

This paper is based on recent research including the work of Daniel Siegel (Siegel 2007; 2009; 2010; 2012), from which it is largely drawn – and extrapolated from. The previous original concise 3 page version is still available – now notated as C6-A.

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Thanks to Michael Ross and Annie Sturgeon for their proof reading and helpful comments.

## 1. Introduction

There are various models of mental health. I am drawn to a model by Daniel Siegel, with three domains: one of chaos; one of dullness / lethargy / depression; and one of harmony and integration. We can summarise these as follows:

- i. When we are feeling anxious / disturbed within; this may be associated with a sense of internal chaos. At such times we may have a feeling of dis-integration.
- ii. When we are feeling lifeless and unable to respond appropriately to what is happening: here we may have a feeling of rigidity within; this can be associated with certain forms of depression / despondency / numbness. We may not feel at one with ourselves.
- iii. When we are well and feeling in the flow of life: here there can be a sense of integration within us

This implies that for mental health we need to steer a course between the chaotic and the excessively rigid. Mental distress and disturbance of any sort involves some form of internal non-attunement with our selves, and / or a feeling of impending disintegration. Mental health, on the other hand, implies responding to whatever life brings with flexibility, coherence, and mindfulness; and this will be associated with a sense of integration.

From this perspective, lack of integration reflects mental disturbance, whereas a sense of integration implies well-being. Some of these dynamics are illustrated schematically in Figure 1.

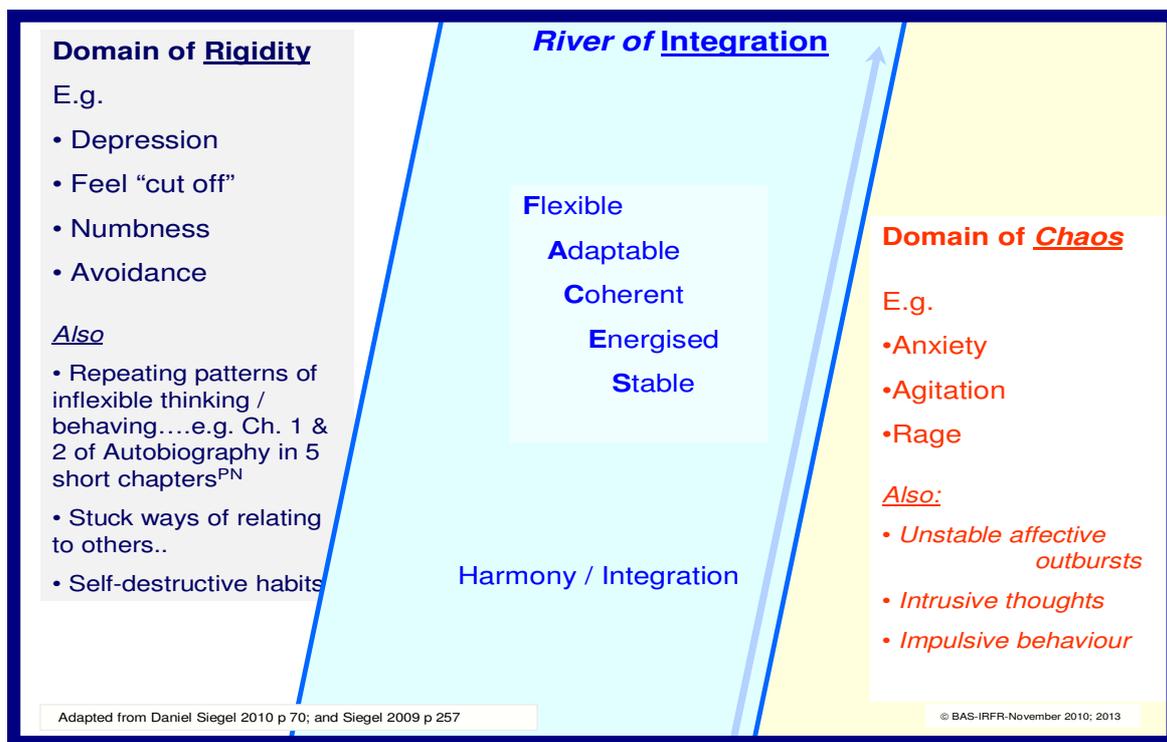


Figure 1  
The River of Integration  
Based on Siegel 2007; 2009; 2010

Note that rigidity tends to occur when we become depressed<sup>1</sup>, feel "cut off"; and when we avoid people or matters. On the other hand, chaos can be associated with anxiety, agitation, and rage. Disturbing memories can of course cause us a great deal of distress and disharmony (see B1 & B4 in this web series).

<sup>PN</sup> Nelson, Portia; 1977. *The romance of self discovery: There's a hole in my sidewalk* ; pp 2-3; ISBN 0-941831-87-6

<sup>1</sup> A feeling of chaos and rigidity can sometimes overlap – as in, for example, agitated depression.

The hallmarks of integration and harmony, it will be seen, embrace the concepts of: “Flexibility; Adaptability; Coherence; Energy; and Stability” (Siegel 2007; e.g. pages 78; 207; 332). So when we are in the flow of life, we will feel both in harmony and energised. We can take the “pulse” of integration by assessing the rigidity – chaos parameters in ourselves, others, and in relationships (Siegel 2009 p 157).

One of Daniel Siegel’s approaches to those suffering from inner disharmony is to facilitate the development of internal integration. This can take various forms, and in Sections 3 & 4 we will focus on two of these: vertical and horizontal integration (Siegel 2007; 2009; 2010). Before that, we will look at four domains that Elizabeth Kubler Ross considers vital for Well Being.

## **2. Four Domains for integration**

Elizabeth Kubler Ross, in her work with those with a terminal illness, used to emphasise the importance of keeping four domains in balance. They are equally important in our day to day lives, whatever our health and whatever our age. The four are:

- the intellectual
- the emotional
- the physical, and
- the spiritual.

Now what we are referring to here as the spiritual domain is important for all of us whatever our belief system / philosophy, as has been made clear to Edinburgh medical students in their General Practice attachments:

By spiritual we mean the needs and expectations which all humans have to find meaning, purpose and value in life: even people who are not religious have belief systems that give their lives meaning and purpose. Spiritual distress can hinder physical healing, and its identification may improve healing outcomes. Thus we consider this a dimension relevant in holistic health care.

Quoted from: The Department of General Practice (Edinburgh University);  
notes for 5th Year Medical Students – 2002

A further interesting perspective on the spiritual is given by Pollard: “Some people find spirituality through religion; others find it through science, music, art or a connection with nature, while still others find it in their personal values and principles. No matter how it is defined, this elusive entity describes the way we find meaning, hope, comfort and inner peace in our lives.” (Pollard 2004)

Integration involves all four of these domains, and we return to this theme in section 5.

