
AN OVERVIEW OF THE HAKOMI METHOD OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

CEDAR BARSTOW

Cedar Barstow is a Certified Hakomi Therapist and the Administrative Director of the Hakomi Institute. She has a wide range of interest and has published three books: "Seeds, a Collection of Art by Women Friends"; "Winging It: A Woman's Guide to Independence"; and "Tending Body and Spirit: Massage and Counseling with Elders." Acutely aware, as an administrator and organizer, of the need for a clear, simple, and interesting description of the Hakomi Method to be given to people with little or no knowledge of Hakomi, Cedar developed this article with the assistance of members of the Training Staff: Halko, Pat, Jon and Greg. We invite feedback on how it serves the function of explaining Hakomi Therapy.

"I know you did your best," he says gently. The woman begins crying and then dissolves into sobbing. As her head sinks down and her shoulders turn inward, he helps her curl up. He stays with her, neither telling her it will all be all right, nor how to change so she'll do better next time. After the sobbing quiets down, they do some more processing and she discovers a level of acceptance of herself that didn't seem possible before. The light in her eyes and the fullness of her breathing speak to me. I feel very touched. I have been privileged to watch a "master" at work. Ron Kurtz is the therapist. I feel mesmerized, wondering, "How did he know to say this?"; "Why did he do that?"; "How did she feel so safe so fast?"; "How can he go so gently and get such powerful results?" As with all masters, whatever their practise, his work seems magical, effortless and full of artistry.

As a young man working in electronics, Ron became fascinated by how things work--the circuitry and the systems. An insatiable reader, he read about how things work in many disciplines--always searching for ways in which one system fits with or augments another. He read psychology, philosophy, systems theory, physics, biology, anthropology, mysticism, meditation. He got curious about psychological change, healing, the mind of the body, therapeutic applications of mindfulness and nonviolence, the evolution of consciousness. Then, while spending a period of time at the

Esalen Institute, he began developing a new system of body-centered psychotherapy called "The Hakomi Method." Though I say a new system, Ron would be the first to acknowledge that Hakomi is a synthesis of extant philosophies, techniques, and approaches. Among the modern therapeutic masters he has studied are Feldenkrais, Lowen, Pierrakos, Pessu, Perls, and Milton K. Erickson. Even though drawing from the understandings of other disciplines, the Hakomi Method has its own unique artistry, form, and organic process. "Hakomi" is a Hopi Indian word meaning, "How do you stand in relation to these many realms?" This was their ancient way of saying "Who are you?" and is an appropriate description for this therapeutic process, a process in which therapist and client explore the complex web of relationships which form our personal identities.

Ron Kurtz observed that in psychology's quest for the answer to the illusive question of how is it, precisely, that people change, psychologists and other helpers/healers have made a significant shift. As an overgeneralization, they have moved from talking about past experience (Freud, for example); to having a present experience or emotional release (Encounter Groups, Gestalt, Bioenergetics); to studying the organization of experience (Hakomi, Feldenkrais, NLP). Ron is convinced that long-term change happens through studying the organization of experience as it is lived and present (in other words how we do what we do). Thus we may bring to consciousness core beliefs which might be limiting, so that new and more satisfying options become possible. For this often delicate process to take place, a special atmosphere must be created: safety, mindfulness, mind-body interaction, attention to live present inner experience, and a sense of pacing that allows an organic process to emerge without pushing to solve a problem. Ron thinks of therapy as "learning, not just fixing something." This kind of learning is what Fritz Perls calls "the discovery of the possible."

One of the most exciting things to me is

that Ron Kurtz, with the invaluable assistance of eight special students (now Hakomi trainers) who studied with him over the last ten years, has actually taken apart the magic of how he works when doing therapy and put it back together into a very teachable system. The best way for me to describe precisely how this system of Hakomi Therapy works, is to go through verbatim sections of a therapy session and intersperse this transcript with client commentary, descriptions of the process, what the therapist is doing, and some of the underlying theories and philosophies.

