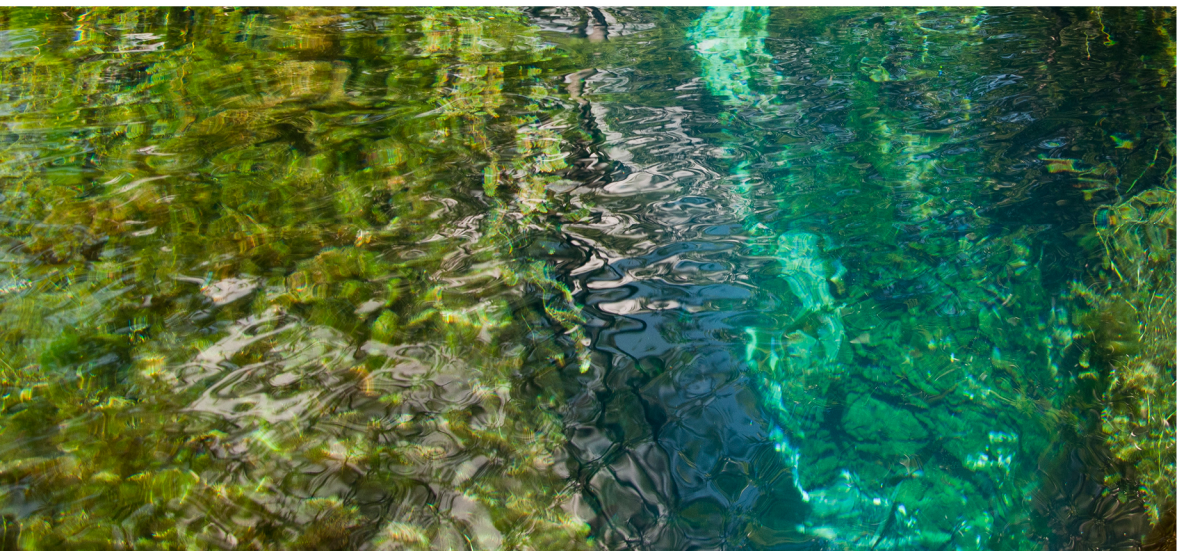


THE SACRED PATH OF THE THERAPIST

Modern Healing, Ancient Wisdom,
and Client Transformation



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CHAPTER 1

Mindfulness, Attunement, and Spiritual Resonance

WE HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCING a mindfulness revolution that has reached explosive proportions over the past decade. Jon Kabat-Zinn has been instrumental in introducing mindfulness from the Buddhist tradition into very practical health-based applications for pain management and stress reduction since the 1980s (Kabat-Zinn & Hanh, 2013). As science has explored this phenomenon, and we begin to understand the brain functions behind it, more attention has been given to the benefits of mindfulness through research and practical applications. We now know that the practice of mindfulness awakens inner senses that create greater brain integration. As a higher order of integration evolves, we have the ability to step out of our limiting perceptions, process emotions and beliefs, and heal past trauma with an expanded perception. This leads us to solutions that were not evident in the past, and perspectives that are expansive and healing.

Mindful Awareness and Clinical Practice

The ability to remain focused on an internal process, within a moment-by-moment experience, without expectation or concern for the outcome, is the foundation of a developmentally inclusive process of personality and spiritual growth. The observation and exploration of the subtle realms of awareness that come to consciousness through the intuitive senses become a doorway for that integrative process to unfold. Therapists have begun to see the value of integrating mindful techniques into their lives and into their sessions with clients. Basic self-awareness helps clients to self-regulate a range of emotions that had been outside

of their control. By focusing on the breath, clients can come to a quiet place within themselves, learn to self-regulate emotional response, and to calm emotional upset. The following is a basic exercise to quiet the mind and focus on the breath. Try it yourself, and teach your clients to practice at home.

Exercise: Focusing on the Breath

Sit comfortably in a quiet space. Breathe evenly in through the nose and out through the mouth. Observe the breath. Count from one to 10, one on the inbale and two on the exbale, three on the inbale, and so on. Every time a stray thought crosses your mind, go back to one.

Although this is a simple exercise, it can take quite some time to master. Do not get frustrated. Just notice your progress over time. The practice of this skill has a direct implication for brain function, training the executive functioning of the brain to come online, changing the biochemical pathways of emotional regulation as we focus on an inner process.

