

Chapter 1

Overview: The Research and the Researcher

Introduction

This thesis describes an expansion of horizons, guided by Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer, 1993, 2006, 2007a, 2008), in studying the clinical supervision practice of Virginia Satir (1916-1988), a pioneer of family therapy, through exploring how she supervised family therapy practitioners and workshop leaders. Hermeneutics is usually referred to as the art of understanding; first practised in judicial and theological disciplines and gradually developed into a methodology of interpreting and understanding in the academia (Thiselton, 2009). Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, however, is "not a prescription for the practice of understanding, but a description of the way interpretative understanding is achieved" (Gadamer, 1993, p. 266). This study gathers her students' experiences through interviews and email exchanges, and goes through cycles of cross-examining these experiences with Satir's writings and demonstrations to come to a broader and deeper understanding of her supervision practice. This study also explores how supervisors of the helping professions could be informed and/or inspired to practise clinical supervision more effectively. Below, in this chapter, I provide an overview of this research and my researcher's position in this investigation.

Virginia Satir has been referred to as "the most visible and influential populariser of family and marital therapy among both professional and lay audience" (Gurman & Fraenkel, 2002, p. 214); and "a remarkable human being, who made a difference in the world not only for her ability to do but also her ability to be" (Santos, 2003, p. 14). She has been constantly

referred to as the Mother of Family Therapy by many authors (such as Hecker & Wetchler, 2003; Kramer, 1995b; Santos, 2003). She published the ground-breaking book *Conjoint Family Therapy* in 1964, and “reached millions of people throughout the world through her writings, videotapes, workshops, and personal appearances” (Innes, 2002, p. 35).

Despite these accolades, she was not given due recognition at the height of her career. Satir was marginalized in the academic field (Gurman, 2008; Pittman, 1989), and criticized as a “naïve and fuzzy thinker” (Nichols & Schwartz, 1991, p. 116) in the 70s. In the face of criticism, she remained true to her “highly idiosyncratic” (Minuchin, Lee, & Simon, 2006, p. 8) way of using herself in therapy, and “challenged practitioners to move from being technicians (developing skills) and clinicians (using those skills, coupled with practice wisdom) to becoming magicians (using skills, practice wisdom, and self)” (Dewane, 2006, p. 544).

In fact, since Satir’s death, i.e., within the past twenty plus years, the field has been getting more acquainted with her work, and has started to acknowledge her as being ahead of her time (Carlson & Kjos, 2002; Hoffman, 1998; McLendon, 2000a; Nichols & Schwartz, 1991; Norfleet, 2009); and to recognize that her impact went beyond the field of family therapy (Banmen, 2006; Piercy, Sprenkle, & Wetchler, 1996; Pittman, 1989). Her work is being increasingly recognized in the field; no current book on family therapy would leave Satir and her approach unmentioned. Even Salvador Minuchin, who had set up a confrontation in 1972 (as reported in McGoldrick & Hardy, 2008) or 1974 (mentioned in Pittman, 1989) titled ‘Is Virginia Satir dangerous to family therapy?’, commented that “she used herself in a way that was highly nurturing” (Minuchin, et al., 2006, p. 43) and her therapy “serves as a worthy exemplar of the work of the activist group of family therapists” (p.8). The major objective of this study is to

understand how Satir supervised and see whether she has left any legacy in the area of clinical supervision practice, which also “serves as a worthy exemplar”.

To date, Satir’s effectiveness in therapy is still highly commended, and “her concepts are now recognized as the core principles of positive psychology, a branch of psychology that officially emerged in 1998, ten years after her death” (Norfleet, 2009, p. viii). People are still being attracted to study not only her skills and theories, but her philosophy of “people making”, and her approach that led to “becoming more fully human” (Satir, 1988, p. xi). Satir’s vision for humanity and her unshaken attitude in trusting and encouraging people to reach their full potentials has been captured in books on the practice of counselling, family therapy and personal growth. However, little has been recorded in literature on clinical supervision. This study aims at responding to this dearth, and exploring Satir’s approach in supervision, to identify the skills, and to extract the ‘theoretical concepts’ and practice wisdom behind her supervision. It is anticipated that supervisors will benefit from this study and that the findings can enhance supervision practice.

Locating the Researcher

Satir’s Influence on my Personal and Professional Growth

In 1990, I resigned from my sixteen year teaching career in a secondary school letting go the role as the leader of the counselling team and a much higher salary in response to a spiritual calling to work in the school unit of the child and adolescent psychiatric team in one of the teaching hospitals in Hong Kong. Three months after I had settled in my new position I was stopped by a senior child psychiatrist at the corridor, “Grace, you are working magic!” She was impressed by the progress of a fourteen-year-old boy with Asperger’s syndrome, who was my

first case assignment upon reporting for duty. The psychiatrist's remark was a huge compliment and confirmation to what I had been practising: not only working with the boy, but also with his parents, and the family as a unit. My guiding approach was Virginia Satir's model of conjoint family therapy.

Working there for four years enhanced my knowledge about universal human yearnings and family dynamics, and affirmed my beliefs that the psychiatric symptoms were signals for help, and that healing began by facilitating family members to connect or re-connect with love. My clients, my co-workers and, most significantly, Virginia Satir expanded my horizon, and I was rewarded with many "awe-full" (Mahrer, 2001) experiences and witnessed powerful changes.

For years, I had been intrigued by the encouraging outcomes in my counselling practices, which were attuned to a simple and straight-forward belief inspired by Satir: There is intrinsic worth and resources in each individual, and my job is to reach these inner treasures of my clients through connecting them with love, trust and hope. It is now eighteen years since I left the psychiatric work setting, and I am practising as a teacher-counsellor-supervisor in a private agency where Satir's approach is still the major guiding principle.

The seed of conducting an in-depth study of Satir's approach was planted in me more than twenty years ago when I experienced the effectiveness of applying Satir's belief system in my work with troubled youngsters and their families, in both the secondary school and the psychiatric settings. The direction of exploring the area of her supervision practice was later affirmed when I became a supervisor of counsellors.

Choosing to Study Satir's Approach of Clinical Supervision

Studying Virginia Satir's practice of clinical supervision could be challenging; one has to

prepare to be opened to unorthodox and unconventional ways and means, as well as the transpersonal beliefs which are enigma to most people. One may even face marginalization, like what Satir experienced in the 70s; because “mainstream American psychology [which permeates into other disciplines], with its materialistic assumptions and scientific bias, has tended to marginalize the contributions of transpersonal psychology” (Elkins, 2001, p. 205). I personally was challenged in a few occasions by views that Satir’s approach was obsolete, it was not evidence based, it was and still is not within the mainstream; hence my study would not have any significance to the contemporary psychotherapy field at large. Another criticism was that Satir’s followers have been deifying her and worshipping her like a cult-figure, and I might be doing the same. I was a little upset but not intimidated by these criticisms because I believed that they all came from good intentions and some from premature conclusions. Based upon the transpersonal experiences in my encounter with Satir’s approach, the encouraging counselling outcomes with my clients, and the increasing demand for effective supervision, I committed myself to exploring this area.

The major reasons for studying Satir’s approach to supervision are, firstly, that I had deep transformational experiences after I was exposed to Satir’s teachings. Learning the Satir model has highly enhanced my own philosophy of living, which was already basically positive, and I have grown both personally and professionally. I have become more attuned to looking inside and reflecting on myself when encountering challenges in relationships and at work. Eleven years into my journey of studying some major approaches of counselling practices, such as behavioural approaches, Rational Emotive Therapy, Client-centred Therapy, Transactional Analysis and Reality Therapy and applying them in my counselling work, I encountered Satir’s approach; and I started experiencing more peace within, becoming a more loving human being,

and a more confident and effective counsellor. I felt much enriched holistically as a person. Secondly, Satir's influence continues in different parts of the world, especially in Asia where I live, even though she died more than twenty years ago. Thirdly, Satir's contribution and effectiveness in family therapy has been increasingly highly commended and widely recognized during the past twenty years; I believe that she could have contributed and been equally effective in supervision. Having immersed myself in supervision literature, none of them gave me the "awe-full" (Mahrer, 2001) experiences that had filled me when reading Satir's writings and watching her on videos. For the purpose of this doctoral research, I re-affirmed my interest in studying Satir's supervision, and prepared myself to be surprised in the process.

Significance of the Study

Paradigm Shift

Virginia Satir's voice has been said to have been ahead of its time, and people started to hear and understand it only years after she lived, worked and taught (Hoffman, 1998; McGoldrick & Hardy, 2008; McLendon, 2000a; Norfleet, 2009; Pittman, 1989). Minuchin provided the reason behind this through his remark in an interview via satellite for a plenary session of the Pan Pacific Family Therapy Congress in 2001: "At the time when other clinicians were concerned with power and with cybernetic explanations of family functioning, Satir, ahead of her time, was focused on the power of connections as a healing tool" (Stagoll, 2002, p. 124). Over the years, therapists and researchers have found that it was not the technique, diagnosis, analysis, or theory that has been most helpful to clients, but the human connection between therapists and clients, and the characteristics of the therapist (Hubble, Duncan, & Miller, 1999; Kramer, 2000; Norcross, 2002; Truax & Carkhuff, 2008). Yet, Satir's 'non-evidence based'

practice, no matter how influential it was for therapists, clients and the public, did not receive matching recognition from the orthodox, conventional academia of her time.

Satir's notion of "Peace within, peace between and peace among" (Satir, 1988, p. 368) also has increasing relevance today, when "the tide of destructiveness continues to wash the world in blood" (Brothers, 2000a, p. 99), and we, the 'global citizens', are still constantly bombarded with messages that evoke fear, hatred, inadequacy and 'punishing the bad people' who are in fact only 'different', not 'bad'! Satir's grand, and yet practical, idea of healing the world through healing families (Laign, 1988; Satir, 1988) holds the potential to contribute to world peace.

Connecting in Peace

I firmly believe that if we can contribute our part to have 'peace within and peace between', then we will move closer to having 'peace among'; and I commit myself to doing so. In the 2010 Satir World Conference that took place in Hong Kong, more than 600 participants from 17 countries, including the "Four Cross-Straits Areas" of China (mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau), Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Czech, Slovak, Israel and the US congregated to share and connect in Peace. Satir's approach provides one avenue for 'the world' to move towards Peace, and her thinking is feasible and possible. It is no longer 'naïve and fuzzy' in the present age. "The wisdom of Virginia Satir will be worthy of study for centuries to come" (Bandler, 1991, p. xiii); and she "left an important legacy to the field of family therapy, one of a fluid integration of artistry and theory in family therapy practice" (Rasheed, Marley, & Rasheed, 2010, p. 136).

Over the past 20 plus years since her death, Satir's humanistic-experiential approach has

been subsumed in many other therapeutic theories (Ajaya, 2008; Bradshaw, 2005; Bryant, Kessler, & Shirar, 1992; Gurman, 2008; Gurman & Messer, 2003; Kramer, 1995b; Schwartz, 1995; Wegscheider-Cruse, 1985; Wegscheider-Cruse, Higby, Klontz, & Rainey, 1994), and many authors tried to organize her work into a theoretical framework (Banmen, 2002b, 2002c; Bitter, 2009; Brothers, 1991b; McLendon, 2000a; Spiegler, 1991; Tam, 2006). In their *Family Therapy Sourcebook*, Piercy, Sprenkle, and Wetchler (1996) stated that “Satir’s ideas went beyond family treatment to encompass issues of spiritual growth and world peace. Her views on the importance of interconnectedness among humanity pervaded all aspects of her work” (p. 85). The family therapy and mental health field are increasingly aware of the powerful impact of spirituality on human experiences (Christensen & Turner, 2008; Miller & Ivey, 2006; Miller, Korinek, & Ivey, 2006; Vivino, Thompson, Hill, & Ladany, 2009); hence, recognition of the spiritual aspects in clinical supervision is deemed necessary and relevant today. Satir’s approach offers one avenue to consider the spiritual dimension.

The present study on Satir’s supervision could also contribute in alleviating the paucity of literature in this area and to fill in some un-reported or missing pieces of history in family therapy. This study will arouse interest in the study of supervision training which attaches more importance to the spiritual aspect of the human processes in addition to problem solving, and skills acquisition.

Guiding Research Questions

Studying the work of a pioneer like Virginia Satir, whose therapeutic approach was regarded as truly original by almost everyone who wrote about her work, I have prepared myself for the possibility of unexpected discovery and insights while preparing the research questions.

The key question I have been asking was: “What legacies can be extracted from the exploration of Virginia Satir’s clinical supervision practice?” With this in mind, the guiding research questions were organized into four areas: (1) guiding principles and philosophy; (2) supervision outcome; (3) skills, techniques and strategies used; (4) and the ‘use of selves’ in supervision. Below is a description of how these questions evolved accompanied by an articulation of each question.

Guiding Principles and Philosophy

Satir is often portrayed in literature as a unique, one of a kind figure in the field of family therapy. Pittman (1989) described her as “the most daring, most skilled of family therapists”, and as “the grandest, most overwhelming human being he had yet encountered” (p. 35). His grand portrayal of Virginia Satir reflected her philosophy of practice: She believed in involving the larger system (Satir, 1983b) and maintained that “if we can heal the family, we can heal the world” (Laign, 1988, p. 20). I developed a commitment to embrace broader perspectives in order to better understand her work.

Satir’s approach in family therapy focuses on honouring the human processes (Bitter, 2009; Brothers, 1991b; Satir, 2000a; Satir & Bitter, 2000), especially the spiritual aspect (Brothers, 1991b; Cowley & Adams, 2000; Lee, 2002; Satir, 1988; Walsh, 2008). She believed that people have all the resources to grow, to learn and to cope with life challenges, and regarded “people as miracles and the life within them as sacred” (Satir, 1982, p. 40). For Satir, “the first step in any change is to contact the spirit” (Satir, 1988, p. 341). While supervision processes undoubtedly work toward change, I was curious to know what “contacting the spirit” meant in supervision terms. What did she actually do to contact the spirit or to bring out the spiritual

aspect in the supervision processes? I also sought to clarify the guiding principles and philosophy behind her supervision practice.

Supervision Outcome

Virginia Satir was a master therapist with exceptional positive outcomes in family therapy, and in promoting positive changes in people's lives (McLendon, 2000a; Minuchin, et al., 2006; Satir, 2000b; Suhd, Dodson, & Gomori, 2000); especially towards intrapersonal and interpersonal peacemaking - 'peace within' and 'peace between' in her own words (Banmen, 2003; Banmen & Gerber, 1985; Brothers, 1993; Kramer, 1995b). I wondered whether her clinical supervision practices elicited similar outcomes. Would her notions of 'peace' be manifested or positioned in her clinical supervision practice? Are there any relationships between 'addressing the spiritual aspect' and 'supervision outcome'? If so, how can supervisors be inspired by her practice and be able to address the spiritual aspect of human processes?

Skills, Techniques and Strategies used

Satir was described as highly intuitive and creative (Brothers, 1991b; Corey, 2009; Kramer, 1995b; Millon, 2004; Winkel, 1991), and was portrayed as "a powerful communicator" (Bandler, 1991, p. xii) who had "highly developed technical skills" (Andreas, 1989, p. 52), which were embedded with structure and patterns (Andreas, 1991; Bandler & Grinder, 1975; Loesch, 1997, 2002). She was also observed making seemingly "random remarks and intervention in therapy" (Minuchin, et al., 2006, p. 8), and somehow connecting all members of the family "in love instead of conflict" (Minuchin, et al., p. 8). I wonder whether these random remarks and interventions were also part of Satir's 'highly developed technical skills'.

Satir (2000b) alleged that "techniques and approaches are tools. They come out

differently in different hands” (p. 19). I was thus prompted to ask what guided this pair of hands, i.e., what were the guiding principles and philosophy behind Satir’s skills, techniques and intervention strategies? Were her remarks really random? How could random remarks result in reconciliation of the family? What could I pick up from her remarks, albeit random, that might enable me to explore the possible pattern or structure of her supervision? In short, I wanted to ask: What specific skills, techniques and intervention strategies were used in her supervision, that were connected to the guiding principles and philosophy that lay beneath them?

‘Use of selves’ in Supervision

Satir was an action-oriented therapist who facilitated creative processes in therapy and supervision (Braverman, 1986; McLendon, 1999). She was seen as “a woman of boundless energy and high spirits” (Millon, 2004, p. 483), and with “personal commitment to the therapeutic process” (Minuchin, et al., 2006). I believe her supervision process would also have been action oriented, and revealed personal commitment. I sought to explore what kind of actions could be identified in Satir’s supervision, and how does an action oriented process contribute to the effectiveness of supervision?

Satir’s personal commitment echoed her emphasis of ‘use of self’ in therapy and her assertion that the therapist’s Self was the best tool (Satir, 2000b). I was curious to know how the concept of ‘Use of Self’ manifested in her supervision. Supervision involves many ‘selves’, including the ‘self’ of the supervisor, the ‘self’ of the counsellor, and the ‘self’ of the client. How were these ‘selves’ being ‘used’ in Satir’s supervision processes? How would these ‘uses of selves’ influence the supervisory relationship, the process and outcome?

Progress of the Study

The initial focus of the study was on ‘developing a Satir Clinical Supervision Model’; however over the years it has shifted to the present focus of ‘Satir’s enduring legacy – exploring her clinical supervision practises’. To start the journey, I delved into the literature in order to select appropriate texts that might be worthy of further interpretation. I then interviewed Satir’s first generation students in the light of learning from their lived experiences. As I moved ahead, the focus gradually shifted, and the guiding methodology also shifted from grounded theory to Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer, 1975, 1993), which can be seen as a process of in-depth understanding of any “object” through cycles of “interpretation, understanding and application” until the learner comes to a new satisfying state of understanding. Details of the methodology will be discussed in Chapter 4. Here, I will discuss three major insights that have evolved during the process of researching and interpreting.

The three major insights realized during the process of the study are that: (i) the interpreter’s (my) effort needs to gear towards producing, not reproducing, the meaning of the texts being studied (Gadamer, 1993); (ii) I need to engage in genuine conversations (Binding & Tapp, 2008; Gadamer, 1993; Schwandt, 1999) with the texts to allow unpredicted meanings to emerge; and (iii) I need to constantly challenge my pre-conceptions through dialogues and applications, enabling new questions and new understandings to arise.

With these in mind, even though this study was prompted by the “awe-full” experiences of my encounter with Satir’s teaching. This research is not aimed at speaking for Satir, or at correctly reproducing what Satir did in supervision, but to discover what was there, and to produce my best understanding of what the texts, i.e., the transcripts of interviews, and the

related historical written, audio and video materials, present to us. I, with the help of my co-interpreters, have tried to let the texts speak, to the extent that the subject matter, Satir's clinical supervision, can be translated into the interpreter's own words (Gadamer, 1993, 2007b; Kertscher, 2002). In other words, the focus of the study is not to understand what Virginia Satir actually thought or perceived when she supervised, which is an impossible mission; but to make my own sense of all the factors that contributed to those supervision processes and outcomes, and to draw out what they are and how we could learn from them.

I fully agree with Gadamer's notion that application is an integral part of the hermeneutic process (Gadamer, 1993), and that "understanding always involves something like applying the text to be understood to the interpreter's present situation" (p. 308). It was through interpreting the text and applying what I understood into my own supervision practice, that I was challenged by questions, from myself, the supervisees and supervisors-in-training. These questions led me to hermeneutic circles of understanding the texts more deeply and differently and to arrive at other levels of understanding.

An Overview of the Research

This research is an interpretive study using Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics as the guiding principle, which will be discussed fully in Chapter 4. The process involves a rigorous search and interpretation of appropriate texts, including the set of transcripts of the interviews and follow up email exchanges with Satir's first generation students who had been supervised by her. A total of fifteen interviews were conducted. The details of the interviews and profiles of the participants will be presented in Chapter 4. A thorough discussion and interpretation of the interviews and subsequent exchanges will be presented in Chapter 5. Another major source of

information came from written texts as well as audio and video recordings of Satir's work. Details concerning this pool of texts will be listed in Chapter 4. An analysis of a 10-minute vignette of Satir's supervision is presented in Chapter 6.

“Knowledge is never fixed; it evolves. It is intimately connected to context related to history, culture, language, and the ways that you come to acquire that knowledge” (Minichiello & Kottler, 2009, p. 14). For me, knowledge evolved through three different streams in this long and winding research path: (1) learning about researching, especially Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics as the methodological guideline to this study; (2) learning about the topic of clinical supervision and Virginia Satir's approach to therapy and supervision at a broader and deeper level; and (3) learning more about “me” through this journey of developing “intimacy” with the subject matter being studied. The details of this learning will be shared in subsequent chapters.

Foregrounding the Researcher's Pre-conception

As a teacher-counsellor-supervisor applying Satir's model, I inevitably would bring along my pre-conception, or prejudice, into this research. Instead of seeing it as an obstacle and blocking my energy, I had learnt, from Gadamer (1993) to view it as an asset, and as a starting point of my hermeneutic processes. Gadamer acknowledged that “A person who is trying to understand a text is always projecting” (p. 267); he warned interpreters that “all correct interpretation must be on guard against arbitrary fancies and the limitations imposed by imperceptible habits of thought” (p. 267), and that “understanding realizes its full potential only when the fore-meanings that it begins with are not arbitrary” (p. 267). Safe-guarding the interpreting process is not securing ourselves by understanding what the author really meant in

the text, but, on the contrary, is “excluding everything that could hinder us from understanding it in terms of the subject matter” (p. 270). Acknowledging and fore-grounding my pre-conceptions about the subject matter, i.e., my pre-acquired knowledge of Satir’s approach, helped exclude my own judgement about my ‘lack of objectivity’ and about allowing the pre-conceptions to be thoroughly questioned. These are the vital steps of the hermeneutic process; only by following them, I could attend to all possibilities at hand, including my subjectivity of interpreting the text and understanding it thoroughly.

Though I have been a keen follower of Satir’s teaching, I do not take her teachings and practices as absolute truth. To improve myself personally and professionally, both as a therapist and a supervisor, I sought to learn from all sources through this study. I shall foreground my pre-conception about the Satir Model of therapy and supervision alongside the literature review of Satir’s approach in Chapter 2.

Defining some Key Terms

This study aims at exploring Satir’s clinical supervision practice and gaining insights into how supervision can be conducted more effectively. During the process, I identified the need to provide a clearer working definition for some of the terms that are used in this thesis.

Clinical supervision: Clinical supervision is a process in which the supervisor, an experienced and skilled practitioner, helps supervisees, less skilled practitioners, in relation to their professional growth as well as their personal development over a certain period of time. The word supervision embeds ‘super’ and ‘vision’, hence indicates a prerequisite that the supervision process oversees everything that is relevant to that particular supervision context. It includes the supervisor’s self reflection and monitoring of her/his own personal

and professional well being; and the facilitation of the supervisees to do the same. ‘Super Vision’ also indicates the need to acquire a bigger picture of the situation in terms of understanding and addressing the issues within each individual, and the dynamics among the supervisory triad: the supervisor, the supervisee and the clients concerned; and to bring about positive change.

Becoming more fully human: The phrase ‘becoming more fully human’ appears frequently in writings concerning Satir and her work. Prior to these publications, Maslow (Maslow, 1962, 1968b, 1976, 1999) had used this term repeatedly in his speeches and articles since the late 50s to illustrate his notion of ‘self-actualization’. Satir saw “therapy as an educational process for becoming more fully human” (Satir, 1982, p. 22), and identified eight levels of access to a person’s “nourishing potentials” (p. 40). These eight levels are also described as “eight elements or dimensions” (Satir & Baldwin, 1983, p. 176) of “universal resources” (Satir, Banmen, Gerber, & Gomori, 1991, p. 274) for people to develop their humanity to the fullest. These eight dimensions are (1) the body- the physical dimension; (2) the left brain- the intellectual dimension; (3) the right brain- the emotional dimension; (4) the sensory channels- the sensory dimension; (5) the ‘I-thou’ relationship- the interactional dimension; (6) the ‘light, sound, smell, space, time etc.’- the contextual dimension; (7) the nurturance-nutritional dimension; and (8) one’s relationship to the meaning of life, the soul, life force- the spiritual dimension. These eight dimensions are all interrelated and interdependent. Satir called them the “Self Mandela” (Satir, et al., 1991, p. 274). Becoming more fully human depends very much on how a person pays attention to, accesses, and utilises these resources in order to become a “*physically healthy, mentally alert, feeling, loving, playful, authentic, creative, productive, responsible human being, who can stand on her/his own two*

feet, love deeply, and fight fairly and effectively; ... and [who embraces and knows the difference between] both her/his tenderness and toughness” [italics added] (Satir, 1988, p. 3). ‘Becoming more fully human’ is viewed as a lifelong learning goal.

Spirituality: Satir defined spirituality as “our connection to the universe and is basic to our existence” (Satir, 1988, p. 334), maintaining that it is nothing conceptual but “through growth one experiences spirituality” (Kramer, 1995b, p. 3). She believed that all we can do is to feel it and talk about its effect on us (Kramer, 1995b). For her, the essence of spirituality is that “we are spiritual beings in human form... and how we apply our spiritual essence shows how we value life” (Satir, 1988, p. 336). For me, spirituality is formless, it cannot be seen or touched, but can be felt and sensed. It houses within our bodies and at the same time reaches far beyond them. When one connects more with who one really is (the essence of a person, or the higher self) instead of what one does, or what one should do; and at the same time connects to who the others really are, one is more likely to be in touch with one’s own spirituality and that of the others. Spiritual connection between humans is a deeper and broader connection, which transcends material, culture, dogma and ethnicity, and is also a person’s connection with one’s higher self. Helen Keller’s famous quote, “the best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched, they must be felt with the heart” resonates with this description of spirituality.

Experience: Experiential approaches to family therapy originated in the humanistic movement of the 1960s with Virginia Satir (1916-1988) and Carl Whitaker (1912-1995) as the representing figures (Thomas, 2003). Satir once said, “I never wanted to settle for being an armchair expert [who works on theories] ... I gave myself ... a requirement- that I spoke

from experience ... That's something inside me all the time... that I watched the experience first [while the other therapists work out the theories first]" (Kramer, 1995b, p. 161). Satir was interested in "finding the clients' rhythms, being able to join them, and helping them into those scary places" (Simon, 1989, p. 38). Satir's notion of experience includes the therapist's curiosity and interest in the other persons' internal experiences [rhythms], and the therapist's willingness to accompany the clients into the unknown or scary places; and to empower them to rely on their own wisdom. Hence, experience is a shared process of "a life reaching out to another life" (Simon, p. 39) between the therapist and the client.

Text: Text represents any written, spoken, artistically performed, displayed "things", or daily encounters being experienced, observed or reported, relevant to the research. In this study, texts include the written, audio and video materials, the transcripts of the interviews, as well as the email exchanges between the researcher and the participants.

Client: I use the singular to represent an individual, a couple, a family or a group seeking help from a professional counsellor.

Star: Satir used the word "star" to represent the key role player in her workshops or demonstrations. Here the word 'star' is also used to represent the recipient of service, to denote that the process belongs to her/him/them. The counselee(s) is the star in the counselling process; and the supervisee(s) is the star in the supervision context.

Counselling: the terms counselling, therapy and psychotherapy are used interchangeably; it is the same for counsellor, therapist and psychotherapist.

An Overview of the Thesis

Chapter 2 is the review of literature concerning Satir and Satir's approach to family therapy and beyond. Chapter 3 will review the literature on clinical supervision with particular focuses on the humanistic, existential and transpersonal perspectives. Chapter 4 on methodology highlights Gadamer's key concepts of philosophical hermeneutics and discusses their implications to this research. It also presents a detailed account of the research design and the methods adopted to recruit participants; locating and selecting appropriate texts for interpretation; the interviews, transcriptions and the interpretation of the transcribed texts; the formation of reflecting teams and the ethical concerns. Chapter 5 analyses the interview transcripts and discuss the experiences of Satir's students of being supervised by her and the lessons learnt. Chapter 6 analyses a vignette of Satir's supervision session and offers a hermeneutic understanding of Satir's supervision philosophy and conceptions. Chapter 7 discusses some essentials learnings about clinical supervision from this study. Chapter 8 concludes with a discussion of the implications of the research, the potential areas for future study, the limitations and my personal reflection of the process.

In this chapter, I have given an overall picture of this research and the outline of the thesis. In the next chapter, I will give a detailed description about Satir and her work through the review of literature.

Chapter 2

Literature Review - Virginia Satir and Her Work

Introduction

Virginia Satir (1916-1988) was one of the most influential teachers of therapists of her time and still remains an important teacher for many today. She believed that within each human being is the capacity for growth, health and peace, and that there always are new possibilities for individuals, for families, for communities, and for the world (Brothers, 1991b; King, 1989; Satir, 1988). Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008) described Satir as “truly an original, [and] no discussion of experiential family therapy would be complete without paying homage to her vision” (p. 223). However, her unorthodox and unconventional approach was not fully recognized until some twenty years later (Hoffman, 1998; Luepnitz, 1989; McGoldrick & Hardy, 2008; Schwartz, 1995), because some perceived her approach as not having a research-based theoretical back up (Gurman & Kniskern, 1981; Liddle, Breunlin, & Schwartz, 1988a; Pittman, 1989), and others regarded her as ahead of her time (Brothers, 1991b; Hoffman, 1998; McLendon, 2000a; Nichols & Schwartz, 1991; Norfleet, 2009). Therapists such as Pascoe (1996) who had directly experienced Satir’s personhood and her ‘Tao’, suggested that the depth and breadth of the scope of her work could not be understood “unless the therapist is fully present and practices out of a congruent archetype” (p. 17).