## **3. Vertical Integration**

It can happen that as we grow up we become out of touch with our bodies and what is going on within. We can call this a lack of vertical integration (Siegel 2010 pp 72-73; & 120-144). For example, we may be out of touch with our heart – both physically and metaphorically. This means that we may be living in a heartless manner; and we may be unaware of this. On the other hand, we may feel broken hearted – and here it is important that, in time, we get back in touch with our inner being and creativity and child-like playfulness; this will facilitate transformation and the healing of our broken heart.

Mental training that helps us get in touch with our body can, in this situation, be of particular value. Such mental training includes, for example, certain forms of yoga, Positive Mental Training, Meditation and Autogenic Training (AT). In Autogenic Training, we start with a simple body scan (which over time allows us to get in touch with various parts of our body); and then the First Standard Exercise focuses on the dominant arm (i.e. the left arm for the left handed: right for right handed). Each new Standard Exercise

focuses on a different part of the body (or physiological process in the cases of the third and fourth exercises). Thus the very essence of AT can be reframed as promoting vertical (and horizontal) integration.

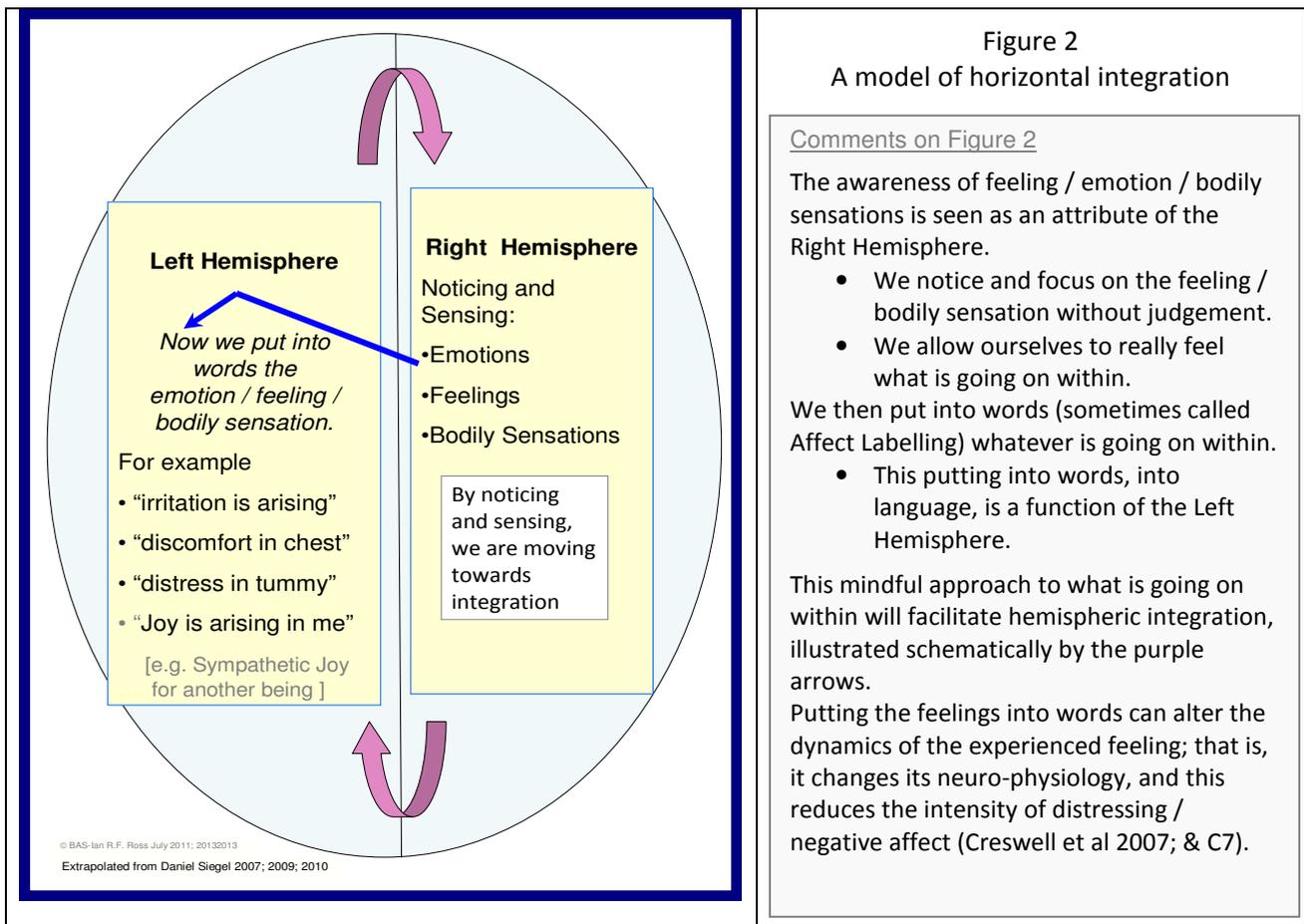
#### 4. Horizontal Integration

We may live our lives very much in our heads – for example with the Left Hemisphere attributes of thinking, reasoning, logic and language. In this situation, we may be out of touch with our emotions and feelings; and it will be difficult for us to be attuned to ourselves or others – including our partner, our children, and close friends; we will tend to lack empathy / sympathy<sup>2</sup>.

Being in touch with our emotions, and being sym-pathetic<sup>2</sup> [“empathic”], is associated with Right Hemisphere dynamics. In mental health, the two hemispheres (left and right) are in proper / appropriate communication with each other (McGilchrist, 2009): they have become integrated. This is called horizontal integration (e.g. Siegel 2010 p 72; pp 102-119). [There has been a tendency in the Western World, since the industrial revolution, to focus on the Left Hemisphere dynamics of logic and language, at the expense of poetry and feeling; from this perspective, our society has become skewed – McGilchrist 2009 again].

If we realise that we are out of touch with our emotions and inner feelings, we can choose to develop our skills in Mental Training<sup>3</sup> – which will facilitate re-integration with our feelings, and also facilitate horizontal integration; and at the same time this will help us to develop the crucial middle pre-frontal cortex functions described in C2 of this web series.

Horizontal integration is thought to come about in a variety of ways: Figure 2 illustrates one of these possible ways. [Further neuro-physiological aspects of vertical and horizontal integration can be found in the Post Script, Section 10.]



<sup>2</sup> See Appendix (Section 11) for a discussion on the use of sympathy and empathy, and their origins.

<sup>3</sup> Just as an athlete would undertake regular physical training to enable her / his muscles and heart to become fit.

Modern communications can give rise to problems. For example, the other day I received an e-mail which I responded to right away – and then had a bad feeling inside for the rest of the day. This disagreeable feeling reflected non-integration. The next morning I sent a modifying e-mail, and only at that stage did I begin to feel better. The immediate response can reflect a Left-Hemisphere-dominated response that may not have been modulated by the appropriate feeling and affect [Right Hemisphere in the current model].

