; for the next five minutes, would you like to be massaged, or to hit yourself in the head with a hammer? Everyone, of course, votes for the massage. Then, as we continue to work, I’ll ask them to notice carefully whether having such and such a thought, or holding their body a certain way, or keeping a certain image in mind, etc. feels like a massage or a hammer to them. Not whether those experiences are important or valid or urgent or to what they lead, but what is the preferential quality of the feeling state - massage or hammer - that they find themselves in when experiencing those events. In this way, we can become clearer about our habits of hammering ourselves, and begin to orient towards experientially preferred feeling states, rather than debating the specific content of those states.

Of course, our varied experiences may not be quite so simple or black and white. Just as we may enjoy both

chocolate and vanilla, so having a certain thought or emotion may require deeper investigation to become clear, as the word Hakomi states, about where we stand in relation to that particular realm. Inevitably, however, we will eventually be able to discover our preference for experience. And the more painful and limiting an experience, the more black and white the choice will seem. In those cases where an experienced is mixed, and contains both preferred and aversive elements (living with teenage children; for example), it becomes necessary to sort out which pieces are preferred and which require change. We'll discuss this further later in the article.

Because our fragmented states were created solely to hold a single though often complex perspective, it is impossible to argue against that perspective while in that state; there is just no file on anything else, or, to put it another way, there is no neural pattern in that state that can hold a different perspective. So arguing vanilla to the chocolate network is hopeless. In fact, much of what clients present is the stalemate between their self-states; the *I'm unlovable* network counterpointing endlessly the *I deserve to be loved* network. When we invite a client to notice her relationship to this stalemate, neither network has the capacity for self-reflection (only, again, self-declaration of its narrow perspective). To respond to the request, the client must engage a *parallel network* - one organized around noticing and not preaching. In this way, the closed system of the limiting neural network is "jumped", to use Ron Kurtz's term (Kurtz, 1990), and the client is now organizing experience from a different set of neural structures.

Again, essential here is that this new, parallel network will inaugurate a different feeling state in the person. The dueling feeling states of, say, *unlovable depressiveness* and the bittersweet helplessness of *deserving-but-not-having* are suddenly replaced by the optimistic, self-supportive expansiveness of investigating what feels best to oneself. It is essential to the process here that the client be directed, in the moment, to noticing the experiential fact of this more expanded feeling state, because such awareness alerts the client to the dream-trench of the previous trances, and so allows for disidentification with them and their content. If not, the old patterns will quickly reestablish their habitual control of the senses, and the client will return, yet again, to their automatic world of internal struggle. If aware of the feeling state of this parallel network, the client can then, again, recognize which is a hammer and which the message, and will continue to be motivated to catch themselves when they downshift into limiting self-states.

In this way, using mindfulness as a "reference for the preference" (Eisman, 2005b) ultimately requires the client to make an existential commitment to his or her own Selfhood - to choose, moment by moment, whether to massage or hammer oneself. Rather than feeling a victim of one's history, the client is inspired to take responsibility,

fully in the present, for the quality of experience that she has.

R-CS describes various avenues of, or techniques for, assisting this shift in states to happen. Some are verbal, some are somatic, some interactive. All seek to have the client disidentify with fragmented, contracted states and experiences, and to re-identify with their expansive wholeness. All presume the already existent presence of this wholeness (however unpracticed that state may be). In fact, the mere choice of the client to consult a professional in order to seek something better demonstrates this: it is not the client's shame or fear or depression that drives him or her to our offices, but a parallel aspect of themselves that stands apart from their pain and wishes to experience life differently - basically, from a different, preferred feeling state.

Another way of framing this is to consider both the limitations and resources of the client. Clients want to transform their limitations, and this desire itself is an indication of the resource within them. R-CS holds that the presence of resource within clients, even the most seemingly fragile and "damaged," is always present and available. Extreme fragility does not mean diminished actual innate resource; it only means an extremely entrenched set of neural patterns, enabling a diminished sense of confidence in, availability of, and connection to those resources. The tendency to slip into those fragile patterns consistently does not render the parallel expansive patterns any less present or real; only less used. So, R-CS says, let's use them, and use them as soon as we can.

