

The Seven Channels of Experience for Couples

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According to the breakthrough research of Bud Craig (2006 - 2009) and Jaak Panksepp (2009) and the writings of Damasio (2010) and Alan Schore (2012 - 2015), the experience of the self involves the whole brain from brainstem to pre-frontal cortex and the whole body from head to toe.

1. Attune to your and your partner's whole-body experience
2. Cultivate our internal capacities to meet the client in the channels you or your partner "lives" experientially
3. Build bridges to those channels that bring comfort so the you can each build a greater window of affective tolerance and build the capacity to drop into core emotion.
4. Establish a secure base through attuning and guiding to expand awareness to channels that are blocked through defensive exclusion

Sensation: Sensations in the nerves, muscles, organs including the skin. Sensation includes the range between:

1. Tension to relaxation in any part of the body
2. Hotness to coolness
3. Comfort to discomfort
4. Supported, floating or burdened
5. Pressure, pinching, pain
6. Heaviness to lightness
7. "Prickly" to pleasure
8. Enjoyable to distasteful
9. Any sensation that brings information that connects mind and body
10. Sensation underlies and accompanies the other six channels
11. Tingling to draining

Emotion: Core affects of anger, sadness, joy, fear and disgust and all the complex and subtle shades of feeling states as well.

1. Notice how the feeling state shows itself. For example, “How do I know I am sad?” could link to sensation, or to energetic state
2. “What does the sadness want to say?” could link to imaginal hearing
3. Noticing the impulse to action shown in emotion laden movement can answer the question, “What does that hand want to do?”

Energetic: Subtle experiences akin to meridians in the context of acupuncture or Chi in the martial arts

1. Energetic lightness to heaviness
2. Eye brightness to dimness
3. Vividness of iris coloration to dullness
4. Energetic charge, fullness or depletion in the pelvic bowl, solar plexus, heart, throat, forehead or at the top of the head
5. Chills” or streaming up or down the torso, arms and legs
6. Flushing or rising heat
7. Micro-vibration: the “hum” or rapid oscillation of the body including tremulous affects
8. Vital to attuning to avoidantly attached clients, as energetic sensitivity is often used to scan for intrusion.

Movement: Body movement including postural shifting, and often non-conscious expression of the limbs, hands, fingers and face.

1. Knowing internal experience through tracking what the movement shows, brings, evokes
2. Breathing rate, type and depth including breath holding
3. Heart movement
4. Gesture, facial expression
5. Noticing stillness, frozenness
6. Can be the inroad to portrayals as the body shows the way to what had been excluded from awareness...often for decades

Auditory: Voice tone, patterns of speech and prosody (the “music” of speech).

1. Resonance and pitch
2. Hearing and feeling where in the body the voice emanates and resonates

3. Content and meaning of speech
4. Changes in the sound of the breath (sighing, yawning, friction in breathing, etc.)

Visual: “Seeing” with compassion and an eye for explicit detail vs. “watching”

- 1) Facial expression, skin coloration and eye brightness
- 2) Seeing movement in its exquisite detail paired with the prosody and meaning of speech including expressed images...creating a co-constructed whole of what is shown, seen and held
- 3) Eye contact, intention and care of expressed through our own eyes

Imaginal: Spontaneous or intentionally invited internal images.

1. “Seeing” images that are either literal or symbolic
2. “Hearing” in imagined or remembered sound
3. “Seeing” actions in recall or “future” imagination
4. Imagined olfactory experiences
5. Imaginal channel allows us to “see” in order to track how old and where a client/patient is in a portrayal in order to undo aloneness
6. “Seeing” intuitively as a kind of “knowing that feels correct” and can then be explored
7. Synergistic with and highly enriching to the other six channels.



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