This chapter is an attempt to understand Virginia Satir’s work with some ‘depth and breadth’, from different perspectives. As many have expressed, in order to understand Satir’s work and her teachings fully, one needs to understand her as a person (Brothers, 1991b; Loeschen, 2002; McLendon, 2000a), so this chapter begins with a brief account of Virginia

Satir's life, followed by a description of the historical background in which she developed into a family therapist and an advocate of world peace in her later years. Then the major concepts of Satir's approach will be presented followed with some critiques on her work, and the chapter concludes with a speculation of Satir's supervision philosophy.

A Brief Account of Virginia Satir's Life

Family of Origin

Virginia Satir (then Ginny Pagenkopf) was the first of five children born to a couple of German descent on a farm in Wisconsin, USA in 1916. She had fond memories of her childhood life on the farm (Brothers, 2000a; King, 1989; Russell, 1987), though at times she had to “shoulder responsibilities inappropriate to her age and developmental level” (Brothers, 2000a, p. 28). She developed a genuine love for nature, an appreciation of the universal life force and wonderful relationships with animals through her early experiences on the farm (Russell, 1987), while living under tension of the troubled relationships of her parents and both sides of her grandparents (Brothers, 2000a). At age five, she had already made a decision to be a “detective of parents” for children (Brothers, 2000a; Satir, 1982, 1988, 1972).

Learning from early childhood experiences

Impact and learning from a life threatening illness

Virginia Satir suffered a life threatening illness - peritonitis resulting from deferred medical attention to her appendicitis at the age of five, and subsequently lost her hearing for two years. This influenced her character development in two major aspects. One was that she decided to keep an emotional distance from her parents and focused her life around working hard

in household chores and in school (Brothers, 2000a; Russell, 1987). The other was that she developed high sensitivity to non-verbal messages after losing her hearing.

Since ‘little Ginny’s’ illness had directly triggered a fight between her parents over the decision about her medical treatment, it was hard for her to differentiate whether it was her or either of her parents’ responsibility for the situation. Not knowing where to position herself between her parents, the five-year-old Ginny developed her “survival stance” (Satir, et al., 1991, p. 31) of being emotionally detached from them (Brothers, 2000a; Satir, 1982, 1988, 1972).

For Satir, this early decision had a life-long impact on her, even though she grew up into a person who “recognized life as energy” (Kramer, 1995b, p. 10) and who taught that the free flow of energy was a key to connection, integration, health and growth in humans (Kramer, 1995b; Satir, 1983-1987, 1988). The decision at age five about “stopping her own energy from flowing freely” within this “primary triad” of “ma, pa and her”; remained an ‘unfinished business’. She confided to her friend Brothers (2000a) that the decision had “set her up for her terminal illness, the pancreatic cancer” (p. 25).

The hearing loss caused by the illness prompted Virginia Pagenkopf (Satir) to develop lip reading, to go beyond words and to pay extra attention to the affective part of the messages (Brothers, 2000a; King, 1989; Russell, 1987). It turned out to be a blessing to her because it laid a broad and firm foundation for her to develop her iconic approach in facilitating communication among family members in therapy; whereby she created opportunities for people to learn through multi-sensory experiences, and to listen to the deeper meaning of the messages by attending to both the verbal and the non-verbal parts of the interaction (McLendon, 1999; Satir, 1983a, 1983c, 1983d; Satir & Baldwin, 1983; Satir, et al., 1991; Thomas, 2003).

Daring to be different

Virginia Satir was used to being different all her life. She had learnt to read at three (Brothers, 2000a), so she befriended ‘Black Beauty’ and ‘Doctor Dolittle’ more than any of her toddler peers (Russell, 1987). She was exceptionally tall among adults, and she had already reached her grown-up height at age ten (Brothers, 2000a; King, 1989; Russell, 1987). For her, with this height she was able to develop a freedom and confidence to observe and explore whatever she wanted to, while on the other hand she also became very isolated from others (Russell, 1987), including her siblings (Brothers, 2000a). Her friends and colleagues Barbara Jo Brothers, John Banmen and Michele Baldwin recognized this shy and vulnerable part in her personality (Brothers, 2000a; King, 1989).

Nonetheless, she seemed to have developed her confidence in being different. This quality was apparent in her openness to share her ‘homemade’ views and methods in helping families, which she believed were proved effective (Satir, 1982). This made her “a self-declared and professionally-acknowledged pioneer of family therapy” (Gardner, 1978, p. 2). Satir’s courage to be different and to reach to the public seemed to have raised much anxiety among therapists of her time (Luepnitz, 1989; McGoldrick & Hardy, 2008; Pittman, 1989); and there were times when the world of family therapy failed to acknowledge Satir’s unique contributions, and marginalized or even excluded her (Hoffman, 1998; McGing, 1990; Pittman, 1989).

With her almost six-foot height, Satir was mindful about the difference in height between her client and herself, and between husband and wife of couples in therapy and in workshops. In her office and workshop settings, she had sturdy stools for shorter people to stand, in order to dissolve the possible power play between two persons by enabling contact at the eye level, and

facilitating better communication (Satir, 1983a, 1983c; Suarez, 1999). Satir constantly emphasized the growing potential through acknowledging the abundant possibilities to learn from our differentness, instead of limiting ourselves to focus on who was right and who was wrong, which led to coercion and submission instead of connection.

Making sense of parenting and partnering from observing her parents

Satir's parents modelled very differently in terms of parenting and partnering. For her, they modelled both effective parenting and dysfunctional partnering. Satir was very appreciative of their parenting in terms of formal, moral and life education (Brothers, 2000a; King, 1989; Russell, 1987). Education made a great difference to Satir's life and also became a main theme in her therapy (Innes, 2002; Kramer, 1995b; Satir, 1982, 1983-1987; Simon, 1989; Woods & Martin, 1984).

Satir recalled that her parents had very high commitment to standards, and were wonderful role models in conveying honest and clear moral messages to their children (King, 1989). They encouraged their children to learn from mistakes - in her family mistakes meant opportunity for learning - no one was punished for making mistakes (Laign, 1988). This may explain why Satir was so daring in taking risks, so positive, respectful, accepting, and hopeful as well as committed toward high standards in her work with people.

Satir had also developed a belief that 'everything is possible' through her mother's demonstration of exceptional life skills and creativity. She told King (1989) that her mother's attitude in seeing possibilities in every situation was a major influence on her profession where she saw the potential in people and claimed that she was "successful in working with people who nobody else wanted to have anything to do with" (p.16).

As far as partnering is concerned, her parents' hidden marital discord surfaced during Satir's life threatening disease at five. It was aggravated over the years and developed into their long term emotional divorce (Brothers, 2000a; King, 1989; Russell, 1987). Satir's parents and both sides of her grandparents had not been good role models in 'partnering'; they modelled dysfunctional or even violent ways of handling differences and conflicts (Brothers, 2000a).

Living with regrets

Satir grew up with very little emotional nurturance and support from her family-of-origin and the 'world' around her (Brothers, 2000a); especially being a German descendant living in the United States that was "so attacking" (Russell, 1987, p. 4) in her experience. She developed her survival skills, kept herself secure within her comfort zone and strived for successes in her endeavours while being oblivious to what she had missed. Not until later in her life did she express that some important life issues had remained unresolved, even towards the end of her life (Brothers, 2000a; King, 1989). Three regrets that she lived with in her life are identified below. Though she might not have resolved them fully, she learnt from them and allowed others to learn from what she had learnt through her writings, workshops and demonstrations.

Distancing from her family-of-origin

The emotional distance between Virginia Satir and each of her parents increased as she grew older. She recalled that she had not seen much of her father since her high school years till her mother's death. Brothers (2000a) remarked that her yearning for peace in her own family-of-origin had not actualized, so she "went out and created new extended families for herself among her colleagues across the continent [and] ultimately ... across the oceans" (p. 97). Satir's brothers also recalled that she was not around when their mother was facing physical and mental

challenges during their college years. Satir's relationship with her only sister, Edith, had not been close all along due to the subtle competition for mother's love when Edith was born just before Virginia had her peritonitis; even though Edith had always admired her sister (Brothers, 2000a). Dodson (1991a) recalled that in Satir's dying bed, she asked Dodson to call her brother, sister-in-law and her daughters, but had forgotten Edith. She sighed after realizing that, a signal that may have reflected a deep regret.

Satir felt she was left out by her family, and told her siblings that the family 'had kicked her out', but they all believed that "it was *she* who had isolated herself from them" (Brothers, 2000a, p. 46). There was an episode when her other family members read in the newspaper that she would be visiting and speaking at a local university and they went to see her. However, they found her surprised to see them in the audience and they felt hurt because "she had not even contacted them to say she would be in town" (Brothers, p. 20).

Perhaps not surprisingly, Satir was not always as congruent as she hoped to be. "Although she was masterful in relating closely in the process of working with any given family, Virginia never quite mastered that level of relating in her personal/social life" (Brothers, 2000a, p. 25). One may be disappointed that a master teacher of communication, and an advocate of congruency, had failed in what she preached within her very own family, and to the ones within her closest circle. Others may feel relieved in the acknowledgement that we do not have to be perfect, as human beings are not meant to be. We may even 'celebrate' our humanity, and accept that we are just a 'cosmic joke', a tiny little part of the universe, and we all have the same kind of vulnerabilities.

Marriages and divorces

Virginia Satir married twice and was reticent about this part of her personal history (Brothers, 2000a). Her first marriage with Gordon Rogers lasted for almost nine years from 1941 to 1949 and left her a deep regret of infertility after a life-threatening ectopic pregnancy (Brothers, 2000a). Satir's story about these nine years was very different from that of her adopted daughters and siblings. Brothers (2000a) believed that "the experience of their relationship and divorce was so emotionally painful for her that she chose to edit the history" (p.46). I believe this may be an area that she had blocked her energy. She married Norman Satir in 1951, and they moved from Chicago to California in 1958 attempting to save their marriage, hoping that Virginia could maintain a more normal working schedule. It did not work out because her profession was developing even faster than before. This marriage ended in 1961 (King, 1989) and left her with the 'famous' last name 'Satir'. She remained single the rest of her life (Brothers, 2000a).

As far as intimate relationship and partnering in marriage are concerned, Satir did not have good role models. In her family-of-origin, the marriages of her parents and of her grandparents' were all unhappy, conflicting and, at times, violent. Each of these marriages portrayed a weak husband and a strong wife. Satir might have worried about 'overshadowing' her spouses, and perhaps consciously held herself back in order not to repeat her parents' tragedy; in that process she may have been unable to engage in her own authentic internal processes and those of her spouses. Dodson (2000) recalled that Satir's "own issues affected how she related to my (Dodson's) dilemmas about relationships with men" (p. 106). Both Brothers (2000a) and King (1989) noted that relationships with men remained an issue for Satir. She confided to King

(1989) that though she was pretty realistic about many things, she was not like that when it came to relationship with men. Though she could not reconcile the differences in her own marriages, she learnt from them and developed an effective therapeutic approach. As Gurman and Fraenkel (2002) commented, “She was laying one of the cornerstones for later models of couple therapy” (p. 214).

Not seeking support for herself

Satir had not fully healed her old wounds from the family-of-origin and the marriages, and sometimes did not handle her close relationships wisely. Her close friends found her keeping things to herself and she did not seek help from them when she needed support in her major life crises (Brothers, 2000a). In some ways, she could have been sending indirect messages concerning her need for support because Spitzer and Bateson were able to lend her their helping hands. Spitzer (2000) mentioned during his early years in the Mental Research Institute (MRI), that Satir was undergoing a divorce and was feeling suicidal at times. As a colleague and co-therapist, Spitzer offered support and continued with the work when Satir did not show up in the family therapy sessions. Those were the years when Satir’s profession developed very rapidly, while she had to face personal challenges, such as her marriage problem, her undisclosed physical challenge and her mother’s deteriorating health and death in 1964. She might have benefited substantially from support and yet she did not ask directly. It was around that time that Satir accepted Gregory Bateson’s recommendation and started her connection with Esalen (a growth centre in Big Sur, California) where she had life changing experiences. She told Kramer (1995b) that, “Gregory said I needed this and it would be good for me. And I trusted him so I went in [the Esalen community]” (p. 173). These examples showed that Satir could

accept help when it was offered; and contrary to what she taught, she made indirect messages about her need for support. Spitzer's and Bateson's subtle support evidently gave her the space to be her own choice maker. This likely reflects her need for security and also explains why she attached so much importance to creating safety in therapeutic settings.

Teachers in Satir's life

Satir is one great teacher, and she had many great teachers in her life. She paid tribute to her high school teachers, Sunday school teacher and teacher training college instructors. They contributed to her self-esteem building, inspired her to appreciate and respect human capacity and to cultivate a nonjudgmental attitude toward human beings (Camiel, 2003; Satir, 1982).

Satir had her first experience with people of different colour in her second year of college, and it turned out to be a life-changing experience for her. Her teacher's modelling opened her up to a totally unfamiliar world, and inspired her to continue the journey of learning from and working with differences in people and in all aspects of life (Camiel, 2003; Russell, 1987).

Satir also acknowledged her experiences in Esalen from 1965 to 1968. Brothers (2000a) noticed an obvious change in her therapeutic intervention style between two family therapy demonstrations in 1965 and 1968, and explored with Satir the reason behind the change from a static and all verbal intervention in 1965 to the dynamic, kinaesthetic and experiential style in 1968. Satir attributed this change to "her involvement with Esalen" (p. 64). She claimed that Esalen facilitated her to become acquainted with Eastern thought, i.e., the holistic experiences with body, mind and soul, and exposed her to the "affective domain" of therapy (Satir, 1982). These experiences in the late 60s contributed significantly in Satir's personal and professional development. She had a long list of people that had inspired her with their theories and practices

(Satir, 1982). After her Esalen experiences, she started to put together a holistic approach in her therapy and teachings, and began to embrace a broader perspective of the humanistic paradigm that merged harmoniously into the transpersonal epoch. Satir had teachers everywhere because she treated her clients, students, colleagues, and all new possibilities in life as her teachers (Brothers, 2000a; Satir, 1982). All these influential ‘teachers’ in Satir’s life contributed significantly to her ground-breaking, “dynamic, systems-oriented, holistic, multisensory, spirit-filled approach to [facilitating] change” (McLendon, 2000a, p. 332).

Dying – the Last Lesson Satir Learnt and Taught

From suspecting cancer to confirming the diagnosis of pancreatic cancer to her death, there was less than three months for Virginia Satir to tune herself into dealing with this poignant process in life, and to move from fighting for life into following her peace. Four months before her death, Satir worked in four cities in the USSR with five other co-trainers. Dodson (1991a) being part of the team, recalled that Satir had worked with more energy than anyone else in the team, and “she [Satir] spoke and worked with families with great clarity and the people seemed to hear her message deeply” (p. 179). She also shared with Dodson about a vision of living to be 102 and further developing her work in the world. Later in Denver when she learnt that cancer was suspected, she decided to return home and to have medical follow up. At Denver airport she told Dodson who was there seeing her off, that ““this is the greatest challenge of my life. I don’t want to lose my life!’... ‘And I wonder when I have such pain, why am I fighting for my life?’” (p. 180). She gave Dodson a message to go to see her in California when the time was right. Dodson went and spent the last eight days with Satir, witnessing and participating in a profound transformational process from fighting for life, to surrendering to the higher power. When her

brother pleaded her to fight for life as she had always done, Satir told him, “I am not giving up on life. I am following my peace”. (p. 185)

In her process of facing the cancer, she asked and accepted help and all kinds of support: inviting Jean McLendon to substitute her to be the leading trainer in Avanta’s annual month-long summer institute in Crested Bute (McLendon, 2000b); accepting Jean Houston’s help to activate her own healing process (Brothers, 1991a; Dodson, 1991a); and accepting all sorts of help, physically and spiritually, from those who were around her as well as those who sent their blessings from afar.

Satir’s process of dying was the last lesson for her and from her. The message she wrote five days before her death showed clearly what she had learnt and left it for us to harvest our own learning:

September 5, 1988

To all my friends, colleagues and family;
I send you love.
Please support me in my passage to a new life.
I have no other way to thank you than this.
You have all played a significant part in my development of loving.
As a result, my life has been rich and full, so I leave feeling very grateful.

Virginia

(Brothers, 2000a, p. 101; Dodson, 1991a, p. 185)

Satir’s Development as a Family Therapist

The Making of a “Real Live” Expert

Satir started her career as a teacher, and later a principal, before becoming a trained social worker. From the onset of her teacher’s role, she had decided “to be a ‘real live’ expert on children instead of an ‘armchair expert’” (Satir, 1982, p. 14). For her, being a “real live” expert

meant getting to know her ‘stars’ by being in their world physically, emotionally, cognitively and most important of all, spiritually (Kramer, 1995b; Satir, 1982, 1988). Over the span of six years of teaching, she visited all her pupils’ homes because she believed that if she wanted to help children, she needed to know their parents; and according to her, she had “developed strong bonds with more than two hundred families” (Satir, 1982, p. 14). Her seemingly effortless connection with families in therapy sessions had its seeds planted in these formative years of her professional development.

In order to know more about the multifaceted family situations and to learn about ‘people’s inside’, she pursued social work training (Satir, 1982). She started with excitement when first exposed to psychopathology, and as she went along she became concerned about its potential for destructiveness. This realization nurtured an important part of her teaching, which is ‘to make use of the pathology information as a resource, as opposed to using it as an identity’, and to get people to see and treat the patient or client differently (Russell, 1987; Satir, 1982). As she continued to learn about families and family dynamics, she became more and more aware that she could not agree with the ‘medical movement’ and could not stay in a context where ‘patients’ were being devalued and not treated as human beings with equal values (Kramer, 1995b; Satir, 1982).

In 1951, Satir started a private practice in Chicago and worked with clients referred by physicians who knew that she was willing to work with all kinds of people, including those no one else would want to touch (King, 1989; Kramer, 1995b; Satir, 1982). She decided not to repeat the classical treatment regimes, which she believed had been tried in vain, and resumed her ‘detective work’ of former years as a teacher, and went along with what she called her

‘homemade’ approach and to observe, listen, and look for health (Satir, 1982). This unorthodox treatment model seemed to be effective because she continued to have referrals from psychiatrists and patients themselves. These experiences consolidated her pledge to becoming a ‘real live’ expert.

Becoming a Family Therapist and a Teacher of Family Therapists

A turning point in Satir’s professional life emerged in 1951 when a young girl’s mother “called and threatened to sue [Satir] for ‘alienation of affection’” (Satir, 1982, p. 17) because her treatment with the girl labelled ‘schizophrenic’ had resulted in the girl becoming more self-reliant. Satir followed the subtle plea underneath the woman’s verbal message and invited her to join her daughter’s treatment session. She accepted. The process eventually developed into having the entire family in therapy; this was Satir’s very first conjoint family therapy interview (Satir, 1974, 1982). She credited this to her being ‘the detective’ by watching, listening, and finding the connections; she extended her learning with this family to all her other ‘patients’ (Satir, 1982). This experience not only strengthened her belief and commitment to becoming a ‘real live expert’, but also prompted her to include the entire family in the treatment of an ‘identified patient’ and led to her developing her famous *Conjoint Family Therapy* (1962, 1967, 1983).

Teaching is the highest form of understanding (Aristotle)

Satir’s good work became known in the field. In January 1955, she was invited by Dr. Kalman Gyarfás, a stranger to her, and a leader of an innovative psychiatric training program in the Illinois State Psychiatric Institute, to teach family dynamics to the residents (Satir, 1982). This experience prompted her to conceptualize what she had been doing and led her to find out

more clearly what she had been learning through her work with families. She admitted, “Indeed, as I taught it, I also learnt more about what I meant, and I became aware of the glaring gaps in my theoretical base” (Satir, 1982, p. 19). Acknowledging this ‘inadequacy’, she explored new possibilities “to fill the holes and clear up [her] fuzziness” (p. 19); and she came across journal articles written by Don Jackson and Murray Bowen. She was overjoyed to find out that there were other people sharing perspectives similar to hers.

She connected and befriended Bowen. Later in 1959, she connected with Jackson when she moved to California and upon his invitation, became one of the founders of the Mental Research Institute (MRI) (Brothers, 2000a; King, 1989; Satir, 1982) and its first director of training (Nichols & Schwartz, 2005; Norfleet, 2009). Satir initially worked alongside Jackson and Riskin in a longitudinal study for schizophrenia (Weakland & Ray, 1995), but was not satisfied with following only one family in the research (Brothers, 2000a). Perhaps ‘bored’ with research (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2000; Piercy, et al., 1996), she started to teach the first family therapy training program funded by the National Institute of Mental Health in 1962 (Weakland & Ray, 1995). This training program also gave her the platform to supervise the earliest family therapy students who were mostly psychiatrists, and to publish her very first book “*Conjoint Family Therapy*” from her teaching notes (from the acknowledgments in Satir, 1967).

The historical context

Human potential movement and transpersonal psychology

Satir developed her model of family therapy under the influence of the humanistic-transpersonal psychological movements. Humanistic psychology (the third force) evolved in the era when positivistic-behavioural theory (the first force) and classical psychoanalytic theory (the

second force) were the most influencing theories of psychology (Maslow, 1968a, 1968b; Sutich, 1968), and “grew beyond the deficiencies of [the above mentioned] traditional psychology” (Frick, 2000, p. 130). It proposed an alternative to the mainstream psychological schools and provided a model to perceive human nature and handle human issues by focusing on human potentials instead of deficiencies (Maslow, 1968a; Schneider, Bugental, & Pierson, 2001). Shortly afterwards, transpersonal psychology which concerns itself with “ultimate human capacities and potentialities... [including] transcendence of the self, spirit, ... maximal sensory awareness ... [etc.]” (Sutich, 1968, p. 77), also emerged as the ‘fourth force’ to complement humanistic psychology in late 1960s.

Interestingly, there was a split in America’s development of psychotherapeutic approaches between the intellectual, ‘cold-hearted researchers’ in the East coast and intuitive, ‘warm-hearted clinicians’ in the West coast (Prosky, 2003). Metaphorically, Satir started her career of family therapy in the middle of the country, Illinois (Chicago) in the early 1950s, and then moved to the west, California, in 1959, then tried living in the east, Maryland, for less than one year in 1971 and settled back in California thereafter (Brothers, 2000a). One might conclude from the transpersonal perspective that there was a special connection between the energy of Satir and that of the west coast.

In the wake of the human potential movement, family therapy was also flourishing with different forms of practices in the 50s. Almost around the same time, in different places in America, mental health practitioners started treating the entire family, or treating the individual’s problems from a system’s perspective before they even knew or heard about the existence of the others. Among the founders of family therapy, there were Nathan Ackerman (1908-1971) in

New York, Virginia Satir (1916-1988) in Chicago, Illinois; Don Jackson (1920-1968) in Palo Alto, California; Murray Bowen (1913-1990) in Washington DC, and John Bell (1913-1995) in Providence, Rhode Island; they were scattered around America and were working alone except Jackson who had worked with Bateson and others in research projects. Satir was the only woman social worker amongst the dominantly male psychiatrists (Bell was a psychologist), when she started to develop her “homemade” (Satir, 1982, p. 12) model of family therapy. She was most often referred to as the mother of family therapy (Costigan, 2006; Hoffman, 2002; Kramer, 1995b; Thomas, 2003). One can speculate that she felt good about her position in the early years from what she told Luepnitz (1989): “all of the men learnt from me, and they have shown me a great deal of respect over the years” (p. 74).

Spending 1965 to 1968 at Esalen Institute (Brothers, 2000a), and as the institute’s first director of training, Satir was considered to be “in the forefront of the Growth [Human] Potential Movement” (Spitzer, 1972, p. ix). She was the president of the Association of Humanistic Psychology in 1982-83. Her ideas resonated with those contributing to and flourishing from the Human Potential Movement and her basic beliefs reflected high compatibility with those of the humanistic, existential and transpersonal thinkers, such as Maslow, Bugental, Rogers and Wilber.

A 1970 survey published by the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (GAP) queried respondents “about the influence of the leading therapists on members of the field. Participants in the survey cited as most influential to their own work not Murray Bowen or Nathan Ackerman, but Virginia Satir” (Luepnitz, 1989, p. 73). She continued to be regarded as one of the most influential therapists of her time (L'Abate & Thaxton, 1980), and even twenty years after her death (Cook, Biyanova, & Coyne, 2009; Simon, 2007).

Losses of the family of family therapy in the 70s

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the emerging family of family therapy grieved the losses of their two founding fathers, Don Jackson and Nathan Ackerman. Don Jackson was a major ‘activist’ who published papers, connected with people, raised funds and launched projects. He was instrumental in raising funds to facilitate Satir’s first nationally funded family therapy training program in MRI, and he also urged, named and facilitated the publication of her first book *Conjoint Family Therapy*. The field was saddened with his “tragic and unanticipated death in 1968 at the age of 48” (Ray, 2004, p. 37), and the ‘family members’ of family therapy were “dispirited without their hero” (Pittman, 1989, p. 34). The field also grieved the permanent silence of “Jackson’s articulate and convincing voice” (Ray, 2004, p. 37). Another founding father of family therapy Nathan Ackerman died in 1971, and members “were disoriented without their patriarch” (Pittman, 1989, p. 34).

Virginia Satir, the only mother of family therapy, “was not constrained by the need to look scientific” (Pittman, 1989, p. 34); instead she was trying to convey a holistic approach of family therapy which incorporated all levels of being human (Satir, 1982), and was teaching the general public these concepts through workshops and demonstrations. These efforts were discounted by Pittman (1989) as “embracing astrology, and flying off to do faith healings in stadiums around the world” (p. 34). With scientific research as the major thrust to prove the effectiveness of this emerging mode of therapy, “some of the second generation of family therapists have been antagonistic to my [Satir’s] work, calling it ‘not deep’ and ‘too female’ ” (Satir quoted in Luepnitz, 1989, p. 74). Believing this a threat to the ‘family’, and hoping to save the field and the public from this ‘heretic’, the brotherhood of family therapists, headed by

Salvador Minuchin, raised the question “Is Virginia Satir Dangerous to Family Therapy?” and set up a debate in 1974 (Pittman, 1989, p. 34; also cited as 1972 in McGoldrick and Hardy, 2008, p. 17), between Minuchin and Satir, at a *Family Process* board meeting in Venezuela. The following excerpt captures the main thrust of the debate and the internal process of Pittman (1989) during the meeting:

There was to be a debate: Sal [Salvador Minuchin] and Virginia [Satir] were to face one another, and each was to choose a second. Each of them asked me to stand beside them in the debate, and I was forced to make the choice that has haunted me ever since. I chose to second Sal, while Kitty LaPerriere stood beside Virginia. The result was devastating to all of us.

I don't remember the words, but Sal outlined his sense of family therapy as a science and an art that requires skills rather than faith. He spoke for the respectability of logic, rationality, and order. Virginia passionately pled for the healing power of love, and the salvation of humankind through family therapy, and called on us to join her in the crusade. She turned to me for the support she knew I felt in my heart. But I rejected her and begged her to come back down from the stars and stay with the mundane world of fixing broken families one at a time. *That limited mission was not enough for Virginia* [italics added]. She left the family of family therapists. (Pittman, 1989, p. 35)

According to McGoldrick and Hardy, “Satir never attended another major family therapy meeting [in the USA]; and devoted more and more time after that to working abroad” (p. 17). In Satir's own word, “some time ago, I decided to stop going to any of the big professional meetings. The competitiveness and the bullfights got to be too much for me. Listening to people talk, I began to feel as if it was not professional to care about people” (Satir, quoted in Simon, 1989, p. 41). Pittman (1989) “last saw her in Czechoslovakia presiding over the first global family therapy conference” (p. 35) held in 1987. When some accused Virginia Satir of “deserting the field” of family therapy, Duhl (1989) provided another perspective: “the field Virginia helped create could not contain her” (p. 109). Perhaps, the family of family therapy, in

that historical era, suffered the loss of their founding mother by failing to embrace differences, and were blinded by the urge to protect the professional image of the newly established field, and to uphold what the brotherhood believed the ‘right ways’ of doing therapy. Bowen’s comment in front of a large audience provides a glimpse of how ambivalent the ‘family members’ had been. He said, “Isn’t Virginia wonderful? She gets to all the right places by all the wrong means” (Satir quoted by Luepnitz, 1989, p. 82).

As time went by, the field of family therapy started to embrace Satir’s ideas. One of the key figures, Sal Minuchin, changed his view about Satir (Minuchin, 2005; Minuchin, Lee, & Simon, 1996), and about family therapy to the extent that he asked people not to read the books he wrote in the 70s (Minuchin, 2005).