On the other hand, when we meet someone and have a chat, there is a lot going on at a non-verbal level that is processed by the Right Hemisphere, and this modulates our understanding of what the other person is saying. It is of course not just the words that are “speaking”, but the intonation, the facial expression, the posture etc; these are inevitably lost in the written word, whether it be on paper, on a computer screen, or as a text message<sup>4</sup>.

## **5. Mindfulness and Integration**

Note that simply naming (labelling) our feelings is not sufficient to bring about horizontal integration. Research by Creswell et al (2003) indicates that for the “affect labelling”<sup>5</sup> to be effective, we need to develop Mindfulness (through, for example, mental training such as meditation / AT). In particular, there is an association between:

- i. Mindfulness and the activation of certain pre-frontal cortex areas (especially the middle pre-frontal cortex (MPFC): MPFC activation is itself associated with specific socially desirable functions such as empathy (read sympathy<sup>2</sup>), insight, and attunement to others (Siegel 2007; and C2).
- ii. Mindfulness, affect labelling, and reduced activation of the amygdala: i.e. affect labelling in those who have Mindfulness skills leads to reductions in the fear / anxiety circuits of the amygdala.

Carl Jung, in his theory of psychological types, included the Four Functions of: Thinking & Feeling, and Intuition & Sensation (Jung 1935A<sup>AP & 1</sup> pp 3 – 38; Jung 1971 / 1991 pp 330-372). These to some extent overlap with the four quadrants / domains of Elizabeth Kubler Ross [EKR] mentioned earlier: Thinking with the Intellectual (and Left Hemisphere), Feeling with the Emotional quadrant, Intuition with the Spiritual, and Sensation with the Physical<sup>6</sup> (in that it is only through our sensory systems that we can become aware of things both outwith our bodies and within our bodies). Be that as it may, integration requires us to embrace all four aspects of the Four Functions and the Four Quadrants.

Figure 4 illustrates the Four Quadrants of EKR schematically.

<sup>4</sup> With care, the written word can of course also communicate effectively and affectively; if it could not, no one would bother writing! However, in terms human-human interactions, non-verbal communications are of great importance – and become critical, for example, in the mother-infant dyad and in counselling / psychotherapy.

<sup>5</sup> The term “affect labelling” does not particularly appeal to me, but it is the term used in recent scientific literature (e.g. Creswell 2007). We can simply name the emotion, or put into words what is going on within us.

<sup>6</sup> Including all external and internal parts of the body.

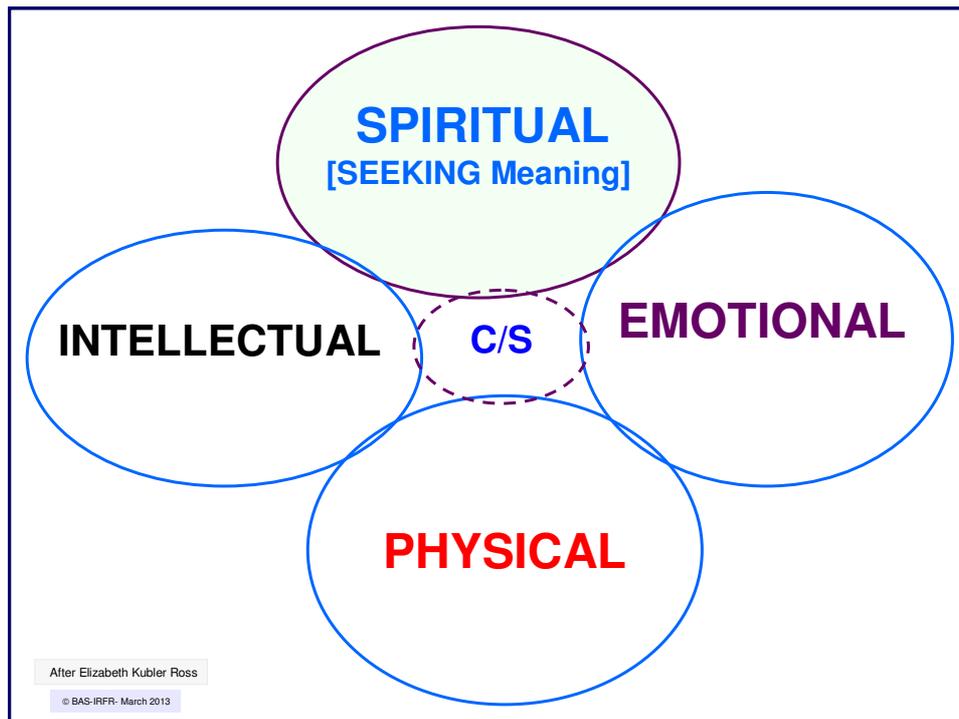


Figure 3  
Four Quadrants / Domains of Elizabeth Kubler Ross  
in the context of Integration

#### Comments on Figure 4

- i. In the centre of the Four Domains is C/S, without which integration cannot occur. Consciousness, C, is not sufficient for this; original consciousness is related to deep brain structure and primary process emotions (Panksepp 1998). In humans integration does not generally occur spontaneously: we have to work on it; and this aspect (in Jungian psychology) is represented by the Self<sup>7</sup>, S. [Not to be confused with Freud's ego, and concepts such as ego-centric.]
- ii. The Intellectual quadrant is linked with Left Hemisphere dynamics (McGilchrist 2009) which Daniel Siegel alliterates as: "linear, linguistic, logical..... literal, and list making" (Siegel 2012 p A1-36).
- iii. The Emotional quadrant originates in the primary process emotions and the linked deep-seated primordial conscious awareness of the world (Panksepp 1998 p 309; Panksepp & Biven 2012 e.g. pp 69-70). According to McGilchrist, the Right Orbito-Frontal Cortex (of the Pre Frontal Cortex) "is essential for emotional understanding and regulation" (McGilchrist 2009 pp 58-59).
- iv. ii. & iii. above suggest that integration of the Intellectual (Thinking) and Emotional (Feeling) quadrant involves Horizontal integration. Horizontal integration is certainly involved. However, our brain dynamics are highly complex and it is a mistake to think we can truly grasp them. For example, the research by Bud Craig indicates that incoming SNS signals from both sides of the body (e.g. pain afferents) are modulated in the *Right* Anterior Insular, whereas incoming PSNS signals from both sides of the body (reflecting that the body is feeling OK) are modulated by the *Left* Anterior Insular [Craig 2005; Damasio 1994 p 150).

<sup>7</sup> Self: i. "An archetypal image of "wholeness" experienced as a transpersonal power which invests life with meaning: e.g. Christ, Buddha, mandala-figures. ii. The hypothetical centre and totality of the psyche, experienced as that which governs the individual and toward which the individual is unconsciously striving. The principle of coherence, structure, organisation that governs balance and integration of psychic contents." (Young-Eisendrath & Dawson 1997 p 318). Such a concept of Self overlaps with Spinoza's Conatus (see B16 in this series).

