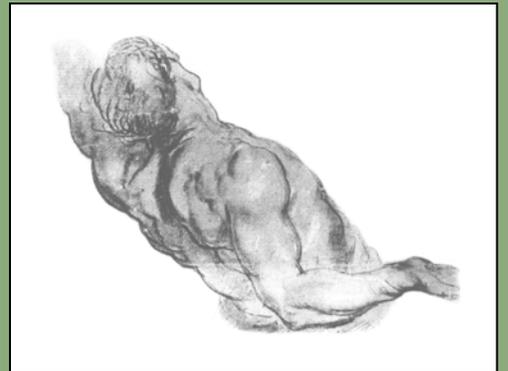


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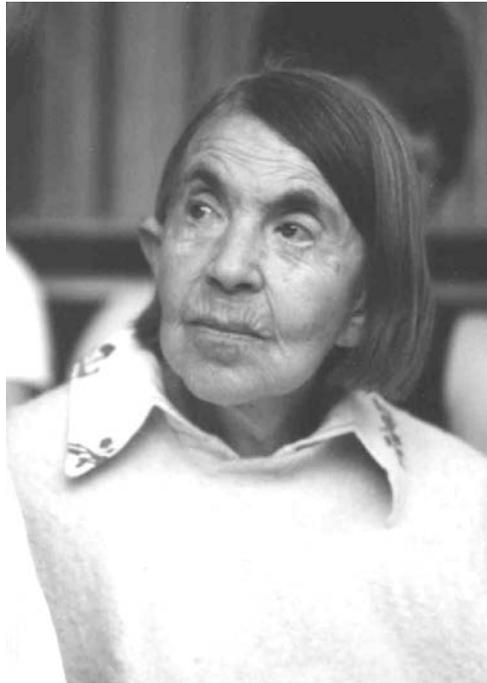


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Charlotte Selver

Born April 4, 1901 – Ruhrort, Germany
Emigrated to United States - 1938
Died August 22, 2003 – Muir Beach, California

“Becoming more and more able to be there in situations, whether easy or difficult; to be more there with our mind, with our hearts, with our sensitivities, with our strengths - this is very, very important.”

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USABP Mission Statement

The USABP believes that integration of the body and mind is essential to effective psychotherapy, and to that end, its mission is to develop and advance the art, science, and practice of body psychotherapy in a professional, ethical, and caring manner in order to promote the health and welfare of humanity.
(revised October 1999)

On Being in Touch with Oneself

Charlotte Selver

Reprinted from: Charlotte Selver, Collected Writings Volume I: Sensory Awareness And Our Attitude Toward Life(1999), with permission of the Sensory Awareness Foundation, Mill Valley, CA (www.sensoryawareness.org).

Excerpts from a talk by Charlotte Selver. It was first published by the Charlotte Selver Foundation in the brochure Sensory Awareness in 1973. Mary Alice Roche did the final editing; the first draft and editing was done by Teri Moldin.

Abstract

In this talk Selver mentions the miracles of everyday life such as waking in the morning. She speaks against compartmentalizing humans into bodies or minds and supports the focus on a unified organismic human being. Citing the potential of young children and the work of Emi Pikler, she also talks about how conscious sensing is the re-educational tool for the nervous system.

Keywords

Children – Emi Pikler – Breath – Experiment – Whole Self – Charlotte Selver – Natural Potential

Have you ever wondered, when you woke up in the morning, just in the transition between sleep and waking, at the miracle that you could feel yourself, feel whether you were rested or not, feel the warmth of your limbs? That when you opened your eyes you could see your room, that the details came to you without your making the slightest effort? Were you astonished by the fact that, with a motion of your hand, you could remove your blanket, get up and move through your room?

Did it occur to you as interesting that when you took your breakfast you could taste the orange juice, taste whether the coffee was too weak, too strong, or just to your liking? Did you realize when the telephone rang that you heard it without trying to - and that you knew it was the telephone and not the doorbell? All this belongs to your biological equipment!

Did you notice your ability not only to distinguish what your friend said, but also the mood in which he said it, his hesitation, his interest? Have you ever thought about these marvelous capacities of yours? Did you wonder about the fact that thoughts came to you in response to what he said - that you remembered things? All this is the property of your organism, your living self.