Of course, in an article of this length, we can only describe briefly some of these avenues for shifting, but hopefully it will provide the reader a basic schema from which you can experiment. All of them adapt Hakomi elements: a grounding in the Principles; an orientation to embodied experience, and not just insights; the mindful study of present experience; and various adaptations of specific Hakomi techniques such as Contact, Tracking, and Accessing Directives and Questions in a 4-Step format (contact experience; assure mindfulness; immerse the client in the full felt sense of the experience; have them study the experience for details, meaning or what it leads to).

Among these shifting methods are:

1. Through embodying the state that emerges while feeling loving
  2. Through embodying the state that emerges when feeling Longing for something better (referencing the preference)
  3. Through the embodiment of the feeling state of any present expansive experience (hope, joy, curiosity, generosity, etc.)
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4. Through pursuing the half-full frame imbedded within a half-empty perception
5. Through pursuing the expansive payoff of a contractive experience
6. Through pursuing the impulse towards Organic Movement
7. Through embracing the Absolutes underlying fragmented behaviors

Each way to assist in the shifting of states is described below.

### **Embodying the State that Emerges while Feeling Loving**

In this technique, we direct clients to feel their Lovingness, because Lovingness is inherently expansive and Organic. We might invite them to imagine someone they care about (summoning the image of their children often works well), or some place they enjoy (the mountains, the beach. . .), or a favorite activity (dancing, poetry, kindness). We might ask them to “radiate” connectedness or caring, or to feel compassionate towards someone or some thing (starving people in Africa; the environment). We might access the image and/or feeling of an icon that represents Lovingness (an untarnished and untarnishable jewel, an unquenchable flame, an angel dwelling within and without), and have them radiate from there. Or we might ask them to summon their *wish* for Lovingness: the wish to be loved, or to love someone, or to live in a loving world.

In any case, though the subject and therefore the content of Lovingness may have associations with contracted or fragmented states, the actual presently felt experience of the Lovingness itself is, by definition, always expansive in nature. By directing the client to feel the state they are in while actually feeling their Lovingness, we can help them embody the feeling state of their innate wholeness. And from here, we can have them recognize the fact of the Self who is able to generate and perceive this state. That is, we do not just want them to have a good experience of love, we want them to recognize the source of that love as the innate fact of themselves.

As with all R-CS transformational approaches, we must track carefully for the resurgence of the fragmented states and their perspectives, and be careful to pursue the expansive feeling state desired. A client may be willing to summon an image of his son, for example, but that image may quickly also evoke his guilt at being absent so often. It is important for the therapist to gently but firmly direct the client to return to the initial, loving state that first

summoned the image, and to have the client immerse fully in that network.

We can then work to have them shift into this state at will, and to stabilize and apply the feeling state and the inherent state of Selfhood in everyday situations (more on this later).

### **Following the Longing (referencing preference)**

In this approach, we utilize the hammer and massage notion of having the client become directly aware of the quality of his or her feeling state, and then seek a preferred one. Though of course all techniques are never linear and predictable, the general sequence of this approach is as follows: have the client embody fully and mindfully their present limiting experience; then ask him or her or them to notice if they wish it were different - if they *long* for something better. By locating in the longing, which is not part of the complaint network, the client, as described above, has already shifted into, and is now momentarily identifying with, the expansive side of their world.

Along the way, there are many other subtle pieces employed to achieve this shift: We embrace and align with any ambivalence, defensiveness, self-protection, etc.; we radiate certainty that the client is indeed already whole; we help them find a more foundational experience of truth and wholeness in their sense of core being, and so on.

Once in the expansive realm, we work to solidify the subtle paradigm shift in orientation, and what they are now invested in and identifying with: To have them realize, immerse in and study that this is a preferred *feeling state*, parallel to the *content* of the story or issue. We help them grasp that this shift in feeling state has taken place, and that they like being here better: *ie.*, have them recognize their preference.