The Hakomi session which follows lasted about an hour and a quarter in real time although the client experienced an inner sense of timelessness. The Therapist in this session has studied with Ron and other Hakomi Trainers and is certified in the Hakomi Method. Please keep in mind that these are selected sections of the actual session.

Therapist: A little nervous, huh?

Client: Yes, a little. That wasn't what I expected you to say.

Therapist: You're surprised ((?)) *

Client: Yes, I thought you would ask me what I was here for. I had my little speech all prepared, you know, about how I can't get angry and why that is, and what's not working in my life and (big sigh) and I'm nervous. I'm nervous.

Therapist: So something shifted inside with that sigh ((?))

Client: Yes, it's like the speech was so that I wouldn't have to notice that I was nervous.

Therapist: So, let's find out more about that nervousness. OK? You may want to close your eyes and check with your body. How do you experience this feeling? What signals are you getting right now?

Client: Ummm. (forehead furrows slightly).

Therapist: It's a little hard for you to identify ((?))

Client: Yes, a little, but mostly I just haven't done this before, except in meditation, but that was not out loud. (little smile)

Therapist: You're interested, huh?

Client: Yes.

Therapist: So, why don't you go back inside and check again.

Client: (big sigh)

Therapist: A little easier now, huh?

Client: Uhhuh, well, part of me is taking a deeper breath and not thinking so much and the nervous part of me is wanting to open my eyes and not be here.

Therapist: So, it's clear how your body is taking part in your feelings right now.

Client: Yes.

Therapist: So your body and your feelings are going two places at once.

Client: Yes.

Therapist: Are you willing to stay inside and find out a little more about this conflict?

* The symbol ((?)) is meant to signal a subtle and important part of the process. It is necessary though not sufficient that the therapist embody an attitude of open exploratory curiosity. It is crucial that the client assume this attitude on her own behalf. It is her exploration of her own organic, inner wisdom that leads to transformation. So when the therapist says, "something shifted ((?))", it is more than a simple statement of fact. The tone of voice implies both that the therapist is willing to be corrected and also that the therapist is inviting the client into her own curiosity. If the client only seeks answers that respond to the therapist's curiosity, the process remains interpersonal and bogged down. When the client becomes curious about her immediate experience and explores it in a way that allows the therapist to know what is happening and make some guiding suggestions, a powerful process is in effect.

Client: Yes.

Therapist: You're curious.

Client: Oh, yes!

CLIENT COMMENTARY:

I'm surprised. Within the first few minutes it's clear that I don't have to explain what's wrong with me. I feel like the therapist is on my side, that whatever is going on right now is of interest. I'm amazed at how quickly and gracefully we get to my feelings. Although some of the therapist's questions sound artificial, I'm interested. I'm not just describing things that I have felt. I'm feeling them vividly from the inside. The interaction feels authentic within the first minutes.

PROCESS:

During the first few minutes, the therapist creates the context for the therapy session. Her first words "a little nervous, huh?" are a simple recognition of present feelings. Her voice is soft, straightforward, accepting, curious. She consistently uses techniques of "contact" and "tracking". She makes contact with the nervousness with a simple, clear acknowledgment: "a little nervous, huh?". She doesn't say, "How are you feeling?" She simply demonstrates in an accepting way that she understands.

Her words continue to be an invitation to go inside. She makes contact both with what the client is saying and with her body signals. Watching another person for clues is called tracking. The clues are often tiny and brief and usually unconscious--a sigh, a slight furrow of the forehead. Making contact with them as the therapist does, "You're surprised!" is a continual demonstration that she is paying attention, understanding, and interested. That in itself helps create safety.

The second thing the therapist is doing from the beginning is inviting the client to turn her awareness inward. Her questions like, "How do you experience this feeling? What are the signals?" require the client to check inside her body to get the information. Again the acceptance and curiosity invite her to go inside. The therapist demonstrates

awareness and her understanding makes it safe for the client to let go of her normal protective, focused outward awareness and be inside, learning and discovering. Mindfulness is available when we feel safe, when we know the outside is being taken care of. Mindfulness is a place of deep knowing. What a privilege for the therapist to be able to meet someone there.