Being at the forefront of family therapy and moving ahead of time

Satir was the ‘real’ pioneer in several aspects of the field of family therapy. The following excerpt from Spitzer’s foreword for her book *Peoplemaking* explicates:

I first met Virginia Satir eleven years ago. She was teaching conjoint family therapy at the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto. This was the first training program in the country in family therapy. Although my psychiatric training was Orthodox Freudian, her innovative ideas made such an impact on me that I joined her and Don Jackson at the Institute, and in my position as administrative director of the program I had the opportunity to see the effectiveness of her technique. She used one-way mirrors, and exposed and involved herself in demonstration and simulated family interviews. These techniques have become so widely accepted today that it is easy to lose sight of the creativity that produced them. (Spitzer, 1972, p. ix)

Her revolutionary conviction of becoming a ‘real-live’ expert, guided her to follow the clues of her clients instead of following sets of rules or guidelines; and suggested to her on the possibilities of working with the family as a treatment unit in 1951 (Satir, 1982). Brothers

(2000a) speculated that Satir saw more families than any other therapists, because while clinicians such as Murray Bowen and Don Jackson spent their time convincing the world through researching and establishing a theoretical framework, Satir was reaching out to hundreds of families all around the world, making clinical observations and improvising methods to facilitate these families to communicate with clarity and connect with love.

Satir stood against all odds to persevere in her ‘naive’ beliefs that “human beings have all the resources which they need to flourish” (Satir, 1982, p. 12), and she maintained that the world could be healed through knowing how to heal the family (Laign, 1988). She not only believed in it but also worked on it by initiating projects for Israelis and Palestinians, in the Native American reservations, villages in developing countries, in Germany, the Soviet Union, and other places for participants to experience the similarities innate in human beings and connect with love instead of hatred (Brothers, 2000a; Dodson, 1991a, 2000; Gomori, 2002; Laign, 1988). These projects are still ongoing in many of these places, and similar new projects have also been developed in other places over the world.

Satir also did more than any other pioneers to convey the concepts of family treatment to the public. As Minuchin (1988) put it, “No one has transcended better than Virginia Satir the difficulty of taking family treatment to the public”. Her books *Peoplemaking* (Satir, 1972); *Making Contact* (Satir, 1976), and *The New Peoplemaking* (Satir, 1988) were apparently written for lay readers. We can understand her intentions through what she wrote in the preface of her book *The New Peoplemaking* (1988):

Using many experiences with families all over the world, I have written this book to support, emphasize, educate, and empower the family. We know there are better ways to deal with ourselves and each other. We have only to put them into

practice. Each of us who does contributes towards a stronger, more positive world for all of us...

A big hope I have for this book is that it will help each of us empower and commit ourselves to congruence. Our congruent experiences and modelling will lead to creative ways to understand each other, care for ourselves and each other, and give our children a sturdy foundation from which they can develop strength and wholeness.

It is important to remember that every bit of energy we use to fight with ourselves and each other divides and diffuses the energy we could use for discovery and creativity... We can find easier and more effective ways to handle conflict; we can benefit from it rather than destroying ourselves. (Satir, 1988, p. x)

Satir (1983-1987) was “more interested in getting [her] meaning across than [in] appear[ing] academic” (p. 7), so she pledged to write in a “humanistic style”, and to reach the public, not only the ‘professionals’. She had hoped that *Peoplemaking* (1972) “would become a bestseller... [because] she wanted the general public to have access to this information about the way families work... [and] for families to use its contents with their children” (Brothers, 2000a, p. 84).

Satir Legacies - Her Influence and Contribution to Family Therapy and Beyond

Spirituality: the Foundation of Satir’s Approach

Virginia Satir did not mention much about spirituality explicitly in her earlier writings; it was not until 1982 that she listed spirituality as one of the eight resources, or nourishing potentials within human beings (Satir, 1982). In 1988, in her book *The New Peoplemaking* (revised edition of *Peoplemaking*, 1972) she added a chapter to elaborate these eight resources under the name of the *Self Mandala*; she also added a chapter titled *Spirituality* to express her views about spirituality in greater details.

Satir maintained that “the first step in any change is to contact the spirit” (Satir, 1988, p. 341) and “getting involved with the human spirit was the only way you’re going to heal anybody” (Laign, 1988, p. 21). For her, “spirituality is the soul and life force in operation” (Laign, 1988, p. 32), and since “life is energy... that permeates everything” (Kramer, 1995b, p. 3), energy and spirituality were viewed as inseparable. Satir’s major tool in therapy was her ‘Self’, and she relied on activating the energy that “creates a movement which is healing” (p. 5). She believed that the hardest thing is to recognize life as energy because people put up walls to contain the energy in ways that prevent it from moving freely. In response to Kramer’s (1995) question about spirituality, she said:

Since I work totally in a world that is networked and connected, it’s [energy is] always there. ... The whole world is made up of energy and I try to get a sense of wholeness within myself and ... to feel this sense of completeness. The whole world is made up of energy and all this energy is geared toward growth. People behave in ways that don’t validate their life force. ... My job is to help their energy become mobile. ...

I think it’s peculiar that everybody knows life wasn’t created by them and that’s spirituality and how come they waited so long to learn about it... You can’t create yourself, so that source that created you [is spirituality] and that life is your spirituality. (Kramer, 1995b, pp. 6-7)

Since she believed that “spirituality is essential to our therapeutic context” (Satir, 1988, p. 334) and her ultimate goal in therapy was to help people grow towards becoming more fully human, her therapeutic process was highly connected with facilitating the stars to get in touch with their energy and spirituality, to experience harmony and a sense of self-worth (Kramer, 1995b; Satir, 1988; Satir & Baldwin, 1983; Satir, et al., 1991). This process would result to the person’s “free flow of energy” (Kramer, 1995b, p. 10), and experiencing a sense of “total presence and total connectedness to the moment” (p. 4) which would bring the person’s “Higher

Self or the whole self” to light (Satir as cited in Kramer, 1995b, p. 6). Satir’s guiding principle for working with people in therapy and in workshops was that everybody could learn how to flow with their inner energy, to connect with the healing power within them as well as with that from the universe; and “she [Satir] could always rely on the spiritual essence of her clients as a basis to help guide them throughout their therapy” (McLendon, 2000a, p. 332).

Satir claimed that even in the early 50s when she worked with the ‘rejects’ of other therapists and the very ‘high-risk’ persons of the psychiatric community in Chicago, she “was working to contact their [her clients’] spirits, loving them as [she] went along” (Satir, 1988, p. 340). For her, “The question was never that they had spirits, but how could [she] contact them” (Satir, p. 340). Many therapists and writers have expressed their own transformative experience with Virginia Satir as connecting them at the spiritual level, such as Bitter, 1988; Brothers, 2000a; Dodson, 2000; Gomori, 2002; Haber, 1996; Kramer, 1995b; Nerin, 1986; Pascoe, 1996; and Wegscheider-Cruse in Wegscheider-Cruse, et al., 1994. It is thus of utmost importance to start with spirituality in order to understand Virginia Satir’s approach.

The Notion of Peace

Virginia Satir used meditations to begin and end her workshops. For her, “everything contained in her teachings has a basis in her meditations, and ... everything in these meditations is basic and connected to her teachings of her ‘Growth Model’” (Satir, 2003, p. 1). Through them she conveyed messages for people to connect with spirituality, to acquire peace within oneself, peace between relationships, and peace among people in a larger context (Banmen, 2003; Brothers, 1994). Satir’s vision and mission were tied with promoting Peace in the world. She mentioned on several occasions that the human world had super technology to the extent that

people can travel to outer space, and yet we still had not learnt how to live peacefully together (King, 1989; Laign, 1988; Satir, 1988); she committed herself to contributing to helping people to live together in peace.

She devoted a chapter entitled *Peace Within, Peace Between, Peace Among* in her book *The New Peoplemaking* (Satir, 1988) to describing the world as a global family and relating world peace with making peace in family. She encouraged the readers that “we are learning how to heal families, and we can use those learnings to heal the world” (Satir, 1988, p. 368). She further shared her simple and logical thesis that “if we bring up children in a peaceful context in which adult leaders model congruence, the children will become peaceful adults who, in turn, will create a peaceful world” (p. 371). She concluded the chapter by stating that throughout the book she had provided readers with ways to move towards this goal of achieving world peace.

Since the early 70s, Satir had gone beyond treating one family, into treating groups, and groups of families in workshop or camp settings (Broeck & Garrison, 2008; Gardner, 1978; Satir, Bitter, & Krestensen, 1988), and eventually developed her model into promoting world peace through reaching out to people in different parts of the world and educating them to have “peace within, peace between, and peace among” (Satir, 1988, p. 368).

Satir’s Concept of Congruence

Satir expressed her hope and wish for people to live in peace. She believed that “for the planet and its inhabitants to survive, we must develop our ability to live together in harmony. For me [her], this meant learning how to be congruent, and that leads to becoming more fully human” (Satir, 1988, p. xi) through “developing self-worth, [which] takes time, patience, and the

courage to risk new things” (p. 41). Satir’s notion of congruence can be further understood from two aspects: The congruent state of being and congruent communication discussed below.

The congruent state of being

Satir contended that we are all spiritual beings; yet we can recognize this and live in peace with each other only when we love and value ourselves enough and reach a congruent state (Satir, 1988). She listed what she called the essentials of congruent living as follows:

- To communicate clearly
- To cooperate rather than compete
- To empower rather than subjugate
- To enhance individual uniqueness rather than categorize
- To use authority to guide and accomplish “what fits” rather than force compliance through the tyranny of power
- To love, value, and respect themselves [oneself] fully
- To be personally and socially responsible
- To use problems as challenges and opportunities for creative solutions. (Satir, 1988, pp. 369-370)

The co-authors of *The Satir Model* (1991) identified three levels of congruence in terms of how Satir’s concepts were developed. They claimed that her work in the 1950s concentrated on Level 1, whereby people are aware of, can acknowledge and accept their feelings; and “are in a state of honesty with [their] feelings in a nonreactive way” (p. 68). They further described that in the 1960s, Satir began emphasizing Level 2, which denoted the state of wholeness and inner centeredness. People at this level focus on the deeper, inner self, and “are at peace with themselves, with others, and in relation to their context” (p. 68). From this, Satir conceptualized and worked with Level 3 in the 1980s, and moved “into the realm of spirituality and universality” (p. 67). It is not stated how this progression evolved. To me, Satir was already working at connecting the spirits of her students and clients when she started her work as a

teacher in the 30s, and right at the beginning of her therapeutic work in the late 40s (Satir, 1982, 1988). This part of her and her work was noticed by and ‘threatened’ others in the family therapy field in the 70s (Pittman, 1989). Interestingly, many authors (such as Cheung, 2006; Cheung & Chan, 2002; Lee, 2002; Lum, 2002) accepted this description and mistakenly assumed that Satir proposed three levels of congruence. Cheung (2006) for example interpreted Satir, without citing the origin, by saying, “It is principally at the second level of congruence that Satir encourages people to step out from their individual self, reach out to other and context, and seek integrity, wholeness and peace in harmony with self, other and context” (Cheung, 2006, p. 12), and criticizes Satir’s approach as having limitation in terms of “focuses on the Self first, before including the Other fully into the picture” (p. 12). Cheung appears to have missed Satir’s major premise that in order “for the planet and its inhabitants to survive, we must develop our ability to live together in harmony” (Satir, 1988, p. xi). For Satir, the Self, Other and Context are integral parts of a Whole, they co-exist in all circumstances, and they cannot be graded or compartmentalized into levels (Satir, 1983b, 2000b). Cheung may be right in pointing out that Satir focuses on the Self first. Yet rather than an egocentric focus as Cheung described as upholding egalitarian individualist values, Satir’s focus is on having people connecting with their own deepest self, taking full responsibility for themselves, and “to love and value themselves and treat others likewise” (Satir quoted in Luepnitz, 1989, p. 81) by connecting the deepest self of the other person, which “clearly brings in the spiritual dimension” (Satir, 2000b, p. 25). I believe for Satir, congruence is a spiritual endeavour, and I prefer to describe the “3 levels of congruence” presented in *The Satir Model* (Satir, et al., 1991, pp. 65-83) as 3 levels of manifestation of self-esteem: level 1 - emotional honesty, level 2 - emotional and perceptual harmony with self, and level 3 - congruence – spiritual connection with self, others and context.

Like Satir's other concepts, the concept of congruence was developed overtime, and it needs to be viewed as an 'add-on' process instead of a 'graded' process. Many authors recalled that Satir described congruence as being in one's 'flow of energy' (Baldwin, 2000; Brothers, 1991b, 1996; Kramer, 1995b; McLendon & Davis, 2002; Santos, 2003); whereby one has 'peace within, peace between and peace among'. Satir's writing suggests rather than 'levels' that a holistic picture of congruence be formed:

There are people who already are discovering the secret of congruence. They are learning to treasure their own miraculousness and that of others. They connect with each other on the basis of sameness, and grow and enjoy each other on the basis of differentness. They believe in their capacity to grow and change. They know how to be emotionally honest. They are vital, engaging human beings with a sense of purpose and the ability to laugh at themselves. ...

These are people who are qualified to be leaders of peace. ... As these people come together, they create a positive critical mass which, because of its nurturing force, will attract similar energy. (Satir, 1988, pp. 371-372)

As McLendon (2000b) has put it: "Congruence requires caring not only for the self and others, but also the context. People trained in congruence are natural and effective care givers to our wounded world. They are activists and leaders..." (p. 359). For Satir, her notion of congruence embraces a context as large as the world.

Congruent communication

Communication refers to "how people convey information, make meaning with one another, and respond – internally and externally" (Satir, et al., 1991, p. 31). For Satir, congruent communication starts from within. In her workshops, she used her powerful transformational therapeutic tool – *The Ingredients of an Interaction*, to lead workshop participants to pay full attention to their own internal mental and emotional processes, so that they could identify their

dysfunctional communication patterns in an interaction (Baldwin, 1993; Satir, et al., 1991), and “become responsible to their internal processes and to communicate their truth to each other, rather than reacting” (Baldwin, 1993, p. 21).

Satir (1991) maintained that “any communication contains two messages: the verbal and the affective, or nonverbal... when people’s verbal messages conflict with their nonverbal ones, we call it incongruent communication” (p. 32). However, even when people’s verbal messages do not conflict with their nonverbal ones, congruent communication is not necessarily present, for what is being addressed is only on the part of the sender (i.e., the output process). The receiver’s role and experience, and the context where the message is being delivered need to be included to contribute to congruent communication in the sense that Satir proposed.

Congruent communication is the “Tao of communication” (Pascoe, 1996, p. 15) or authentic communication (Brothers, 2002; McLendon & Davis, 2002) which builds solid emotional bridges between two people in interaction resulting in “each arriving at the essence of the other... to the point of ‘hugging the human spirit that has made connection’” (Brothers, 2002, p. 11). McLendon and Davis (2002) explain that authentic communication represents the internal process of valuing and considering all three components – the self, other and context – of a communication process. They believed that “congruent communication meant that there was integrity or alignment between the inside and the outside, balance and harmony between and among the components, and choice for when, how, and what could be expressed” (McLendon & Davis, p. 171).

For Satir, congruence in communication is levelling, which has three aspects: “the message [delivered] is single and straight; ... the response also represents a truth or the person at

that moment; ... and it is whole, not partial” (Satir, 1988, p. 94); and “the power in Congruence comes through the connectedness of your words, your feelings, your body, your facial expressions... and your actions ... You come from a state of strength ... all of your parts have flow with other parts” (Satir, 1976, p. 31).

Major Concepts of Satir’s Approach of Family Therapy

Hoffman (1998) asserted that “she [Satir] was a voice so ahead of its time that only now can it be heard” (p. 145). The increasing number of publications describing Satir’s work in the last decade echo Hoffman’s remark, reflecting more depth and breadth in their presentations. Though Satir had not comprehensively conceptualized her work, her basic systemic principles of working with families, and her inclination to connect the strength and health of people instead of looking only into their problems were already evident in her earliest days as a young school teacher (Satir, 1982).

Apart from the three key principles, spirituality, peace and congruence, of her approach discussed above, six major concepts of her therapy are now identified and discussed; they are: (a) therapy as an educational and experiential process; (b) activating the healing energy of the clients; (c) systemic-holistic-multisensory approach; (d) strength, health and peace focus; (e) becoming one’s own choice maker; (f) therapist’s use of self.

Therapy as an educational and experiential process

Satir regarded “all therapy as learning” (Satir, 1991, p. 210). For her, “therapy is an educational process for becoming more fully human” (Kramer, 1995b, p. 22); she believed that all we do and know is learnt, so if what we learnt does not help us grow towards becoming more fully human, we can always learn something new (Kramer, 1995b; Satir, 1983-1987). In an

interview a few months before her death, she told Kramer (1995b) that she would like therapists to be “seen as teachers of how to become more fully human and... look at the learning model as the paradigm of change” (p. 177). She expressed that she was not interested in having her patients unlearn things, but for them to learn new things about themselves, and to add new possibilities for their relationships and coping (King, 1989; Satir, 1982; Satir, et al., 1991). Her focus was on creating a growth enhancing environment and appropriate experiential processes in order to facilitate clients and workshop participants to have holistic learning experiences.

Satir believed that people inherently gear towards growth. Her therapeutic process aims at helping people to gain access to their nourishing potentials and to learn how to use them (Satir, 1982). In her later works, Satir emphasized that the most important step in growth was to learn “to recognize life as energy ... [and] learn how to flow with our inner energy” (Kramer, 1995b, p. 10). The following excerpt describes vividly how in a conference setting Satir facilitated an experiential process to help people learn to let their energy flow:

When I participated in my first family therapy conference in the 1980s I had a powerful and career-changing experience. I went to a plenary session in which Virginia Satir was going to present her work to a large group of professionals. Usually, speakers at these large sessions give rather boring speeches in which they present the tenets of the approaches more or less by reading from prepared notes. Satir proceeded differently. With her warm and genuine charisma, she had 400 to 500 family therapists stand up, hold hands, and feel their inner love for one another. Sounds phony, right? It was not phony with Virginia Satir (if I tried this, it probably would seem phony). She had the ability to connect with people and to help them connect with one another in ways that felt sincere and genuine. She not only talked about how her humanistic- experiential approach to family therapy worked, she lived it and made her audience experience it – and what an experience that was. (Thomas, 2003, p. 174)

Thomas’s (2003) experience was not exceptional; many others reported similar transformative experiences where they connected at a profound level of soul meeting soul,

essence meeting essence with Satir (eg. Bitter, 1987; Brothers, 2000a; Dodson, 2000; Gomori, 2002; Loeschen, 2002; McLendon, 2000b; Nerin, 1986; Pascoe, 1996; Spitzer, 2000; Wegscheider-Cruse, 1985). The power of these experiences did not come from what Satir did, but what she was. She showed her willingness to be real, to take risks. She communicated clearly and modelled her own congruence for other people (Gardner, 1978); she was also willing and able to bring “her essence to the therapeutic relationship” (McLendon, 2000a, p. 331). Her firm belief that “therapy is helping souls to emerge, helping people to be in touch with themselves” (Laign, 1988, p. 21); and her modelling of her belief also contributed to those powerful transformative experiences.

Braverman (1986) commended Satir’s ability in concretizing abstract concepts, and helping people learn the essence of these concepts through experiencing them. Satir (1983-1987) acknowledged her own ability and willingness to meticulously prepare people to take risks for their desired change. Since she understood the pain and uncertainty that often accompany the process of change, she was mindful of being compassionate and patient in guiding clients through the process. Satir’s notion of ‘therapy as education’ emphasized ‘learning through holistic experiences’; not ‘educating’ through talk therapy, didactic teaching, or homework assignments.

Activating the healing energy of the clients

Satir (2000) believed that “the whole therapeutic process must be aimed at opening up the healing potential [or healing energy] within the client... through the meeting of the deepest self of the therapist with the deepest self of the client” (p. 25). Since Satir believed that “life energy permeates everything” (Kramer, 1995b, p. 3), she started each therapeutic process by connecting

with this life energy which connects with other life energies in the universe. She also believed that this would enable the client to put down the walls that blocked the natural flow of life energy, and facilitate her connection with the client at the spiritual and energy level (Kramer, 1995b). Dodson (1991b) contended that it was Satir's "deep acceptance of life as a process, and her respect for every person" (p. 119), that enabled her to lead thousands of people to get in contact with their life force, to re-convene their energy toward growth instead of being stuck in their problems and sickness.

One of Satir's approaches in activating the life energy was her meditations in the beginning and ending of workshops. She very often led participants to get in touch with three "sources of energy": The energy from the centre of the earth (the energy of groundedness); the energy from the heavens (the energy of intuition and inspiration); and the energy that one can create by receiving and merging these two energies together to form the energy of connectedness within each of us, in order to connect deeply with ourselves, and to connect with others (Banmen & Banmen, 1991; Banmen, 2003; Brothers, 1991b; Satir, 1983e). In this process one was led to fully utilize the resources, which Satir believed to be provided by the universe, and to become aware that a balance could potentially be created within this person with these three energies (Satir, 1983e). This flow of energy, the balance and groundedness were believed to activate the growing and healing energy, and to bring peace in the individual and in relationships.

With a steadfast belief that we are all spiritual beings, Satir had no doubt that these energies were available for all of us; it was only a matter of how to activate them. She identified that there were negative and positive energy and that "negative energy comes from restriction, especially from human beings who cannot manifest themselves or feel themselves to be loved,

valued, mattered.... Positive energy is free energy, it comes from growth” (Satir cited in Gardner, 1978, p. 5). She maintained that therapists need to believe that human beings have capacity for their own growth and healing, therefore her therapy and teachings were all geared towards activating the positive energy in people, and enabling one to get in touch with one’s life force.

Moreover, Satir considered energy as power, and committed herself to use the power constructively. In her own words, she was to be her own choice-maker and be fully responsible for all aspects within her being, and to respect that in others (Brothers, 2000a; Satir, 1976, 1988; Satir, et al., 1991). She also invited everybody to see themselves as “a fountain of energy, ... to open up...[and to] give themselves the permission to celebrate themselves” (Laign, 1988, p. 21). Dodson (2000) remarked that this “ability to see and inspire the highest and best selves in people was one of her [Satir’s] greatest gifts” (p. 105).

Systemic-holistic- multisensory approach

In Satir’s approach, we do not only view the person’s family-of-origin as a system, the person’s present family (if any), the person’s affiliations (sometimes referred to as the person’s chosen families), such as the work setting, church communities, volunteer groups etc., and the person him/herself are also viewed as systems. Satir also took into consideration the larger and macro systems which may affect the person, namely the cultural context, religious dogma and political situations in the world. “She not only spoke about and taught the multiple levels of all systems but she lived and acted at all those levels as well” (Jacobs, 1991, p. 43). When meeting a person, Satir would not separate his/her behaviour, perception, or feelings, but would bear in mind the holistic and universal picture of this person’s physical, intellectual, emotional, nutritional, interactional, sensual, contextual, and spiritual conditions at any given moment of the

time, and respond accordingly (Satir, 1982; Satir & Baldwin, 1983; Satir, et al., 1991; Woods & Martin, 1984).

In Satir's growth model, there are different representations of the system of an individual. The 'Personal Iceberg' metaphor (Banmen, 2002c; Satir, et al., 1991) is used to represent the observable behaviour and coping pattern as well as the internal experiences, such as feelings, feeling about feelings, perceptions, expectations, yearnings and the self (spirit) of a person at any moment of the time. The 'Parts Party' (Satir, 1986e; Satir, et al., 1991) or *Your Many Faces* (Satir, 1978, 2009) is to help people explore the various aspects of their personality and take concrete actions to live more satisfyingly (Norfleet, 2009). Satir's 'Self-Esteem Maintenance Tool Kit' (Banmen & Banmen, 1991; Banmen, 2003; McLendon, 2000a; Satir, et al., 1991) and 'the Personal Mandala' (Satir, 1988; Satir, et al., 1991) are representations of a person's internal resources and "nourishing potentials" (Satir, 1982, p. 12). Not only were all these representations geared toward helping individuals understand oneself better from a systemic perspective, they were also therapeutic tools to help the individual work toward a more integrated self, to bring balance, harmony and peace within this system. They guide both the therapist/teacher and the clients or workshop participants to seeing themselves from a holistic and universal perspective.

Satir used the word universal to refer to something common to all humans; such as the "four universal aspects of how people perceive the world" (Satir, et al., 1991, p. 6); her "guidelines for the application of universal principles... to enhance human growth and unite individuals" (Brothers, 1991b, p. 1); "universal human yearning to be loved and appreciated" (Azpeitia & Zahnd, 1991, p. 83) etc. Hence, in order to understand Satir's approach, it is

necessary to take Jacobs' (1991) advice that “no matter at what point one chooses to focus, it is essential to bear in mind this holistic, universal perspective with which Virginia [Satir] viewed her world” (p. 43).

Another level of systems is the relational systems. A person is a part of each of the systems that he/she belongs to or is affiliated with. The parts within each system interrelate with and influence each other while the systems also interrelate with and influence each other. So everything interrelates with and affects each other directly and indirectly (Satir, 1982, 1983b, 1988). Satir called this phenomenon “the can of worms in action” (Satir, 1988, p. 194); and maintained that “any one person can be in the middle of many pulls at the same time... the issue is not how to avoid these pulls (because that’s impossible) but how to live with the pulls creatively” (p.194). So a person’s symptom serves as a signal - a call for help - for this individual and the family system (Satir, 1983b). She used the metaphor “family life is something like an iceberg” (Satir, 1988, p. 2) where “most people are aware of only one-tenth of what’s going on” (p.2). She believed that the family is the first and a life-long learning context for every human being (Satir, 1964, 1972, 1983, 1988). So in her therapy, she treated the family as a unit and led family members to see clearly what costs they were paying to maintain balance in the system when challenges arose. Her goal was to offer ways for families to seek alternatives and to reach a healthy state of harmony.

Satir’s systemic view transcended the family level and moved into the larger systems, and into the world. For her, accessing the life energy of each individual in the system and the life energy of the system, and facilitating the connection of all these energies through multisensory experiences were essential principles to enabling growth and health. ‘Family Reconstruction’

(Gomori & Adaskin, 2008; Nerin, 1986, 1993; Satir, et al., 1991; Wegscheider-Cruse, et al., 1994) is an example of connecting energies at different levels of the systems. It was an innovative means that Satir (1986b) had developed to “re-establish the context in which old learnings originated, and pave the way for new learning to happen” (p. viii). She believed that it is possible to apply this view to all other systems, and to apply the same set of principles to heal the larger systems, including the world (Laign, 1988; Pittman, 1989; Satir, 1988).

She believed that “family is a microcosm of the world. To understand the world, we can study the family” (Satir, 1988, p. 2); and “to change the world is to change the family” (p. 2), to which she tirelessly committed herself and facilitated others in pursuing.

Growth oriented - strength, health and peace focused

Satir believed firmly that each person has the potential for growth, which she defined as “an ongoing process of sorting, adding on, and letting go of that which no longer fit” (Satir, 1982, p. 22). For her, “therapy needs to focus on health and possibilities instead of pathology” (Satir, et al., 1991, p. 16) and the therapist’s role was thus to help people grow towards health and happiness. She considered the pathological aspects or symptoms of the patient as his/her effort to grow (King, 1989; Satir, 1982), thus in therapy, she focused on connecting the client’s growth energy and the life force, and worked on cultivating and affirming strength, health, potentials and possibilities. She maintained that “the problem is not the problem” (Satir, et al., 1991, p. 17), and hence went beyond the problem and paid full attention to each person by reaching directly to the spirituality, the core yearning, the positive intention and the love behind the ‘problematic’ behaviours instead of focusing on the ‘problem’ (Hoffman, 1998; Kramer, 1995b; Satir, 1974, 1983-1987; Satir, et al., 1991; Satir, Stachowiak, & Taschman, 1975).

Satir's guiding principle was her steadfast belief in the growing potential of people. She pointed out that human beings are born with all the essential ingredients to grow and develop healthily (Satir, 1982, 1983-1987; Satir, et al., 1991); yet "most people prefer the certainty of misery rather than the misery of uncertainty" (Satir, 1983-1987, p. 12) and paid high prices and endured enormous pain for maintaining a superficial, make-believe peace and a balance in relationships (Satir, 1983b; Satir, et al., 1991). Satir was optimistic that "since what we do is learnt, then if what we have learnt doesn't fit, we can always learn something new" (Satir, 1983-1987, p. 16) and pointed out ways for freeing oneself to make better choices and live in greater harmony (Satir, 1983-1987, 1988; Satir, et al., 1991), and have real "peace within, peace between, and peace among" (Satir, 1988, p. 368).

It was this stubbornness about human potential that guided Satir to have the kind of connection with people that very few are able to accomplish. Hoffman (1993) called this Satir's "relentless optimism" (p. 59), and claimed that "this was something [she] had got from Virginia Satir... and of all the elements of therapy that [she] had learnt during the twenty-five years of studying other therapists' work, this [relentless optimism] was the one that stuck with [her] most stubbornly" (Hoffman, p. 59).

Becoming one's own choice maker

In Satir's unpublished manuscript, she mentioned that "our human job is to find our way to develop and fulfil our potential as human beings ... really feel worthy about ourselves ... We do not have to exploit and manipulate others; instead, respond to and connect with others" (Satir, 1983-1987, p. 20). She believed that this would happen when people became their own decision makers. Satir (1983-1987) called this process the third birth:

Everyone who has lived has made the first two births (the first birth refers to the time when an ovum and sperm find each other and unite; the second birth is when we came out of the womb), but relatively few have made the third. (p. 18)

The third birth is when you feel yourself to be your own decision maker and take charge of your own life.... to love, to protect, to guide, to nurture yourself in terms of your own nature. (p.23)

Consistent with what she described, she invited the readers to practise being their own choice makers by allowing themselves to “taste, but only swallow ... [what] fits for them” (p. 19). The importance of making one’s own decisions and being responsible for them had been central in her teaching and therapy; in this unpublished manuscript named ‘the third birth’, she explained details of this central theme of ‘becoming one’s own choice maker’.