For wholeness and well-being, we need to be in touch with our bodies, the physical domain. It could be argued that in hyper-vigilant states (Dobbin & S. Ross 2012) we are *too much* in touch with our bodies. Actually, the problem is that our bodies are out of balance, with excessive afferent inputs from the SNS – which is telling us that “all is not well in the periphery”. However, if through Mental Training, we allow our breathing to slow, then the Left Anterior Insular will respond to incoming PSNS afferents by inducing the vagal brake – i.e. slowing of the heart rate (Porges 2011; Craig 2005). This will then have the effect of reducing the SNS afferents that signal bodily distress (e.g. tachycardia) to the Right Anterior Insular; and so develops a sense that:

Everything in the periphery is quiet  
Wallnöfer 2000

### Cultural and social aspects of Integration – Mountain Lake, and the Bushmen of the Kalahari

Vertical and Horizontal integration overlap, as do all the forms of integration discussed here – and in the other web-pages (e.g. C7). Not only individuals, but whole societies, can suffer from various degrees of non-integration. Both Carl Jung and Laurens van de Post, in the extracts below, are hinting at aspects of non-integration in modern [e.g. Western] human society. We will start with Jung, reflecting on his encounter with Ochwiay Biano (Mountain Lake), an indigenous American Indian of the Pueblos in New Mexico. After they had been chatting for some time, Jung recounts the following conversation with Mountain Lake:

“See” Ochwiay Biano said: “how cruel the whites look. Their lips are thin, their noses sharp, their faces furrowed and distorted by folds. Their eyes have a staring expression; they are always seeking something. What are they seeking? The whites always want something; they are always uneasy and restless. We do not know what they want. We do not understand them. We think they are mad.”

I asked him why they thought the whites were all mad.

“They say they think with their heads” he replied.

“Why of course. What do you think with?” I asked him in surprise.

“We think here” he said, indicating his heart.

I fell into a long meditation. For the first time in my life, so it seemed to me, someone had drawn for me a picture of the real white man.....

C.J. Jung; in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*; p 276  
1963; Flamingo; ISBN 0-00-654027-9

This is a chilling reminder of the imbalance that many see in much of Western Society (see also McGilchrist 2009). These feelings are echoed by Laurens van de Post, who had a life-long interest and respect for the Bushmen of the Kalahari; he comments:

We [i.e. western man] know so much intellectually, indeed, that we are in danger of becoming the prisoners of our knowledge. We suffer from hubris of the mind. We have abolished superstition of the heart only to install a superstition of the intellect in its place. We behave as if there were some magic in mere thought, and we use thinking for purposes for which it was never designed. As a result we are no longer sufficiently aware of the importance of what we cannot know intellectually, what we must know in other ways, of the living experience before and beyond our transitory knowledge.....

.....Cut off by the accumulated knowledge from the heart of his own living experience, he [modern man] moves among a comfortable rubble of material possession, alone and un-belonging, sick, poor, starved of meaning. How different the naked little [in physical size] Bushman, who could carry all he possessed in one hand. Whatever his life lacked, I never felt it was meaning..... He was rich where we were poor; he walked clear-cut through my mind, clothed in his own vivid experience of the dream of life within him.

Van de Post 1961 pp 128-129

The Heart of the Hunter:

*A journey into the mind and the spirit of the Bushmen*

Now of course there are many in the modern western world who are in touch with their hearts and are integrated; yet Jung's and van de Post's words still have a disquieting feel and relevance about the direction of our modern world, which are re-echoed by Satish Kumar (Kumar 2007).

## **6. Autogenic Training, Off-Loading exercises, Integration, and well being**

### **6.1 Hyper-vigilant States and the *Intentional* Off Loading Exercises**

Many people have benefited from the Off-Loading exercises – which are an integral part of Autogenic Training in Britain. These can help us to get rid of any backlogs of unresolved emotional issues, which will help us in the process of re-integration. We can look at unresolved emotional distress (e.g. anger issues; anxieties; loss) in terms of a loss of integration; we are not in the flow of harmony (Figure 1). For example, unresolved anger issues may at times lead us into the domain of chaos (feelings of chaos) and an associated hyper-vigilant state. On the other hand, depression associated with lack of energy and a feeling of giving up will be associated with the domain of rigidity and perhaps feelings of numbness and avoidance – all forms of hypo-vigilant states<sup>8</sup>.

Figure 4 schematically represents the situation when we are, much of the time, in a hyper-vigilant state – such as when we have unresolved issues around anger [RAGE] and / or anxiety [FEAR].

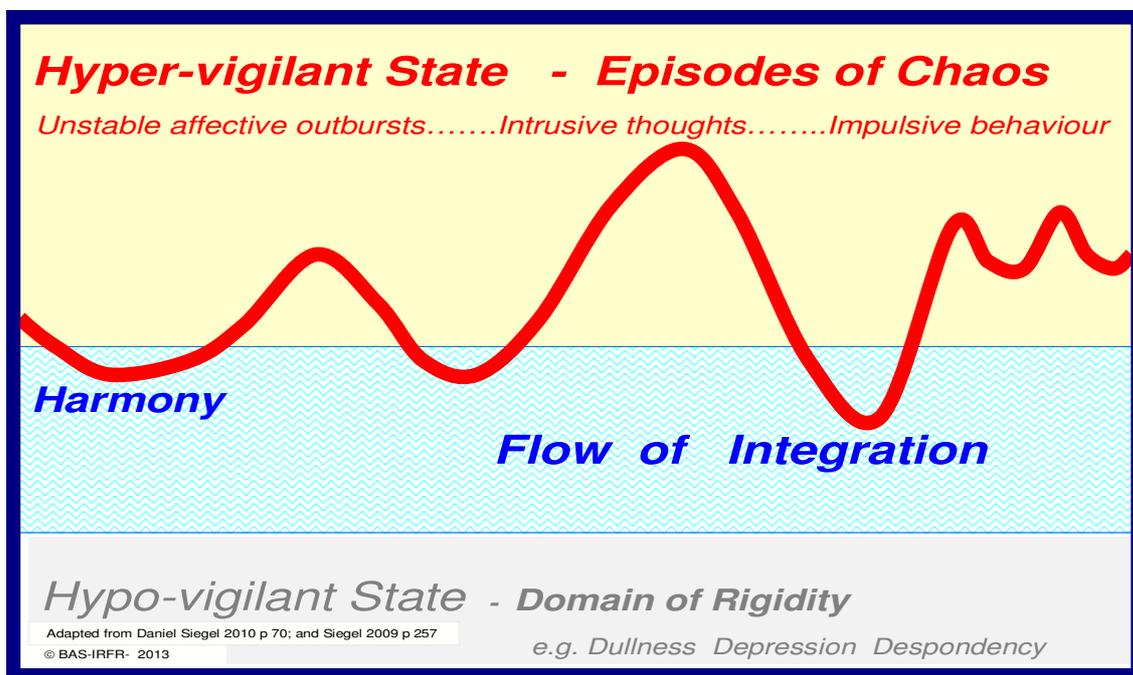


Figure 4

Schematic representation of a day when we are in a hyper-vigilant<sup>8</sup> state

*Comments on Figure 4/*

<sup>8</sup> Hyper: increased / excessive; cf. hypertension. Hence hyper-vigilant – an excessively vigilant state. Hypo: decreased / too low; cf. hypotension – a potentially dangerous state. Hence hypo-vigilant – excessively low arousal etc.