The third thing she is doing is crossing the mind/body interface by continually inviting the client to discover how her body is participating in her feelings and how her thoughts are being reflected in her body. This interface is a rich, lively source of new information. For example, she makes contact: "So your body is taking part in your feelings," to encourage the client to study these dual events.

In addition, the therapist is creating a space where the client and therapist explore information that is spontaneous, interesting or compelling. These qualities are the bottom line, the creative edge of therapy. The therapist lets go of specific goals and stays with an orientation of discovery, helping the client study how she does what she does, how she organizes her experience.

During the first few minutes, the Hakomi therapist is doing a number of things. She is making contact and tracking, inviting the client to move from ordinary consciousness to mindfulness and curiosity, crossing the mind/body interface, and paying attention to the things that come up in present awareness that are of particular aliveness.

THEORY:

In Hakomi Therapy, the first order of business is always safety. Feeling safe is a prerequisite for any kind of deep exploration. When we're not feeling safe, our defenses are automatically up, and rightfully so, to protect us from danger. The defenses produce a lot of "noise" making it difficult or impossible to go inside and learn about the part that needs protection. For this client, for example, her "speech about what was wrong with me" was creating a lot of noise.

Client: M m m m.

Therapist: It's not quite clear?

Client: M m m m

Therapist: Take your time...a little sadness?

Client: No,...it's...I'm scared.

Therapist: You're feeling scared (her voice softens even more). Can you tell me more about it while you continue to stay inside? What kind of scared is this?

Client: I'm really scared. I don't want to breathe.

Therapist: You're holding your breath?

Client: M M M...(pause, then lots of tears). There's something wrong.

CLIENT COMMENTARY:

I'm finding myself very curious about the details of what's going on inside me. I've meditated before, but I've never tried to get quite so precise. My feelings are strong and authentic welling up from deep inside.

PROCESS:

Having made contact, established safety, and set the tone for mindfulness, the therapist begins accessing her client's particular unique experience--both mind and body--of nervousness. To do this she asks a series of questions which require her to be "inside" in order to answer. For example, "Is that with thoughts or are you seeing things?" There is no right or wrong answer to these questions. The purpose is to ask for details and help her deepen her awareness and study how she is organized around this nervousness which before has been simply familiar, habitual or unconsciousness.

Next, the therapist tries a Hakomi technique called "taking over". Seeing that breathing smaller and stopping her breathing requires energy on the client's part which then is not available for discovering what-

ever it is that she is "stopping", the therapist suggests an experiment in which she will take over the effort for the client. She will do one piece of what the client is doing, so the client can feel safe that it is being covered and allow her awareness to go to deeper levels and to identify more fully with the unexplored part. She's supporting and honoring her natural defense system. In this process it is very important to take over the action of the client in precisely the way she is doing it herself. She takes quite a while making sure that she's doing it right. "Is this the place? How fast?" In Hakomi work, there are many things which can be "taken over": a voice in the client's head, a desire to punch can be held back so the client can safely explore the impulse, a tightening in the stomach, held up shoulders, and so on. Almost instantly as she takes over the shortened breathing, she notices feelings and makes contact with them and begins to ask questions which will deepen and clarify the experience. With this experiment the therapist has chosen an access route to the core belief which is involved here.

THEORY:

There are three important theories involved in this section. The first is the all-pervasive principle of non-violence. The principle of non-violence acknowledges and respects the wisdom of living organic systems to know what is needed for themselves. It is reflected in Hakomi Therapy sessions in several ways. One is the sense of going gently, taking whatever time is necessary--not pushing or demanding in any way and matching the pace of the client. Another is in the predisposition of the therapist to follow whatever process is naturally emerging for the client, to simply be there and assist in exploring the information that presents itself.