The therapist’s “Use of Self”

Virginia Satir was identified as a pioneer in training therapists in the ‘Use of Self in therapy’, a concept and practice which had become main stream thinking in the therapeutic community (Banmen in the commentaries of Baldwin, 2000; Brothers, 2000b; Dewane, 2006). For Satir, “the person of the therapist is the centre point around which successful therapy revolves” (Satir, 2000b, p. 25). She believed that therapists could influence therapeutic results negatively or positively through their use of self, so she proposed “to use the self for positive results” (Satir, 2000, p. 23). Satir asserted that the therapist needed to be centred, willing to be real, willing to risk, and allowing himself/herself to be vulnerable in order to be able to really join with others and obtain a real understanding of the client’s situation (Gardner, 1978).

Cowley and Adams (2000) remarked that “Satir was never intimidated by anyone’s idea of what was professional. She allowed herself to be totally present with others... She made an intentional choice to bring her whole self into the relationship” (Cowley & Adams, 2000, p. 53).

For her, being fully present with oneself and with the client is a key factor of using the self in therapy. Using the self will inevitably bring in one's value system, personal beliefs and common sense into therapy (Dodson, 2000), and Satir believed that the clients have the abilities to take in whatever fit for themselves and to make their own choices. She saw "a therapist firstly as being a joint explorer, a person who looks rather than has ideas about what should happen" (Satir quoted in Gardner, 1978, p. 2).

Pascoe (1996) shared his first encounter with Virginia Satir whereby she was late for *ten* hours. While the group increasingly worried for Satir's safety, Pascoe's impatience also increased. Below is how he described his experience when Satir had finally arrived, and how Satir used herself:

Virginia quickly gathered the group in a circle and said she regretted the mix up in times but was very glad to be with us. She then asked everyone to introduce themselves and share what they hoped might happen in the next five days. Then, more importantly, she asked what everyone was experiencing at this moment in time. Most were happy to be there and many expressed relief at Virginia's safe arrival, as they had feared the worst. When my turn to speak came I said that I was damn mad. I had driven a long way and was angry that I had wasted a whole day waiting for 'the great one' to appear. (I had been encouraged by others to say what I was feeling and now was the time to test out new behaviour). Virginia's response to me was the hallmark of her Tao of communication. She said, "Thank you for sharing that with me Wray." She kept her eyes fixed on mine, affirming and validating my position with one of the most incredible smiles that was definitely meant for me. This lady was authentic. I felt that she honestly accepted my hostile comments while appreciating me and where I was at that moment in time. (I was to learn about congruent communication later in the week). (Pascoe, 1996, p. 15)

For Satir, her means of making contact was in her own "congruent communication and the modelling that went with it" (Satir, 1988, p. 340). Pascoe (1996) remarked that the fundamental difference between Virginia Satir and many therapists who claim to use the 'Satir Model' was that she had a genuine and firm belief of the existence of an inner spirit in the other

person; and she accessed it by her modelling and congruence. The ‘use of self’ Satir demonstrated and advocated was grounded in the congruent being, the spirit, of the therapist, and a genuine respect and trust in that of the other person. Many therapists and supervisors who practise ‘therapeutic use of self’ (which to me represents incongruence) these days likely have to struggle to achieve similar results.

Satir’s goals for therapy

Banmen (2002a) highlighted that Satir’s therapeutic goals are positively directed and he summarised four meta-goals as the focus of change in Satir’s approach. They are, “*Raising the self-esteem of the clients... Helping clients to be their own choices makers... Helping clients to be more responsible... Helping clients become congruent*” (p. 11). I appreciate this concise highlight about the positive directional aspect, and agree with the direction of the meta-goals but have much hesitation to identify with the wordings, which delineate a ‘therapists-focused, helper-helpee’ hierarchical undertone of these goals. They reflect the ‘expert’ position of the therapist, and indicate a therapist-leading process, not a co-discovery process which Satir upholds. Thus, I would re-word them as: The four meta-goals that guide the counsellor-client’s co-discovery process of positively directional focus for change in Satir’s approach are: (1) Client holds a good sense of self-worth, permitting growth toward higher self-esteem; (2) Client becomes his/her own choice maker; (3) Client is more able to be responsible for himself/herself, and be more responsible to others and contexts; and (4) Client becomes more congruent, and is more able to have ‘peace within, peace between and peace among’.

We now shift to examining some of the critiques of Satir and her approach.

Critiques on Satir and Her Work

Unreliable in terms of Keeping Appointments

Perhaps the strongest criticism about Satir's behaviour could have been about her lack of reliability in terms of keeping appointments (Anderson, 2004; Kripal, 2007; Pascoe, 1996; Spitzer, 2000; Weakland, Watzlawick, & Riskin, 1995). Anderson (2004) and Kripal (2007) both recalled a story that Satir had volunteered to be one of the full-time faculty members of the first residential program launched at Esalen, and some of the advisers had reservations and considered her "not the most reliable candidate" (Anderson, 2004, p. 125), because "she was somewhat unpredictable herself" (p.125). Somehow, Satir became the only faculty member of the program when it started in the fall of 1966. Nonetheless, a few weeks into the program, she left without "telling anybody why she was leaving or when she would be back" (Anderson, p. 126); "she just disappeared" (Kripal, 2007, p. 153). Such behaviour seems incongruent with the Satir known to many as an advocate of direct and clear communication, with a respect of the self, the others and the context (Satir, et al., 1991), and a promoter of taking responsibilities for oneself (Satir, 1983-1987, 2000b; Satir, et al., 1991).

This withdrawal behaviour, or 'being irrelevant', is one of the 'survival stances' identified by Satir to describe one of the four 'dysfunctional copings' adopted by people when they feel stressful inside and still want to look good on the outside. These stances all originate from a state of low self-esteem (Satir, et al., 1991). At that juncture of her life, Satir could have been facing a difficult situation. Instead of facing it congruently, she might have coped by avoiding, perhaps an indication that she probably was not at a good place in terms of her self-esteem. This coping seemed consistent with how Satir handled her relationship with family

members: she withdrew and avoided. Maybe Brothers (2000a) was correct in her comment that Satir did not “allow herself the emotional vulnerability of telling [others] what was really going on in her life” (p. 47). In her own words, she might have paid a high price for this: losing her credibility.

Satir openly addressed the issue of her ‘mixing up the appointment times’ and shared what she had learnt from it in a conference setting (Satir, 1986f); but no record is found concerning her addressing the Esalen issue of ‘disappearing’. This whole issue unveiled a ‘human’ part of a growing professional, and can help people understand Satir’s notions of ‘self-esteem’, ‘dysfunctional copings’ and ‘therapists have to allow themselves to be vulnerable’ from a different angle, where she was the ‘star’.

Lacking a Concrete Theoretical Framework

One of the earliest criticisms about Satir was that she did not have a strong theoretical base hence “no discernable school or therapeutic method has evolved from her contribution” (Gurman & Kniskern, 1981, p. xiv). Though Satir also realized that there were ‘glaring gaps’ in her theoretical base and she tried to remedy this (Satir, 1982), she did not sufficiently record her ideas and concepts in written format. This has been seen as a deficit by some (Innes, 2002; Luepnitz, 1989), while others perceived it as an alternative, i.e., experiential or holistic model as opposed to theoretical model (Brothers, 1991b; Ramon Corrales, 1989; Jaison, 1991).

Luepnitz (1989) pointed out that Satir’s work was being singled out and criticized as ‘not deep’, “because Satir aimed at accessibility in her written style; ... [and] academicians seem not to trust a theory they can understand” (p.79). However, she simultaneously criticized that Satir had never really defined self-esteem, or defined what she meant by “self”. Nonetheless, one can

notice that she discussed self-esteem and ‘self’ in almost all her writings. Yet, with limited publications, Satir did not put forth most of her concepts concretely, and left much room for others to critique.

Somehow, as Gurman and Fraenkel (2002) suggested, “Virginia Satir has risen again in the marital therapy field” (Gurman & Fraenkel, 2002, p. 225). Her ideas and concepts have been revitalized in America through other therapists’ practice frameworks in recent developments. Many authors have also tried to present their interpretation of Satir’s approach into an organized conceptual or theoretical format over the years (such as Banmen, 2002c, 2008b; Bitter, 2009; McLendon, 2000a; McLendon & Davis, 2002; Nerin, 1986), and yet there is no consensus among them. It also still cannot change the fact that Satir did not have a clear, well-written theoretical framework for her approach. Perhaps it is best to conclude this section by Innes’s (2002) remark: “The relation of theory to method and practice is the least developed aspect of the Satir model” (Innes, 2002, p. 35).

Not Considered as Mainstream - No Empirical Research Back-up

Satir’s decision to quit research in MRI and to concentrate mainly on training instead of doing both in parallel was a misfortune. By rejecting research, she had already given a ‘negative label’ to this important part of the academic and therapeutic establishments; and could not support her own claim to be inclusive and holistic. If she had chosen to do both, she might have established a genuinely holistic approach with concrete support from research studies, and could have contributed some different perspectives or approaches to researching.

Satir was explicit in her disagreement with or even objection to the “sin model” (Satir, 1967, p. 182) and the “medical model” (Satir, 1967, p. 233; 1983b); and she also did not hide

“her disdain for therapies that failed to focus on strengths” (McLendon, 2000a, p. 332). These biased attitudes could have limited her not only in appreciating others’ ‘good intention’ - one of her notable attributes, but also in her own exploration of her potential in research and in formulating a more structured conceptual framework of her approach.

Being “Naïve” and “Touchy-feely”

Another early criticism was that she was a “naive and fuzzy thinker” (Nichols & Schwartz, 1998, p. 122) and that she got too involved with the client and becoming “touchy-feely”. This criticism may hold less ground now when “the field is slowly catching up with that ‘touchy/feely’, visionary Virginia Satir, and shaking off its no-emotion legacy” (Schwartz & Johnson, 2000, p. 32). Satir was a real pioneer in embracing the whole person of the client and accessing the vulnerable feelings and yearnings through loving touches, both metaphorically and physically. She had addressed the issue of physical touch in different settings. A short piece of Satir’s work with a therapist who asked her a question about touching in a conference setting is analysed and discussed in chapter six. Her holistic approach which embraces physical touch seems to be more accepted and understood by members of the field, yet it is still an area to be handled with great care. Professional bodies such as American Psychological Association, American Mental Health Counselors Association, National Association of Social Workers etc., have ethical and legal guidelines over the issue on therapist-client physical contact or touch.

Being Too Close with Students and Clients

Some people found Satir’s way of involving herself with her students and clients to be rather intrusive and overwhelming (Minuchin, et al., 2006). Pittman (1989) “found her both compelling and frightening” because he “had never known anyone to move in so close to

people” (p. 34). While her proximity triggered anxiety for some people, it was highly commended by others (Andreas, 1991; Brothers, 1991b; Loeschen, 1997; Rasheed, et al., 2010). Haber (1996) appreciated Satir’s involvement in the personal lives of many of her trainees, including his; while Dodson, his professional sister (Haber, 1996), found Satir’s personal issues in marriage affected how she related with Dodson’s dilemma about relationships with men (Dodson, 2000).

Minuchin, Lee and Simon (2006) commented that Satir’s emotional proximity would have been irresistible for family members to follow her lead. They further pointed out that “one could argue that her level of involvement was smothering and that her push for positive emotion inappropriately overrode and suppressed the honest expression of conflict” (Minuchin, et al., p. 8). However, they also acknowledged that though Satir was extremely proximal, “she used herself in a way that was highly nurturing” (Minuchin, et al., p. 43). They went further to relate this with supervision and stated that “supervisors who prefer their relationship with the supervisee to be friendly, formal, and at a middle distance might have found her supervision style too close for independent thinking to take place” (p. 43).

Conclusion – Envisioning Satir’s Supervision

I would like to conclude this chapter with two quotations: “Satir was her theory – there was little differentiation in Satir the person and Satir the therapist; the personal, experiential aspect of her life was the focus of her therapy, and it shows in her writing” (Horne, 2000, p.7); and “The therapy of Virginia Satir was nothing if not highly idiosyncratic. But in its very idiosyncrasy, it serves as a worthy exemplar of the work of the activist group of family therapists” (Minuchin, et al., 2006, p. 8).

In the absence of written literature about her supervision, I assumed her supervision would demonstrate the same philosophy as her therapy. In her supervision, I assumed she would focus on “bringing into full view the higher self of each person [both the supervisee and the client]” (Brothers, 2000a, p. 6); which “will result in each person [supervisee] feeling better about himself/herself and gaining the ability to do things more creatively with [their clients]” (Satir & Baldwin, 1983, p. 186). I also believe that she might have treated supervision as “dealing with a coping process rather than a problem-solving process” (p. 186). Since Satir expected a therapist to be the leader in initiating and teaching a health promoting process to the stars in the therapy sessions, and to facilitate them to take charge of themselves and to take the risks they need for change, it is highly possible that she would adopt the same approach in her supervision and guide her supervisees to this direction.

Satir gave much prominence to the experiential component in terms of how learning and changes happen (Braverman, 1986; Corrales, 2000; McLendon & Davis, 2002; Piercy, et al., 1996; Satir, 1982); I, therefore, believe she would also emphasize the experiential component in her supervision. Satir had expressed that “as a therapist, I am a companion. I try to help people tune into their own wisdom” (quoted in Simon, 1989, p. 40); hence, I would expect her, as a supervisor, to help supervisees tune into their own wisdom as well.

Moreover, her mission was to heal the world through healing families (Laign, 1988; Pittman, 1989); her goal for growth and therapy was for people to reach their higher selves through the development of their full potential and high self-worth. She challenged people to “change our perceptions from negative to positive... as well as [to develop] confidence in human

possibilities” (Satir, 1988, p. 383). I assume that her supervision would reflect this ‘breadth’ and ‘depth’ of her philosophy and mission.

Though Satir planned to complement the book *Conjoint Family Therapy* with a volume of case history material from actual therapy sessions (Jackson, 1967), this ‘case history book’ never actualized. However, “she intended her faith in her work to be contagious, to seep out of the page, or whatever medium she was using, and into the heart of her audience” (Suarez, 1999); so apart from writing she made audio and video recordings that served the same purpose. Some of those recordings included her own explanation of the sessions, so that supervisors can learn about her approach and the philosophy behind what she taught through these ‘non-written’ materials, allowing them to formulate their own supervision philosophy inspired by the Satir Growth Model should they so wish.

In this chapter, I have presented a brief account of Virginia Satir’s life, a description of the historical background in which she developed into a family therapist and an advocate of world peace in her later years; followed by the major concepts of Satir’s approach with some critiques on her and her work, and conclude with a speculation of Satir’s possible supervision philosophy. In the next chapter, I will review the philosophy and practices of clinical supervision within the humanistic, existential and transpersonal paradigms, with special attention to the supervision of family therapists and group supervision, especially during Satir’s time.

Chapter 3

Literature Review – Growth oriented Clinical Supervision within the Humanistic-Existential-Transpersonal Paradigm

Introduction

Clinical supervision had been a key component in safe-guarding client welfare and promoting professional competency of practitioners in the fields of education, general medicine, psychiatry, psychology, nursing, social work, and other educational and mental health services. The aim of this study is to explore what we can learn from the clinical supervision practice of Virginia Satir, a world recognized master therapist and teacher of therapists.

Satir named her approach ‘The Growth Model’ and she described her encounter with people ‘The Human Validation Processes’. Though she had not identified herself with a particular school of thought in the counselling field, it is helpful to acknowledge the ‘sameness’ between her approach and three major thinking paradigms, which overlap in many ways.

First, her approach falls into the tradition of depth psychotherapies, and embraces the humanistic philosophy such as believing in the abundance of human resources, honouring the self and advocating congruence. It also reflects the existential beliefs of searching for meaning in life and the importance of being authentic in the ‘here and now’ experiences. Last but not least, it values the transpersonal experiences of connecting one’s energy with what is thought of as a universal energy and addressing spiritual aspects of humanness - and beyond, so as to view oneself as part of the cosmos. Though supervision is a distinct specialty area, it is generally assumed that the philosophy and techniques in clinical supervision practices are congruent with the supervisor’s therapeutic (counselling) paradigm (Abrell, 1974; Pearson, 2006). I therefore

assume that Satir's supervision would also be congruent to her practices in leading workshops and family therapy; thus, would fall into the humanistic-existential-transpersonal paradigm.

This chapter reviews literature about growth oriented clinical supervision within the humanistic, existential and transpersonal arena. Literatures in group supervision and family therapy supervision were also reviewed because one of Satir's major contributions was in family therapy and most of her supervision sessions were conducted in group settings.

Philosophy and Fundamental Beliefs of Humanistic Counselling and Supervision

Humanistic Psychology and Humanistic Psychotherapy/Counselling

Humanistic psychology, also acknowledged as the third force psychology, was "in large part a reaction to the gross inadequacies of behavioristic and Freudian psychologies in their treatment of the higher nature of man" (Maslow, 1968a, p. 686). It emerged in the history of American psychology in the 1940s. Maslow (1968a) pointed out a major shortfall in classical academic psychology, which depended on finding answers about human behaviour in animal laboratories. It also ignored questions about ultimate human values such as authenticity and ethical commitment (Maslow, 1999), and the "higher-order elements of personality such as altruism and dignity, or the search for truth and beauty" (Maslow, 1968a, p. 686). Yet, Maslow did not imply that humanistic psychology is purely descriptive or academic; it also calls for action and implies consequences (Maslow, 1999). In short, humanistic psychology, according to Maslow, is an avenue for people to explore and cultivate human potentials to the extent of actualizing the higher-order elements of personality and realizing ultimate human values in a responsible manner.

Since its birth in the 1940s, humanistic psychology and humanistic psychotherapy has gained popular acceptance; humanistic perspectives defuse into the larger context and are adopted in a diversity of practices, such as parenting programs, crisis management, personal and executive coaching, and numerous other fields (Cosgrove, 2007). The recent positive psychology movement is also seen by many as humanistic psychology repackaged (Friedman, 2008; Robbins, 2008; Taylor, 2001), though the founders deliberately distinguished it from humanistic psychology by criticizing the latter of not having any empirical base because it “emphasized the self and encouraged a self-centeredness that played down concerns for collective well-being” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 7). Existential thinkers, though sharing a lot of commonalities, sometimes characterize the humanistic view about human potential as being overly optimistic to the point that it misses out some fundamental aspects of human concerns (van Deurzen, 2002; Yalom, 1980).

To date, there is not one single accepted theory or representative model in humanistic psychotherapy (Schneider, et al., 2001). Many of the contemporary humanistic psychotherapy practices embrace the existential perspectives (Craig, 2007; Sleeth, 2006, 2007a, 2007b; Tart, 2005), as well as the transpersonal perspectives (Fukuyama, Murphy, & Siahpoush, 2003; Spalding & Khalsa, 2010); this will be discussed in the later sections of this chapter.

In order to better understand the foundational philosophy of humanistic psychology in the American context, where my professional training in psychotherapy is heavily based, I chose to go back to its roots and see what the pioneers wrote about humanistic psychology; and then draw out some consistent themes or fundamental beliefs from these founders and other practitioners to date.

Perspectives of the founders of humanistic psychology

Sutich (1962, cited in Bugental, 1964) described humanistic psychology as being primarily concerned with human capacities and potentials such as: “love, creativity, self, growth, organism, basic need-gratification, self-actualization, higher values, being, becoming, spontaneity, play, humour, affection, naturalness, warmth, ego-transcendence, objectivity, autonomy, responsibility, meaning, fair-play, transcendental experience, psychological health, and related concepts” (p. 22); and he identified this new category of psychology with “Jung, Adler, and the psychoanalytic ego-psychologists, existential and phenomenological psychologists” (p. 22). At the outset, an inclusive tone had already been set for humanistic psychology by the first president, Sutich, of the American Association for Humanistic Psychology.

Later, in order to start the process of issuing an affirmative statement of the nature of humanistic orientation in psychology, Bugental (1964) proposed five basic postulates for humanistic psychology: (i) Man, as man, supersedes the sum of his parts; (ii) Man has his being in a human context; (iii) Man is aware; (iv) Man has choice; and (v) Man is intentional. He also specified six characteristics of the humanistic orientation in psychology: Humanistic psychology (i) cares about man; (ii) values meanings more than procedure; (iii) looks for human rather than nonhuman validations; (iv) accepts the relativism of all knowledge; (v) relies heavily upon the phenomenological orientation; and (vi) does not deny the contributions of other views, but tries to supplement them and give them a setting within a broader conception of the human experience. Being cognizant that humanistic psychology was still in its early developmental stage, Bugental re-iterated that these were bare initial concepts, and he invited “much thought, much imagination,

much discussion and argument, much creativity – in short, much of being human ... and it must have an affirmation of man's respect for man" (p. 25). Bugental's approach to psychotherapy embraces the existential ideology and was known to the field as an existential-humanistic psychotherapy.

Father of America's humanistic psychology, Maslow (1968a), articulated his belief in human nature, which includes the reality of higher human needs for the intrinsic and ultimate values of goodness, truth, beauty, perfection, justice, and order; as well as human motives and capacities. He called upon an education towards a different and very complex conception of the self, which he further explained as "a kind of intrinsic nature which is very subtle, which is not necessarily conscious, which has to be sought for, and which has to be uncovered and then built upon, actualized, taught, educated" (Maslow, 1968a, p. 688). When summarizing the work of his fellow humanistic psychologists and existential psychiatrists of his time, Maslow (1968a) concluded that the then 'uncovering' therapy (humanistic psychotherapy) was to help the person to discover his Identity or his Real Self. He also posed the concept of basic needs and self-actualization and acknowledged that everyone "has needs which must be gratified in order to become fully human" (p. 688). Such a process includes discovering oneself, 'making oneself', and to 'choose' for oneself in order to grow well and be healthy. It also includes discovering both sides of one's idiosyncrasy, the "self-hood", as well as one's humanness, the "specieshood".

Maslow announced in the preface of the second edition of his *Towards a Psychology of Being* (published in 1968) that he "consider Humanistic, the Third Force Psychology to be transitional, a preparation for a still 'higher' Fourth Psychology, transpersonal, transhuman, centred in the cosmos rather than in human needs and interest, going beyond humanness, identity,

self-actualization, and the like” (Maslow, 1999, p. xl). This sense of openness to all other relevant thoughts and extension to the unlimited possibility and to the unknown was articulated clearly by another founding father, Rogers, of the humanistic movement.

Rogers, another pioneer, one of the most influential teachers of therapists in the last four decades or more (Cook, et al., 2009; Simon, 2007), best known for his person-centred approach (initially named client-centred therapy), embraced the humanistic tenets right at the beginning of his counselling profession, whereby he demonstrated his courage to be different from the other counsellors at his time (Rogers, 1942). In his 1942 book *Counseling and Psychotherapy*, he offered a “Newer Psychotherapy” which had a fundamentally different set of values and viewpoints than those practices of the time. “It aims directly toward the greater independence and integration of the individual, rather than depending on the counsellor to assist in solving the problem... the aim is to assist the individual to grow” (Rogers, 1942, p. 28). It also addresses “the emotional elements ... places greater stress upon the immediate situation than upon the individual’s past ... and it values the therapeutic relationship as a growth experience” (p. 29-30). His 1961 book *On Becoming a Person* was well received literally by people all over the world, and had “forced him out of his parochial view that what he might say would be of interest only to therapists” (Rogers, 1980, p. xvi). Later, in his 1962 article *Toward Becoming a Fully Functioning Person*, Rogers, being well aware that his readers were the massive public, presented three trends that individuals would move toward: An increasing openness to experience; accepting living and becoming as a process; and an increasing trust in his organism, i.e., trusting his own physical, emotional and unexplainable experiences (Rogers, 1999).

In 1980, Rogers moved outside the psychotherapy framework and talked about “a point

of view, a philosophy, an approach to life, a way of being, which fits any situation in which *growth* – of a person, a group, or a community – is part of the goal” (Rogers, 1980, p. xvii).

Rogers, in actual fact, had moved into the existential and transpersonal arena and shared a new level of consciousness:

I have mentioned the transcendent spirit of oneness which often occurs in our workshops*. What does this signify for the future? I feel others are more competent than I to answer this question.

As historian of ideas Lancelot Whyte (1974) has pointed out, there is usually, in any new development, a subterranean current in the popular mind and feeling, which grows stronger and stronger until, with a seeming suddenness, it breaks forth into clearly articulated form in various places and countries. In this sense I believe there is, alongside the obviously destructive forces on our planet, a growing current that will lead to a new level of human awareness. There is the strong interest in holistic healing; the recognition of undeveloped psychic powers within each individual; the mysterious, unspoken communication that is so evident in our groups; a dimly sensed recognition that the strongest force in our universe is not overriding power but love. ... Our workshop experiences, along with the many other manifestations of this current, mean to me that humankind may be moving into a far different type of consciousness than exist today. (Rogers, 1980, pp. 203-204)

* His workshop participants include the Egyptian President Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Begin in September, 1978; and a group of militant Catholics and Protestants from Belfast in 1973... (Rogers, 1980, p. 200).

It is obvious that these founding fathers of American humanistic psychology and psychotherapy demonstrated the inclusive virtue of humanistic principles, expanded their own human potentials and evolved into embracing and integrating the existential and transpersonal philosophy into their humanistic approach; they presented a broader and holistic worldview, and spelt out a clear direction for future practice in psychotherapy as well as introducing a way of being. They revealed that humanistic psychotherapy transcended itself, and had begun to move into the humanistic-existential-transpersonal arena.

What is expected of humanistic counsellors and supervisors?

A humanistic counsellor (or supervisor) sees their roles as helping a person to discover and unfold what is already present inside instead of offering or forcing anything into him/her (Bugental, 1999; Maslow, 1968a; Rogers, 1965). This requires a therapist or supervisor to be familiar with the humanistic principles. Rowan (2005) summarized four main common concepts from the pioneers' theories of humanistic psychology: (i) A belief that people are "fundamentally OK". By regarding people as fundamentally OK, humanistic psychotherapists and supervisors view people as basically good, and aim at eliciting the goodness in people; (ii) An emphasis on the whole person, i.e., to acknowledge one's effort in realizing human potential through any or all parts of one's being - the body, mind, emotion, and spirit; (iii) An emphasis on change and development; humanistic psychologists believe that the growth process is natural and necessary to all human beings, and that we will continue to grow into our full potential if we do not limit ourselves; (iv) A belief in the abundance-orientation of human motivation - humanistic psychologists, though acknowledging the existence of deficiencies in life, believe that human beings are motivated to move towards achievement, to capture the abundance of opportunities that lead to varied experiences, and to realize one's potential.

It is apparent that Rowan has missed three important concepts that the humanistic pioneers also shared: Self, authenticity and consciousness. Humanistic psychologists maintain that every individual has an "intrinsic innate tendency to actualize one's unique potential for full human existence" (Polkinghorne, 2001, p. 82). Living in one's authenticity (Bugental, 1967; Maslow, 1976; May, 1969), congruence (Rogers, 1965) and consciousness (Bugental, 1964) has been a major thrust in humanistic psychology. Humanistic psychologists perceive authenticity as

an experience of one's state of being; when an individual experiences being authentic, he/she is fully aware in the present moment and present situation, and be able to respond from one's real self (Polkinghorne, 2001; Rowan, 2001) which makes it possible to "reduce phoniness to the zero point" (Maslow, 1976, p. 183). These pioneers also attached much importance to self-discovery and self-making (Maslow, 1968a; Rogers, 1999), as well as being intentional and conscious about one's own process (Bugental, 1964) toward becoming a more fully functioning person (Maslow, 1968a; Rogers, 1999), which Bugental (1999) referred to as being "alive and aware in both realms –the subjective and the objective– but the former is ... more crucial in most of our living" (p. 150).

Merging these concepts into Rowan's list of four, I summarize six basic principles and beliefs that guide humanistic counsellors and supervisors: (i) people are basically good; (ii) to be human is to live out the essence of one's Self by realizing one's potential holistically; (iii) growth and change are the goals of humanistic approaches; (iv) humanistic counselling works on the premises of abundance, not deficiency with the view that one builds on what is present, not what is absent; (v) consciousness and intentionality is the key to self-discovery, self-making and self-growth; (vi) authenticity or congruence is the process and an outcome of a person fully realizing his/her potential. A humanistic counsellor or supervisor is thus expected to uphold these principles.