Siegel (2007) discovered that as individuals develop a mindful awareness of their actions and reactions, their internal neurobiological process becomes coherent and cohesive. Research scientists, such as McCraty and Childre (2010) of HeartMath Institute, explore the electrophysiology of intuition and the interconnection of all living things. They suggest that the use of mindfulness skills leads to heart-brain coherence, which then brings all body systems into alignment. This creates physical as well as emotional health. This can be a powerful adjunct within the psychotherapy session.

The research of HeartMath Institute has shown that children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder noticeably improve as they learn to self-regulate, using HeartMath's EmWave interactive biofeedback software (Lloyd, Brett, & Wesnes, 2010). This software creates heart-brain coherence through mindful awareness and leads to coherence of all systems within the body.

It is useful to introduce guided imagery into the session to teach the client to focus internally to self-regulate and self-sooth while awakening a variety of inner senses. It is helpful for the therapist-healer to learn to perceive these internal senses within a transpersonal psychotherapy model, which have been identified as alternative ways of knowing (Braud & Anderson, 1998, 2002, 2011). These ways of perceiving an inner range of alternate reality are the basis for indigenous practices of shamanism

as well as Eastern spiritual traditions. These internal, alternative ways of knowing can emerge only within an experience of mindful awareness, deep inner focusing, and expanded conscious awareness.

Alternative Ways of Knowing

We have all most likely had experiences with alternative ways of knowing without being aware that we have been using those senses. We can have an intuitive experience in which we think of a friend, and then the friend calls on the telephone. We may get a gut feeling in our body that something is wrong, only to learn later that something ominous happened in the family. We can feel tingling in our body to indicate that an important insight is upon us, and this changes our choices and direction with a deep sense of certainty. We can use our own inner senses as a conscious tool within our lives and our work.

The following list of alternative ways of knowing comes from Braud and Anderson (2002).

Visual Skills

It is through the imagination that we can perceive information and insights as visual images. The therapist may be able to access this skill to track information and energy flow within a shared field. The client can then learn to do the same. One image can be worth a thousand words. The unconscious or higher conscious can communicate with us through our imagination, bringing new material and awareness to the surface: for example, "I can see the energy fill the room as radiant light." You can learn to trust your own images and may find it helpful to write them down as they present themselves within a session. They can be an excellent resource for assessment and intervention. It is another level of information that helps to understand your client.

Close your eyes for a few minutes. Take a few deep breaths. Get still and notice if you see colors, forms, or shades of light and dark within the silence. There is no right or wrong. Does your imagination carry you to a memory or a scene? Did that shift your emotion?

Within the silent spaces of internal focusing, the client also can learn to pay attention to images that float to the surface of consciousness. These images are symbols of information looking to emerge from below. One of my clients once asked very indignantly why she saw a Native American medicine man in my office when she closed her eyes to pro-

cess old trauma during the silent spaces in our session. She didn't see these images anywhere else when she closed her eyes. I asked her about her experience with it, and it became a beautiful internal resource for her. She integrated the experience and began drawing on this image outside of the office for strength and security. She began to realize that this was a part of her that was emerging and guiding her, providing stability and strength.

Auditory Skills

Internal auditory skills attune us inward to the sounds of the imagination and the deeper experience of the human psyche and soul. Soul awareness can come through as a verbal message or a sound. This is far from an auditory hallucination, such as a perception of a negative outside voice in the presence of a fragmented ego structure. In a more integrated ego, internal messages can bring opportunity for healing and higher integration. These sounds may be what is referred to by Wilber (2000) as "the whispers of the soul."

It was in the silent spaces of internal reprocessing of trauma during an EMDR session with my client that I heard the phrase run through my head, "serpents in her belly." With that, I directed my client to do a body scan to explore where in her body she was holding the stress related to the memory of trauma. She went right to her belly. I had her silently focus on that area, while auditory BLS was introduced. She closed her eyes and went deep into her belly. She opened her eyes and asked, "Have I ever told you that I have parasites in my intestines?" She was being treated medically for intestinal parasites. We used her deep intuitive knowing and imagination to engage with the consciousness of the parasites (serpents) by immersing herself into the image without thought or expectation. Her perceptions of that consciousness led us back to a negative self-judgment attached to an early original trauma that was at the root of her negative beliefs about herself. It was the reprocessing of that early trauma, originally outside of conscious awareness, that improved her feeling of empowerment and took the emotional charge out of the early scene. Listen to the whispers of the soul.