Supporting the defense system is a very important component of the concept of non-violence. When defenses are confronted directly, they get stronger and louder. Guarding what's underneath that needs protection. An efficient, compassionate and powerful way to learn about the delicate feelings and memories that have for so long been held back by the defenses, is to support and honor the defenses.

Non-violence is also reflected in Hakomi Therapy by the therapist's embodying and modeling attitudes of compassion, acceptance, trust, and patience--qualities which are much needed in the empowerment and heartfulness of our relationships with ourselves and our larger communities. The principle of non-violence is so vital to Hakomi Therapy that a number of the techniques were developed to enable the therapy to be non-violent, and simply won't work without the corresponding attitude.

Another aspect of the Hakomi approach is its experimental attitude. This relates to the concept that therapy at its best is a learning process. It is not a fix-it process. Therapy is learning how we do what we do, and how we have decided what is impossible. When something seems impossible, we have no choices. By doing little experiments in awareness we witness how we organize ourselves around various inputs, and the possibility of exploring new choices for experiencing and expressing ourselves arises.

In Hakomi Therapy, there are a number of kinds of awareness to pay attention to: thoughts, sensations, tensions, feelings, movements, images, impulses, memories, meaning. By staying with and paying attention to any one of these, the experience will become more vivid and deepen into awareness on another level. Eventually, the vividness of the experience and/or the accumulated information will reveal a core belief normally created in childhood. This belief, if it is a limiting one, functions as a barrier to the normal process of updating the files when new and different information comes in. Transformation is possible when the client is enabled to change his or her mind about the belief.

So far in the session described here, the therapist has made contact with thought and sensation, explored the sensation and some strong feelings have emerged.

Therapist: It seems like something is wrong? Just stay with that feeling a bit. What do you notice about that "wrong"?

Client: (more tears) I don't know. (now crying and shaking)

Therapist: A little overwhelming right now ((?))

Client: Mmmm (She puts her hands to her eyes and bends her head forward). The therapist sees the direction her body is moving and helps her curl up, putting her hand over her eyes. Lots of tears and shaking. The client doesn't speak for some time and then gradually the tears and shaking slow down. Somewhere a fragment of a memory appears: "I think something's wrong with ME!"

Therapist: You're remembering something?

Client: Yes, I'm lying in bed.

Therapist: Can you see where you are?

Client: I'm in a big bed, my parent's bed. (The memory unfolds suddenly with great clarity.) I'm 9 years old. I'm wearing a light blue flannel nightgown. I'm sick. I'm real weak and I can't walk by myself. I have dolls that I'm playing with on the bed and the doctor's here. He's been here before. He's old and not very nice. He says, "If you throw up once more, you'll have to go to the hospital."

Therapist: You're pretty scared about this, huh?

Client: (nods)

Therapist: So I bet you sure don't want to throw up!

CLIENT COMMENTARY:

Client: Yes. I'm amazed. I'm actually simultaneously really being a nine year old and watching myself be a nine year old. These aren't in conflict. It's quite easy.

I notice my head nodding as a child would and my lower lip curling a bit as the sad, scared nine year old would. Here is a piece of this traumatic experience I've never remembered before. I remembered being in the hospital, but not the circumstances of how I got there.

(The session continues with more contact with the child.)

THEORY AND PROCESS:

At this point, the process of mindfulness has deepened from thought to feeling and then a childhood memory. The feelings, as they emerge are pretty overwhelming, since they have been locked up for many years. The therapist makes contact with how strong the feelings are, notices the direction in which her body seems to want to move (curling up) and simply supports this spontaneous behavior, helping her cover her eyes and curl up. This releases a lot of feeling in another state of consciousness which Hakomi calls "riding the rapids." This is a genuine, spontaneous emotional release. There is such intense feeling that mindfulness is simply not available. So the therapist supports whatever behavior the client is doing and maintains contact with the client until mindfulness returns.