Not a single article on humanistic supervision addressing all the core philosophical perspectives and beliefs listed above was found in my exhaustive review of the literature. Abrell's (1974) addressed the key issues of supervisee growth and promoting efficacy in service delivery. In his own words, humanistic supervisors need "to have the attitude and skills required

for the type of supervision that at once enhances persons and improves instruction” (Abrell, 1974, p. 212). Though his article was written for supervisors in the educational settings, supervisors in other fields may also find it informative. To him, a humanistic supervisor works cooperatively with supervisees and facilitates the growth of supervisees as well as cultivates skills, attitudes and knowledge in supervisees as well as supervisors. However, he did not discuss what skills, attitudes and knowledge should be cultivated in supervisees and supervisors in the article; instead, he mentioned six functions of humanistic supervision, listed ten characteristics of effective humanistic supervisors, and suggested a process of five steps which “humanistic supervisors must take to achieve instructional improvement and fulfilment” (Abrell, 1974, p. 215) in relation to the supervisor’s role of “creating an environment which encourages human growth and fulfilment among those with whom he/she cooperatively works” (p. 213). His article focused more on the ‘doing’ and ‘functional’ aspects of the supervisor, and missed the ‘being’ part; thus can only provide guidelines for humanistic counsellors and supervisors of what to do, but not what and how to be, which is paramount to the humanistic philosophy.

In Hawkins’s (1985) article *Humanistic Psychotherapy Supervision: A Conceptual Framework*, the author only addressed the practical and operational aspects of supervision, namely the mode and style of supervision practices, but is silent on the other aspects of humanistic psychotherapy, such as its philosophy, its beliefs about humans, and the humanistic view of therapy. He “developed a model and a map of the varying supervision styles, categorized by where the centre of focus lies with the supervision” (Hawkins, p. 70). He categorized ‘humanistic supervision’ practices into two types: one focuses on the supervision process and the other focuses on the therapy process. He further subdivided each type into three categories. The first type included the focus on supervisor counter-transference, the “here and

now” process and the therapist’s counter transference, while the second included exploration of the “there and then” process, the strategies and intervention used by the therapist, and the reflection on the content of the therapy session. He failed to discuss the philosophy underneath the different styles, or the core beliefs of having different focuses, while maintaining that “distinguishing between the modes in their pure form, has many advantages” (Hawkins, 1985, p. 71). The advantages listed were functional or operational, such as the supervisor becoming clearer about his own style, more awareness of allowing the supervisee the choices of what to explore as well as negotiating the type of supervision they want. Though Hawkins mentioned that “A good supervisor... must possess the qualities of ‘empathy, genuineness and non-possessive warmth’ ... and be able to use all six categories of intervention – ‘Prescription, Information, Confrontation, Catalytic, Cathartic and Supportive’” (p. 72), he did not explain the relevance of the assertion that added the notion of qualities to his former categorizations for intervention. Neither did he draw out the common or basic principles relevant to the humanistic practice of psychotherapy. Humanistic psychology is not merely functional or operational, it is also ontological; the title of the article, *Humanistic Psychotherapy Supervision: A Conceptual Framework*, can thus be critiqued as misleading, given that it only includes a conceptual framework focusing on methodological aspects, without addressing the ontological issues of the underlying philosophy, beliefs and principles.

Humanistic Supervision

Humanistic perspectives or the humanistic approach are not discussed in the major clinical supervision text books, such as Bernard and Goodyear (2004), Watkins (1997), Falender and Shafranske (2004), Campbell (2006), Fall and Sutton (2004), Carroll and Holloway (1999),

and Holloway (1995). However, when basic principles of supervision, or personal characteristics of therapists and supervisors, or the effectiveness of supervision are mentioned, the humanistic philosophy is constantly being included.

Since six major concepts are identified in humanistic counselling, one might assume that supervision practice within the humanistic paradigm embraces these main concepts or principles. However literature shows that even when any of these major concepts are discussed, it seldom reaches the depth the pioneers of humanistic psychology conveyed. Below is an account of how each of these concepts was or was not reflected in the supervision literature.

The position of the six identified major humanistic concepts in supervision

People are basically good

The belief that ‘people are basically good’ is hardly reflected in supervision literature. The closest concept is the notion of ‘trust’ in supervision. Trust is seen as a vital condition for effective supervision (Gillespie, 2005); and a trusting relationship between supervisor and supervisee enhances supervisee development (Severinsson & Borgenhammar, 1997). However, it is generally believed that trust in a supervisory relationship does not just occur; it needs to be established and developed (Gillespie, 2005; Halpern, 2009; Hughes, 2004; Kavanagh, Spence, Wilson, & Crow, 2002; Severinsson & Borgenhammar, 1997). It is the supervisor’s responsibility to build the trust in the supervisory relationship (Hughes, 2004); and building trust demands the supervisor’s intentional attention to congruence and transparency (Gillespie, 2005). Having an open dialogue as well as being sensitive to and respecting the supervisee’s boundaries by not probing can both serve to promote trust (Halpern, 2009).

A puzzle about whether “people are basically good” emerged during this literature search:

Is this really humanistic, or just an idealistic belief of humanists? It is obvious that the supervisors cited in the above studies followed some humanistic guidelines, but there is no evidence that they lived and practiced from this set of beliefs. If one intrinsically believes that people are basically good, does one need to build trust, or will it just occur? A pioneering analysis undertaken by Luhmann (1979, cited in Hughes, 2004) showed that the process of developing trust in someone occurs in small steps, and it takes a supervisor's deliberate effort to establish it. It may be understood that humanistic supervisors do uphold the belief that "people are basically good" while the supervisees may not necessarily believe it to be so, thus requiring the supervisor's unyielding effort to assure supervisees that they can be trusted.

Realizing the essence of Self

Supervision literatures that addressed the 'Self' varied in their focuses: some focused on therapists' and/or supervisors' self-awareness, self-evaluation, self-management, self-observation, self-reflection or self-supervision (Dennin & Ellis, 2003; Ellis, Krenzel, & Beck, 2002; Fowler & Chevannes, 1998; Gray & Smith, 2009; Heckman-Stone, 2003; Kottler, 1999; Moffett, 2009; Sobell, Manor, Sobell, & Dum, 2008; Wheeler & Richards, 2007; White et al., 1998, just to name a few); and some discussed the therapists' and/or the supervisors' use of self (Aponte & Carlsen, 2009; Holub & Lee, 1990; Oliver, Nelson, & Ybanez, 2010). Yet, very few addressed the depth of the essence or the higher integrated self as the pioneers of humanistic psychology depicted (as in Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003), not even the ones that explored self-actualization (eg., Deming, 1980).

Maslow's (1968a, 1976, 1999) articulation that 'human needs must be gratified in order to become fully human' prompted me to look for how supervisees' needs are acknowledged and

handled when we talk about ‘realizing the essence of self’ through the process of supervision. This belief seemingly has been echoed (not necessarily articulated) by therapists and supervisors (such as Abrell, 1974; Beatty, 1977; Carroll, 2004, 2010b; Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2001) in their practices. In Rønnestad and Skovholt’s (2003) study: The first theme they found was “professional development involves an increasing higher order integration of the professional self and the personal self” (Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003, p. 27); this view point resonates in other literatures (Aponte & Carlsen, 2009; Carroll, 2009; Jennings, Goh, Skovholt, Hanson, & Banerjee-Stevens, 2003; Lambie, 2006), and could be understood as a continuous process as well as a state of being at that particular moment. It is also believed that there exists an innate potential and wish in humans to move toward one’s integrated higher self; it will become actualized through the natural process of growth when the environment facilitates or accommodates it.

However, most supervision literature reduced the ‘self’ of the therapists and supervisors to their roles and pragmatic functions (Crocket, 2007; Holloway & Neufeldt, 1995; Sommer, 2008, just to name a few). Some academics do not perceive the ‘self’ or the ‘person’ of supervisors and supervisees as a holistic entity; some even deliberately separate the ‘professional part’ from the ‘non-professional part’ (as in Firth & Martens, 2008). Firth and Martens (2008) refuse to acknowledge the importance and impact of a supervisor ‘reaching the essence of self’; they argued that “engaging supervisors in a process of self-transformation reinforces the idea that successful supervision is a function of the supervisor’s recovery of a fully integrated and higher self” (p. 279) and they concluded with a suggestion “that personal transformation belongs to the non-professional part of supervisors’ and candidates’ lives and is therefore of no interest to academic developers” (p. 287).

Other literature addressing the notion of realizing the higher self will be discussed in a later section under transpersonal supervision.

Growth and change

The nature of supervision is to facilitate growth and change and most supervision literature covers this area. Supervisee development is the most discussed topic in supervision literature (Emerson, 1996; Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003), and a few also address the development or growth of supervisor (Carroll, 2009; Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Crethar, 1994; Worthington, 1987), though mostly addressing the role and function rather than the 'person' of the supervisee or supervisor.

Abrell (1974) contended that "the major role of the humanistic supervisor is to create an environment which encourages human growth and fulfilment among those with whom he/she cooperatively works" (p. 213). Rowan (1998) also maintained that humanistic supervision puts all the emphasis on the counsellor, from the point of view of helping the counsellor to grow and change, in terms of facing problems arising out of actual practice, "not from the point of view of "therapising' the therapist" (p. 196).

Neswald-McCalip, Sather, Strati and Dineen's (2003) study on 'creative supervision' reflected exactly what Abrell mentioned even though he is not cited in the references of the article. The authors gave an account of their exploration of having "students designing and engaging in their own concept of counselling supervision" (p. 224) which led to the emergence of what they called the "Regenerative model" of supervision, upon which Neswald-Potter carried out a follow-up study in 2005 (Neswald-Potter, 2005). The model reflected that the humanistic philosophy of 'creating a growth enhancing environment in the supervision context' as well as

the commitment to ‘work collaboratively with supervisees’ have been adopted by at least some supervisors including these authors.

Though these authors shared their extensive use of expressive art activities accompanied by other ‘unconventional’ exercises during supervision, the main thrust was not what was done but rather what was believed – the fundamental belief about human needs and growth. Their sharing affirmed the humanistic beliefs that, to facilitate supervisees’ growth and change in supervision, it is significant to address supervisees’ needs and choices. Through respecting and inviting them to actively contribute to co-create an appropriate supervision environment, supervisees were empowered to manifest their autonomy, satisfy their needs, and gain new awareness about themselves (and beyond) from the multifaceted, multi-sensory experiences; thus ultimately to reclaim ‘freedom’ and ‘responsibility’ not only in the supervision process, but in their life. This is a good example of a growth and change oriented supervision practice.

Working on the premises of abundance

Humanistic supervisors are expected to be motivated to move towards achievement, and to work on guiding supervisees to capture the abundance of opportunities that lead to varied experiences, and to realize potential in the supervisory triad: supervisor, supervisee and his/her client. However, I could not retrieve any article that overtly addresses the topic of working on the premises of abundance. Literature on strength based supervision is closest to this end because of its similar perspectives. A social work strength based supervision model proposed by Cohen (1999) refuses to put deficiency and pathology at the centre of supervision and therapy, and focuses on client and supervisee’s strengths; supervisees are guided to focus on what was successful instead of what went wrong (Cohen, 1999). Surprisingly, the author expresses doubts

about this model's applicability in some situations by saying that, "the strengths perspective is probably not appropriate to every helping situation and supervisors, as ever, need to proceed with caution and not exercise their authority with a heavy hand" (Cohen, 1999, p. 465). It is not grounded on a belief of 'every person has strengths', which humanistic supervisors uphold.

Edwards and Chen (1999) described a strength-based wu-wei [a Taoist term meaning not to intervene] model, that while not reflecting a premises of abundance as a starting point, is also fundamentally different from the humanistic standpoint of intentionality. Lietz and Rounds's (2009) study describes developing a strength-based supervision as a means to exert a parallel process whereby what the supervisee experienced with the supervisor may be transferred to what he/she interacts with his/her clients. Again, this strength based supervision model did not emerge from an ontological belief about human abundance and strength, but from the functional needs and practicalities of supervision and therapy.

Humanistic practitioners with this fundamental humanistic belief of abundance deeply planted in their hearts might be expected to be more intentional and diligent in reflecting and sharing how this ontological belief affects their practices, than is currently reflected in literature about humanistic supervision.

Consciousness and intentionality

Humanistic pioneers contended that consciousness and intentionality were the keys in self-discovery, self-making and self-growth. The process of supervision, similar to that of life, can be regarded as an ongoing integrative process that enables the development of consciousness. There are studies on identifying the specific knowledge, skills and attitudes which are necessary to the development of the humanistic potential of the supervisor (Abrell, 1974; Beatty, 1977).

These studies aim at promoting supervisor's consciousness about their own potentials and about how they can develop these potentials in light of enhancing their effectiveness in supervision.

Supervision literature addressing the personal issues of the supervisee, supervisor, the counselling relationship, or the supervisory relationship (such as Costa, 1994; Ganzer & Ornstein, 2004; Hill, 2009; Jacobsen, 1991; Korinek & Kimball, 2003; Nelson & Friedlander, 2001; Sumerel & Borders, 1996; Webb & Wheeler, 1998; Yerushalmi, 1994), also point to the need to facilitate supervisees' and supervisors' self-discovery, to enable their self-making and self-growth by being open to whatever is uncovered, and to be intentional about making changes that are needed.

Authenticity and congruence

Supervisor congruence and counsellor congruence are topics frequently addressed in supervision literature. Oliver, Nelson and Ybanez (2010) provided their belief in the importance of supervisors' authenticity and congruence: "The supervisor's ability to demonstrate genuineness and congruence as well as to model a non-anxious presence in the supervisory process enables the creation of an ambiance that encourages supervisee reflection on one's own and the co-supervisee's work" (p. 62). This view is shared by authors like Tsui (2004), Lambie (2006), and Haber (1996). A humanistic approach to supervision facilitates dialogues between supervisor and supervisee, as opposed to having monologues from the supervisor (Beatty, 1977; Ratliff & Morris, 1995). Beatty (1977) contends that "the supervisor must become a dialogic rather than monologic communicator with others" (p. 226) and "to become dialogic with others, the supervisor needs to develop the ability to be completely honest [authentic/congruent] with himself/herself" (p. 228).

Supervisory relationship is a widely researched area, and it is believed that congruence is a factor contributing to satisfactory supervisory relationship as well as therapeutic relationship (Miller, 1989; Vallance, 2005; Wickman & Campbell, 2003). Vallance (2005) clearly articulated that “congruence and confidence were the most direct link between supervision and client work” (p. 107). She shared: “A high level of counsellor congruence and confidence in the supervisory relationship leads to increased congruence and confidence in the counselling relationship” (p. 109). Kilminster and Jolly (2000) agree that in their literature review there are studies indicating that congruence contributes to the effectiveness of supervision, and they asserted that “the quality of the relationship between supervisor and trainee is probably the single most important factor for effective supervision” (p. 828).

The concepts of authenticity and congruence are well accepted by counsellors and supervisors, and the attribute of congruence is included in the characteristics of an effective counsellor or supervisor, though sometimes using different terms. Carroll (2009) demonstrates his own authenticity, and honestly shares and discusses his eleven major learnings from being a supervisor for over 30 years, and describes himself as “indeed studying supervision” all the time (p. 210). He has grown from a pragmatic, functional supervisor who practised supervisor-led supervision into a curious, creative, flexible, existential supervisor who practises supervisee-led supervision. The words authenticity and congruence are not mentioned in his article, but live in the text.

Humanistic counsellors believe that attitudes of the counsellor are the factors affecting therapeutic change most, not the skills; hence, humanistic supervisors focus more on developing supervisee’s empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruent communication than on skills.

They also believe that supervision is necessary throughout a counsellor's career (Rowan, 2006).

Philosophy and Fundamental Beliefs of Existential Counselling and Supervision

Existential Psychology and Existential Psychotherapy/Counselling

Existential psychology has its base in existential philosophy which can be traced back to the nineteenth century with the European thinkers and philosophers Kierkegaard (1813) and Nietzsche (1844-1900) as forerunners; and later with Sartre (1905-1980) who explicitly adopts the term 'existentialism' as a self-description (Crowell, 2010). Existential analysis emerged when European psychiatrists found Freud's reductionism inadequate in understanding patients. Among these European existential thinkers, Ludwig Binswanger (1881-1966) is the first one to combine psychotherapy with existential ideas, applying philosophical concepts to psychiatric work, and pioneered in looking at human distress from a non-medical perspective (van Deurzen, 2010). These psychiatrists, though not in total agreement with each other, share a common argument: to understand a patient, an existential analyst "must enter the patient's experiential world and listen to the phenomena of the world without the presuppositions that distort understanding" (Yalom, 1980, p. 17). Their works were introduced to America when Rollo May (1909-1994) published the "highly influential 1958 book *Existence*" (Yalom, 1980, p. 17). While the European existential therapists practise existential-phenomenological psychotherapy, which is more descriptive in nature, the American therapists adopt the humanistic-existential approach, which is much more interventionist (van Deurzen, 2010).

Perspectives of the pioneers of American existential psychotherapy

May is generally seen as the father of American existential psychotherapy and has played

“a unique role ... in the popularization of existential psychotherapy by translating it into easily accessible concepts and methods” (van Deurzen, 2010, p. 210). In fact, May integrated his existential therapeutic approach into the humanistic movement though he had reservations about humanists’ optimistic view of human conditions and maintained the existence of darker sides to men. Like May, Irvin Yalom (1980) also avoided the “professional philosophical jargon and uses common-sense terms to describe existential concepts” (p. 11) and has been seen as an influential figure in American Existential Psychotherapy together with Rollo May and James Bugental (1915-2008) (van Deurzen, 2010). They pointed out some major concerns with existential psychotherapy. May’s main concern was in establishing “a therapy that can strengthen the self in facing the anxieties of life” (Spiegelberg, 1972, p. 163). Bugental’s focus was on the search for authenticity and emphasized the importance of therapeutic relationship (Bugental, 1981; Polkinghorne, 2001). Yalom (1980) picked up the notion of anxiety and agreed that it plays a central and obvious role in psychotherapy, and identified four ultimate concerns in human existence: death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness.

Existential psychotherapy shares many basic tenets with humanistic psychology, and many humanistic psychologists have an existential orientation (Yalom, 1980). Rowan (2001) even claims that “humanistic psychotherapy is existential” (p. 448) and that humanistic beliefs and techniques serve to enhance existential psychotherapeutic practices. However, Farber (2010) makes a clear distinction and comparison between humanistic psychotherapy and existential psychotherapy:

Humanistic psychotherapy tends to emphasize the creation of psychotherapeutic conditions for cultivating an innate actualizing tendency that is posited to propel psychological growth (Cain, 2002; Maslow, 1968; Rogers, 1961). Existential psychotherapy posits that psychological vitality and fullness in living spring from

one's willingness both to take responsibility for one's freedom to choose and to accept that one's potentiality is bounded by one's physical, social, and psychological contexts, as well as specific existential givens (e.g., the finiteness of life) with which one must reconcile oneself (May, 1983; Schneider & May, 1995; Yalom, 1980). In this way, existential psychotherapy emphasizes more than does humanistic psychotherapy the tension between possibility and limits, along with the tragic dimensions of the human condition (Bracke & Bugental, 2002; Cain, 2002; Yalom, 1980). (Farber, 2010, p. 28)

To him, these two psychotherapy traditions share some key foundations, such as focusing on experiential understanding as fundamental for growth and change, and a call for therapist's openness, authenticity, and genuineness in establishing the psychotherapy relationship to promote change (Farber, 2010). The major difference between these two approaches lies in the view about human nature. The humanistic approach optimistically perceives human beings as basically good, while an existential approach believes in the intrinsic flexibility of human nature, and that human beings may evolve in many directions (van Deurzen & Young, 2009).

Existential psychotherapy addresses fundamental, ontological issues of how one deals with one's life at the present moment (Bugental, 1999). It is the central work of depth psychotherapy (Bugental, 1999; Craig, 2008) which engages the whole person of the client (Bugental, 1999), attends to "the deepest structures of human existence" (Yalom, 1980, p. 485), and offers people an "opportunity to come into a new relationship with life" (Dean, 2003, p. 87). Yalom (1980) describes it as a dynamic approach that focuses on the ultimate concerns: death, freedom, isolation and meaninglessness.

The two basic assumptions of the existential therapeutic approach are: (1) life makes sense; hence people make meaning of their situations "in spite of seeming chaos and absurdity" (van Deurzen, 2002, p. 6); (2) human nature is intrinsically flexible, people may evolve in any direction, and it is up to the person to choose how to respond to and create with what are given

(Bugental, 1981; Rowan, 2001; van Deurzen, 2002; Yalom, 1980). According to van Deurzen (2002), people may be born with the survival instinct, but to live life in a deeply meaningful way is an art, which needs to be learnt and can be learnt through experiences only. Hence, “existential therapy calls each of us to a more deliberate way of life and invites us to a considered reflection on our daily existence” (van Deurzen, 2009, p. 229).

To date, existential perspectives have been incorporated or integrated into different approaches of practices (Bugental, 1999; Feinstein, 2001; C. Jones & Wright, 2008; Mahrer, 2001; Nanda, 2010; Schneider, et al., 2001; van Deurzen, 2010; Vontress & Epp, 2001), including life-coaching, spiritual guidance, hospice and palliative care.

What is expected of existential counsellors and supervisors?

Practitioners using the existential approach need to have a good grasp of existential philosophy, and to be aware of their professional and personal assumptions (van Deurzen, 2002). At the same time they need to “allow themselves to be fully present in their work and to draw on their most profoundly personal understanding of human existence” (van Deurzen, 2010, p. 235). They are also expected to relate with clients in a personal way and to focus on exploring with the client possibilities for experience and growth, instead of focusing on interpretations about the past. Their goal is to help clients “to become more and more centred and, therefore, also more able to go out from this centre to be with others” (p. 211).

May (cited in Yalom, 1980) urged existential therapists to adopt an attitude of “disciplined naivety” (p. 25) which means to enter into client’s personal experiential world without any presupposition about the person. Existential therapists work with clients’ lived world, as well as their ideals, beliefs, values, hopes and dreams; but the starting point is always

from where it hurts most. Therapy is an in-depth process into the truth one knows and leads one to re-establish the connections between life's limitations or one's sufferings and one's aspiration for life, and ultimately leads to living one's life meaningfully (van Deurzen, 2002, 2009).

van Deurzen (2002) believes that clients can only benefit from an approach when they agree with the basic assumptions, and can only engage fully with the counselling process if they have confidence in its principles. Hence, the existential approach in counselling "assumes the importance of the clients' capacity for making well-informed choices about her own life and her attitude towards it" (p. 2). The challenge for existential practitioners is to live in their own perceived world while bringing about clients' awareness, understanding, and acceptance of their authentic or unique way of being in the world, and to foster the development of their own personal way of tackling life's challenges (Craig, 2008; Dean, 2003; van Deurzen, 2002, 2009).

Existential Supervision

Existential supervision goes beyond the usual tasks of supervision and considers the supervisee's work from the broadest possible perspective. It takes a bird's eye view of the client's issues, concerns and the counselling relationship within the context of the client's and the counsellor's life and their respective position in the world. It is considered as complementary to rather than substituting for any forms of supervision (van Deurzen & Young, 2009). However, literatures on supervision seldom discuss this perspective. In fact, van Deurzen and Young (2009) were the first to publish a book on existential approaches to supervision. Carroll (2010a) commented that the book "rang memory bells of what should never be forgotten in supervision: evocative supervision, patient philosophical reflection, meditation on work, critical contemplation, collaborative exploration, reflective consciousness, reflective discussion,

dialogue, and imaginative variation” (p. 154). In addition to the presenting concepts of supervision using these specific words and phrases, another contribution of the book is that basic philosophy of supervision was “presented and re-iterated in a new and refreshing style” (Carroll, p. 154).

The strength of existential supervision according to van Deurzen and Young (2009), “is that it builds on the solid ground of life itself and makes room to encompass all human paradoxes, dilemmas and contradictions, highlighting both limitations and possibilities; and transcends narrow frameworks to make supervision multi-dimensional” (p. 1). Its limitation is that it does not address the practicalities of being a supervisor, such as contracting, ethical decision making, evaluating, or giving feedback, nor the organizational aspects, the tasks of supervision, or the functions of supervision (Carroll, 2010a). Carroll, an acknowledged leader and author in the supervision and coaching field, claimed that he knew little of existential approaches to counselling/psychotherapy/supervision, and yet he believed that he had been a “closet existential thinker and supervisor without knowing it” (Carroll, 2010a, p. 154). To him, the existential perspectives represent the central values of supervision, and many supervisors have been addressing issues such as “the centrality of the relationship, the focus on the supervisee, the importance of reflective collaboration and dialogue, the questioning of assumptions for all participants, as well as dealing with ‘big stuff’ of life” (p. 154) without knowing or naming them ‘existential’.

Instead of adding an ‘existential’ label to supervision, I would like to extract the key existential perspectives presented in supervision literature, whether or not they are overtly identified as existential (as in du Plock, 2007, 2009; Jones, 1998a, 1998b; van Deurzen, 2002;

van Deurzen & Young, 2009; Yegdich, 2000) or referred to as the basic values or philosophy of effective supervision (as in Abiddin, 2008; Aponte & Carlsen, 2009; Carroll, 2009, 2010b; Cottrell, Kilminster, Jolly, & Grant, 2002; Ellis, 2010; Kilminster & Jolly, 2000; Wheeler & Richards, 2007). I list them below as a reference for further discussion in this research endeavour.

In actual supervision practices, existential perspectives facilitate: (1) the creation of an environment that facilitates deep reflections; (2) an open, facilitative and collaborative supervisory relationship whereby supervisor and supervisee can be authentic about their experiences during therapy and supervision ; (3) a holistic and relational perspective about the client's, the supervisee's and the supervisor's own situations; (4) participation in the supervisory process as a co-director and co-explorer, and (5) going beyond the 'ontic' i.e., the presenting issues, and addressing the 'ontological', i.e., universal, fundamental challenges in life (Neswald-McCalip, et al., 2003; van Deurzen & Young, 2009).

Literature on existential supervision to date is still very limited; but as Carroll (2010a) commented, by adding an existential dimension to any form of supervision, the work can be extended towards a deeper and truer process of human understanding.

Philosophy and Fundamental Beliefs of Transpersonal Counselling and Supervision

Transpersonal Psychology and Transpersonal Psychotherapy/Counselling

Transpersonal psychology emerged in the 1960s in America as a natural advancement of humans seeking mind, body, and spiritual connections. It was announced by Maslow in 1968 that there was an emerging Fourth psychology [in America] which was transpersonal,

transhuman, and centred in the cosmos rather than in human needs (Maslow, 1968b); and was formally inaugurated in 1968 (Sutich, 1968). Sutich (1968) described it as complementary to the Third Force – humanistic psychology, with specific concern in “the scientific study and responsible implementation of becoming, individual and species-wide meta-needs, ultimate values, unitive consciousness, peak experiences... and related concepts, experiences and activities” (p. 78).

The word transpersonal has its prefix ‘trans’ rooted in Latin, meaning ‘across’, ‘beyond’, ‘through’, ‘changing thoroughly’, and the suffix ‘personal’ rooted in the Latin word ‘persona’ meaning an actor’s mask (from Dictionary.com). So “transpersonal means literally ‘beyond the mask’... and transpersonal psychology seeks to disclose and develop the source and deeper nature of identity, being, and ground” (Davis, 2003, p. 7). There is an abundance of transpersonal literature in diverse cultures and languages. This literature review limits to English publications concerning transpersonal psychotherapy and supervision, hence the discussion below is mainly based on the literature written by US, UK and/or European authors.

Lajoie and Sapiro (1992, cited in Boorstein, 2000; and in Hartelius, Caplan, & Rardin, 2007) concluded that “transpersonal psychology is concerned with the study of humanity’s highest potential, and with the recognition, understanding, and realization of intuitive, spiritual, and transcendent states of consciousness” after surveying “more than 200 definitions” (cited in Boorstein, 2000, p. 409), or “based on a collection of 40 definitions” (as cited in Hartelius, et al., 2007, p. 148).

More than 10 years later, Hartelius, Caplan and Rardin (2007) conducted a thematic analysis of 160 definitions of transpersonal psychology from a corpus of publications from 1968

to 2003 (35 years), and summed up three themes: beyond-ego, integrative/holistic, and transformation. They pointed out that the Latin word *trans* has three meanings: beyond, pervading and changing. Hence they attached new meanings to the word 'transpersonal' in conjunction with these three themes, which was: "*beyond ego, pervading personhood, and changing humanity*" (p. 142). The summary definition they gave is: "Transpersonal psychology: An approach to psychology that 1) studies phenomena beyond the ego as context for 2) an integrative/holistic psychology; this provides a framework for 3) understanding and cultivating human transformation" (Hartelius, et al., 2007, p. 145). The authors further envisioned that the beyond-ego aspects of human experience signify the emergence of integrally interconnected human individuals within much larger contexts, where humans transform into a greater and deeper humanity. They claimed that the field of transpersonal psychology "has been defining itself quite cohesively over the last 35years, though rarely in a succinct and comprehensive form" (p. 146); and a vital core represented by the vision presented above began to emerge as a cohesive whole through their retrospection of the work of many scholars over several decades.

What is expected of transpersonal counsellors and supervisors?

The vital core described above can be found throughout most of the transpersonal psychotherapy and supervision literature retrieved. Lewis (2005) explicates that healthy forgiveness is transpersonal. She states the importance of guiding the patient through necessary stages: namely, addressing the pre-personal stage (making the unconscious conscious); then moving into the personal stage (coming to terms with the reality and establishing healthy ego functioning); in order to transcend beyond the ego or the personal stage into the transpersonal stage (integrating the experience into a larger context and reaching a healthy sense of unity).