Close your eyes once again for a few minutes. Take a few deep breaths. Listen to the sounds in your head. Is it mental chatter? Or can you get still enough to hear internal intuitive messages? Take your time.

Another good exercise to develop your inner hearing is to sit quietly with a pen and paper. Rest your pen on the paper and wait for your hand to be drawn to automatically write without conscious effort. This can take practice, so try it several times. Are the whispers of your soul

beginning to come through your writing? Can you sense the words in your head as they are written on the paper?

Kinesthetic Skills

“I feel tingling in my body” is a common phrase that many therapists use to validate their opening to a higher truth and inner wisdom. The experience is very body centered and has a meaning behind it. It can be felt in the skin, bones, muscles, and organs. We know that the body holds the memory of trauma that can be experienced through tension and stress. But it also holds ancient memory of spiritual connection to a divine force. Therapists and clients have reported that their spine straightens when an energy seems to penetrate it. Their bodies relax as they access a perception of their higher power. All of these phrases describe what they experience within the physical body as the body’s way of communicating the connection to the deeper knowing.

Think of a situation in your own life that has been on your mind. Take a deep breath and get still. With your eyes closed, scan your body with your imagination from the top of your head to your toes. What is your bodily reaction when you bring to mind the situation in your life? Bring awareness to that part of your body and notice the information that you hold there such as emotion, beliefs, and memory. Write your experiences and let the kinesthetic sensations help you develop deeper understanding of your situation.

Proprioceptive Skills

Also body related, proprioception relates more to affective knowing held within the body. For example, I have heard the phrase “I feel an empty hole in my heart” from many clients. As they work through the grip of the old trauma, they may describe a sense of wholeness and completion by saying, “My heart feels full,” or “I feel so large, as if my energy fills the room.” As you practice the skills of alternative ways of knowing, you may begin to sense boundaries diffusing and a blending happening in the energy field between yourself and your client. This would be a proprioceptive experience. Although a client may not have a reference for this experience, many clients have chosen to close their eyes during auditory bilateral processing, using headphones and a CD with music that switches from ear to ear, only to open their eyes and feel surprised that I am across the room. They sensed my energy right in front of them as it related to their own spatial recognition and body position.

A Buddhist-trained therapist offered this comment based on proprioceptive knowing: “I feel a heart-to-heart connection with my client as I drop into myself, feeling presence, and my heart opens and feelings of compassion come to the surface.” The interaction between the sensing of the shared energy field, the connection to the physical body, and the emotional bond to the client are reflected in this statement.

Notice a common phrase that you may use to describe a bodily reaction to an identified situation in your life, and how it reflects the pervasive affective connection. Write it down in your journal. Then get quiet within yourself, taking a few deep breaths. Use your phrase as a doorway in, noticing what deeper understanding floats to the surface. What is the information and the message held in the proprioceptive sense?

Direct Knowing

An intuitive and empathic connection to one another can lead to a direct and immediate recognition of a deeper truth or insight. It can come as a flash of awareness or a peak experience that leads to an emergence of inner wisdom, as if being shocked awake (Johnson, 2013). When cultivated, a degree of direct knowing can permeate how you interact in the world and choose paths of direction. A client who is a scientist reported that when given a scientific problem to solve, he would just know the answer, and then track back the steps to get from the end result to the beginning steps. The most successful entrepreneurs go with their gut reactions in business deals and then find the sequential steps to make it happen. Previous knowledge of patterns and circumstance play a role, but there is an element of direct knowing that is a nonlocal process that we can access outside of linear time and space (Bradley, 2006, 2007). We call it intuition. Direct intuitive knowing can be cultivated as an outgrowth of meditation practice and mindfulness, leading to recognition of your inner knowing as a valid perception (Marks-Tarlow, 2014). Within the context of a therapy session, the therapist can learn to trust that intuitive knowing and flow with a line of inquiry and discussion that is in alignment with the inner process of the therapist as well as the client.