In Hakomi, four distinct states of consciousness are used. First, ordinary everyday outward focused consciousness. Most of our lives are lived in this state of consciousness. The second (where most of Hakomi Therapy takes place) is mindfulness: awareness focused inward on present experience. Here, the vast richness of inner experience is available. The third is riding the rapids, and the fourth is the child.

For the client, a childhood memory, at first vague and fragmentary, emerges after the rush of feeling subsides. The therapist helps to stabilize the memory by asking for the details of the scene. "What are you wearing? Is someone else there with you? Where are you? What's happening? How do you feel?" As the client gets more in touch with the event, she becomes noticeably more childlike. Her words get simpler, her facial expressions younger, she begins referring to her nine year old self as "I". In Hakomi, this is the child state of consciousness. It is the fourth state and is a rich source of information about core beliefs which may be limiting to the adult. Since these core beliefs were formed in childhood, it is very valuable to return directly to their source. Now, back to the session.

Therapist: So you're probably scared to eat or move around.

Client: I'm staying very still and only breathing very quietly from right here (sternum up). I move my eyes around, but not my head.

Therapist: You're scared to move.

Client: Well, kind of frozen. I'm not feeling anything!

Therapist: You're not feeling anything ((?))

Client: I'm making it all still on the outside.

Therapist: So if you don't move and you don't feel then maybe you won't throw up.

Client: (Nods and lips purse a bit and head comes down)

Therapist: So, you probably don't want to talk much either.

Client: (Nods)

Therapist: I want to talk to you a little bit. Is that okay? I know you're scared and I know you're afraid something bad might happen...but I want you to know it's okay to tell me how you feel.

Client: (Shakes head "no".)

Therapist: It's not okay, huh?

Client: (Shakes head again) If they know, then I'll have to go to the hospital. (whispers) I think there's something wrong with me.

Therapist: You're pretty confused and scared and you sure don't want to go to the hospital.

Client: (Nods, more tears, holds her knees to her chest and starts rocking back and forth.)

Therapist: (Helps her fold up and rocks her.)

Client: (Takes a deep breath and lets go a bit.)

Therapist: I'm not your mommy or your daddy or the doctor, but I want to know how you feel and I'm happy to be here with you now, holding and rocking you. I know little girls who are scared need to be held.

Client: (More tears and more letting go)

Therapist: Feels good, huh? You need to be held. (Now therapist tracks a little furrow in forehead.) You're worried about what might be wrong with you, huh?

Client: (Nods)

Therapist: I bet you have some ideas.

Client: Something real bad.

Therapist: So you're scared there's something bad inside you.

Client: Uh huh, but I don't know what.

Therapist: So how do you know this?

Client: (Curls up her lip) The doctor.

Therapist: So all this must be pretty confusing. It seems like the doctor is telling you something is bad inside you and you shouldn't let it out by throwing up. You don't know what it is so you're pretty worried, especially about going to the hospital. So you're deciding you'd better be very careful and quiet and still.

Client: Uh huh. (Therapist has been tracking for signs of agreement as she talks).

PROCESS AND THEORY:

The therapist's goal at this point is to assist all the components of this child's experience to emerge so that they can be honored and recognized. She wants to get all the details of the big picture: The client's feelings, how she organizes her body to respond to and reflect those feelings, and the theme, the core belief which is operating here; and the strategy, what the child learns to do about it. The statement: "It's okay to tell me how you feel" is, in Hakomi, a technique called a "probe". A probe is an experimental statement given to the client so that (s)he can mindfully study what it is

that goes on spontaneously when (s)he hears it. It is not given as an answer or advice, but as an experiment. Probes are positive statements designed to be potentially nourishing. If the statement is "taken in", the response will be more relaxation and the therapist and client will then wait for the process to orient around the next thing that is needed. If the client, and this is usually the case, finds a barrier to the sentence (notices, for examples, a voice inside saying, "that's not true" or his or her breathing tightens up or (s)he feels angry), then this is a place for some processing. Normally, a probe is preceded by a phrase like "what happens inside when you hear the sentence...(pause)." However, when working with the child, the form is less formal. In this case the sentence is used as part of talking with the child and is not set up as an experiment.