Some people might wonder at the fact that I am including facets of awareness that are often attributed to what is called the 'mind'. But I would say that, as I look out from here, I see people. I do not see minds, I do not see bodies -but I see human beings. I assume you have the same impression when you look around. So I doubt that we could question that a person is a psychosomatic unity. I might add that until mind and body are commonly experienced and understood as what they really are - one rich, unified organization, functioning as a complex unity - people will continue to be to one degree or another self-alienated.

Our natural potential can best be seen by watching children from infancy to two years, because at that age there is the best chance they are still unspoiled. It is wonderful to see what a child will undertake when he is given the opportunity to move around freely and is not interfered with (whether it be by hindering him, interrupting his activities, or helping him) when no one is ambitious for him, and he is "permitted to live in peace and develop according to his own pace and individual needs", as stated by the Hungarian pediatrician, Dr. Emmy Pikler.

The young child regards everything with interest; he explores each movement as it becomes possible for him. When he comes to sitting, he sits in a marvelous posture which nobody taught him. Coming to standing is a tremendous job of balancing. When he plays he gives himself entirely to what he does. It is this wholeness and directness which is so striking in children who are still intact. His muscles and joints give easily; he has a perfect sense for the space he has at his disposal, and - extremely important -he relies on his base of support, whether it is the floor or a rolling stick, and whether he is squatting, sitting or standing.

Even before he can speak, a child can communicate what he wants - and does not want - if the adult would only listen. But what if the mother does not listen, and insists on what she wants rather than what the baby wants? Sooner or later many a child is overruled, either by force or by learning he has to compromise if he wants to have mother's love and approval. All kinds of devices, rewards, and threats will be used by the mother to achieve this. In eating, for instance, what is the result? A dulling of taste, an ignoring of even the clearest messages, such as whether or not he has had enough. "I don't seem to know; mother knows!"

Some of his spontaneous self-assurance gets lost, and where does the genuine expressiveness of his whole little self go, if not into holding back, or becoming lifeless?

Much scientific work is being done today to determine whether, in functioning and expression, genetic factors are responsible or whether experience-determined factors have left their imprint. My personal experience is that all too often genetic factors are blamed when actually wrong conditioning has created harmful changes. The emphasis in organismic-orientation is on release of these modifiable elements.

I have spoken about how unfailing children's responses are, and in what basic ways self-alienation can be created, with simultaneous physical hindrances. Other interferences may happen at an even earlier stage and continue to happen throughout our development. For example, insensitive handling by the mother at a time when the baby most needs love and support may

make the baby pull back, and lay the basis for feelings of insecurity - which express themselves in contractions, holding of breath, and other malfunctions.

Taboos may be created when the baby explores himself physically and finds there are some regions he is told to keep away from. Also, coaxing to premature physical “achievements” on the part of ambitious parents may result in unnecessary and harmful effort, sometimes producing weaknesses such as bowed legs, curved backs, flat feet and so on, to say nothing of the loss of the feeling of satisfaction and pride which goes with the freedom to explore, and with self-accomplishment.

It is not difficult to see the effect of the constant admonition of parents, teachers and important adults to: “Speak thus and so! Sit straight! Put your shoulders back! Chest up, buttocks tucked under!” Advice like this, if followed (and who has not at least tried?) blocks spontaneous motion and stifles natural behavior. And what about such advice as: “Pay attention! Answer quickly! Make an effort! Think hard!” Have you thought of the psychosomatic conflict and confusion which such remarks must create?

The sad thing, and at the same time the telling one, is that most children give in, often with anger and a feeling of defeat, and with a blotting out of the protest which is both psychological and physical and with this they drift away from the true language of the organism. They give up, without knowing the great value of what they are giving up.

So, we can understand how various attitudes develop toward what we call “body”. Often the “body” is taken for granted. People say, “It is best when we do not feel anything of our body.” They mean that when they do not feel anything, it is working smoothly; but when they do feel something, that means trouble. Either they feel discomfort, or have wishes they do not dare to give in to.