Johnson (2006) shares how she walks with a client through the process of healing shame, and stresses that the “therapists must face our own shame issues” (p. 234) and “use supervision and self-reflective meditation to keep her personal system in balance” (p. 235). She not only describes a process of facilitating the client to move beyond the ego, and transform into a state of feeling integrated; she also shares the importance of the counsellor being able to allow herself to establish a truly human relationship with a client by seeing her own shadow in the client’s experience and moving into the process of the human transformation mentioned above. Hence, supervisors are expected to be able to accompany the supervisee to go through such a process.

Transpersonal counsellors share two other common viewpoints including the belief that each human being has innate drive and capacity toward spiritual growth (Boorstein, 1997; Clark, 1977; Cortright, 1997; Wellings & McCormick, 2004), and that there are different dimensions of consciousness. Thus transpersonal psychotherapy and supervision attempt to show individuals the levels of consciousness beyond the physical manifestation and how to reach cosmic connectedness (Boorstein, 1996; Cortright, 1997; Rowan, 1993, 2009; Wilber, 2000). Scotton (1985) sees transpersonal psychotherapy as a very demanding discipline and lists six requirements for therapists: 1) to have the openness to the transpersonal dimension and “have a conviction based on experience that contact with the transpersonal dimension may be transformative; ... [which] is not just interesting but is of the greatest healing potential” (p. 60); 2) to have “the ability to sense the presence, or a report, of numinous experience, whether it should appear in a dream, a vision, a synchronous event, or a contact with a spiritual teacher” (p. 60); 3) to acquire knowledge of a variety of spiritual paths; 4) be in active pursuit of his/her own spiritual development; 5) must have a degree of transparency to the patient; and 6) to obtain and maintain a firm grounding in psychotherapy. He also maintains that transpersonal

psychotherapists need to have conventional training in psychotherapy otherwise they “cannot do half the job” (p. 61).

Transpersonal Supervision

Literature directly naming supervision as transpersonal is very limited, though more and more research studies review the spirituality aspect in supervision (such as Carroll, 2001; Lawton & Feltham, 2000; Powell & Brodsky, 2004; Shohet, 2008; West, 2000a, 2000b). Rowan’s 2006 *Transpersonal Supervision* and Scotton’s 1985 *Observations on the teaching and supervision of transpersonal psychotherapy* are the major references for this section of the discussion.

Rowan (2006) adapted Wilber’s (2000) nine layers of the Self into four levels and defined four positions in psychospiritual development. He translated Wilber’s levels: mental ego (role self), centaur (authentic self), subtle (soul self) and causal (spirit self), into the four Rowan positions: instrumental self, authentic self, transpersonal self 1 (soul), and transpersonal self 2 (spirit), and asserted that different schools of therapy would be particularly suited to one or other of these levels. For him, cognitive or behavioural supervision approaches are suited for the mental ego (instrumental) level because they concern the role of the therapist; humanistic, gestalt, and existential supervision deeply concerned with authenticity, spontaneity, creativity and body-mind unity of the autonomous self, are meanwhile suited to the centaur (authentic) level. “Transpersonal psychotherapy, psychosynthesis and some of the Jungian and post-Jungian approaches are particularly suited to the subtle (soul) level ... [concerned with] a self open to contact by symbols of the divine, and also open to the souls of other people” (p. 226). Concerning the causal (spirit/unity) level, Rowan pointed at the fact that there has been more appreciation in pursuing the causal level in therapy, but it is not yet applied in supervision.

Rowan's (2006) view point does not differ much in principle with Hartelius, Caplan and Rardin's (2007) definition; yet he maintains that these different levels "co-exist, in the manner of Russian dolls, rather than as completely superseding one another" (p. 236) while Hartelius et.al (2007) take the subtle and causal levels as the ultimate goal of transpersonal endeavour, which supersedes the former levels. Rowan (2006) also maintains that "every transpersonal supervisor has also available to them the earlier formation and abilities" (p. 236). That is to say, a supervisor at the subtle level has knowledge and access to the mental ego level and the authentic self level, and should make appropriate decisions to use them freely to fit a needs and level. This perspective is shared by Scotton (1985) who believes that "the reductive therapeutic work [the mental ego level] is the place where the patient intersects his inner and outer world... because the symptoms are seen to hold the seeds of the spiritual growth [subtle level]" (p. 58).

Rowan (2006) pointed out that transpersonal supervision "requires an act of will on the part of the supervisor, to affirm that all supervision begins with the supervisor's internal state of consciousness and a commitment to work from the 'inside out' before even meeting the supervisee" (p. 232). The means he suggested to achieve this internal state of consciousness include: a 'personal mindfulness-awareness meditation practice' for both supervisor and supervisee (Rabin and Walker, n.d. cited in Rowan, 2006); developing an 'energetic self-awareness' in the therapist, (Cameron, 2004 cited in Rowan, 2006); and acknowledging and utilizing 'intuition', 'hunch' or 'gut feeling', during supervision to explore the subtlety or unaware areas in the supervisee's presentation (Charles, 2004 cited in Rowan, 2006).

Sterling's (1993 cited in Rowan, 2006) experience of being supervised by Bugental has led her to a "melded experience" when role playing her client. She describes herself as losing

the ability to ‘maintain the immersion’ and play the role: “The distinctions between ‘me’ and ‘the role-played client’ dissolved. It was as though there was a collapse of the separated consciousnesses into one *melled* experience” [italics added] (Sterling & Bugental, 1993 cited in Rowan, 2006, p. 233). Rowan believes that the melded experience is the ‘linking’ phenomenon in supervision. He argued that linking is always a subtle phenomenon, which implies that the supervisee has already reached the Soul level of self. What Bugental facilitates in his supervisee is a transpersonal experience of the ‘oneness’ described in humanistic, existential, spiritual and transpersonal literatures (such as Boorstein, 1997; Boorstein, 1996; Bugental, 1981; Maslow, 1976; Rogers, 1980; Schneider, et al., 2001; Sutich, 1968; Wilber, 2007; just to mention a few), but not found, to the best of my search, in supervision literatures.

Practitioners of the mental health field, especially family therapists, are increasingly aware that spirituality is a powerful aspect of human experiences (Carlson & Erickson, 2002; Coffey, 2002; Miller & Ivey, 2006; Miller, et al., 2006; Senter & Caldwell, 2002; Walsh, 2008). Researchers also acknowledge the significance of spirituality within the context of supervision (Carroll & Tholstrup, 2001; Miller & Ivey, 2006; Miller, Korinek, & Ivey, 2004; Miller, et al., 2006; Parker, 2009). A belief shared by these authors can be summed up by Miller & Ivey’s (2006) statement: “As clinicians, we must recognize both the humanity and the spirituality of clients with whom we work. As we interact with each other as supervisors, therapists, and trainees, we need to respect the diverse experiences and perspectives of what people see as spiritual and divine” (p. 323).

It is puzzling that Carroll, a prominent British scholar in the supervision field, wrote about *The Spirituality of Supervision* in 2001 (Carroll & Tholstrup, 2001), yet in his critical

reflection on his 30 years of experience of supervision, he concludes that supervision is learning and “learning is as much an emotional experience as it is a rational one” (Carroll, 2009, p. 216), and “the deepest form of learning used in supervision is transformation learning, which combines both personal and professional learning” (Carroll, 2010b, p. 17). The kind of transformations he described in the articles are all ‘within ego’, not ‘beyond ego’; Carroll missed out the spiritual aspects in his 2009 and 2010 articles.

West’s study in 1992 also shows that there is reluctance, or ignorance among supervisors in terms of acknowledging spiritual or transpersonal aspects in therapy and supervision. He identifies issues of supervisees not being able or willing to share the spiritual dimension or their ‘healing’ practices in supervision sessions. He also reports supervisors not accepting, nor encouraging counsellors’ use of healing and transpersonal techniques, and thus downplaying or ignoring the healing and spiritual experiences, or neglecting the dilemmas involved. This results in supervisee’s “shutting off the bridge” (West, 2000b, p. 116) or finding another supervisor to handle the issues. On the other hand, he also reports that when a supervisor can look into the counselling phenomena from a perspective which embraces psychological, spiritual and religious perspectives, the supervisee can move beyond his usual practice of trying to make meaning cognitively, and be connected with the whole experience as it happens in therapy.

Scotton (1985) contends that a supervisor of transpersonal psychotherapy must be a transpersonal therapist who needs to first meet all the six requirements listed above. Secondly, she or he must have an ability to tolerate different styles of work, to allow for the fact that students may not conceptualize from the same perspectives and may act differently in therapy, and to discriminate between mistakes in therapy and differences in therapeutic style.

Family Therapy Supervision and Group Supervision

Since Satir's supervision practices were mainly family therapy supervision in group form, I deliberately reviewed the literature on family therapy supervision and group supervision especially around her time. Below is an account of my literature review in these areas.

Family Therapy Supervision – its Practice and Effectiveness

This section of the literature review focuses on what makes family therapy supervision effective and what does not. Like humanistic psychology, the emergence of family therapy in America was a response to the inadequacy of the first and second forces of psychology, especially the restrictive guidelines of psychoanalysis in having different family members being analysed by different analysts whereby strict confidentiality of clients must be observed, thus allowing no room for contributions of a 'systemic perspective' to understand an individual. When family therapists crossed the boundary to see the whole family, the practice was seen as breaching confidentiality in traditional therapy. Furthermore, families were 'exposed' to the supervisor and the co-learners of the therapists in live supervision, and 'exposed' to the public in on-stage demonstrations as well as recorded videos. Satir was among the first to practise live supervision, on-stage demonstrations with families in the early 60s (Spitzer, 2005, Brothers, 2000). There are a lot of ethical and legal concerns with these modes of practice. Perhaps this is why the field of marriage and family therapy became the first to develop standards for supervisors in the early 1970s (Falvey, 2002 as cited in Bernard, 2006). Due to limitations in time and the focus of this review, I shall not continue to explore ethical issues of family therapy supervision, but to focus on its practices.

Live supervision – a popular mode of supervision in training family therapists

Live supervision and delayed review (by video recording) were popular modes of supervision during Satir's time and is still widely practised in counsellor education and marriage and family therapy especially in conjunction with training programs mainly because it allows for immediate direction and intervention during the therapy sessions (Charlés, Ticheli-Kallikas, Tyner, & Barber-Stephens, 2005; Locke & McCollum, 2001; Taylor & Gonzales, 2005; Wright, 1986, 1994). Champe and Kleist's (2003) literature review studied live supervision published within the 12 years of 1990 to 2002. They concluded that the focus of the research on live supervision gears toward addressing its prevalence and use, the impact of live supervision interventions, and perceptions of supervisors, trainees, and clients on live supervision. Their review shows that live supervision is the second most frequent supervision method, after videotape review, and makes up 85% of the supervision in marriage and family therapy practicum. Champe and Kleist (2003) also cite a study by Bubbenzer, West, and Gold in 1991 reporting that the most popular methods for delivering live supervision were co-therapy and one-way mirror observation of trainee with telephone contact. Co-therapy is not always treated as a mode of supervision when described in literature reviews, but more often as "a form of psychotherapy practice... in which significant therapeutic gains are possible for the patient and considerable collegial support and learning are possible for the therapists" (Roller & Nelson, 1991, p. 3). Co-therapy as a supervision strategy will be discussed in a later section.

Besides using a one-way mirror, a sitting-in arrangement, video transmission, computer assisted devices (Neukrug, 1991; Smith, Mead, & Kinsella, 1998), or teleconferencing (Smith et al., 2007) observation of 'real-time' therapy sessions are also used in live supervision in order to

provide immediate feedback when necessary. Feedback is given through phones installed in the therapy room, earphones or 'bug-in-the-ear' devices for supervisors to call the therapists when necessary, or during a pre-arranged break in each session for the supervisee to leave the therapy room to consult the supervisor and other observing team members. Occasionally, supervisors may enter the room to work with the family or to discuss with the supervisee and the family for a little while, or to take over the session, which is very rare. Since it is mostly practised in a training setting, the live supervision session is always attended by a group of fellow trainees and other trainers. There are many studies concerning both supervisor and supervisee perspectives of live supervision (such as Charlés, et al., 2005; Liddle, Davidson, & Barrett, 1988; Wark, 1995a, 1995b), and studies including clients' view (such as Bartle-Haring, Silverthorn, Meyer, & Toviessi, 2009; Locke & McCollum, 2001; Moorhouse & Carr, 1999). However, studies on the effect of live supervision on therapeutic outcome, and investigation into the effectiveness of different modes of providing feedback in live supervision are limited.

Charlés, Ticheli-Kallikas, Tyner, and Barber-Stephens (2005) point out that "the intensity of live supervision can be an extremely generative learning platform for both supervisor and supervisee" (p. 207), and it "warrants on-going examination of the effectiveness of supervision from multiple perspectives that include all those involved" (p. 216). In this study, Ticheli-Kallikas, Tyner, and Barber-Stephens who were supervisees of Charlés reflected by supervisory pair on a live supervision process on their respective cases of crisis management. The outcome indicates a discrepancy between the supervisor and supervisees in each pair in terms of perceiving the same interaction. The authors point out the need for open, transparent, dialogical processes throughout supervision in which multiple supervisory voices could be heard (Charlés, et al., 2005). These authors remark that live supervision in marriage and family therapy (MFT)

is specifically powerful in providing all participants an opportunity to contribute to a process in which all participants feel safe to share both their great ideas and anxious concerns, and to sense and hear that they are respected for doing so. They conclude that “the voice of MFT trainees in discussions of how the supervision process works is fundamental to this approach, and is a necessary part of collaborative supervision” (Charlés, et al., 2005, p. 218).

In studies about clients’ perceptions about live supervision and their satisfaction with therapy, the results are diverse. Locke and McCollum’s (2001) study shows that clients are generally satisfied with the process of live supervision, while some clients find it intrusive. The authors suggest that finding a right balance between helpfulness and intrusiveness (or between treatment and training), needs to be achieved in live supervision sessions.

A more recent multilevel analysis by Bartle-Haring, Silverthorn, Meyer and Toviessi (2009) examined live supervision’s unique contribution to therapist development and client well-being, by investigating the relationship between live supervision and both the therapists’ and clients’ perception of progress on the problem. The results showed that trainee-therapists all viewed live supervision as helpful to the progress of therapy; but clients did not indicate any progress resulting from live supervision. The authors expressed concern about the effectiveness of live supervision for helping clients with their issues. They warn that while live supervision is being enthusiastically promoted and practiced in the field as a clinical development tool, “benefit did not translate to perceived progress for clients in this study” (p. 413). They maintain that “training programs should seek to find ways to make the live supervision process more directly beneficial to clients” (p. 414). They also urge counsellors and supervisors to “think more carefully about how we discuss live supervision with clients so that they do not feel as if their

problems are too big to be solved, or that their therapist is not adequate to help solve them” (p. 414).

The studies cited above indicate that there exist significant differences in perspectives among members in the ‘supervision triad’: supervisor, supervisee and client. It may be more so in family therapy situations because the ‘triad’ does not only consist of three participants, it includes all family members as clients. No literature on this aspect was retrieved to date, however it is an important issue to address in order for supervision to simultaneously contribute to therapist development and client well being.

Other supervision modalities and techniques in family therapy supervision

Other modalities such as co-therapy (Bradley & Ladany, 2001; Liddle, Breunlin, & Schwartz, 1988b), audio or video tape review and case presentation are practised in family therapy supervision (Bradley & Ladany, 2001; Liddle, Breunlin, et al., 1988b; Locke & McCollum, 2001; Taylor & Gonzales, 2005), using a shared set of supervision skills and techniques, such as conceptual skills, clinical skills and personal awareness skills (Edwards & Patterson, 2006). Different techniques are required for supervisees in different developmental stages. Supervisors used a more directive approach with beginner therapists whose conceptual capacity is low and a more non-directive or collaborative approach when therapists reach a higher level of conceptualization (Champe & Kleist, 2003; Kilminster & Jolly, 2000).

Other supervision skills are isomorphic to specific therapeutic orientations. For example, the Bowenian and psychodynamic approaches will emphasize the handling of personal issues while supervisors adopting Haley’s strategic approach will use indirect techniques and paradox among other things. Storm et al. (2001) urged supervisors to examine more closely the

differences between therapy and supervision and to identify the specific supervision techniques paramount to different therapeutic approaches.

Experiential activities are often used in marriage and family therapy and its supervision. Role playing exercises are seen to be important in facilitating supervisees' clinical skill and sensitivity development (Werner-Wilson, 2001). Family sculpting, a therapeutic tool originated from psychodrama and popularized by Satir, was reported to be applicable in family therapy supervision (Baldo & Softas-Nall, 1998). Family sculpting involves "the dynamic, non-verbal and physical portrayal of people in various positions in space that represent perceptions of family relationships at a particular time" (Duhl et al. cited in Baldo & Softas-Nall, 1998). The authors report a modification of the sculpting process and use it as a tool in supervision and for training therapists.

Edwards and Patterson (2006) cite a number of works and identify four essential skills in supervising medical family therapy trainees in primary care, namely understanding medical culture, locating the trainee in the treatment system, investigating biological/health issues, and being attentive to the Self of the therapist. They emphasize that these skills serve as an addition to the clinical skills which are specific and familiar to the primary care context experienced by supervisors. These additional skills prepare supervisors to supervise medical family therapy trainees in the primary care context more effectively, and to be able to respond to the questions supervisees in this context bring to supervision. Edwards and Patterson's experience and recommendations can be transferred to other settings by just substituting the keywords of the first three skills to come up with four essential skills specific to their own "x" context, i.e., understanding the "x" culture, locating the trainee in the "x" system, investigating the "x" issues,

and being attentive to the Self of the therapist.

Group Supervision

Group supervision is a most frequent practice in counsellor training programs “not only as an economical use of supervisory time but also as an opportunity for peer review, peer feedback, and personal insight into interpersonal behaviour relevant to the professional role” (Holloway & Johnston, 1985, p. 332). Yet, its definition is hardly seen in supervision text books. Bernard and Goodyear’s (2004) definition of group supervision is probably the only detailed one, although it lacks comprehensiveness. In their definition, the supervisors and supervisees are only seen in their ‘roles’; they are not seen holistically as humans in a process of developing. The definition reads:

Group supervision is the regular meeting of a group of supervisees

- with a designated supervisor or supervisors
- to monitor the quality of their work and to
- further their understanding of themselves as clinicians, of the clients with whom they work, and of service delivery in general.

These supervisees are aided in achieving these goals by their supervisor(s) and by their feedback from and interaction with each other. (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004, p. 235)

Even if a more holistic definition of group supervision still cannot be located to date, it is of great relevance to know what guides the practice of group supervision, how it is practised, how it contributes differently to counsellors’ development as compared with individual supervision, and what are the strengths and weaknesses of group supervision practices.

Holloway and Johnston (1985) reviewed group supervision literature in counsellor training from 1960 to 1983 and acknowledged that group supervision was at a very rudimentary level, and they criticized the focus on interpersonal dynamics in current group supervision

practices because they claimed that other research indicated that interpersonal process groups were “found to have little effect on trainees’ counselling function and this technique was abandoned” (Holloway & Johnston, 1985, p. 338). They also criticized the case presentation approach as having no empirical support. They instead advised educators of counsellors to consider: a) the goals of group supervision; b) the roles of supervisors in terms of realizing these goals; c) the balance between didactic material, case conceptualization, and interpersonal process; d) role of evaluation in group supervision; and e) the unique contribution of group supervision in a training program.

Their advice was not taken seriously as reflected in a follow up study by Prieto. Eleven years later, Prieto (1996) draws a conclusion that group supervision was still widely practiced and also remained poorly understood when she updated Holloway and Johnston’s study. Prieto’s findings did not totally support the former study. She points out that the interpersonal process or therapy-based approach, which was dismissed by Holloway’s former review, was still popular in group supervision. A few studies show that “these types of supervision environments promoted personal and professional growth in trainees” (Prieto, 1996, p. 296), which one would expect as an achievement of supervision. She further comments that the mode of practice had not changed much since Holloway and Johnston’s (1985) study, i.e., psychotherapeutic oriented group supervision continued to be a popular training format and still lacked support from organized empirical or exploratory research.

Riva & Cornish (2008) replicated a national survey in 2006 and compared it with their former survey conducted in 1991-92 (published in 1995) on how group supervision was practised in pre-doctoral internship sites. Both studies attribute the major unique contributions of

group supervision over individual supervision as: it provides diverse viewpoints and multiple perspectives; provides vicarious learning; promotes group process issues and allows interns to receive feedback from peers. Both studies show that case presentation is a popular practice in group supervision. While the first study points out that more than 60% of the leaders do not use a theoretical orientation to structure the group supervision; the second study does not address this issue. In both studies, there is a high discrepancy in the use of group process in supervision groups, varying from spending no time at all to the highest of spending 85% of the group supervision time. These two studies show that though group supervision has its unique contribution, there is no consensus about what group supervision is, and how group supervision should be practised.

Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Hart, Morris and Betz (1994) conducted a 7-year pilot study on a *Structured Group Supervision* program and compared its effectiveness on counsellor trainees' personal growth and skill development against a control group. It is shown that the structured group supervision is more effective than the control group in the development of beginning trainees' counselling skills and personal growth. However, the authors also point out that the effectiveness of structured supervision versus more process-oriented group supervision is still much debated and needs further investigation.

Lambie (2006) introduced a "humanistic existential group supervision activity as a burnout prevention strategy" for the counselling and supervision professions. He gave a definition on burnout but not one on 'humanistic existential group supervision'. The only published book on existential supervision has one chapter on "online group supervision" (van Deurzen & Young, 2009, p. 96) and describes online supervision as an activity, group as a

formation, and supervision as the task and process. These two articles bring insight and excitement to the practice of supervision, but may be criticized by Holloway and Johnston (1985) as not having a clear systematic conceptualization about group supervision.

Neswald-McCalip et.al's (2003) and Neswald-Potter's (2005) study, which I discussed previously, on 'creative supervision' that birthed the 'Regenerative Model' of supervision is an example of process-oriented, supervisee directed, collaborative supervision practice. The ongoing struggle supervisors experience trying to create a balance between structured group supervision and addressing the group process issue can be informed by Wilbur et al.'s (1994) study, Neswald-McCalip et.al's (2003) and Neswald-Potter's (2005) study.

Triadic Supervision

Triadic supervision has been added as an approved supervision modality for accreditation in counsellor training programs in America since 2001. The triad consists of two supervisees and one supervisor with two supervision formats: single focus format – entire session focuses on one supervisee, and split focus format – the session is evenly allotted to each supervisee (Hein & Lawson, 2008). One study comparing counselling students' perceptions of supervisory experiences in individual, triadic, and group models of supervision used measures by the Working Alliance Inventory, Supervisory Styles Inventory, Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory, and the Supervision of Supervision Evaluation. Overall results suggest that the sample of 15 students perceived the individual and triadic models more favourably than the group model (Newgent, Davis, & Farley, 2006).

Stinchfield, Hill and Kleist (2007) propose an emergent model for conducting triadic supervision within counsellor education programs, namely the reflective model of triadic

supervision. The reflective process is an integral component of the model. The supervisees engage in three fundamental roles: the supervisee role, the reflective role, and the observer-reflector role. These roles engender and value both inner and outer dialogue. The supervisor is responsible for outlining the format, structure, and process of supervision, as well as spelling out clearly the rationale of the reflective process. The authors' grounded theory qualitative study on the process and experience of the supervisees produced the following finding: the reflective role provides freedom from interacting in the conversation, and allows them to take 'more in' through the feedback and the observer role facilitates professional development by enhancing conceptualization skills. At the same time they report some challenges such as when providing feedback, some believed that they betrayed their peer by playing the supervisory role. The authors maintain that "ongoing dialogue in the counselling field is necessary to inform our supervision practices and to ensure that we are facilitating the optimal growth and development of counsellor trainees" (Stinchfield, et al., 2007, p. 181) and they hope their presentation of an emerging model of triadic supervision stimulates scholarly discourse.

Essential Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of Clinical Supervision

Some factors which significantly affect supervision experiences, independent from the supervision modality or approach, are discussed below.

The 'Selves' in Supervision

Oppenheimer (1998) exposes the incongruity between some supervisors' supervision techniques and what they expect the supervisees to achieve with their clients. They use criticizing, demeaning, and ridiculing with supervisees while wanting them to build on the positive side of their clients' life circumstances. After having endured supervision experiences of

this type and subsequently reflected on her journey to becoming a therapist, she contends that “a good therapist has less to do with techniques and more to do with her or his therapeutic (real *healing*) personality” (p. 62). Having worked through her own personal difficulties with the help of a highly effective family therapist, she developed the concept of therapeutic personality, which includes genuineness – having the courage to be who he/she is; allowing oneself to be vulnerable – through self-disclosure or admitting what he/she doesn’t know; being fully present – listening hypnotically to the client’s life story; and respecting the client as a unique human being with the potential to access his/her own healing resources. The author asserts that “True healing only takes place when the patient takes control of her or his life. The same goes for therapists” (p. 62). This concept is also applicable to supervisors and can be modified into a concept of “supervisory personality”. She urges counsellors to structure their sessions with one goal in mind, that is, to encourage the client to develop his/her own intuition, so that he/she can start to follow his/her inner wisdom. She concludes: “Good supervisors are not those who impose on us their well-rehearsed methods, but those who help us create our own” (p. 62), and “encouraged by good teachers, supervisees will do the same” (p. 63).

Oppenheimer is not the only one who maintains that personality precedes techniques in establishing counselling or supervisory relationship and in contributing to counselling or supervision effectiveness. In fact, what she describes can be found in any supervision literature describing ‘good’ supervisor qualities. With a goal of assisting supervisors to help therapists utilize all of themselves in therapy, Aponte and Carlsen (2009) propose the *Person of The Therapist* (POTT) training and supervision model, which emphasizes: (a) the mastery of self (self-knowledge with self-command), (b) access to the self (memories, emotions, and values), and (c) the ability to actively and purposefully choose how to use self therapeutically in a

therapist-client relationship. For them, use-of-self in therapy is more relevant in today's Western world, where "freedom of choice is valued over social conformity, personal freedom is often valued over commitment and obligation in relationships. The 'I' has the priority over the 'us'; society has become more democratic and egalitarian" (p. 396). All these changes call for therapists to be more aware and responsible for how they are and what they do in therapy. The model they developed is one which structurally facilitates supervisors to address the personal growth of therapists with particular relevance to their professional role and obligation. They conclude that all therapists should first work on "freeing themselves of hang-ups that impede good therapy, and to grow in personal insight and emotional maturity to bring a more complete self to therapeutic encounters" (p. 404). Their model can also be modified to help supervisors utilize their fuller self in supervision.

Supervisory Relationship

Morgan and Sprenkle (2007) cite numerous articles on supervision that suggest the supervisory relationship as an indispensable element of supervision. Inevitably, supervisory relationship is also seen as a critical factor to the effectiveness of family therapy supervision (Beavers, 1986b; Emerson, 1996; Kilminster & Jolly, 2000; Liddle, Breunlin, et al., 1988b; Morgan & Sprenkle, 2007). Supervisors approach supervision via a spectrum or a continuum of methods ranging from hierarchical to collaborative (Barker, 2007; Liddle, Breunlin, et al., 1988b; Piercy, et al., 1996; Todd & Storm, 2002), but Morgan and Sprenkle (2007) point out that "the supervisory relationship has an inherently hierarchical structure" (p. 10), and even feminist supervisors, who emphasize downplaying the hierarchy and the need to establish an egalitarian and collaborative relationship, agree that collaborative methods and hierarchical methods are not

mutually exclusive, and suggest supervisors strive for a balance between the two (Morgan & Sprenkle, 2007).

The feminist literature has particularly encouraged a collaborative, egalitarian-learning relationship (Morgan & Sprenkle, 2007). Prouty, Volker, Scott and Long's (2001) study shows that the feminist supervisors and the therapists they supervised talked most frequently about collaboration as the supervision method used. Their description of this method is rich, and generates numerous techniques. The authors identified five techniques of collaborative supervision, including "fostering competence, applying multiple perspectives, providing options to therapists, making suggestions during call-ins, and encouraging mutual feedback between supervisor and therapist" (p. 89). They point out that feminist supervisors not only use collaboration techniques to develop therapeutic competence, but also to create a collaborative learning environment among supervisees, to develop professional relationships as well as encouraging therapists to practice within a professional community that values diverse views. Though the participant supervisors in the study were all self-identified feminists, Morgan and Sprenkle (2007) asserted that the techniques identified by the authors are the qualities central to supervisory relationship and "the feminist model of supervision is not much different from other clinical-based approaches to supervision" (p. 5).

Establishing a safe supervisory environment

The need for creating a safe environment for supervisees to learn more effectively is frequently mentioned in the literature. A supervisory relationship whereby the supervisees feel safe can help therapists overcome their fear and anxiety about appearing deficient in front of their supervisors (Storm, et al., 2001; Wong, 1997). Storm, Todd, Sprenkle and Morgan (2001)

suggest that “supervisors should give major emphasis to the supervisory relationship” and work on enhancing this relationship through expressing optimism, warmth, support, empathy and genuineness, as well as through the use of humour. They believe that these factors are crucial in facilitating supervisees to trust the supervisory process, to feel safe and to be open in revealing their weaknesses. Hill (2009) asserts that “only in a collaborative and supportive climate can vulnerabilities and uncertainties be revealed, considered and evaluated, thus allowing a constructive supervisory process to develop and unfold” (p. 1).