Ron Kurtz speaks of four components of a "Sensitivity Cycle." These are four stages in the continuing flow of increasingly efficient functioning. Clarity leads to the possibility of effective action which sets up the possibility of organismic satisfaction. This leads to relaxation of tensions mobilized around the original need and the chance for greater clarity about what the system next needs to orient around. **CLARITY, EFFECTIVENESS, SATISFACTION and RELAXATION.** Processing in Hakomi Therapy is not concerned with solutions, advice or comforting. Rather, the therapist is concerned with helping the client explore the barriers inhibiting the normal organic process of efficient functioning. As soon as the sensitivity cycle is cycling again, the solutions or changes needed will be available and easy.

In this situation, the barrier is the insight barrier at the clarity part of the cycle. She does not know what is wrong ("I don't know what's wrong with me". Because she isn't clear about what is wrong, she inhibits her responses and cannot act as revealed by the probe and seems to be stuck at the effectiveness part of the cycle. This is the response barrier. Because she is inhibiting her response, she can't take action. Unable to act (unable to tell people about her feelings), she can't receive the nourishment which would help her to relax. In turn, when relaxed, she could get more

clarity about the situation. And so on. So the therapist wants to help the client "unstick" the theme of holding herself down which has evolved naturally from the core belief about it not being okay to let people know. She wants to help her update her files so that her own realistic organic possibilities can emerge.

Working with the child is a special opportunity. Here is a child who made a decision which has effected her whole life and her body. One of the main tasks of childhood is to categorize, order, and make sense of an enormous amount of information, feelings, reactions, experiences. Children's thinking naturally tends to be black and white, either/or, not containing the many permutations and adjustments and allowances available to adults through years of gathering data. Because they are uninformed and have a small data base, children also take information very literally and causally. So, in this client's case, the obvious conclusion from the doctor's statement was that there was something dangerous inside her that she must not let anyone know. She didn't have enough information to know that there were other possibilities.

The child doesn't need to erase or release the experience from his or her life. The child doesn't need therapy. The child simply needs the presence of a compassionate adult to help the child through the upsetting event by understanding, comforting, and clearing up the confusion, so that the child can change his or her mind and replace the old belief with a new, informed one. So the Therapist works with this child gently and delicately as a "magical stranger".

As she does this, now and during the rest of the therapy session as well, she is shifting back and forth from the big picture, the gestalt, the theme, the organization of the process, to the fine grain, the details, the spontaneous events. It's as if she moves from looking in a telescope to looking in a microscope. For example, at the same time that she's noticing that the barrier is the response barrier, that the theme is holding back, and that the body is holding back, she is also quick to notice and make contact with a furrow of the eyebrow, a nod of the head, a slight movement forward, a big breath. Contact with whatever is going on at the moment

keeps the process fresh, lively, spontaneous and flowing, while awareness of the larger context enables the process to reach its organic conclusion and transformation.

In addition to the Sensitivity Cycle, Hakomi also makes use of character theory. Ron uses eight major body types, each tending to reflect a corresponding character strategy. Contributors to the character patterns by which experience is organized include the structure of the nervous system, metabolism, language and culture, and habits. Character theory is not used to label people, but rather to help the therapist understand a certain part of the client faster and better. There are specific ways of working with each strategy which seem to work best. And there are specific core beliefs which seem to be the basis for particular character strategies. In this situation, the Therapist recognizes a "schizoid" or sensitive/analytic process. There are both strengths and weaknesses inherent in each strategy. (Strategies are normal and necessary in being alive and interacting with the world, and Hakomi Therapy both identifies and affirms the strategies and supports changes in the system. The sensitive/analytic strategy is to hold everything inside from a fear and belief that there is something bad or dangerous inside or some inescapable dangers outside. In very general terms, the approach to use with this strategy is to go slowly and gently, and help the client hold herself in to defend against the fear which paradoxically allows the belief underneath to emerge.