Many people use “their bodies” as a means for competition in regard to strength, appearance, sex-appeal - often patterning themselves after current idols. Others, who have been overprotected in childhood, regard “their bodies” with utmost concern, afraid to enjoy living for fear something may happen to “their body”.

Another prevalent attitude is that our head is our only source of information about ourselves. To be in contact with ourselves physically is for many a waste of time in a civilization in which everything circles around “doing”, “getting”, “succeeding”, “gaining”, “competing” but with hardly any room for existing – existing in a biological sense, simply being.

What we do for what we call our body is more or less routine: we groom ourselves; we use cosmetics; we diet; we exercise; we take our daily bath. But do all these activities come from a real sense of self? This indifference to ourselves as living beings does not work.

Such self alienation influences at every moment those who have been exposed to unwise conditioning. In standing or sitting we may hold ourselves according to an image of how one should look in these “positions”, an esthetic idea which has little to do with the laws of nature and where everything is put and posed – or superimposed. We may hold ourselves upright, constricting the abdominal region, with tissues strained - an unnoticed waste of energy – or we may collapse, pulled down by our own weight, and call it “being comfortable” rather than realizing the lack of reactivity, the lack of sensitivity toward the life-activities within us. We make similar discoveries in those basic activities in which we constantly find ourselves, like lying, standing, walking, etc. – any kind of movement and expression.

The primary aim of our approach is to make it possible for a person to re-experience himself as a totality, to bring him back to the degree of aliveness and receptivity of which he is capable. The tool for this process is sensory re-education, or conscious sensing. It is that natural activity of the organism which happens just like seeing or hearing. Our organ for sensing – the sensory nervous system – spreads through the entire organism by a multitude of nerves, including the skin. So we really cannot help but be sensing to one degree or another as long as we are awake. The question is to what degree we allow it, or hinder it, in our daily lives.

To study sensory phenomena, people need quiet – an atmosphere of peace and concentration. But many people, when they first come to me, are disturbed about just that quiet. They come to be “exercised”; they want to be “told”; they expect to be “shown”. The air is full of questions like, “What is proper breathing?” “Where should I put my arms?” “What am I supposed to do in standing?” “How should I bend?” There is no end to the “shoulds” and “hows” and “supposed tos”.

To discover that one can find out for oneself is a revelation. There is a great difference between “knowing” I have a head, “seeing” it in the mirror, and actually sensing one’s head. It is usually a surprise to the person that he can learn directly, through his own sensations, that right within him is the best source of orientation. Thus, learning to sense opens a whole new world.

In the beginning, some people are looking only for pleasant sensations; but often when I ask, “What do you feel of yourself?” the answer is, “Nothing; nothing hurts me.” Only a disturbance is registered by these people. With time, the student becomes less disturbed by his “trouble” signals, as he realizes that feeling a disturbance means that deep down he knows that something else would be more satisfactory - and demands it. He therefore gets interested in what creates the disturbance, and what he could allow for change. Gradually his sensations get clearer. He becomes more aware of what “his body” has to tell him: what feels better, what not so good; where he is alive, where too lifeless; where he rests and where he contracts or presses; where it feels free and where not. This means that he begins to get more in touch with himself.

Often the seemingly least-significant sensations turn out to be most significant. There is no “right” or “wrong,” just sensations which come to consciousness and from which we can learn. To be able to get clearer messages, it is necessary for the total self to become awake, receptive and ready for the slightest changes. Yet, most important, there is no need to do anything. Changes will happen by themselves when the organism is allowed to assert its needs.

Let me repeat, sensing is the tool for all our experiments; through it we become aware of many important things – the functioning of breathing, for instance. It is interesting how many theories of “correct” breathing have been proclaimed. What

one learned with one method has to be unlearned with the next. We turn the tables; instead of our educating breathing, we learn from it.

Breathing is the most intimate indicator of our personal condition – something so utterly fine and honest that it should be treated with more humility. In sensory awareness we study breathing in rest, in motion, in our daily activities. We learn to feel and obey its varying rhythm.

What we are constantly dealing with is reality. As long as we live, we must breathe. Breathing indicates life. It has an important job to do; it cleans us out, it replenishes us. Imagine what it means for a person to experience this more fully! There is a two-way reactivity – the musculature, by and by, becomes more reactive to breathing, while breathing adjusts itself to the demands of the organism.