Next, we work to stabilize this state as an ongoing way of being: an always available and preferred state of Self. We integrate this new state with their everyday lives. In addition, we have to help them recognize when they are in the process of, or have already shifted back into, a limited, habitual, fragmented state. In fact, this part of the process is actually the most time-consuming. The old habits are so strongly entrenched, that most people automatically return to these limited states right away. It’s fairly easy to get anyone to shift; the hard part is having them sustain the new state. It becomes the therapist’s job to “sheepdog” the client, gathering up aspects of Self as they stray from the expansive herd, and helping them shift back into wholeness and preferred states. In doing so, we activate the use-dependent process, and the more we assist the client to use and develop a preferred state, the sooner the preference becomes the default orientation.

## Pursuing a Half-Full Frame within A Half-Empty Perception

Finally, we have the client assess the original presenting problem from this preferred state. Like consulting an Oracle, the new state will have an expanded, open, inclusive perspective, and can provide wiser and more holistic counsel to the person than their old, contracted and agenda-driven trance states could. A co-worker who had been seen as annoying may now evoke a wave of compassion, or a terrifying encounter in the forest might now be viewed as a learning experience. A woman who had been driving herself to distraction trying to decide about staying in school or dropping out discovered from her more expansive state that what she really needed to do was to commit more fully to each action that she took; school or not school, didn't matter - her real interest lay in investing fully in whatever she did (yes, she stayed in school).

### Embodying a Present Expansive Experience

In this technique, rather than embody the limitation and seek its opposite, we track immediately for any expression of expansiveness or wholeness in the client (hope, confidence, clarity, happiness, freedom, determination, generosity, etc.). We then have them fully and exclusively embody this experience, and notice the felt sense of Self in the expansiveness, first as the experience itself (*"feel your determination"*) and then more generally (*"feel how you are someone who is determined"*). We then work to expand this feeling into the awareness and presence of a generalized expansive state of Self, usually around the pleasure and then the truth of the state (*"let yourself feel how good this place or way of being is. And let yourself decide: is this true, is this actually YOU who is feeling this way?"*)

From there we have them *identify* with this state as a fact of being themselves (*"so just be this you, the you who feels good and is determined and knows your truth . . ."*), and then as before, work to stabilize this identity and also use it as an oracle for present life concerns.

Here's a dramatic example, from a client I worked with. A 30-ish male, he had been struggling for a long time with a very tumultuous marriage. He came in one day, sat down and told me, with great presence and determination, that he had decided once and for all: He was going to kill his wife! My response to him: *"It must feel really good to be so clear . . ."* At first startled by my reply, he soon acknowledged that it did feel good. We then pursued embodying the felt state of clarity - not referencing being clear about killing his wife, just the absolute state of being clear. This eventually led to him embodying a general sense of empowerment, from which he realized he did not really want or need to kill his wife, or anybody. We worked on him retaining this sense of empowerment regardless of what his wife, or anyone else, did or did not do.

This method is based on the recognition that everything we do has its foundation in our wholeness. Even our choice to fragment consciousness is an act to preserve our wholeness by dividing it into situationally expedient parts. As a result, embedded in any contracted experience or perspective, lies an expansive foundational impetus. By pursuing this half-full part of the Self's cup, rather than the presenting half empty, we once again have immediate access to the client's felt sense of wholeness.

Much of this requires listening for expansive causation and implication. If the client is hurt, there must be someone who knows about feeling good. If they complain about screwing up, then they must be someone who wants to do well.

The general process is this:

- 1) Listen to, engage with and have the client embody whatever contractive issue or experience they are presenting.
- 2) Hold in your own perspective that this contractive outlook is the half-empty framework of an expansive wish, and contact this more expansive element, by offering a half-full reframe. For example, if the client says, *nobody loves me*, the therapist might reply, *you want to be loved*; or, *you know something about love*. Or if the client laments, *I always screw up*, we might respond with, *you want to get it right*; or, *you have a sense of what success would be*.