### Comments on Figure 4

- When we are distressed, our bodies are not relaxed, and this creates a hyper-vigilant state – so that much of the time we are in a Fight / Flight mode. This is represented by the red line. From time to time we may dip into periods of relative harmony.
- This hyper-vigilant state may be associated with just a vague feeling of unease, or we may be aware of unresolved anger / anxiety / fear issues.
- In this condition, it is very hard for us to feel any sense of ease, as most of the time we are not in the flow of integration, but in the chaos of chaos.
- In this state, attempts to settle our mind are difficult.
- Mental Training helps – but we may initially feel too stressed, too ‘hyper’, to focus on the exercises.
- In this context<sup>9</sup>, the judicious use of the *Intentional Off Loading* exercises can be of value – see Figure 5 below.
- Sometimes, unresolved emotional issues can lead to despondency and depression, represented in the bottom part of Figure 4 above; this may be associated with the activation of the ancient unmyelinated vagal systems (dorsal vagal complex) that overlaps with the freeze response (Porges 2009; 2011; see also Figure 1 of A7 in this series).

Figure 5 shows schematically the typical effects of these *Intentional Off Loading* Sessions on us if we have been going through a phase of protracted agitation.

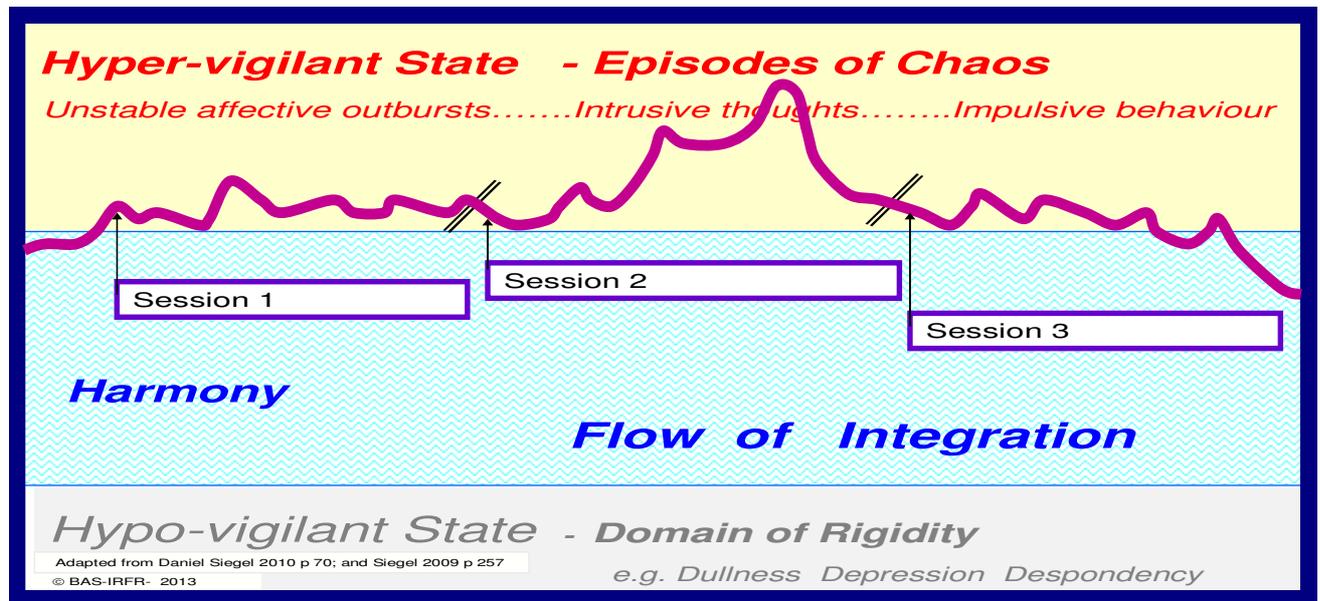


Figure 5

Schematic representation of typical effects of practising *Intentional Off Loading Exercises*<sup>8</sup>

### Comments on Figure 5

- In Session 1 we often start in a slightly Hyper-vigilant State (HyVS); and it does not appear that much changes; in fact, in this example, we do not really get into the exercise.
- The // indicates a gap of a day or a week, say, between sessions.
- Session 2 again starts off with slightly increased HyVS activity, and this then increases dramatically – peaking above the ‘u’ of thought! During this phase of increased intensity, we may wonder what on earth we are doing. The increased distress can feel unsettling – yet it can be sowing the seeds of healing (See Ross 1997; and B13 Figure 2, which reproduces the original 1997 Figure 6.3; it is also not uncommon in, for example, Expressive Writing Off Loading (see B13 in this series).

<sup>9</sup> i.e. when we have, or are developing, an on-going practice of Autogenic Training. In other words, I have reservations about the use of the *Intentional OLE* without the background of mind and body (PSNS) settling Mental Training.

- In Session 3, there is a slight increase of activity in our HyVS to start with; this then fluctuates slightly within the Hyper-vigilant zone, and then we move into the quieter and calmer waters of harmony – indicating that integration is occurring.

Between these Off Loading Exercises, we will be continuing to practise our Autogenic Standard Exercises (including Short Stitch<sup>10</sup>).

## 6.2 Affect labelling in the context of AT

Once we have got rid of the backlog of un-resolved distress, the judicious use of affect labelling both during an AT Standard Exercise session – and say the three minute exercise as suggested by Segal, Williams, and Teasdale (Segal et al 2002 e.g. pp 184 & 241) – may, in the light of recent research, be more appropriate than frequently using the *Intentional* Off Loading Exercises<sup>11</sup>.

Note that, in general terms, Autogenic Training, like Meditation and Positive Mental Training, brings about psycho-physiological changes within us (Schultz & Luthe 1969 p 1), and thus helps us to remain – most of the time – within the “river of integration”.

## 6.3. Hyper-vigilant States and Autogenic Neutralisation (Re-Balancing)

Luthe found that the Off Loading Exercises could help some people complete the basic Autogenic Training course – when previously, without the OLE, they would have given up – partly because of the number of distressing Autogenic Reactions [see CAR sheet – Checklist for Autogenic Reactions].

It can happen that we need to go deeper with such off loading, in which case we may benefit from Autogenic Neutralisation.