In our experiments we learn a lot about our musculature - and about our structure - not as abstract knowledge, but in practical work. We learn through experience that we have many joints and that they are meant to be used; to give, and not to be rigid. We learn through experience that the spine is a very flexible structure. We learn through experience that seeing happens by itself, that straining of the eyes in order to see only results in strained eyes and impaired - rather than better - vision. We learn that straining to think blocks rather than improves thinking. We learn that stretching our muscles does not mean straining them - that our muscles can expand or contract freely and, in fact, are meant to give in every motion.

We learn a lot about our attitudes; we begin very early to distinguish the difference between “doing” and “letting happen.” We become conscious of how ‘we use our energy, conscious of effort, and that effort impedes rather than helps us in our tasks.

In our experiments there is much play about too little and too much. Our days are made up of activities demanding various amounts of energy; we open a letter; we carry a package; we close a window; we wash our dishes; we write or type, or speak, or drive a car. We can exhaust ourselves with the way we handle these tasks (many people do) or we can be stimulated – regenerated – by them, simply by being tuned in for what is now required. We learn that to be more in touch with ourselves means to be more in touch with what we do. Then the needed amount of energy is available – not too little, and not too much. Imagine how valuable this information can be in daily life.

Also, in this freeing process long-forgotten memories may flare up, and the origin of hindrances become clear. We may gradually realize that, as adults, we do not need to stay hampered with these old hindrances, that we can relate anew, with shutters more and more open. When a person experiences how good it feels to cooperate with the laws of nature within himself, instead of interfering with them, he may – by the gratification he gets – realize that he is meant to be open for life and there is no need to protect himself against it.

At the beginning, I spoke of the child’s relation to the earth, the floor, the base of support. He is at home on it; he can rest on it. In using the floor’s good hardness which gives support and offers resistance, he grows strong through it. He moves over it, he learns to act in space. And he is always supported.

As we gradually give up our holding back, we adults become increasingly aware that there is something under us inviting us to comfort, always there to support us in everything we do. That something is the earth. We have returned to our home; we are once again children of the earth – related but free. As the young child trusts, and acts in accordance with natural law, which operates both inside and outside of him, couldn’t we, as adults, rediscover what we have not really lost – our natural heritage? Being in touch with natural law as it is working through us is nothing less than being in touch with ourselves. Is this not a wonderful invitation?

On Breathing

Charlotte Selver

Reprinted from: Charlotte Selver, Collected Writings Volume I: Sensory Awareness And Our Attitude Toward Life (1999), with permission of the Sensory Awareness Foundation, Mill Valley, CA (www.sensoryawareness.org).

This text was first printed in 1971 as the very first publication of the Sensory Awareness Foundation (Charlotte Selver Foundation at that time). It is an excerpt from Charlotte Selver's June 1966 workshop on breathing in New York City. Editing by Mary Alice Roche.

Abstract

In this excerpt from a workshop Selver talks about possibilities of being more there and the distinction between spontaneous and habitual behavior. She focuses on breathing and the possibilities of allowing it to be natural. She clarifies how breath is the primary indicator for our conditions and how it can be support for our healing and learning.

Keywords

Breathing – Explorations – Spontaneous Behavior – Habitual Behavior – Satisfactory Exhalation

We have been seeing some photographs. Among them was one of grasses growing beside water. There was such appeal in the strength and vivacity of the grass, and such wonderful fusion of water, stone, earth, sunlight and shade with the plants, that I thought there could not be anything better to make us conscious – from the beginning – that nothing in nature is isolated, that we also, by nature, are not isolated from the world around us, and that the process of breathing is connected with *everything* which happens in us and around us, just as the plants are connected to everything around them.

Actually, every event, every presence – even our *sitting here*, our all *being together* --already has, in the moment it occurs, an influence on us: on our breathing, our blood circulation, our stomach activities, the functioning of our glands, and so on. In other words, all the mysterious interwovenness which is happening in the living organism is coming to expression in every moment in which we are living in our environment.