As the client acknowledges this reframe, we then help him embody its *feeling state* - again, avoiding discussing the content and its veracity. The client will almost certainly tend to revert to the fragmented content of their limiting frame (*yeah, buts* are common here: *yeah, I know about love, but no one seems to care . . .*), and to continue to argue the contractive position. The therapist also needs to avoid the specifics of the half-full statement he or she made. We wouldn't, for example, pursue "by whom they want to be loved", or "what success would look like"; we only want to have them notice & embody the state they slipped into as they embraced the reframe. Again, we are seeking the feeling state of the parallel network, and not the content, good or bad, of any of the states.

After establishing the half-full-based feeling state, we then proceed as above, stabilizing the Self who operates from this expansiveness, and practicing and using the new state as an oracle.

## Pursuing the Expansive Payoff of a Contractive Experience

This approach is also founded on the notion that all fragmented states are actually skewed permutations of the Organic Self, and so have their origins in the impulse to do something beneficial for oneself. Here, rather than just contacting the half-full side of the contractive coin, we ask the client to search for the benefit they derive from holding their limited position. In other words, there is almost always a *payoff* for the fragmented stance - while apparently stifling the overall expansion of the Self, it actually serves some larger, self-promoting function. Like cutting off a limb to save a life, our procrastination may buy us some secret freedom from having to do more than we want; or our numbness around sex may let us have a sense of control in a relationship; or the knotted tension we carry around in our shoulders actually allows us to feel our physical presence in the world. When I invited a student in a class to investigate below her statement that she keeps chasing after this fellow who isn't responding to her, she discovered that all that chasing gives her a great sense of aliveness - the chase was the payoff, and not the possible relationship. She needed to stop the fruitless pursuit of that person, and to redirect her pursuits to more satisfying ways to feel fully alive.

As before, begin this technique by having the client embody fully whatever contractive or fragmented experience he or she presents. Then, with great mindfulness, focus and precision, have them search carefully within the felt sense of the embodied experience for anything at all that in some way feels good or useful. Make sure the search takes place within the felt sense of the experience, and not just as a cognitive guess - watch out for things like, *well, I think it could be doing something to protect me*. Such surmises will not have originated from a strong, expansive feeling state, and therefore not provide a doorway in to the client's felt wholeness.

When they recognize the payoff, it will usually be attended by a sense of having landed in the truth. It will feel right, typically, and somehow satisfying, perhaps surprising, often even a relief. Have them then embody this expansive felt sense of the payoff.

Again, be careful not to fall into the trap of debating the "yes, but" of the content. For example, if the client discovers that her hostility towards men protects her from getting hurt by someone, you might direct her to "*feel how you're someone who knows she wants to protect herself;*" but not, "*feel all the ways you might be able to protect yourself from that fear.*" To contact her being someone is to establish her expansive identity; to investigate how she might protect invites the fear that it won't happen.

After establishing the expansive state, proceed, as above, with stabilization and practice.

## Pursuing the Impulse Towards Organic Movement

Our bodies have an Organic orientation to their own innate somatic being and truth. We often habitually co-opt our somatic resources in service to the psychological needs of one or more fragmented selves: we chronically tighten our shoulders to take up less space in the world, or we puff up our chest to intimidate others we unconsciously fear may dominate us.

Underneath such diversions, our bodies retain a sense of how they would like to be and what they truly would like to do, if not sublimated to our psychological needs. So, if we invite someone to feel deeply into themselves, ignore anything besides their actual present bodily experience and just encourage any part of their body to follow unconstrained impulse and do anything it wishes - big or small, fast or slow, one finger or their entire back... - the Self will typically respond with some kind of movement that originates from a well of personal purity. Might be a sigh, might be a roll of the neck, might be sitting back, might be clenching a fist...

We can then have them feel the rightness of this movement, it's innate truth and pleasure, and follow these feeling states to the Organic Self who is this body and can move in this authentic way.