During your day, direct your attention to your intuition. How often do you make a choice based on an intuitive impression? How often do you allow yourself to follow your gut knowing in shaping your choices? Although you may know your clients or family members well, can you tell when you sense something that is beyond what they have told or shown you? Write down in your journal a memory of having a clear and strong sense of intuition that changed the outcome of a situation. This skill can be cultivated through mindful awareness, meditation, and inner focusing.

Unconscious (Chthonic) Processes

Unconscious clinical material breaks through to the surface through dreams, surrendering, letting go of expectations, and silent mindful presence. The information is in the depth of the unconscious. For example, Jane came into session with a dream. She dreamed that a large cat, which she thought was a jaguar, was tearing into her and devouring part of her intestines. She sensed the presence of an indigenous healer. Although it was frightening and confusing for her, she awoke from the dream feeling some sense of relief that she had made it through since it seemed so real. Having no personal reference to shamanism, and unfamiliar with my personal shamanic background, she was describing a dream reflecting a shamanic archetypal force of nature. In Incan cosmology, the archetype of the jaguar teaches us to face our greatest fears, and we realize that there is nothing to fear because we are already one with Spirit. It is through the challenge of facing death, on many levels, that we open to the next level of spiritual initiation.

The dream was explored from her point of reference and her consciousness at the time. Ultimately this dream was a foreshadowing of her healing path and made sense to her on multiple levels over time. The devouring and then the rebirth became empowering rather than frightening. It reflected her strength and her spiritual path rather than her fear.

This experience describes not only the power of the emergence of unconscious material as an alternative way of knowing, but the levels of consciousness that may be present, from the personal human psyche, to the collective consciousness, to the archetypal consciousness. This example also begins to explore the shared experience between client and therapist, as information emerges into consciousness as a result of a shared attunement.

In the shamanic tradition, the belief is that power stalks us. Spirit steps in and gives us direction beyond what our conscious mind may understand. We can embrace that power or let it go. Notice how this has happened to you. Have you had a dream or an awareness that has floated to the surface in the quiet spaces of meditation or internal focusing? Do you allow yourself to go deeper into the meaning behind it and follow a path unfolding? What has been your outcome? Write it in your journal and notice your process moving forward.

Let's identify, awaken, and integrate these internal and intuitive alternative ways of knowing. Keep in mind that not everyone is visual, or auditory, and so on. Let yourself relax into the experience without judgment or expectation.

Exercise: Awakening Internal Senses

Get comfortable and close your eyes. Take three deep breaths. Hold each breath and slowly let it go. If there is any stress in your body, bring your awareness to it and breathe into the stress until your body relaxes on its own. Imagine a tunnel that reaches down into the earth. Your starting point may be a tree trunk, a pond, a hole in the ground, or a cave that takes you deep into the earth. Imagine going down and coming out of the tunnel in a beautiful place in nature. Let it emerge naturally and put your questioning mind aside. Get all of your inner senses working. Look around; feel the ground under your feet; listen for sounds; smell the air; feel the sun or the breeze against your body. Allow your own intuitive process to create the experience. As you surrender to the experience, allow yourself to expand and become lighter as the radiant light of the sun penetrates your body. Stay there as long as you like, following your experience. When you are ready to come back from your journey, find the entrance to the tunnel and make your way back up to your starting point. Then open your eyes.

It is suggested that you keep a journal to track your experiences. Notice which inner senses were prominent for you. Practice this exercise several times and notice how you progress.

Attunement and Clinical Practice

The term *attunement* has shown up in a great deal of literature, with a variety of different emphases. It has been used to describe the interrelational resonance between two or more people, and is an important element of effective psychotherapy. Many therapists know the experience of attunement, as we tune in to the emotional and mental state of our clients. Empathy and compassion can become an innate response within the caring therapeutic connection as the therapist attunes to the client's needs. As the client is attuned to the therapist, a safe and trusting environment is created for healing to take place. As the client can integrate that experience internally, a sense of safety can be brought into the client's world.

Siegel, investigating the heartfelt experience of attunement between mother and child through empirical research, found that "an attuned system is one in which two components begin to resonate with each other. For two people, attunement is based on the resonance of each person's state" (2007, p. 206). His research on attachment has validated the role of attunement between mother and child in shaping the child's

ability to develop loving relationships within a healthy and normal style of attachment. This experience of attunement is very natural in an environment where there is a clear and loving intention and desire to relate.