We are usually not enough awake for it, but sometimes you may have noticed that when something or somebody really interests you, you are speeded up, even when you were tired a moment ago. Your breathing changes; your vitality changes; you are functioning quite differently than before. And you may wonder, how is this possible?

Nowhere in the organism is there any limit to *being there* for any occasion; everything in us can be constantly responding to anything with which we happen to be in connection – if we allow it. We are constantly in connection with something, and therefore are never alone, never isolated. The whole day is full of invitations, but only we ourselves can realize if and when we respond to them. That is the question: do we respond to these everlasting invitations which can keep us young, movable, and reactive – never repeating, always new, because each invitation is new? Imagine what a change such responsiveness would bring in our lives! Who would like it? Who is against it?

The distinction between spontaneous and habitual behavior is one of the main topics of our work in general. How a person lives – is he habitual, or is he reactive in everyday living? – is the great question upon which our work turns. Many people do not make a distinction between spontaneous and habitual breathing. They have the notion that when they are just as they always are, this is being spontaneous, just as people who are very pushy, or very lazy, say, “This is my nature; it’s the way I am,” while it is only a habit – a deviation from their true nature.

Breathing is always as the person is. It is the clearest index of what is happening in the person – unless it is made up. Many people think they should breathe ‘properly.’ Forget it! It is no use, because there is no ‘proper’ breathing. Your breathing indicates very clearly what state you are in. When you are more reactive, your breathing is more reactive; when you are more habitual, your breathing is more habitual; if you are pushy, your breathing gets pushy, too, or stops. You can depend on it – as your breathing is, so you are. I should say, at any given moment my breathing is me, it is always me.

Now, as we go more directly into the study of breathing, please do not close yourself to other sensations. Everything which happens in us is very precious. When you care only for breathing, you are impoverishing yourself. It is much better when you have first the experience of the great variety of processes and sensations which is you. Remember the grasses in the photograph; we are not working on something isolated.

When all goes well, our breathing is an automatic energy supply. It supplies the amount of energy needed at the moment for whatever we happen to do, in exactly the way the dynamic requests of living require -- if we *allow it*. It is tremendously sensitive. Every little bit more of a demand or every little bit less of a demand – when we are innerly awake – will be reacted to in our breathing without our doing anything to it. It is about the same thing, for instance, as when an artist plays a Brahms concerto. There are passages which need a great delicacy and quiet, and there are passages which are very emotional and powerful. And the one who plays has to be able to give all of that, otherwise he just doesn’t play well.

Every person who plays the piano can tell you that to play pianissimo needs the greatest presence, a kind of *being fully there* for this pianissimo, and for this only. In the next moment he must be there for a crescendo, and then for a greater crescendo, until the greatest power is developed.

And we have the same wonderful possibility in breathing. When we are lying on the floor, breathing will react to our lying there, and it will nourish us. But it is something else when we are playing the piano, or fighting, or when we are running or jumping, or whatever it is. The response in breathing, if we are not holding it back or are not too uninterested or habitual inside so that it can't happen, will constantly allow the necessary supply of energy for what we are doing. We don't have to say, "Breathe!" For heaven's sake, forget that! It comes by itself, spontaneously – *if we allow it*. Therefore, it is the allowing – the possibility of becoming more permissive – that we want to explore.

When we become more sensitive for what being permissive means, then the whole day is full of opportunities for exercising this possibility of becoming more permissive – or, if I might say it differently, more loving in the way we contact whatever we contact. And the role which breathing plays in this is tremendous. As soon as we become more open for something we do, we find that the first thing in which we can recognize this increased openness is our breathing. In other words, when the heart is touched, when the inner is touched, when we really allow something to – as we say so nicely – *touch* us, then something in us opens, becomes awake and interested, and simply makes us breathe. We don't make ourselves do it. *It makes itself felt.*

Exploring breathing really needs to be a practice, but a practice which is absolutely new each time – not a repetition of old ways, but a finding out what is going on in the condition and activity in which you happen to be at a particular moment. No moment can be compared with another; in each there is something new to discover. There are people who have spent a lifetime practicing breathing in this way. It is one of the most wonderful, most gratifying practices in which you can engage, because as you are finding out about breathing through experiencing it, you will become quieter and quieter, freer and freer, healthier and healthier, and more and more alive. As long as you live, it never ends; so don't worry about how long it will take you!