### Autogenic Neutralisation

Autogenic Neutralisation [AN] was developed by Wolfgang Luthe, a colleague of Schultz, in North America during the 1960-1970s. Some of us find the term Autogenic Neutralisation unsatisfactory; I would prefer a term such as: Autogenic Re-Balancing or Integration<sup>12</sup>.

Students who have learned the basic AT exercises may go on to AN, with an Autogenic Therapist. AN is co-created in a one to one format:

- the session starts with the student doing a brief Autogenic sequence, and
- then saying out loud whatever comes to mind or what the student feels in body.
- The Sessions are recorded, and the therapist makes judicious comments from time to time.
- Should the student become significantly distressed, they are encouraged to do a brief AT exercise, which restores them within the River of Integration, after which they can return / revisit the area of distress.
- The student then transcribes in full the whole session, adding comments about the session as they come to mind.
- A copy of the transcription is then sent to the Autogenic Therapist before the next session.
- Sessions last a good hour; 90 minutes may be more appropriate (Rossi 1991; pp 1 – 6; Ross 2010 p 101 [Essay 3, which explores aspects of the therapeutic process in the context of biological rhythms and gene expression, and the innate rhythms found in all of nature]).

<sup>10</sup> i.e. Body scan; and then Right (or Left) Arm Heavy x 3 – 6; and then close.

<sup>11</sup> The Off-loading Exercises have the potential to activate, for example, the FEAR and / or RAGE circuits (Panksepp 1998; and B3 on this website). So once we have got rid of our backlog of unresolved distress, I feel that we should only use the exercises rarely – as the need arises. This is not the case in Affect Labelling or the three minute exercise, which can be used on a long-term basis.

<sup>12</sup> But then all forms of AT are really to do with Integration.

Figure 6 schematically represents the beginnings of re-integration in the context of a single session of Autogenic Neutralisation.

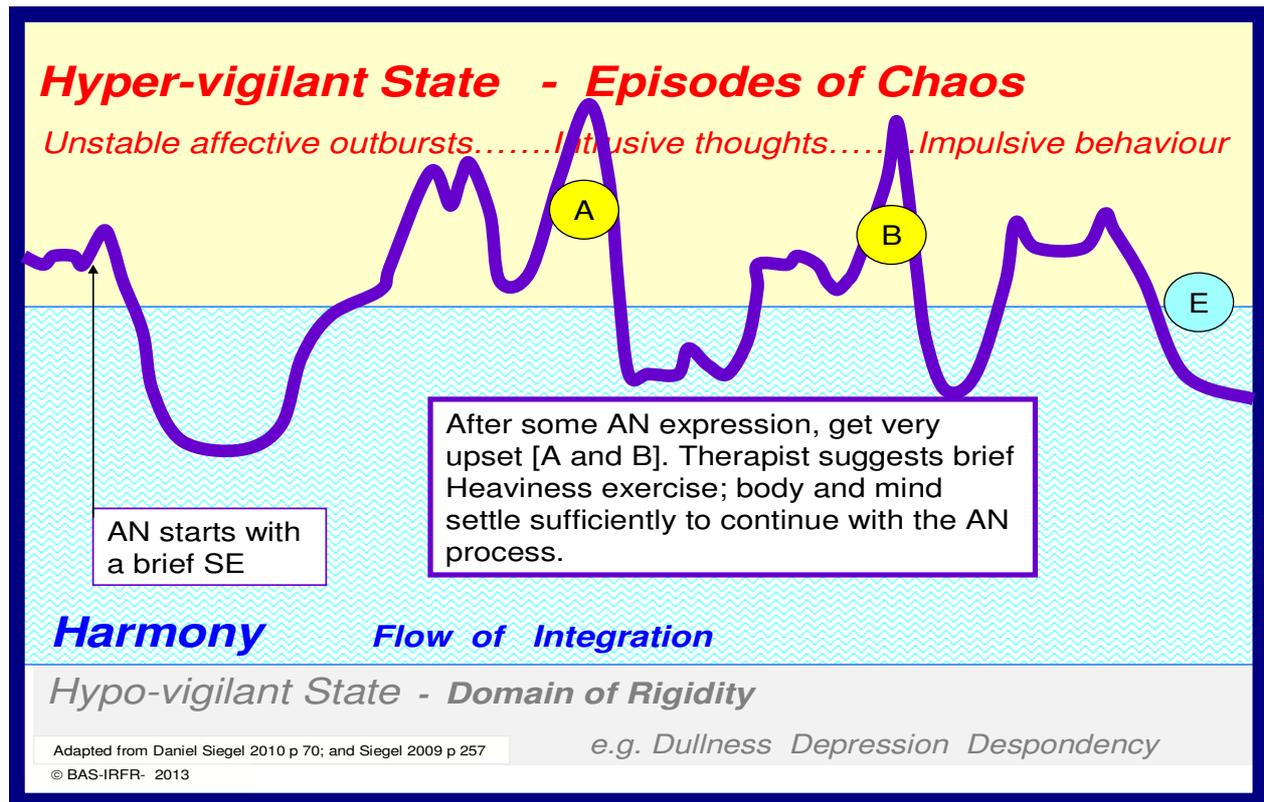


Figure 6<sup>8</sup>

Typical type of pattern in Autogenic Re-Balancing  
 [AN Autogenic Neutralisation]

#### Comments on Figure 6

This model of Autogenic Re-Balancing suggests:

- We often start the session a little apprehensive – wondering what may transpire.
- This unsettled state quickly settles with a brief (and abridged) Standard Exercise sequence [SE].
- We then express out loud – both verbally and in sounds – anything and everything; i.e. carte blanche: nothing is out of limits; there are no limits; we simply express what arises within us.
- If and when we become too distressed [A & B in Figure 7], our therapist suggests a brief AT exercise; we settle somewhat, and then resume.
- At a certain stage, if time is not restricted, we naturally resume a more settled state – which the therapist picks up, checks with us that that is the case [E in Figure], and so that part of the session ends.....
- We still have the writing up to do....which we can best do in an enquiring type of way with PLAYfulness and curiosity.

Typically, AN may require 12 to 24 sessions; as we become more proficient at it, we can begin to do sessions on our own at home<sup>13</sup>, initially supervised by our therapist – in that we report back to them in the form of the transcription of the session. So AN can become a truly Autogenic process for some people.

Some of us may, of course, from time to time benefit from one to one counselling. It came to me on a walk today that there is an aspect of AN that resembles classical Freudian psychoanalysis – where the patient lies on the couch, with the therapist sitting. Carl Jung was not happy with this approach: and in what

<sup>13</sup> This involves us making our own arrangements for recording the sessions.

became Jungian Analytical-Psychotherapy, the client and the therapist sit facing each other; this facilitates inter-subjective experiencing<sup>14</sup>. The original inter-subjective experience for all of us will have been in our infant-mother dyad – and it is this close relationship that fosters the neuro-physiological development of appropriate affect regulation in the child (Reddy 2008; Sunderland 2006). It seems to me that some aspects of deep distress / trauma may require bi-directional sympathetic attunement between the person in distress and the therapist; and for this, face to face communication is essential (Trevarthen 2012; Reddy & Trevarthen 2004; Bromberg 2011).