As individuals attune to one another, and learn to pay attention to their intention, evidence shows that this process may directly involve the mirror neurons in the brain. As a mother shows love and acceptance to a child, the mirror neurons in the brain of the child are activated in a way that they mirror the cellular network of the mother. The child then is able to evolve into a loving human being. Siegel (2007) supposed that it is possible for individuals to experience intrapersonal attunement in a way similar to interpersonal attunement, involving the mirror neuron system within the larger resonance circuit of the brain. Siegel pointed out that cellular neural networks of the brain continue to evolve as they make choices, as the neurons learn from experience and engage in an anticipatory process. "This resonant circuit carries out its mathematical deductions by way of anticipation of what will happen next in biological motion" (2007, p. 173). This premise raises the question of whether self-evolving cellular networks are an important factor in the evolution of consciousness itself, as new energy and information are transmitted to the cellular network and the cells make choices to evolve.

In a clinical setting, as the therapist attunes to the client with empathy, compassion, and acceptance, sensing the client's state of being, the client then senses that compassion. The therapist becomes a model for that range of experience and, as suggested by Siegel (2007), may even create changes in brain function as an interpersonal neurobiology establishes higher brain integration based on the experience of attunement. Helen, Shaké, and Kimberley (2007) have determined that the empathic attunement of the therapist to the client is the single most important factor in treatment outcome.

Vaitl et al. (2013) found that long-term meditators have increased theta electroencephalogram activity over the frontal region of the brain, contributing to the subjective feeling of bliss. Newberg and Newberg (2010) discovered that different spiritual practices and meditation techniques affect brain function, each a little differently. They found that there is a biological response that correlates to a subjective emotional response, leading to a greater capacity for compassion and greater consciousness. It is hard to say what comes first, the chicken or the egg. However, their work supports the premise that higher brain integration and improved brain function are common outcomes of meditation.

Scientific research offers an explanation of this phenomenon in which the presence of the psychotherapist and emotional attunement to the client is what allows the client to resonate with the same emotions, thus

feeling seen and understood. This brings us to the next question. Do these principles of attunement apply to client mirroring of the developmental level of the awakening consciousness of the psychotherapist, and the state of awareness within a clinical setting? Psychotherapists with a psychospiritual orientation say yes, based on personal experience.

Patricia is a clinical social worker, and a Eucharistic minister. Originally trained in psychoanalysis, she has changed the way she practices to an eclectic approach with a psychodynamic core. She integrates imagery into her work with her clients, working within silent spaces of mindful awareness. The client's own symbolism and images may emerge during silent processing and can be a valuable tool in the process of change. She finds that it helps them to get to core beliefs and to change emotions and belief systems on a symbolic level rather than relying on analysis and words. Patricia uses imagery for herself every morning to become centered and connected to what she calls her higher power. This can be an image of connecting to the earth or to a place in nature, which is taught later in this chapter. Patricia never mentions spirituality to her clients unless they bring it up, and yet she finds over time that within their attunement to her, clients consistently begin to read spiritual books, take yoga classes, and meditate. Perhaps it is a frequency chord that she is playing within the energy field.

Khan, a Sufi master, supported this premise and described attunement from the perspective of spirituality as "a state of being tuned to a certain pitch, or being in harmony with a certain note" (1994, p. 194). When the frequency of unconditional love and compassion are present in the psychotherapeutic container, humans can attune to one another through those frequencies. These qualities have been spiritual principles in Buddhism, voiced often by the Dalai Lama (Dalai Lama & Cutler, 1998).

The spiritually based healing practice of sharing attunement, developed by Uranda and Cecil (1983) through the Emissaries of Divine Light, facilitates balance and harmony within the body, allowing the recipient to resonate with a spiritual design reflecting a full spectrum of consciousness. Through the process of shared attunement, the consciousness of the body can experience being divine and human at the same time. There is a vibrational spiritual substance (energy) that bridges Spirit and form (Uranda & Cecil, 1985). The reflection of the light of Spirit is present in the individual who is capable of accommodating this vibrational consciousness. Uranda and Cecil defined the purpose of this practice as "establishing attunement between Earth and heaven in human experience" (1985, p. 90).