It is very important that you set aside time for this exploration of your breathing, perhaps beginning with not breathing at all. Who has already noticed that we all stop our breathing a great deal? Perhaps we don't notice it, or only when someone asks about it. It is very important to notice. And once we do, the question of permissiveness comes up.

If you are dutiful, when you feel you stop breathing, then *you begin to breathe*. That means, you *do* something. That does not mean that *it* wants to breathe in you. Maybe it wants to continue to stop breathing. At one point, you will certainly feel that your breathing starts by itself; and that is a wonderful discovery. Do not go about your daily life saying to yourself, "Breathe!" When you find yourself holding your breath, wait a little. Wait until your breathing begins to function again for whatever you happen to be doing. You will notice that, when your breathing stops, something is not quite right in your relationship to what you are doing. Either you are too anxious, or too hesitant, or too shy, or resisting something, or holding back in some way. In other words, you are not fully *there* for what you happen to be doing at that moment; and it is very interesting psychologically to find out what makes you stop your breath at that particular moment.

It is possible for you to put into everything, not only into what you are doing at that moment, too much pressure, too much urgency, or too much watching or observing. In very many people, when they watch or observe – whomp! – breathing stops. When the head is too busy, breathing stops. There are thousands of reasons why breathing may stop. You may be awed; you may be shocked; you may be this or that; and it's no use being angry with yourself about it. Be grateful that you feel it, and don't push yourself toward changing. Then you will discover this marvelous fact, that breathing will start by itself again – when you are not hindering it.

The most important thing is that you learn to have patience and respect for what you find, and not get into regimenting yourself in terms of, "Breathe! Breathe! Breathe!" Is this clear? Be very careful about this. It can destroy the discovery of spontaneous breathing entirely – if you try to force your breathing along as soon as you find you are not breathing.

When you feel your breathing is too shallow, which usually means that you are not participating enough in what the occasion demands, you may become a little more ready for what you are doing right then. And you will find that this change has an effect on your breathing. And when your breathing changes – becomes faster or slower, or you have to sigh, or anything – permit it happily. This is one way to learn what permissiveness is.

We will have to give a little time to the question of exhalation. I wonder which of you, without being invited to it until now, has found that there is much exhalation going on? For instance, in some of our experiments, you may have needed to allow considerable exhalation to go through the head. Being as busy as we are, with one activity heaped on top of another, our heads have lost their elasticity and freedom. Often this lack of freedom is created through the holding of too much inhalation inside of us, which doesn't permit the cleaning out, the sweeping out, the renewing that is needed. Only fully permitted exhalation can do this. It would be helpful to give yourself plenty of time to find out whether you allow exhaling as needed; that means whatever time exhaling wants to take when you do not *do* it, but *allow* it until you have, so to speak, a feeling of satisfaction, of completion.

It is also possible that, having permitted a satisfactory exhalation, nothing further seems to occur immediately in breathing. Don't be upset by this. At one point breathing will start again. There is no need to worry if the inhalation does not come immediately after the exhalation; and please listen to me as I say once more, if *it comes*, not if *you inhale*. Who can feel the difference? You know, some people *take* a breath. Wait until it comes by itself! And allow it to distribute in you as *it* wants to. In other words, be an open house for your breathing, and don't manipulate it.

All this is a question of sensitivity, and when you orient yourself, you become a fine discoverer. It is much better when you find out about things for yourself, when you trust your own sensations and learn from them and do not have to be told everything. That is truly 'exploring'. And you will be delighted at how clear a language the organism speak.

Sensory Awareness and Our Attitude Toward Life

Charlotte Selver

From: Charlotte Selver, Collected Writings Volume I: Sensory Awareness And Our Attitude Toward Life (1999), with permission of the Sensory Awareness Foundation, Mill Valley, CA (www.sensoryawareness.org).

This text is an excerpt from the introduction to A Taste of Sensory Awareness. It was written in collaboration with Gordon Bennett and first published by the SAF in 1989.