Supervisory relationship is an area that has received broad attention. While it has always been highlighted in humanistic approaches, transpersonal approaches to supervision also attach much importance to supervisors and supervisees connecting at the higher levels of their ‘selves’. One may be able to conclude that humanistic and transpersonal approaches of supervision inherently attend to the core concern of effective supervision.

Ethics and Responsibility

One needs to be experienced, responsible, confident, competent, congruent, and committed to counselling in order to become a professionally competent supervisor. Adequate training, ample practical experiences, and on-going practices in counselling are pre-requisites for a counsellor to undergo supervision training and take up a supervisor’s role. He/she should also demonstrate his/her commitment in continuous counselling practice and engage in on-going professional development both in counselling and supervision.

Supervisors have tremendous responsibility for themselves, their supervisees and their clients. They sometimes need to guard the entry of professional counsellors to the profession while most of the time they are responsible for the professional development of their supervisees

and the welfare of the clients under their care. A practising supervisor needs to develop and maintain a high level of competence in both counselling and supervision. This can be addressed by seeking supervision in counselling and supervision from a higher-level supervisor or through peer supervision among fellow supervisors.

Multiple relations or boundary management in supervision

While supervision guidelines alerted supervisors to be cautious about entering dual relationships with supervisees, in practice, supervisees frequently rated their best supervisors as those with whom they socialized and subsequently developed personal relationships (Gottlieb, Robinson, & Younggren, 2007). Gottlieb and others believe that as the multiple roles of the supervisor increase, vulnerability and risk may increase. It was not until the 1990's that multiple relationships between supervisors and supervisees were brought into attention. There is still no consensus about it, though all professional bodies advise against boundary violations and boundary crossings.

Conclusion

This literature review is by no means comprehensive, but it has allowed me to answer some of my puzzles and opened me to a broader perspective of the topic. It also points to a clearer direction for how I can interpret the texts better and explains the contexts within which Satir's work can be understood and appreciated. In the next chapter I shall discuss the methodology that guides me through this research journey.

Chapter 4

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter consists of two sections. In the first section, I will describe the philosophical underpinning for choosing the interpretive paradigm as the research methodology for this study. In addition, I discuss the justification for choosing Gadamer's (1993) philosophical hermeneutics as the guiding framework of the study. In the second section, I provide a detailed description of the research design, as well as the actual process of conducting this research project, including the procedures for selecting the participants, the interviewing process, and data analysis. This chapter concludes by addressing ethical issues and concerns regarding rigour and validity.

This project involves studying Virginia Satir's clinical supervision practice. The purpose of this study was to explore some of the ways that Satir practised clinical supervision. Though she had not left any written record in this area, I obtained information from interviewing her supervisees and from digging into a large pool of written, audio, and video resources by Satir or about Satir's work.

The Axiological, Ontological, Epistemological, and Methodological Considerations

The academic lenses that helped me understand the rationale for concretizing the abstract ideas of a study and clarify what I aim to achieve in this research are the axiological, ontological, epistemological, and methodological considerations related to the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2005, 2008; Heron & Reason, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mason, 2002; McLeod, 2001; Parse,

2001). In Lincoln and Guba's (1985) words, a researcher considers how the study examined the nature of reality (ontology), the relationship between the knower and the 'to be known' (epistemology), the role of values in an inquiry (axiology), and their implications for "the doing of research" (methodology) (p. 37). Below, I clarify my axiological, ontological, and epistemological perspectives and discuss their implications to the methodology of this research.

Axiological Consideration

Heron and Reason (1997) prompted researchers of the participatory inquiry paradigm to consider an axiological question about what sort of knowledge is intrinsically valuable in human life. For me, any knowledge that can help a person to attain peace of mind and to contribute to others' peace of mind has its intrinsic value. The axiological nature of this research lies in its effort in unfolding means to reach the intrinsic goodness of humanity through exploring the clinical supervision practices of a pioneer known to be a master of bringing out the goodness in people. I see the process of supervision as 'life reaching life': Good supervision inspires supervisees to practice good counselling; and good counselling process inspires counselees to lead a more fulfilling life. I believe an effective supervision process can create a chain effect in bringing out the goodness in people and unfolding meaning and value to human lives. It is with this conviction that I started to search for inspirations to enhance clinicians' supervision practice.

Ontological Consideration

To know or learn something is not just epistemological but also ontological. Epistemology focuses on how to know and usually considers knowledge as being obtained through adding up parts to form a whole, while ontology focuses on how to be and considers knowledge as holistic and acknowledges the presence of the whole in each of the parts. Virginia

Satir's approach as observed in her growth workshops and therapy sessions geared toward facilitating people to have ontological experiences, i.e., experiencing wholeness, genuineness and being fully present in the moment. In order to explore her clinical supervision practices, it is thus important to adopt an ontological perspective that honours the full spectrum of human experiences within the supervision and therapeutic contexts.

Epistemological Consideration

Epistemology deals with the researcher's ways of knowing and her belief system about knowledge. I echo with Minichiello and Kottler (2009), in that "knowledge is never fixed, it evolves" (p. 14). I believe that in the process of the research, the researcher (knower) will grow, and the subject matter being studied (knowledge) will also become alive. My epistemological emphasis is on the process of knowing. This process is vibrant and versatile, thus allowing knowledge to emerge, such that the principle, philosophy and techniques etc. of Satir's clinical supervision practice will be unfolded. The process also challenges me (the knower) to move beyond my original horizon, and let go of misconceptions with the discovery of each new concept, knowledge, and fusion of horizons.

For me, application (in this case applying what was interpreted or learnt into my daily practice as a supervisor) is a vital part of the process of knowing. I need to give it a 'legitimate' position in the research process. Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics acknowledges application as an integral part of the hermeneutic process together with understanding and interpretation (Gadamer, 1993). This position allows me to be an insider in this study and to realize the full potential of knowing not only by acknowledging application as an integral part of the interpretive understanding processes, but also recognizing it as an essential component within

the structure of dialectical dialogues in genuine conversations (Gadamer, 1993).

Methodological Consideration

A good researcher does not fit his/her study into a methodology but rather strives to organise whatever fits into the specific research situation within the ontological assumption (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a, 2003, 2008a, 2008b; McLeod, 2001). Three considerations, or specific situations, about this research needed to be considered; they were, firstly, I, the researcher, being a practitioner of the discipline (clinical supervision) being studied; secondly, I have been applying the approach being studied, namely the Satir Model, in my counselling and supervision practice; and thirdly, the main task of this research was to capture the whole person experience of supervisees and to understand as thoroughly as possible the philosophy behind each of Satir's intervention strategies in clinical supervision. Therefore, I had to search for a research methodology that allows me, the researcher, to be a participant in the study; and that allows me to address my prior knowledge in the subject matter being studied, leading to a higher level of understanding. Gadamer's (1993) philosophical hermeneutics *emerged* as the guiding methodological principles of this study.

Gadamer's declaration that "all understanding inevitably involves some prejudice" (Gadamer, 1993, p. 270) validated the position of my prior knowledge concerning Satir's approach. According to Gadamer (1993), "The history of ideas shows that not until the Enlightenment does *the concept of prejudice* acquire the negative connotation familiar today" (p. 270), and that it was Heidegger who recognized 'prejudice' as the "fore-structure of understanding for the purpose of ontology... and once freed from the obstructions of the scientific concept of objectivity, [hermeneutics] can do justice to the historicity of

understanding” (p. 265). I was intrigued to further explore Gadamer’s approach and was amazed that it described exactly what I had been doing and gladly followed its guidance in the rest of my research journey. The moment of discovering Gadamer was a metaphysical experience in which energy and thoughts flowed freely, and emotions made sense. It was nothing short of an ecstatic spiritual encounter.

Gadamer’s Philosophical Hermeneutics - Guiding Methodological Principles of the Study

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) a German philosopher, who inherited and developed the legacies of his predecessors including his teacher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), and others like Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), had took hermeneutics to another horizon, i.e., the philosophical hermeneutics. Gadamer attempted to comprehend human understanding as a cultural, historical, and philosophical phenomenon (Lawn, 2006). Particularly in his later works, Gadamer stressed that the hermeneutical dimension pervades all human activities in the world (Gadamer, 2008; Lawn, 2006; Ormiston & Schrift, 1990). For Gadamer, “human life is essentially a process of understanding. Human beings interpret their situation and try to make sense of it” (Widdershoven, 2001, p. 254). His philosophical hermeneutics was not an attempt to prescribe a method or a set of methods for understanding; instead, “he simply intended to discover the conditions and the possibilities of understanding in general” (Bilen, 2000, p. 120), and “offered a description of the whole realm in which humans reach an understanding with each other” (Gadamer & Palmer, 2007, p. 376). He stressed the link between hermeneutics and practical philosophy and simultaneously provided some challenging practical guidelines for researchers’ interpretive inquiries (Gadamer, 1993;

Gadamer, Dutt, Most, Grieder, & von Westernhagen, 2001; Malpas, 2005), such as the notion of the ‘inner word’ that was thought but not yet spoken (Dostal, 2002; Gadamer, 1993; Gadamer & Palmer, 2007), genuine conversation (Binding & Tapp, 2008; Gadamer, 1993; Gadamer, et al., 2001; Lawn, 2006; Warnke, 1987), and the ground of the legitimacy of prejudices (Dostal, 2002; Gadamer, 1993; Malpas, 2005). They will be discussed in later sections.

Key Concepts of Gadamer’s Philosophical Hermeneutics

Gadamer (2008) argued that “the task of philosophical hermeneutics is ontological rather than methodological” (p. xi), which elucidates a search for meaning through interpretation (Michelfelder & Palmer, 1989). He emphasized that the search for meaning through interpretive understanding always includes application, and enunciated that understanding, interpretation, and application are the unbreakable integral parts of the hermeneutic process (Gadamer, 1993).

Gadamer’s (2008) philosophical hermeneutics seeks to describe what actually takes place at every moment of understanding. It reveals that understanding becomes possible only when one brings one’s own presuppositions into the process (Gadamer & Palmer, 2007). For Gadamer, this new perspective of understanding solves the hermeneutic problems that his predecessors Schleiermacher and Dilthey had not successfully addressed (Gadamer, 1993).

Since all understanding begins from the subjective experience of the interpreter who would continue to defend or reshape his/her understanding when being challenged, it is necessary to work out a hermeneutic situation that transposes the everyday understanding into a scholarly task. The six conditions described below address the special circumstances and enable a full dimension of understanding in the hermeneutic process (Gadamer, 1993). They are: (1) the hermeneutic circle; (2) the position of prejudices; (3) understanding, interpretation and

application as a unified process; (4) genuine conversation; (5) the fusion of horizons; and (6) the significance of finitude.

The hermeneutic circle

The hermeneutic circle is a circular process of understanding between the parts and the whole of the 'text' being interpreted. In a hermeneutic study, 'text' refers to any written, spoken, artistically performed, displayed 'things', or daily encounters being experienced, observed or reported, relevant to what the researcher wants to study; such as books, poems, paintings, dramas, people and nature etc.. Gadamer's metaphor of the 'book of nature' clearly delineated the meaning of 'text' within the hermeneutic paradigm. He described nature as "a book whose text was written by the hand of God and the researcher is called upon to decipher it" (Gadamer, 2007b, p. 169).

A hermeneutic circle is not a set of prescribed methods to facilitate understanding, but rather a description of the natural processes of how interpretive understanding is achieved (Gadamer, 1993). It comprises a constantly expanding 'unified process of interpretation, understanding and application' (to be discussed later), which starts with the knower's 'prejudice' (to be discussed later) or pre-conception of the topic, followed by repeated attempts to question and challenge one's own prejudice to acquire a "critical understanding" (Gadamer, 2008, p. xviii), until the unity of meaning, i.e. the 'fusion of horizons' (to be discussed later) emerges. Within this circle, understanding moves from parts to the whole and back to individual parts in an iterative manner. The hermeneutic circle can end at any stage when the knower experiences a 'finitude' (to be discussed later) or a satisfaction of understanding at that historical moment. This finitude may also be the beginning of another hermeneutic circle.

The position of prejudices

Gadamer's greatest contribution to the interpretive inquiry paradigm was his affirmation of the legitimacy of prejudices in the process of interpretive understanding. For him, the first condition of hermeneutics is to "begin the process of understanding when something addresses us" (Gadamer, 1993, p. 299), which means every understanding starts with the interpreter's subjective experience. Gadamer named this subjective experience 'prejudice'. Instead of giving it a negative connotation, it is acknowledged as the interpreter's prior understanding, which needs to be brought into consciousness (Risser, 1997) and deployed as the "fore-conception" (Gadamer, 1993, p. 266) or "fore-projection" (p. 267) at the outset. Gadamer (1993) defined prejudice as a judgment made before a full examination of all relevant elements or conditions that determine a situation has been completed. He maintained that "all understanding inevitably involves some prejudice" (p. 270), hence the hermeneutic circle serves as an ongoing process to test one's 'prejudices' in order to understand better (Gadamer, 1993). The process does not aim at "the transcendence of all prejudices in the direction of a prejudice-free apprehension of the text or event 'in itself'" (Gadamer, 2008, p. xviii), nor does the practice reflect one permanent, inflexible set of prejudices; instead, it reflects the fact that the knower has come to a "historical experience of understanding" (Gadamer, 2007b) at a certain point of his/her life.

Being "historically conscious" (Gadamer, 1993, p. 306), that is knowing what one knows at a certain moment of time; and being able to foreground the prejudices clearly, the interpreter does not conceal the tension between the embedded messages of the text and the present understanding, but allows a *temporal distance* within which he/she can test the prejudice, letting "the true meaning of the text emerge fully" (Gadamer, p. 298). In other words, acknowledging

and declaring prejudices, instead of concealing them, may empower one to risk the challenges of misunderstanding or not understanding fully and gradually come to a full understanding, at that historic situation of interpretation.

Understanding, interpretation and application as a unified process

According to Gadamer (1993), hermeneutics comprises a unified process of understanding, interpretation, and application. He argued that “interpretation is an act of understanding itself” (p. 397) and it is also “the explicit form of understanding” (p. 307). Gadamer also asserted that “application is a constitutive element in all understanding” (Gadamer, 2006, p. 44), and that “understanding always involves applying the text to be understood to the interpreter’s present situation” (Gadamer, 1993, p. 308). Consequently, he added application to the hermeneutic circle to uncover the genuine conditions under which understanding already operates, and to facilitate a deeper understanding of meanings, or the inner word, conveyed in a text (Dostal, 2002; Gadamer, 1993, 2006; Lawn, 2006). In this unified hermeneutic process of understanding, interpretation, and application, understanding moves from understanding parts of a whole through interpretation and application, to a global understanding of the whole and back to individual parts in an iterative manner (Klein & Myers, 1999).

Genuine conversation

In Gadamer’s account, the more genuine a conversation is, the less is it conducted by the will of the partners in the conversation; but rather emerges when people just “fall into conversation... [and] become involved in it, ... creating a common language, ... [and] reaching an understanding on the subject matter” (Gadamer, 1993, pp. 383-385). However, it is not impossible to have structured genuine conversations. Gadamer proposed an application of

genuine conversation through a dialogic structure of understanding texts in a hermeneutics endeavour (Warnke, 1987), in which he maintained that every true conversation requires each person to open up to the other, to truly accept the other's viewpoint as valid, and to position himself/herself into the other to the extent that he/she understands not the particular individual but what he/she says (Gadamer, 1993; Gadamer & Palmer, 2007; Warnke, 1987).

He pointed out that the path to understand texts is not to reproduce the intent of the author, but to have a genuine encounter, through dialoguing, that creates a new understanding of the text through making the text speak. The dialogic process serves as the medium of understanding that lies between two partners. It can occur between the interpreter and the text; or within the interpreter himself/herself when he/she doubts his/her own prejudice; between the interpreters; or between the researcher and the participants. For a dialogue to develop into a genuine conversation, the partners do not insist on putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one's own point of view, but are willing to transform into a communion in which one transcends oneself (Gadamer, 1993; Gadamer & Palmer, 2007).

Grondin (2003) stated that Gadamer's ideas of genuine conversation and self-application are essential concepts of hermeneutics, and that Gadamer showed that conversation facilitates transformation not only in the understanding of the subject matter, but also the very being of the participants in the dialogue.

Fusion of horizons

A horizon is where one situates himself/herself in the world in order to perceive the world. "To acquire a horizon means that one learns to look beyond what is close at hand - not in order to look away from it but to see it better, within a larger whole and in truer proportion" (Gadamer,

1993, p. 305). The forming of a horizon is a continual process of testing all our prejudices (Gadamer, 1993). Gadamer (1993) suggested the notion of historical horizon in hermeneutics, which he referred to as “the range of vision that... can be seen from a particular vantage point” (p. 302). For him, it was almost impossible to understand others by “by adopting an Archimedean point of objectivity” and “abandoning one’s own horizon” (Hekman, 1986, p. 104). One cannot stand on a hypothetical vantage point and claim that one can objectively perceive the subject matter of the inquiry. The prejudices one brings into a hermeneutic situation constitute a particular historical horizon at that point in time; this horizon will change as one continually tests all his/her prejudices and reaches a phase of new understanding termed ‘fusion of horizons’.

The fusion of horizons happens naturally in one’s lived experiences of knowing, whereby the “temporal distance” (Gadamer, 1993, p. 296) between the past and the present, the parts and the whole “is not dissolved in perfect understanding but... is most fully realized... [and] really constitutes a unity of meaning” (Gadamer, 1993, p. 293). However, in a scholarly study, one may deliberately activate this process of understanding by putting his/her prejudices at stake and allowing himself/herself the ‘temporal distance’ to consider others’ horizons, and moving iteratively from the part to the whole, and from the whole to other parts, and back to the whole with an open and inquisitive mind, enabling him/her to transcend his/her own subjectivity and consciousness and to reach a fusion of horizons.

The significance of finitude

Being influenced by Heidegger, one significant notion in Gadamer’s (1993) entire philosophical hermeneutics is *finitude*. Like prejudice, their definition of finitude is very different from our accustomed understanding of it as an enclosed and fixed state. Gadamer

undertook Heidegger's notion of existence that it cannot be "considered as everlasting or eternal but is understandable only in relation of its own time and future" (Gadamer, 1993, p. 99). Hence, even death was seen as the radical finitude of existence of 'being-in-the-world' (Gadamer, 1993, 2008); though not explicitly pronounced, it implies a beginning of something else. As Gadamer expressed, "we finite beings always come from afar and stretch into the distance" (Gadamer, 1993, p. 449).

This perspective opens up new possibilities, and asserts that finitude exists within all human experiences and only when one is aware of one's finiteness or limitation does the experience become real. Gadamer (1993) maintained that each understanding "is part of the historical finitude of our being that we are aware that others after us will understand in a different way" (p. 373) because the act of understanding is always finite, but what is to be understood is infinite (Caputo, 2000). Gadamer (1993) also affirmed that when a hermeneutic experience reaches its consummation, the hermeneutic process comes to a finitude "with respect to an end that a beginning is defined as a beginning of an end... [and] for every beginning is an end, and every end is a beginning" (Gadamer, 1993, p. 472). Hence, for Gadamer, fusion of horizons constitutes a concept of finitude, not totality (Krajewski, 2004).

One may conclude that a hermeneutic circle starts with a finitude, i.e., the interpreter's pre-conception concerning a subject matter which he/she wants to know more about; and the hermeneutic circle ends with another finitude, i.e., the interpreter's satisfaction of understanding at a certain point of time. The finitude of any process reflects an opening of another; it signifies a fusion of horizons at a particular historical period of time. Gadamer's quotation cited by Krajewski (2004) summarises his concept of finitude: "Understanding is an infinite dialogue, so

that all who participate in it must accept that their views will eventually be superseded. No one ever has the last word” (p. 131).

Research Design and Research Process

The following section discusses the overall research design which has gone through several stages of modification and has evolved over the years, yet the main goals of the study were unaltered. The research process is also discussed to provide an account on my own growth as well as on how the study has come to fruition.

Identifying and Inviting Participants

Purposive sampling combining with the snowballing method (Minichiello, Sullivan, Greenwood & Axford, 2004) was adopted in selecting interviewees. Participants for this study were identified through the recommendations of my two Satir mentors, John Banmen and Maria Gomori, who are well known in the Satir circle, and have been passing on Satir’s teaching for over thirty years. I also identified some authors who had written books or articles on the Satir Model, and trainers who had been conducting training workshops using the Satir Model (naming Satir’s approach as ‘the Satir Model’ was one of my pre-conceptions which was later superseded when I came to a fusion of horizons in the hermeneutic process). During the process of identifying potential participants, some participants also recommended new names for me to invite. I also browsed through the membership list of the Virginia Satir Global Network (formerly named Avanta the Virginia Satir Network) to increase the pool of potential participants. In my three visits in 2004, 2005 and 2006 to the Virginia Satir Archive in the University of California, Santa Barbara, I identified more names but could only trace three of them. Over the span of four years, I identified a total of 43 names, located and tried to connect with 39 of them

(mostly face-to-face in conferences) and 34 responded. Out of them, five were interviewed for pilot study. Thirteen joined a focus group discussion in August 2004 during break time in one evening of the Satir annual conference held in Seattle, Washington, USA. No data was collected because the recording was inaudible; besides, the discussion was not very focused so I gave up setting up any other focus group discussion. More details about the individual semi-structured interviews are presented in a later section.

I used four means to approach the potential participants, including face-to-face invitation during the Satir annual conferences, sending emails, sending letters and an open invitation on one occasion when I presented my study during the 2004 Satir annual conference. I started to attend the annual conferences of the Virginia Satir Global Network in 2003. I met and talked to nine people about my intention of doing this research, and conducted pilot interviews with five of them to get myself familiarized with the semi-structured interviewing process.

After confirming the candidature in July 2004, I sent out eleven emails attaching the ‘invitation and information sheet’ (Appendix 1), and the ‘declaration statement for informed-consent’ (Appendix 2) to potential participants prior to the 2004 annual conference; among them four had verbally agreed to take part in the previous year and four others I had identified through my literature search and recommendations from others. Six agreed to be interviewed during the conference. Two others consented to be interviewed but they would not attend the conference. I made deliberate trips to visit and interview them on my way to the conference.

Since I presented my research plan in the conference, I took the opportunity to openly invite volunteers to take part. A few explored the possibility and suggested names that were not in the conference; more approached me because they were interested in what I presented. Only

two met the criteria of having been supervised by Satir and having practised clinical supervision. Up to that point, i.e., August 2004, I talked to more than fifteen people but only formally interviewed nine eligible participants altogether.

In the 2005 Satir annual conference, I interviewed two more participants whom I had identified through my literature search. Prior to that I mailed my invitation to two other people but I never received their reply. I interviewed two more participants in 2006, one of whom I had written to but had not replied, and she consented to take part in the process when I approached her directly; I also made a deliberate trip to interview another participant in 2006. That interview turned out to be the longest of all because she was very keen to show me materials and to provide me with information. Up till this point I had interviewed thirteen participants and among them two did not have the experience of supervising others; they were included because their experience of being supervised by Satir provided rich data, and the focus of the study was on knowing how participants experienced Satir's supervision rather than how they had practised supervision.

All participants were Satir's first generation students whom had been supervised by her. They were either world renowned Satir practitioners or authors of books, book chapters or articles concerning Satir's approach. It forms a very strong sample for this study. More details about the participants are presented in a later section of this chapter.

The interviews

An interview guide was prepared to help me to stay focused on the topics and to provide directions for follow-up or probing questions (see Appendix 3). However, aligning with what is being investigated, the interviews were conducted in a manner in which the participants were

encouraged to reflect on their whole range of experiences. The internal processes of the whole person of the participant were tracked, as far as possible, in order to obtain data grounded in the participant's "self", i.e., the "being", not only their "doing", "feeling" or "thinking".

At the onset of the study, I was blurred by my own pre-conceptions and admiration of the "Satir Model" and did not probe well enough to enable the emergence of a "temporal distance" or more diversity of viewpoints. I noticed that, from one of my first batch of interviews, I would ask close-ended questions like, "Do you mean that she helped you see the stuckness is not really outside, but inside?" instead of asking the participant to elaborate what he/she really meant. On one occasion, the participant told me that sometimes she was really devastated and then the interview was interrupted by a phone call. What she said after answering the phone was, "what I really learnt was to be focused". My response was really inadequate, because I said, "even though when you experienced some devastation?" I did not ask what really happened in the supervision process that had caused the feeling of devastation, nor did I ask her what really happened inside her when she chose to conclude with what she learnt instead of going further into that part of her experience.

It was most undesirable that on one occasion, I imposed my meaning into the process by saying, "So when you talk about universal, it also depends on how you pick that up, right? Because some trainees might not pick that up." I also asked questions like, "So, helping the supervisees to go through this and then help them to see the same in the clients. Is that what you mean?" instead of being curious to know how relevant the participant perceived her supervision experience was to her work with her client. Fortunately, most of the times, the participants would go on with their own narration disregarding what my question or response was.

Nonetheless, I was capable to probe better in some occasions, even at the beginning of this research journey. I was able to ask “I am interested in how she can mix these very extreme parts, like being confronting and loving, how was she able to...”, though it could be improved by probing, “I am interested in how you experience her being confronting and loving at the same time.” At the later stage, I noticed that in the interviews, I was less concerned about the ‘interview’ and was more open to flow with the process and was able to ask questions like, “how was the experience for you?” and “How did this inform or inspire you in terms of your own supervision?”.

The interviews ranged from seventeen minutes to two hours. The contents also ranged from being entirely focused on supervision, as in the short interviews, to covering a full spectrum of participants’ experiences with Virginia Satir in different contexts. Table 4.1 shows the summary of the participants, with pseudonyms assigned to each of them, and the duration of the interviews.

The interviews were all recorded with digital devices which enabled me to have easier storage and access. They were played repeatedly at any possible time to allow me to immerse into the data and let the ‘texts’ speak to me; and jot down my impressions of what was going on for me, for the participant, for Satir, and between and among the supervisory dyad or group. The interviews were all transcribed, and each was studied at least seven times, coded and initially analysed. This process will be discussed later in the section of data analysis.

The demographic characteristics of participants

Among the 15 participants, four are male and eleven are female. They have an average age of 74 to date. All of them have known Satir for 10 years or more, and with an average of 19

years. One had known Satir since 1958, one since 1961 and another 1963, the rest have known Satir in the late 60s and early 70s, only one had first met her in 1979. They all consider themselves a colleague who worked with Satir till 1988, the day she died. They all work as therapists and 13 have been or are still working as supervisors. The average years of experience in being a therapist is 42, with the highest record of 67 years. This participant still drove around till 89 years old and is still seeing clients at 92, other participants still travel to teach in many different cities at their 80s and early 90s. The average supervision experience is 25 years with two participants having supervised for 40 years. They all have attended numerous training events with Satir and most of them have lost count of it; the lowest number I recorded was 10 events. They have all worked as co-trainers with Satir, for at least 3 times (average 12 times, highest 39 times). Five had co-authored with Satir and all had authored at least one article on Satir's work.

Table 4.1 A summarised account of the interviews.

Keys: PC= process community; RP=research project; MRI=Mental Research Institute; +therapist=became a therapist after encountering Satir; sup=supervisor					
	participants	supervision context	year of interview	length of interview/transcript	response to email
1.	Brigitte, therapist, sup	PC, individual sup	04	100 min	once
2.	Christina, + therapist, sup	PC	04	65 min	occasional
3.	Dawn, therapist, sup	PC, work place, individual sup	05	17.5 min	all
4.	Faith, therapist, sup	PC, individual sup	06	130 min	occasional
5.	Henry, therapist, sup	PC, individual sup	04	19.5 min	no
6.	Joshua, therapist, sup	PC	04 08	70 min 30 min	occasional

Table 4.1 (continued)

7.	Joyce, therapist, sup	PC, RP	04	51 min	occasional
8.	June, + therapist	PC	04	18 min	no
9.	Martha, therapist, sup	PC, individual sup	04	65 min	all
10.	Pearl, therapist	PC, individual sup	04 06	51 min 80 min	occasional
11.	Roy, therapist	MRI	05	17 min	occasional
12.	Ruth, therapist, sup	RP	06	70 min	no
13.	Susan, therapist	PC, RP	04	26 min	all
14.	Norman, therapist, sup	PC, RP	09	emails only	all
15.	Jeff, therapist, sup	PC	09	emails only	all

Locating a Matching Methodology

The initial purpose of this study was to understand the development and experiences of ‘Satir supervisors’ and their practice of clinical supervision in the light of establishing a research-based theoretical framework for training and practice of clinical supervision using the Satir Model. Grounded theory was initially applied because my study addressed the need of getting out to the field to discover what had been really going on; and to develop a theory grounded in data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I started my interviews with this in mind and had coded the transcripts of the interviews in order to discover themes and develop propositions (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1995).