In the practice of attunement, this vibrational pattern of spiritual substance (energy) is directed by the attunement practitioner throughout the body of the client by accessing points in the endocrine system. The attune-

ment can be transmitted via hands-on practices, such as Reiki, shamanic healing, Johrei, and other energy-based modalities that include a transmission of life force energy through the healer to the client (Gerber, 2000; Uranda & Cecil, 1985; Villoldo & Krippner, 1987). *Reiki* is a Japanese word that means universal life energy. These energy healing modalities can also be provided from a distance through the spiritual attunement of the practitioner and the resonant field created between practitioner and client. This concept will be explored more fully as it applies to psychotherapy.

Resonance and Clinical Practice

Attunement and resonance go hand in hand. Two people cannot be in resonance without sharing an attunement, but it's not always the other way around. You may be attuned to the energy in the field, but not in resonance with a person. This often happens between you and your clients. You are attuned to the client's underlying anger. You can pick it up through the client's words and nonverbal cues, but there is more. It may seem strong to you and very noticeable because you are not in resonance with it. It feels as if it does not belong to you. You may intuitively notice that there has been a shift in the field.

When we are in resonance with another, an entrainment is established as two become one in a synchronized flow of energy and information leading to a unified experience. Each has a deep knowing of the other as they move as one in their thoughts, emotions, and actions, within a shared interpersonal energy field.

The term *resonance* is used in the natural sciences of physics, biology, and neuroscience. Similar ideas have a variety of names in psychology, such as sympathetic resonance, emotional resonance, embodied resonance, and emotional attunement. Anderson (2000) was the first to present the concept of sympathetic resonance within the context of transpersonal research, giving the analogy that when a cello string is played on one side of a room, the same string of a cello on the opposite side of the room will begin to vibrate, producing a sound in resonance with the original string. As one strikes a musical note from a distance, the vibration travels. "The resonance communicates and connects directly and immediately without intermediaries (except for air and space)" (Anderson, 2000, p. 33). This is the principle of resonance.

Through mindful inquiry, Nagata (2002) explored the deep embodied experience of being in resonance with another individual in a multicultural interaction. She defined embodied resonance as "the bodymind's experience of energetic vibration from both internal and external

sources” (p. ii). Therefore, when two or more come together, a sympathetic resonance develops that becomes interpersonal. There is a shared experience of the same emotional vibration that intensifies as they resonate together. Kossak stated that resonance is a “vibratory phenomenon produced by reflective merging created when energy (pulsation) moves between two or more bodies” (2008, p. 37).

Tiller (1997) presented a mathematical explanation of resonance. Mathematical calculations indicated that when a linear system was added to two harmonic waves of frequency, the attuned coherence state of resonance showed a major increase in the information capacity of the system to access and process information from a wider band of frequency. Applying his model to human interaction is an ontological leap; however, Tiller suspected that great spiritual leaders such as Christ, Buddha, and the Dalai Lama have had the capacity to transmit wide bands of energy through the heart, creating an attuned, coherent resonance between the spiritual leader and thousands of disciples. His model lends itself to exploring the validity of applying resonance to a psychotherapeutic environment in which a psychotherapist who can fluidly move from egoic awareness to expanded states of consciousness may be able to transmit a broader range of frequency, to a lesser degree than a spiritual master, through the antennae of the heart. When this broader range of frequency is transmitted in the shared field between therapist and client, the client may potentially access and process information from a level of greater awareness.

McCraty researched the magnetic component of the heart’s field and has compared it to the field of the brain, and the influence of the heart’s field on resonance. He, like Tiller (1997), concluded that “the heart generates the largest electromagnetic field in the body” (McCraty, 2003, p. 1). His results have shown that the magnetic component of the heart’s field is around 5,000 times greater than that of the brain. When positive emotions were induced in research participants, he found that physiological coherence and resonance among systems within the body increased, with greater synchronization between the heartbeat and the alpha rhythms of the brain. It is interesting to explore the therapeutic interaction between psychotherapist and client, and how it might be considered an electromagnetic heart interaction. This leads to speculation on whether the body itself is a natural resonator.

McCraty (2003) reported that synchronization happens in the interaction on verbal and nonverbal levels as well as on an energetic level, which operates just below the conscious level of awareness. This energetic information exchange is what creates a synchronization between two people. Synchronization is the product of a large vibrational resonance, which is identical or close to the natural vibration of the system.