Abstract

In this excerpt Selver presents the attitude of the work of Sensory Awareness and the responsibility of becoming aware and more fully living our lives through simple, daily activities. She clarifies how Sensory Awareness, even though often having therapeutic effects, is not meant to be therapy.

Keywords

Sensory Awareness – Awareness – Experimenting - Discovery

In our work of Sensory Awareness, we experiment with all the simple activities of daily life, all the things which we have been doing since we were born, or which we have learned in our earliest infancy, such as walking, standing, sitting, lying, moving, resting, seeing, speaking, listening, etc. As Elsa Gindler said, “*Life is the Playground for our work.*”

Our daily life gives us opportunity enough for discovery: in combing our hair, washing the dishes, in speaking to somebody, and so on. In such “unimportant” areas of life we can experience the same attitudes we have in “important” areas, where we are often too absorbed to feel clearly what is happening.

Although practicing Sensory Awareness often has therapeutic effects, it would be a misunderstanding to think of our work as therapy. Our purpose is not to make living healthier, but to make it more conscious; not to make it happier, but to let it come more into accord with our original nature. The more we arrive at our original nature, the more we discover that healthier and happier living and relating *comes about by itself*.

We begin to discover that experiences within the organism are parallel to experiences in life. This can be difficult. Often we may find ourselves full of fear, not wanting to allow changes. Through experimenting, we may come face-to-face with the reasons for previously unexplained problems in our lives. But with growing ability to permit what becomes necessary, our elasticity grows, and so does our security.

We cannot know how much energy we have as long as we keep interfering with our own activities. We cannot know our real abilities until we have freed ourselves to such an extent that they can unfold more fully. As Elsa Gindler used to say, “*If we would have the strength at our disposal that we use in hindering ourselves, we would be as strong as lions.*”

What creates our freedom, or our lack of freedom, is our *attitude* toward whatever we meet: the way we are living our daily lives; the way we are with our families and friends; the way we do our work; the way we read the newspaper; in short, the way we are in this world. When it is understood that we are including the broader questions of our *attitude-toward-life*, this will help us much more than just working on what we call “the body”.

So, in the very simple experiments of a Sensory Awareness session, we can make some small steps to come to ourselves and to awaken some of the possibilities which are dormant inside us. For instance, we may work to become so quiet that life can begin to whisper to us again, so that we are not just seeing the big, blunt things, but can be touched and nurtured by the beauty of what may be small and quiet.

But not only beauty becomes conscious: there is also an opening of our heart to those difficulties in life which demand our presence and maybe our help. Too often, we don't see and we don't feel what is happening around us. Too often, we are only interested in ourselves, our family and maybe our very close friends. To become sensitive enough and free enough to become active as a member of our community, country, and world - this is also part of awakening.

For me, Elsa Gindler was a great example of this through her deep involvement in what was happening in the world. During the Hitler time, although she was invited to live in Switzerland, where she could have been secure, she stayed in Berlin giving help to whoever needed it. Her life was in danger from resisting Hitler, and from the constant bombings, but she did not leave.

This attitude of responsibility is part of becoming aware, so that we would not be part of the “*Me* generation”, but rather of the “*We* generation”, embracing everyone and everything on this planet. Do you not feel that everyone has an equal right to live a life, unconditioned, free from pressure and rejection, free from starvation and harassment?

Becoming more and more able to be there in situations, whether easy or difficult; to be more there with our mind, with our hearts, with our sensitivities, with our strengths - this is very, very important.

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Jacqueline A. Carleton, Ph.D., Editor (jacarletonphd@gmail.com)

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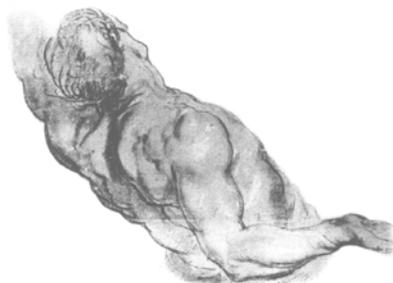
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Jacqueline A. Carleton, Ph.D.
Editor
USA Body Psychotherapy Journal
115 East 92nd. Street #2A
New York, NY 10128
212.987.4969
jacarletonphd@gmail.com