### 7. Towards Integration and Well Being

Well Being and Integration flow together. Most of us, at some stages in our lives, enter phases of lack of integration in some form (e.g. loss; bereavement). These phases of loss of integration – which can lead to feelings of dis-integration, can be viewed either as calamities or learning experiences. The Chinese symbol for Crisis contains two parts: one depicting Danger, the other opportunity. Mental Training can help us to stay in the flow of the river of integration (Figure 7) – yet always aware that we may from time to time end up on one or other bank: the opportunity then is to see the bank (the chaos or the state of rigidity) as an opportunity to learn – and so re-enter, in due course, the flow of harmony as a stronger “swimmer” than we were before.

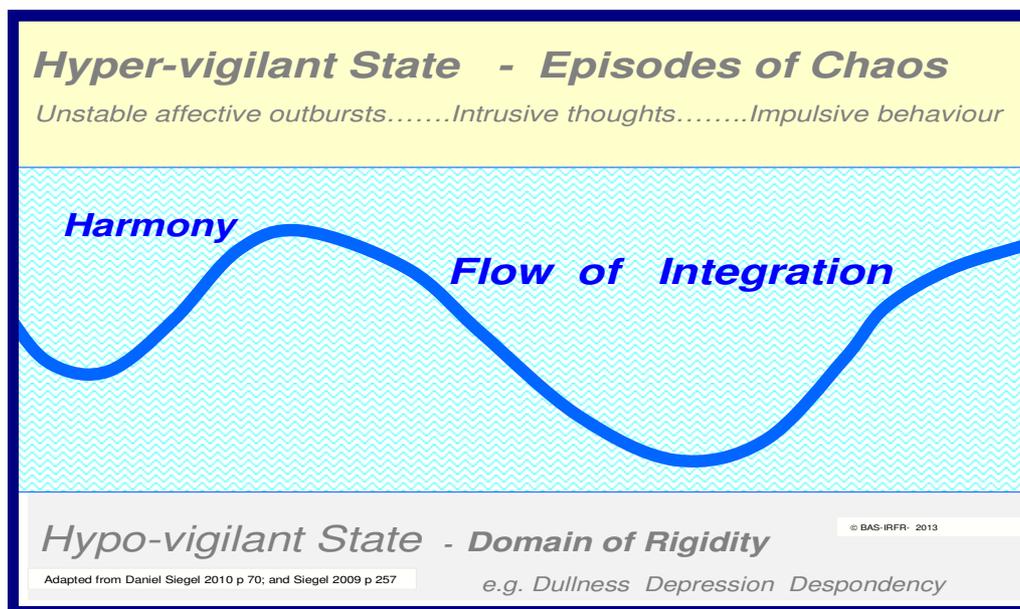


Figure 7  
Being in the Flow of Integration

#### Comments on Figure 7

- Mindfulness [D1 in this series] helps us to remain in the flow of integration;
- We are aware of the banks on either side.....
- Yet with mindfulness we can generally create a course that avoids both the bank of chaos and the bank of despondency.

### 8. Some concluding reflections /

<sup>14</sup> And this is of course now standard practice in most forms of counselling / psychotherapy [note: psycho: soul; so reframing, we have: soul-therapy (e.g. Jung 1933)]

## **8. Some concluding reflections – Nature and Integration**

When we are feeling at one with the world, we have a sense of integration. When we are feeling distressed or emotionally upset, we may have a feeling of dis-integration.

Let me give one or two examples from life. A decade or so ago, when I was one of the partners in a General Practice, there was a serious disagreement about a certain matter. I felt that my inner being was being torn apart – I had a terrible sense of dis-integration. A feeling of dis-integration can also engulf us if we have a serious upset with our partner / spouse<sup>15</sup>. On the other hand, if we are in harmony with the work we are involved in, we may have a feeling of internal integration and well being; this is also the case if we are in harmony with our partner, when there can be a wonderful feeling of integration that embraces a sense of mutual integration.

Sometimes when I am feeling emotionally out of balance, I go for a cycle or walk; when in nature I find it easier to be mindful and be in the present moment. Kate Chambers, who attended a recent Autogenic course I was running, came up with a lovely phrase (Personal and Motivational Formula):

Nature Grounds Me\*

In that grounding, we become integrated.\*

## 9. Linked themes in this Autogenic Dynamics section

A3	Towards a concept of Happiness and Well Being
A7	Porges and the Polyvagal Theory – <i>Reflections on clinical and therapeutic significance</i>
B1	Bears, Imagination, and Well Being
B2	Reframing, Reappraisal, and Well-Being
B3 Part I	The Origins of Affect and Affective Neuroscience – <i>and the misplacing of Affect in the Neo-cortex</i>
B3 Part II	Emotional Operating Neuro Circuits – <i>a brief introduction to Panksepp's model</i>
B4	Emotional Triggers and the Refractory Period
B13	Expressive Writing – <i>the efficacy of intentionally off loading through writing</i>
B16	Antidotes to Threats our Minds Create – <i>The Soothing and Contentment System</i>
C2	Mindsight – <i>our seventh sense and associated pre-frontal cortex functions</i>
C6-A	Integration and Well Being (original 3 page version)
C7	Being in touch with our feelings – <i>Hemispheric Integration</i> (includes the concept of Affect Labelling)
C8	Lost or disturbing memories – <i>Memory Integration</i>
C9	Making sense of our lives – <i>Narrative Integration</i>
D1	Reflections on foundations for Mindful Living

## 10. Post Script: /

<sup>15</sup> In both cases, we can, in time, return to harmony with, for example, on-going Mental Training, Mindfulness, and Being in Nature.

\* With permission and thanks

## **10. Post Script: Some further neuro-physiological aspects of integration**

### **10.1 . Vertical Integration**

For Well Being and mental health, we need a balance between the two hemispheres, that is, between logic / reason on the one hand (an especially Left Hemisphere modality), and feeling – especially gut feelings<sup>16</sup>, on the other. In 1848, Phineas Gage, a well respected railway worker in the USA, suffered a brain injury from a metal tamping rod that passed through the front of his brain. Although he initially appeared to be mentally intact, and was able to carry out mental calculations well, the accident had a devastating effect on his personality – so that he was no longer able to make appropriate choices in work or in his social setting (Damasio 1994 pp 3-51; Ross 2010 pp 143-145). The brain damage caused by the rod meant that he was no longer in touch with his inner (gut) feelings, and as a result he often made inappropriate decisions<sup>17</sup>. In other words, he was no longer able to integrate important aspects of his life, and consequently his life disintegrated.