Returning to the session.

Therapist: (Speaks very slowly like an adult talking to a child.) So, I'd like to tell you something. I know how terrible this is for you. You really needed someone to talk to and there wasn't anybody, but you can talk with me about it now. I don't know exactly what's wrong either, but I do know that it's not too terrible because I meet you many years later and your body is very healthy. And I know that sometimes little girls' bodies get sick and don't work quite right. Being sick doesn't mean that there's something wrong with your feelings or that you did something wrong or that you need to hide or pretend. (Therapist notices Client nodding as she speaks.) This is what you were thinking, huh? It feels good to understand,

to hear all this. So you're feeling better now?

Client: I'm not so scared...!

Therapist: It's different inside when you're not scared ((?))

Client: I can breath easier and it's like my chest is more open and my shoulders lower. I can move!

Therapist: Great. So I want to tell you something else. Let's watch what happens when you hear...."It's okay now, to show your real feelings."

Client: (big breath)

Therapist: So something's changed. You can begin to believe that now. Let's just relax and enjoy that.

Client: Yes, what a relief!

Therapist: Is there anything else you'd like to hear that would make you feel even better?

PROCESS AND THEORY:

For the Client the transformation is simple and touching. Her body relaxes and softens as she feels understood, comforted, and no longer confused. The Therapist repeats the probe which earlier seemed impossible and what goes on is entirely different now. A big breath, one of relief and release. It's now possible that it's okay to let people know. The change from impossible to possible is enormous, and the beliefs are clear, available, and satisfying. The session concludes with the therapist and the client spending some time absorbing the new belief. The Therapist also makes sure that the client is clear about what goes on in her body with this new belief--deeper breathing, shoulders lower, a sense of movement. This supports the integration process.

When the process is complete, the client spontaneously returns to ordinary consciousness. The therapy session has moved from contact to accessing to processing to

transformation and now to integration. Although transformation in the therapeutic context is immediate, integration in the real world is recognized as an essential and longer part of therapy. Some of the personal changes will occur spontaneously as a result of new beliefs. Other aspects of change will take some time, and some trial and error, as the client discovers her own new sense of when and how much of herself it is appropriate to share in given situations. She will have a system of body cues to help her out. When she notices herself holding her breath or holding down movement, she'll be able recognize the fear and then make a choice instead of automatically, habitually shutting down and hiding. This change took place in an organic process of working with, honoring and bringing to consciousness the inseperable inter weaving of three systems: body, emotions, and beliefs. There is also another essential component of change which has not been mentioned here. As useful as it is to have a system and techniques, there is a healing that comes through the spirit in a manner beyond logical theories and systems. This special gift is welcomed and honored.

In conclusion, I'd like to say something about the goals and outcomes of the Hakomi Method of Therapy. The ultimate goal is the discovery of the possible, the transformation of limiting self-imposed beliefs, and the empowerment which results from new freedom and new options. Another goal is simply accepting the past and moving on as an adult, learning how to take in nourishment in new ways and, having "updated the files" in the therapeutic setting, learning how to apply these new beliefs in the real world. Applying new beliefs is greatly facilitated by understanding the particular and individual body-mind organization of experience which has been created to support and reflect the old beliefs. Just as important, however, are the skills the client learns through Hakomi Therapy. One is the skill of being mindfull of present experience. Another is the skill of using the witness/ observer part of awareness. A third is the skill of learning to notice both the big picture and the fine grain in any situation. There are also attitudes which are acquired in Hakomi Therapy: attitudes of curiosity and openness, patience

and going with the grain, responsibility and non-violence, compassion and respect, and attention and humor. In the biggest picture of all--how the world works--these very skills and attitudes seem to be what's needed for people everywhere to understand our essential interconnectedness and our responsibility for the care and healing of each other and the planet.

A TOUCH IS ENOUGH TO LET US KNOW WE'RE NOT ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE, EVEN IN SLEEP.
ADRIENNE RICH

STAGES OF THE PROCESS