Through Embracing the Absolutes Underlying Fragmented Behaviors

One foundational element of the Organic Self is that it is fueled, guided and driven by a set of moral assertions, collectively called the Absolutes. They are universal human values, innate to us, and inform our preferences, desires, actions and interactions. Among them are such beacons as truth, freedom, abundance, connection, empowerment, lovingness, preciousness, clarity, solidness, balance, integrity and more.

ANYTHING we do, whether from our Organic or fragmented selves, has at its roots an orientation to express and/or attain one or more of these Absolutes. Our Organic Selves see them in an integrated, mutually supportive way: *we deserve to connect with others because we are precious and love is abundant and we feel solid both alone and in relationship*. Our fragmented selves are often entrenched in specific, only partially embodied aspects of the Absolutes, and this leads to conflict within us: *it's dangerous to connect because I'll have to surrender my freedom to the other person*.

So a shirt may fit us perfectly or it may be too large or too small, or it may even be ripped, but if we focus on the fabric, not the fit or the form, we can arrive at the elemental nature of the garment. In the same way, if we direct the client to notice one or more of the absolutes involved in

their experience, we can move the focus from the story or the pain, etc. to the underlying presence of Self that is there no matter what. If the client describes the trouble they are having with a partner being remote and unavailable, I can respond by saying, so, what you really value is being connected... And from there to have them refocus [in however many steps] from the current relational distress to the clear, felt knowing within the deepest part of them that connection is right and essential. Or if a client struggles with trying to juggle their family needs and their career, we can reshape the conversation towards the importance of balance [another Absolute].

In either case, once we embody the Absolute as a fully engaged presence, we can then pursue the Organic Self who holds and is this presence, the intersection of moral truth and I AM.

## Conclusion

In addition to the ways these pursuits of state-transformation vary from Hakomi and other experiential methods of therapy's descriptions of the change process, it is worth noting that they also require a different orientation to Tracking and reality. All such methods track carefully for specific present experience (tension, voice quality, the presence of the child state, etc.). R-CS, however, adds the need to track not just the *what*, but the *who*; which self-state is expressing this content? Is this half-full or half-empty? Are they hammering or massaging? And for anything sorted to be originated by fragmented states, the need to respectfully disregard them in service to the ultimately more genuine experiences and Selfhood of the Organic Self.

On the other hand, R-CS certainly agrees with hakomi and other therapies that people do, indeed, have missing experiences. While the expansive aspect of Selfhood is already intact, and readily accessible, it is also true that regardless of how innately resourced we all are, we nevertheless may certainly not have had the opportunity to encounter certain necessary developmental events. We may know in our Organic core that our feelings are all ok, but we may never have had the actual experience of lying in someone's arms and sobbing without restraint while being fully accepted. So while R-CS views the essential nature of change as the ability to operate from preferred states, it also actively pursues any therapeutic experimentation necessary to enhance life experience.

Similarly, for some clients, the need to indulge the trance states and/or regress may be necessary, or may be an easier route to take than that of shifting, sheep dogging and inspiring Self-commitment. The drawing power of the trances can be so great as to distract unendingly the attention of the client, and so may need to be indulged. On the other hand, many people report what a relief it is not to have to dig up old memories or dwell upon their stuckness,

not from a need for denial, but because they are so ready to feel good about themselves.

In any case, whatever the method, the shifting states approach is clear in recognizing the inevitable necessity of honoring use-dependency in fostering transformation. Just as a limiting belief has become lodged in the psyche because it's been repeated over and over, so new networks need time and practice to take root. Regardless of how we assist our clients in arriving at new ways of organizing, we cannot consider their transformations complete until they have succeeded in operating regularly from their greatest wholeness.

For practitioners, it behooves us to examine our own beliefs and trances about change. How linear is our concept of the Self? Are we colluding with shifting immediately because we fear going deep? If clients can change quickly, how will we keep our practices going? We know how to work in a certain way - what if we mess up trying something new? To these important questions and others like them R-CS encourages not only seeking their answers, but asking yourself: *Which* you is concerned about them? If you were located in your empowered Self, would these questions be so important?

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