Research by Antonio Damasio in recent years on patients who have suffered from similar brain damage to Phineas Gage shows a similar picture. In a card game (with a gambling element) used for research purposes, these people – with damage to the Pre Frontal Cortex (ventro-medial frontal lobes) – kept making bad decisions. This was because they were not aware of what their bodies were telling them – they were out of touch with their gut feelings [i.e. lack of Vertical Integration]. On the other hand, those research subjects with normal / intact brains were in touch with their gut feelings, and this allowed them to perform much better at the card game (Damasio 1994 pp 212-217). The implications of this are that pure reason / logic often leads us to make inappropriate decisions when it is not integrated with our inner (gut) feelings; that is, our inner gut feelings are picking up, at an un-unconscious level, that something is amiss / wrong. If we are out of touch with our bodies, then vital (sub-conscious) information does not modulate our decisions. Daniel Siegel gives a very moving description of a patient who came to him for therapy and who was out of touch with her body; his approach helped her to re-integrate mind and body into Mind-Body / Body-Mind – i.e. vertical integration (Siegel 2010 pp 120-144). Autogenic Training, from the first Standard Exercise<sup>18</sup> on, helps us to get in touch with our bodies.

### **10.2 Horizontal Integration**

If we are repeatedly caught in negative, brooding ruminations, this can become a major problem for us, and can be associated with some aspects of depression (Segal et al 2002). Such ruminations are associated with Left Hemisphere activity – and this may actually then inhibit the Right Hemisphere, which normally assesses the total inputs (from both hemispheres). It is as though with such negative brooding the Left Hemisphere usurps the Master Right Hemisphere's normal integration of all that is going on [following Iain McGilchrist's thesis – (2009)].

Meditative type approaches such as AT, which focus on the present moment – and the present moment felt sense within the body – seem to activate the Right Hemisphere, and this activation may actually then inhibit some dynamics of the Left Hemisphere – such as negative ruminating / brooding [i.e. negative type thinking].

Across the hemispheres, the integrating fibres of the corpus callosum enable the homologous – or matching – areas of the right to mutually inhibit the firing of that area in the left hemisphere.

Siegel 2009 p 159

See also McGilchrist 2009 for a detailed view of the dynamics of the two hemispheres.

<sup>16</sup> i.e. sensation arising in the body – such as, literally, the guts

<sup>17</sup> The Right Hemisphere has an especial affinity with “emotions and bodily experiences”, and in emotional perception of all forms. Emotional understanding and regulation is the domain of the orbito-frontal cortex; damage to these areas means that we can no longer be in touch with the messages (bodily experiences) coming e.g. from our guts (McGilchrist 2009 pp 58-59).

<sup>18</sup> i.e. Heaviness

## 11. Appendix

### *Some reflections on sympathy and empathy*

The word empathy in the English language has come to be regarded by counsellors / carers as more appropriate than the word sympathy. However, this is due to a mis-translation long ago (Trevarthen 2009; 2011 'p 8 of English translation'). If we use the word empathy with our European colleagues, they will see it as the power to understand the other – with the possible aim of then manipulating them: i.e. a potentially unwholesome and un-ethical approach. Sympathy, on the other hand, means entering into the other's feeling with sympathy and compassion – and in that way sharing some of the essence of their suffering; it is this mutual sharing (an inter-subjective dialogue – Reddy & Trevarthen 2004) that then becomes the crucible in which deep healing (involving the integrating of various feelings / affects) can come about (Jung 1935<sup>1</sup>; Bromberg 2011; Trevarthen 2009; 2011).

As is clear in the original Greek, em-pathy is a one-sided projection into (or taking in of) an emotion "about" an object by the self, whereas sym-pathy is a creative sharing of feelings, of whatever kind, "with" an other or others – seeking immediate mutual sensibility between friends or opponents (Smith 1777/1982). The difference is that in sympathy, there is a motivation for cooperation and the social negotiation of role (Reddy & Trevarthen 2004), even between infants in groups (Bradley 2008).

Trevarthen 2009, pp 56-57

I propose that two-way 'sympathetic' sharing of *complementary* emotions *with* another person has roots in adaptations for communication that grow in the human body and brain before birth. That this endowment leads to the capacity for more detached appreciation or 'interpretation' of *matching* feelings and states of mind *in* other individuals, now widely understood as 'empathy'. Empathic 'understanding' of emotions, knowing how to identify and regulate them, needs experience. It is developed by learning habits in a pragmatic social world. In contrast, the natural feelings of sympathy retain their importance for sharing aesthetic and moral principles of cooperation whatever artificial habits or customs are 'taught'. They transcend cultural differences, language, and education of reason. The initial capacity for emotional communication has the property of mutual support, which is properly called sympathy, and this is essential for harmonizing different intentions, experiences and emotional reactions.

Trevarthen 2011 p 1

See also pp 11-12 for further discussion re the Greek origins empathy and sympathy  
[*ἐμπάθεια* (*empathia*) and *συπάθεια* (*sympathia*)].

Be that as it may, we now seem stuck with the English language common meaning of empathy and sympathy, especially within the psychological / therapeutic circles. For example, Daniel Siegel defines empathy in the following terms:

- *Cognitive empathy*: “the ability to see the world through another person’s perspective.”
- *Emotional empathy*: “the ability to feel another person’s feelings.”
- *Empathic imagination*: the ability to “imagine what it is like to be another person.”
- *Empathic identification*: the ability “put oneself in another’s shoes.”

“These various definitions of empathy can overlap with the use of the term *compassion*, but they generally are more about understanding and perspective than about being driven to help another reduce suffering.”

Source: Siegel 2012 p A1-29

While the bulleted points above seem clear and helpful, I think Trevarthen would feel the last sentence of the quotes from Siegel reveals one of the things that makes our word empathy problematic, when the original (Greek) sympathy would convey a positive motivation to support the other: i.e. “The initial capacity for emotional communication has the property of mutual support, which is properly called sympathy, and this is essential for harmonizing different intentions, experiences and emotional reactions” (Trevarthen 2012 p 1, and quoted above).

Siegel also uses the term Empathic Joy to mean “The positive feeling of taking joy in the joy of others, in feeling pleasure in their pleasure, and feeling pride for their accomplishments. Feeling good about another’s well being” (Siegel 2012 p A1-29). A similar term in Buddhist psychology is Sympathetic Joy, which is grounded in generosity of heart: “When we take delight in the happiness of another, when we genuinely rejoice in their prosperity, success, or good fortune rather than begrudging it in any way, we are abiding in *mudita*, sympathetic joy.....” (Salzberg 1995 p 119).

Finally, I think that the extraordinary work by such psycho-analysts as Bromberg is rooted in sympathetic resonances, as is the mother-child dyad (Schore 2003A; 2003B; 2012); and that the vehicle of healing and integration can be a sympathetic awareness of each *other’s* vulnerabilities (Bromberg 2012<sup>e.g. pp 80-88</sup>).

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<sup>19</sup> No relation to Ian Ross