“In self-generating a state of physiological coherence, the clinician has the potential to facilitate the healing process by establishing a coherent pattern in the subtle electromagnetic environment to which patients are exposed” (McCraty, 2003, p. 17).

Tiller’s (1997) work reflects the results of the natural therapeutic process where the client can feel compassion and caring from the therapist. A stabilizing pattern develops within the shared field. Suppose we could enhance that pattern of coherence within the shared field by enhancing it within ourselves? Learning how to attune to our own inner process and then to a greater cosmic whole allows us to become a vibrational tuning fork within the shared field. This has the potential to create a fabric of frequency that unlocks the client’s greatest healing potential and ability as we, therapist and client, come into resonance with a greater cosmic whole, or a divine force. This has the potential to relieve depression, anxiety, or symptoms of trauma, and take the client from a normal state of functioning to an expanded experience of spiritual awakening.

The term *spiritual resonance* emerged from an exploratory qualitative heuristic study that I conducted. I found that as my clients were processing traumatic memory in silent space, I was also dropping into an experience of inner focus and connection to a larger cosmic whole. I was being present from a place of expanded awareness familiar to me through meditation. The consistent experience of being in resonance with my clients vibrationally and emotionally, tracking energy flow, and blending within a shared field appeared to set the foundation for my clients to have awareness from what I will call a higher consciousness or soul perspective. The key ingredient was the experience of being in divine presence and that presence permeating the field. The experience of both therapist and client was a felt sense of connection to a greater cosmic whole. This contributed to changing clients’ perception of their trauma within a larger cosmic context, which many have identified as spiritual. I asked other psychotherapists who could relate to this experience about their understanding of the term, spiritual resonance, based on their experience, their interpersonal dynamic with the client, and the observed transformational process of the client.

The following ideas about spiritual resonance emerged:

Spiritual resonance is a vibrational pattern of greater cosmic wholeness, which is experienced as being accessed by soul awareness. Spiritual resonance is a central core of life, not just healing. It is the vibrational fabric from which healing and life emerge, and is greater than the sum of its parts. Spiritual resonance, which includes all other forms of resonance, is perceived

as a gift to the receiver who is consciously aware of the experience, but the potential for realization is present in all of us. Spiritual resonance is realized through an experience of expanded awareness, usually through spiritual practice, and is nonlinear, transcending time and space. Therapist and client may become transmitters of this range of energy within the therapy session, and contribute to the mutually created and shared energy field. The client has the choice to resonate with that range of frequency, disidentifying with ego, changing perception, and transforming within the unified experience of cosmic wholeness. Ultimately, the transmission of spiritual resonance is multidirectional between therapist, client, a divine cosmic source, and earth.

Expanded awareness of soul consciousness creates the frame of reference for spiritual resonance. The deep internal processes of intuition, inner knowing, sensory experience, or listening to the whispers of the soul provides a spiritual context for the experience of the therapist.

Ancient spiritual teachings and practices reflect concepts most closely related to spiritual resonance. Meditation practice brings the individual into an expanded state of consciousness and activates an awareness of soul consciousness and direct connection to the divine. As taught in the traditions of Sufism, Buddhism, and Hindu Integral Yoga (Armstrong, 1993), connections to the divine exist within individuals rather than outside of them.

Hazrat Inayat Khan was the first Sufi master to bring Sufi philosophy and teaching to the Western world in the early part of the 20th century. Khan (1964) taught that everything we see or do not see, other than Spirit, has form or capacity. Objects, emotions, feelings, light, soul, all have capacity that resonates vibrationally to reflect the qualities that make them as they are in the seen or the unseen world. It is the frequency of vibration that allows the form to be seen or unseen and determines its qualities. Illness also has a vibrational frequency, which is the cause and the effect of the disorder.

Khan (1964) taught that change could not happen without a change in vibration. As remedies are introduced to heal illness, the vibrational frequency of the remedies changes the vibrational frequency of the state of health. This is the basis of homeopathy. However, this applies also to a teacher-disciple relationship. A finer vibrational frequency may be directly transmitted from the Sufi teacher to the disciple, reflecting the higher consciousness of the teacher, and allowing the student to resonate in that higher consciousness as the true self comes into awareness (Witteveen, 1997). These principles of frequency may also apply to the therapist-client relationship. The more consciously aware the therapist,

the finer the frequency that can be brought into the field, even if his or her consciousness has not reached the level of mastery. As each individual grows developmentally, for both client and therapist, the vibrational frequency changes and awareness shifts (Khan, 1964). Khan (1961) taught that consciousness is the divine element that makes us small or great, narrow or expanded.

Sri Aurobindo (1982), a yoga master and a mystic, taught through his practice of Integral Yoga that a greater truth emerges within as individuals elevate their lower nature to a higher nature. It is the yoga of self-perfection, facilitating our evolutionary process. In a dual process, from lifetime to lifetime, there is an evolution of form and of the soul. As we awaken to the inner reality of our being, the essence of our soul, we come in contact with the greater reality of our being, beyond our life in our body and our mind.

Shirazi (2005) related Sri Aurobindo's teachings to three spheres of consciousness: (a) the egocentric observable personality; (b) the psychocentric inner self-consciousness, referred to as the soul; and (c) the cosmocentric impersonal ultimate self, existing beyond our perception of linear time and space. It is the influence of the psychocentric sphere on our outer expression (egocentric sphere) which leads to transformation that impacts everyday life.

According to Sri Aurobindo Ghose and Mirra Alfassa, known as the Mother (Aurobindo & the Mother, 1990), all of life, every level of consciousness, is a mass of vibrations, and that vibration which comes from within brings back to us in the outer world what resonates with that vibration. The vibration moves about in resonant fields, giving the impression of separation, but it ultimately comes back to the individual because it was always there. It is the internal work that changes the vibration. In other words, it is the frequency that we carry emotionally, cognitively, and spiritually, which determines the form that we create within our lives and within our physical bodies.

Khan (1994) wrote that as one turns within and listens to the cosmos, a vibration can be found inside each individual that is resonant with what is being picked up from the spheres of the universe. These cosmic spheres are vibrationally finer than the everyday earthly world of our egoic perceptions. Since there are many types of resonance, this perception of cosmic connection provides an important context within which to understand the experience of spiritual resonance. This level of awareness can be brought into psychotherapy from a transpersonal perspective, and transformation happens as a result of accessing an inclusive range of frequencies and leading our clients from emotional pain and suffering to spiritual consciousness. These varied spiritual teachers

echo the same message. Our level of health and well-being reflects the frequency held in our field of consciousness.

I am a clinician, and not a spiritual master. Yet I have noticed that the vibrational energy of the shared field becomes tangible on intuitive and somatic levels between me and my clients. This resonance, within the unfolding developmental stage and experiential state of expanded consciousness, appears to evolve as focus is directed to an internal moment-by-moment mindful awareness of self-observation outside of the range of egoic thought. Spiritual resonance occurs as a result of therapist and client sharing an energy field within a range of frequency that resonates with a level of consciousness that holds an experience of divine connection. Multiple levels of resonance are happening at one time. As the therapist-healer resonates with a larger cosmic force, the client has the opportunity to share in that field of energy and do the same. Brain integration accelerates, and heart-brain coherence aligns the systems within the physical body to function at optimal capacity. Limited perceptions now can expand, and the wounds of trauma can dissipate as inner wisdom emerges, allowing the client to view the event with a larger meaning about the lessons on the path of one's life journey. It is then that the egoic mind can ground the experience and give it a meaning and context beyond the limitations of ordinary consciousness.

Therapist Experience With Spiritual Resonance

Some therapists that were interviewed on the subject had had a peak experience in an unexpected manner that opened them to their own soul consciousness. They then continued meditation practice in order to build upon that experience and establish a stable pattern of consciousness based in soul awareness. Others sought spiritual growth by working with spiritual teachers because of an internal calling to a particular spiritual discipline. Each one has a unique way of entering the sacred space within themselves, and they bring their internal experience into the therapeutic session through a variety of clinical and spiritual orientations. Some therapists silently access expanded awareness and allow the client to mirror the experience, while other therapists introduce meditation and focusing techniques.

The following therapists are experienced with the practice of working in a shared field of spiritual resonance with their clients, but they did not start that way. Over time they have learned to utilize their alternative ways of knowing to track information and energy flow between client