However, as an ardent student of the Satir approach, I could not help but applying the

concepts that I heard of and read about from this research process into practice in my counselling, teaching, and supervision. I felt excited about my personal and professional discoveries, but guilty about the academic endeavour because I had an impression that I might “contaminate” the study by not being “objective” enough. However, I found application helped, instead of hindered, the process of unfolding the area of knowledge that I set forth to pursue. I even had an idea that “if this is what academic study is about, I would rather travel my own path of ‘researching’ and give up the ‘recognition’ accompanied by the three letters after my name”. My enthusiasm in ‘knowing’ and learning more, and my perseverance kept me going. Satir’s philosophy about not wanting ‘copy cats’ or ‘Satirians’ to run around the world (Gardner, 1978) also inspired me to keep digging into the texts. Her wish for everybody to develop their own skills and relate them to their own beings (Gardner, 1978) inspired and empowered me to go on searching for the territory in the research academia where my efforts could be acknowledged. More effort was invested to search for a methodology that can more appropriately reflect the texture and complexity of the data that was being generated.

Becoming a ‘bricoleur’ in the research process

I explored phenomenological research methods and realized that I could not truly refrain myself from “influencing” the inquiry process by “bracketing out” my prior and ongoing increasing knowledge about the Satir Model; nor could I reach the state of being “free of prejudgments and preconceptions” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90) because I recognized that I have been constantly and automatically applying what I learnt from the study into my therapeutic and supervision practices.

After considering several approaches, I considered a ‘bricolage’ (Denzin & Lincoln,

2005b; Kincheloe, 2001; McLeod, 2001) of methods, which included adding narrative analysis into my ongoing content analysis and discourse analysis guided by the principles of hermeneutic phenomenology. A hermeneutic phenomenological research studies how people interpret their lives and make meaning of their experiences (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000). I wanted to capture the life stories of my participants and how they made meaning of being supervised by Satir. Since her use of language was highly commended (Andreas, 1989, 1991; Bandler & Grinder, 1975), and her intimacy with supervisees was being highlighted by Minuchin (1996), I also wanted to analyse a short piece of Satir's supervision to unfold what we could tease out from her supervision intervention; so I considered taking the role of a 'bricoleur' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b). According to Denzin and Lincoln (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b), a researcher may be seen as a bricoleur, or a quilt maker, who uses different tools, strategies, methods and materials, or even invents new tools or techniques, if necessary, in a pragmatic, strategic and self-reflexive manner to come up with a 'bricolage'. It is "a means of explaining how researchers can come to terms with the confusing array of methodological genres that exist" (McLeod, 2001, p. 119).

Yet, as I went further, and with the limited information about the participants' life story from the previous interviews that I had conducted, I realized that "to *do* hermeneutic phenomenology is to attempt to accomplish the impossible... lived life is always more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 7). Besides, "bricolage is concerned not only with divergent methods of inquiry [or interpretation] but with diverse theoretical and philosophical understandings of the various elements encountered in the act of research" (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 679). It also "promotes a synergistic interaction between concepts" (p. 683). My project had not reached this breadth and depth. I had only been focusing

on how supervisors could be inspired by Virginia Satir to practice clinical supervision more effectively.

Encountering Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics

As I continued to reflect upon my research journey and searched for a matching methodology it was Gadamer's philosophical concepts of understanding that could most appropriately describe my research process, and could effectively help me integrate the findings. Gadamer's (1993) consideration of "application as an integral part of the hermeneutical process just as understanding and interpretation" (p. 308) and his acknowledgment of "prejudices" in the process of understanding struck a chord in me. The more I read about Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, the more I found myself 'at home'. I had been conscious about the fact that application had always been a very important part of my interpretive process, and had also tried hard to find a legitimate place for it in research. My habit of digging to the root of a saying, by reading more intensively and extensively, as well as clarifying with others, in order to capture its 'true meaning' resembled what Gadamer termed as 'dialoguing with the texts' and 'having a genuine conversation'. The application processes also challenged and prompted me to doubt what I understood before and to go through the dialectic processes and led me to revise my teaching notes, and to practise counselling and supervision differently. My natural process of understanding was very similar to what Gadamer had described.

Encountering Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutic gave me many 'a-ha' moments of epiphany. For the first time in my research process, I could fully embrace what I had been doing and affirmed that my 'prejudice' and the 'applications' were not only acceptable, but 'legitimate' in a research process. This interpretive approach emerged as '*the*' methodological principles for

which I had been tirelessly searching. I no longer had to separate my researcher's role from my practitioner's role. Besides, Gadamer did not only acknowledge the researcher's prejudice or pre-conception about the subject matter being studied, but also stressed its significance in the entire interpretive process (Gadamer, 1993). My prejudices or pre-conceptions of the Satir Model were in fact assets, not obstacles. For me, the ontological nature of Satir's approach and Gadamer's hermeneutics of advocating and honouring holistic and authentic experiences made them a perfect match. I continued the research process under the guidance of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics.

Re-formulating a Structural Guide to the Hermeneutic Process

Gadamer (1993) viewed "the task of hermeneutics as clarifying [and describing] the miracle of understanding, which is... the sharing of a common meaning [between the text and the interpreter]" (p. 292) instead of prescribing any set of methods. Before presenting how I reformulated a structural guide for the rest of the hermeneutic journey, I illustrate my natural process of "sharing a common meaning with the text" by the example below.

My naturally emerged hermeneutic process

I found myself intrigued by one of the participants Henry's remark that Satir "*was a master at putting a concept out and picking the universal process*". I started to contemplate the meaning of universal process since then and continuously found myself reaching new horizons about universal processes. In the interview, Henry further explained what he learnt about universal process from Satir. He used Satir's metaphor of a three ring circus and expanded it to a five ring circus or a ten ring circus and contended that "*the true ring master knows how to take what's going on here and also apply it over to here [other rings of the circus]*." He related it

with family therapy by saying that, *“There are only so many stories. There are stories about intimacy. There are stories about loss. There are stories about shame, and I think it was constantly looking and see... how it might have been affected by their family of origin.”* He further asserted that the theme is universal but the story may vary, and gave an example that if a family has a theme of *“peace at any price”*, then we have to see *“how would it manifest itself in each of the relationships, or how would it manifest itself in their world.”*

This was new to me, I had not tried to understand universal process from this angle; all I knew was from workshops of the ‘Satir Model’ that all we have the same yearnings to be loved, valued etc., so human yearnings are universal. I searched the literature, watched the video and listened to the audio recordings trying to understand this concept of universal process better, but I found applying it in my practices helped most. It was really a journey of going back and forth between the parts (the specific stories of a client or a supervisee) and the whole (the universal theme under that situation), as well as a question and answer process between me and the texts on hand whereby I raised questions like what did Satir say about universal processes, how did she demonstrate this in her therapy... etc. The process enhanced my understanding and application of the concept of looking for the universal process within each situation. My counselling and supervision practices were enhanced and my teaching also embraced a broader perspective. I had always considered being able to apply what I learnt from the process a bonus from the research endeavour until I encountered Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics.

Formulating a structural guide for subsequent hermeneutic processes

Having been bothered by the geographical and financial limitations that had made follow-up interviews with the participants quite impossible, Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics

came to me as the most desirable means to unfold the meanings of the texts on hand.

Discovering this prompted me to organize my natural process of understanding into a scholastic process in the light of yielding better quality interpretation of the texts being studied. Although Gadamer (1993) offered valuable insights into how one may develop a deep understanding of texts, he did not offer either a methodology or methods for doing so. A structure to guide my subsequent research process, not only the interpretation process per se, inspired by Gadamer's notion of hermeneutic circle was formulated. The structure of the hermeneutic circle is presented in Figure 4.1 followed by a detailed description.

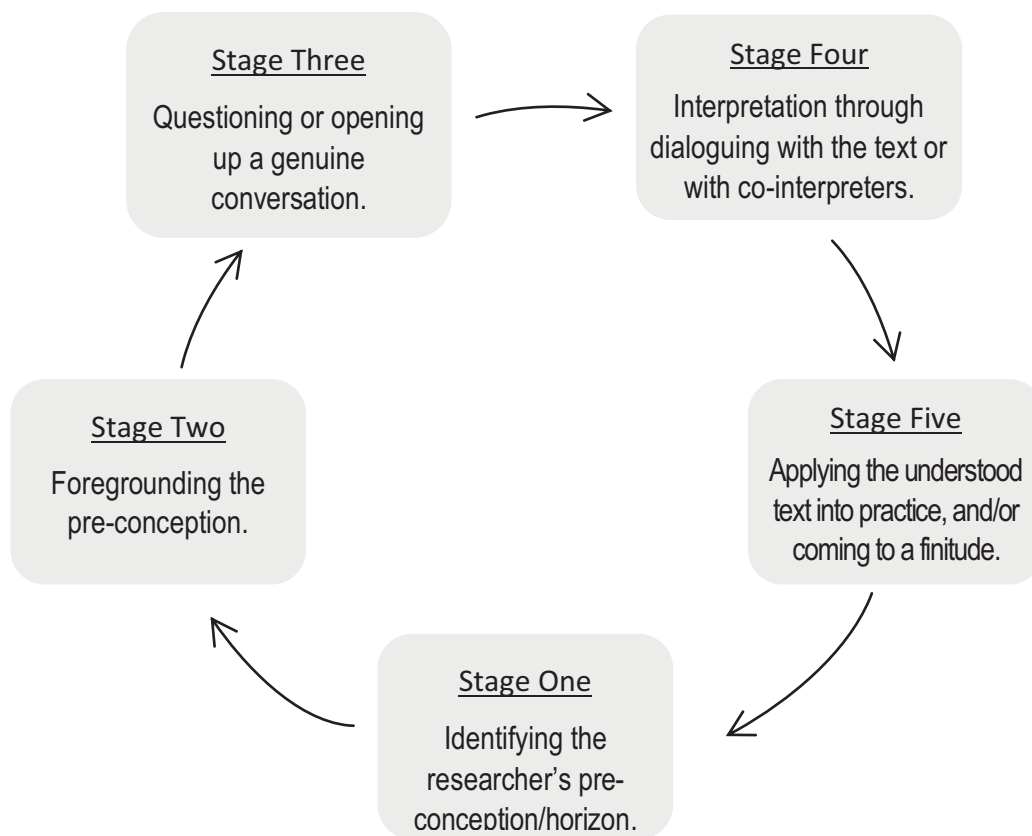


Figure 4.1 – The dialectical process of the hermeneutic circles

Stage one: The hermeneutic circle begins with the researcher *identifying* his/her historical experience of understanding, i.e., the *prejudice or pre-conception* about the subject matter, which is also known as the horizon where the researcher situates at the onset of the study. In this case, I had involved in a natural ‘philosophical hermeneutic process’ of “interpreting, understanding and applying” all through the previous years, and started to convert it to an organized hermeneutic process from February 2008, as my one year suspension of the study ended. During the preceding 14 months, I worked on my internal personal struggle towards a more integrated state as a ‘student-researcher, a counsellor and a supervisor’ while at the same time studied Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics and came to realize that “this is what I had been searching for”. My pre-conception at that stage was the themes identified from the coded transcripts and from there I continued my hermeneutic journey.

Stage two: The first effort that needs to be taken is acknowledging and foregrounding the pre-conception about the subject matter. Up to this point, I had started writing the analysis of the data. Those drafts served to foreground my pre-conception about how Satir practised supervision and how the participants experienced Satir and her supervision.

Stage three: This stage is the first step of a genuine conversation, or a meaningful dialogue, called *questioning*, whereby the researcher gathers questions to open up possibilities to understand the text(s).

Stage four: This stage completes the cycle of genuine conversation. Here, the researcher makes deliberate efforts to *dialogue* with the text(s) and/or the co-interpreters to yield answers which help the researcher make sense of what is being studied. To me, stage three and four formed an iterative process by itself. I dialogued with the text(s), i.e., tried to interpret and

understand the concept that emerged, then questioned myself whether I could understand it differently, and then went back to the original text as well as to search for other texts which may shed new light. I also posed the questions to a group of people within the Satir circle, and to another group not familiar with the Satir concept and therapy, in the light of eliciting some ‘tension’ caused by different views. These co-interpreters are regarded as my reflecting team members. Most of them communicated with me through emails and a group of local Hong Kong members had met twice, viewed the video tape of Satir and shared their views, while maintaining email exchanges with me. These email responses and sharing provided the “temporal distance” where I was able to go through a genuine conversation to challenge my previous understanding. One of the participant’s viewpoints stood out as most unique because she criticized Satir most; this huge gap led me to consider moving to another horizon and to try to understand from there. This process had enabled me to move back and forth between the parts and the whole, and reach a finitude where I could apply what I understood in my practices.

Stage five: In this stage, the researcher affirms his/her understanding through *application*, i.e., the researcher adds what has newly been understood into practice. What the researcher applies to his/her situations could be seen as a *finitude* of understanding at the previous stage of the interpretive process. In other words, the researcher has acquired a new ‘historical experience of understanding’, or a *fusion of horizons*. The application itself is also a process of foregrounding the researcher’s ‘prejudice’ at this juncture, and opening to another cycle of dialectical interpretation. New questions may arise and prompt the researcher to continue the spiral process of hermeneutics. This stage of application served to confirm my understanding as well as to provide insight for more in-depth understanding.

These five stages were repeated as many times as needed until I came to a “good gestalt” (Kvale, 1996, p. 47) of the concept, or “a sensible, valid unitary meaning free of inner contradictions” (Kvale, 1996, p. 48), which is also referred to as a ‘fusion of horizon’ by Gadamer.

An example of one of my hermeneutic circles in understanding a concept

One example presented below illustrates how I went through a hermeneutic circle with these five stages and came to a ‘good gestalt’. This example relates with how I understand more deeply Satir’s emphasis on experiential learning.

Stage one: Reviewing the interviews, the transcripts, and the research documents that had emerged prompted me to look into the aspect of ‘experiential learning’ with more depth and breadth. The hermeneutic process was especially ignited when I heard of an incident from four participants, who were supervised by Satir in a family therapy research project which will be discussed in chapter five, that she expected her students to have *actions* in their therapy sessions. They all recalled that when Satir reviewed their video tapes in the first group supervision session, she was shocked and disappointed to see her team of therapists sitting there almost motionless. “No one got out of our chairs” remarked Joyce. Norman believed that within twenty minutes Satir wanted them to be up on their feet doing some sculpting of the family. She wanted the therapists and the families to be active with more than their mouths. Joyce remembered Satir “stumbled, and stammered... unlike her”; and finally conveyed her disappointment that “they did not look like therapists who had been trained by her”. Susan attributed this to several factors. The major one was the comparative, and thus competitive, nature of the research that everybody including Satir was under the stress of being ‘studied’; and then the therapists were being

supervised for the first time in this group combination, and they were all out of their own familiar ‘comfort zones’... etc. Given that my focus of this study was not to explain but to understand (Gadamer, 1988a, 1993, 1988b), I did not pursue on ‘why’ but ‘how’ and ‘what’ Satir really want her supervisees ‘to be’ and ‘to do’.

Stage two: My pre-understanding was that Satir’s approach was an experiential approach (Braverman, 1986; Ramon Corrales, 1989; Guerin & Chabot, 1997; Woods & Martin, 1984; just to mention a few) and that she used a lot of body movement and sculpting in her workshops and therapy (Satir, 1983a; 1983d etc.). I also noticed that I had not given much thought to what experiential learning really meant and just accepted that this was one of her ‘powerful’ means to facilitate in-depth and long lasting changes (Andreas, 1991).

Stage three: This episode conveyed a message that Satir REALLY attached much importance to having actions in the therapy session. So I raised some questions to myself: Does moving around or having action in therapy sessions mean that the process would be experiential? What does experiential learning really mean? What is the philosophy behind it? What has Satir done in order to enable experiential learning?

Stage four: I decided to have some vigorous dialogues with the texts. Other participants had different stories about their own experiential learning: Martha used the expression of being “thrown into the lion den” and “knowing that Satir was always around” to describe how Satir pushed and encouraged her to make a transformational move forward in her professional journey. Faith reported similar experience that she was asked to do something for which she was not prepared, the process was uneasy but the outcome was that she expended and discovered her potential. Ruth shared an event that Satir sent all her trainers-in-training (who were to work in

triads later in a process community) to Outward Bound School, because they needed to be able to trust each other, to respect each other, and to lean on each other, before walking into the training room; and according to Ruth, everyone who was there reported that “things went much better”. These and other episodes reflected that experiential learning is not just having movements or actions, it is a conscious choice and arrangement of the supervisor (or the teacher) in light of facilitating the supervisee to capture his/her own learning, and to reach a higher level of understanding and practising, or even a higher level of being, through the process.

However, the question of what role does ‘action’ play in terms of experiential learning was still not answered. I went back to the video that recorded Satir’s therapy sessions and watched her intervention with these dialectical questions in mind. All the recordings showed a lot of movements. Not only had Satir moved around but she also directed the family members to move around. One movement found in many sessions is that she would ask two persons to move their chair to face each other while guiding them to look at and talk directly to each other. After moving back and forth from this specific ‘part’ and the ‘whole’ of Satir’s practice philosophy, and through my own application, I came to understand that this movement of facing each other changes the energy flow instantaneously and enables genuine conversation to take place.

Stage five: I practised this with my reflecting members and invited my students to practise it; all of us experienced instant change of energy flow between each other when we moved to facing and looking into the eyes of each other. Some felt more connected and more able to communicate while some felt being in touch with their own vulnerability. This process helped me reach another level of understanding about Satir’s belief and teaching that the free flow of energy was a key to human connection, integration, health and the role of acknowledging

our own vulnerability in growth (Kramer, 1995b; Satir, 1983-1987, 1988). Later when I went back to the transcripts, I tried to dialogue between what the supervisees described and my understanding of these therapy demonstrations. This iterative dialectic process enhanced my understanding of Satir's experiential learning approach.

This is only part of the rich and protracted hermeneutic circle, within which I also invited other participants to share their interpretation about her action oriented interventions and to dig into the written materials to look into the 'whole', i.e., the philosophy behind this mode of intervention. The process included going back to more audio and video texts, to understand the parts better, and writing down my understandings, refreshing them with each 'fusion of horizons' until I reached this present 'finitude' about her action-oriented experiential intervention. More descriptions of these understandings are presented in chapters 5 and 6.

Locating the Secondary Source of Data

As mentioned above, in order to make better sense of the philosophical underpinnings of what was described in the transcripts, to have genuine conversations with the texts, and "to form ideas through the hermeneutic circle of whole and part" (Gadamer, 1993, p. xxxv), I needed to move back and forth from the interview transcripts and other texts that provided me with materials to grasp the holistic philosophy of Satir's approach as well as how she supervised. I went back to the pool of written, audio and video resources by Satir and those about her work that I had reviewed at the onset of the research. Though the literature review and the materials I used for the review were helpful, I added new materials, which emerged in ongoing literature searches, and I also shifted to my focus when reviewing the materials again. The process of the study shifted from merely analysing the transcripts to a dialectic nature of dialoguing with the

relevant texts (including the transcripts and the analyses) to challenge my pre-conception as well as to broaden my horizons of understanding. As described by Gadamer in 1960, “dialectic is nothing but the art of conducting a conversation and especially of revealing the mistakes in one’s opinions through the process of questioning and yet further questioning” (quoted in Barthold, 2010, p. 100); the more I went through the dialectic process, the more I found my pre-understanding inadequate, and the deeper I understood the texts. For me, making sense with the different texts was like studying different dialects. Not until I fully grasped the dialects, could I fully understand the other’s horizon. Having attached this meaning to the word ‘dialectic’ in this hermeneutic process helped me move on much more smoothly. I was also rewarded by locating a ten-minute supervision session by Satir, which emerged when I immersed into the hermeneutic process of understanding the transcripts. This discovery provided me with a significant secondary source of data for understanding Satir’s supervision practice, especially her use of language and proximity with the supervisee as mentioned on p. 138.

Among all the retrieved materials, I paid special attention to the interviews with Satir, which presented verbatim transcripts of Satir’s views about therapy and therapists. I also paid special attention to the sections where her demonstrations were being discussed. In some occasions, she would just explain what she had done during the demonstration; and on other occasions, there would be a question and answer period between the group of therapists watching the demonstration and Satir, sometimes she would even role played with the inquirers in order to present her answer. I believed by focusing on these materials, relevant data would emerge in terms of how Satir perceived and practised therapy and hence I would be able to trace how she perceived and practised supervision. I did not expect to unfold a ‘supervision’ session, so I was overjoyed when the 10-minute vignette emerged. In this 10-minute session, Satir literally

supervised a therapist named Joyce, who went on stage to consult her with issues between her and her clients after Satir's presentation in a conference. I believe interpreting this vignette would add-on to the rich texts generated from the interviews I conducted for this study because it provides a real situation where Satir supervised a therapist. I decided to use it as a secondary source for this hermeneutic inquiry, and went through a separate hermeneutic circle with this set of data. The interpretation of this short piece of supervision is presented in Chapter 6. I am listing all the references that I perused during the process of locating the secondary source of data in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 A list of the references by or about Satir and her work

A. Interviews with Satir:			
Year	Interviewer	Title	Source
1967	Haley, J. Hoffman, L.	A family of angels: An interview with Virginia Satir; chapter 2 of <i>Techniques of Family Therapy</i>	Book purchased
1971	Kramer, E.	An interview with Virginia Satir	<i>Virginia Satir Archive, UCSB</i>
1978	Gardner, P.	An interview with Virginia Satir	<i>Virginia Satir Archive, UCSB</i>
70's (n.d.)	Vargiu, J. & Vargiu, S.	Personal Growth and the Family – a conversation with Virginia Satir	<i>Virginia Satir Archive, UCSB</i>
1980	Theodorou, L.	Beyond Roles: an interview with Virginia Satir	<i>Virginia Satir Archive, UCSB</i>
1981	Barrows, S.	Interview with Virginia Satir – March 31, 1981	<i>Virginia Satir Archive, UCSB</i>
1981	Gester, p.	An interview with Virginia Satir	<i>Virginia Satir Archive, UCSB</i>
1982	dos Santos, A. M.	Satir on hummingbirds, struggle and nurturance – Interview with Virginia Satir – 5 October 1981	<i>Virginia Satir Archive, UCSB</i>
1983	Miller, R.	Families in Transition – The Art of Peoplemaking An interview with Virginia Satir	<i>Virginia Satir Archive, UCSB</i>
1983	Seaman, R.	The Person Behind the Therapist – a telephone interview with Virginia Satir	<i>Virginia Satir Archive, UCSB</i>
1983	Parson, J. Gomori, M.	Interview with Virginia Satir – part I	<i>Virginia Satir Archive, UCSB</i>

Table 4.2 continues:

A. Interviews with Satir:			
Year	Interviewer	Title	Source
1984	Parson, J. Gomori, M.	Interview with Virginia Satir – part II	<i>Virginia Satir Archive, UCSB</i>
1985	Simon, R.	Life Reaching out to Life: An interview with Virginia Satir	<i>Virginia Satir Archive, UCSB</i>
1985	Kimball, G.	An interview with Virginia Satir	<i>Virginia Satir Archive, UCSB</i>
1987	Hycner, R.	An interview with Virginia Satir: The therapeutic relationship	<i>Virginia Satir Archive, UCSB</i>
1987	Russell, D.	A conversation with Virginia Satir	<i>Virginia Satir Archive, UCSB</i>
1988	Laign, J.	Healing human spirits: Interview with master family therapist Virginia Satir	<i>Virginia Satir Archive, UCSB</i>
1989	King, L.	Virginia Satir in <i>Women of Power</i>	Book purchased
1989	Luepnitz, D.	Virginia Satir: Limitation of humanism 1 from <i>Journal of Feminist Family Therapy</i>	Internet, inter-library loan
1989	Simon, R.	Reaching out to Life: An interview with Virginia Satir	Family Therapy Networker
1991	Starr, S.	An interview with Virginia Satir in <i>Coupling: what makes permanence?</i>	Book borrowed from library
1992	Starr, S.	Power issues in therapists: An interview with Virginia Satir in <i>Equal partnering: a feminine perspective</i>	Book borrowed from library
1993	Starr, S.	Change, vulnerability, fear, and taking risks: An interview with Virginia Satir in <i>Attraction and attachment: understanding styles of relationship</i>	Book borrowed from library
1993	Starr, S.	Heart and soul and communication: An interview with Virginia Satir in <i>Spirituality and couples: Heart and soul in the therapy process</i>	Book borrowed from library
1993	Starr, S.	“All good therapy has the same ingredients”: An interview with Virginia Satir in <i>Couple therapy, multiple perspectives: in search of universal threads</i>	Book borrowed from library
1993	Starr, S.	Prevention: Changing our whole culture - An interview with Virginia Satir in <i>Peace, war, and mental health: Couples therapists look at the dynamics</i>	Book borrowed from library
1995	Kramer, S	Virginia Satir interviewed on January 23, 1988 from <i>Transforming the inner and outer family: humanistic and spiritual approaches to mind-body systems therapy</i>	Book purchased

Table 4.2 continues:

A. Interviews with Satir:			
1995	Kramer, S	Reflections on healing and spirituality: Conversations with Virginia Satir from <i>Transforming the inner and outer family: humanistic and spiritual</i>	Book purchased
B. Audiovisual materials:			
Year	Title		Source
n.d.	Satir Family Series - 10 DVDs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching family therapy 2. Family interview 3. Introduction to Family Reconstruction 4. Making of maps 5. Father's Reconstruction 6. Mother's Reconstruction 7. Son's Parts Party & question period 8. Couple's Parts Party 9. Mother's Parts Party 10. Father's Parts party 		Purchased from Virginia Satir Global Network (formerly named Avanta)
1983	Featuring Virginia Satir - 4 video cassettes then 4 DVDs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Family at the Point of Growth 2. A Step Along the Way – A Family with Drug Problem 3. Blended Family with a Troubled Boy 4. Of Rocks and Flowers – Dealing with the Abuse of Children 		The Golden Triad Films - Purchased from Virginia Satir Global Network
1983	Virginia Satir Talks about The Essence of Change		Purchased from Golden Triad Films
1985 /86	“In Her Own Voice...” Virginia Satir 1985/86 -10 audio CDs: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Going Behind the Obvious - the Therapeutic Journey (EP85.IA11a) 2. Going Behind the Obvious - the Therapeutic Journey (EP85.IA11b) 3. Becoming More Effective As a Therapist Featuring Use of Self (EP85.WS3a1) 4. Becoming More Effective As a Therapist Featuring Use of Self (EP85.WS3a2) 5. Becoming More Effective As a Therapist Featuring Use of Self (EP85.WS3b) (<i>the 10-minute vignette discussed in chapter 6 is extracted from this CD</i>) 6. Group, Individual, or Family therapy I – V. Satir, M. Goulding, T. Szasz, and C. Whitaker as panellists (EP85.P2) 		Purchased from The Milton H. Erickson Foundation, Inc.

Table 4.2 continues:

B. Audiovisual materials:		
1985 /86	<p>“In Her Own Voice...” Virginia Satir 1985/86</p> <p>-10 audio CDs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. The Role of the Therapist/ the Role of the Client – R. May, C. Rogers, T. Szasz, and V. Satir as panellists (EP85.P12) 8. Case Discussion Panel – J. Haley, V. Satir, L. Wolberg and J. Wolpe as panellists (EP85.CD4) 9. Supervision Panel – M. Goulding, R. Laing, V. Satir and J. Wolpe as panellists (EP85.CD4) 10. The Tools of the Therapist (IC86.K2) 	Purchased from The Milton H. Erickson Foundation, Inc.
1987	Virginia Satir: Fundamental Principles of Therapy – Expanding the Therapeutic Situation Issues for Therapists A Lifespan Learning Institute conference - DVD	Purchased from Lifespan Learning Institute
1989	<p>Virginia Satir: Families & Relationships - 6 DVDs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family relations (code: 728-DVD) 2. Endings and beginnings [of relationships] (727-DVD) 3. Forgiving parents (729-DVD) 4. Self worth (730-DVD) 5. Divorced parents & children (726-DVD) 6. Blended Families (725-DVD) 	Purchased from NLP Comprehensive
1999	Family Therapy with the Experts – Satir Therapy with Jean McLendon (Video cassette tape)	Purchased from Allyn & Bacon Professional
2000	Virginia Satir Revisited - An Appreciation and Understanding of her work by Ramon G. Corrales - DVD	Purchased from Golden Triad Films
C. Book chapters, journal articles and books: more than 200 items. Please refer to the reference list for the ones which were cited in this paper.		

Re-positioning Data Collection and Data Analysis

As mentioned before, I had started to code, and in fact, analysed the data while coding. Even though I began to have doubts about my methodology, I considered a microanalysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) of the data starting by coding the transcripts, a necessary step in any qualitative inquiry. Initially, I wanted to use computer assisted means to go through the coding process but was discouraged by the supervisors, because they were not convinced of the

appropriateness of the devices for this project. I then used the combination of open and axial coding approaches (Minichiello, Sullivan, Greenwood, & Axford, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), and went through the transcripts line by line, and word by word to locate the emerging concepts and then linked the like codes to a related category (Minichiello, et al., 1999). This was very time consuming, and at times hectic, but very helpful in teasing out major concepts. I spent almost four years listening repeatedly to the recorded interviews, coded most of the transcripts and organized the concepts (perceptions of individual participants) under some themes and grouped them under categories, and kept a cumulating record of ‘themes so far’ for my own reference. Table 4.3 is an extract of my draft categories and themes as of 2007.

Table 4.3 An extract of the draft categories and themes as of 2007

Categories	Themes	Original source of concepts (quotes – too many to be included)
Beliefs/philosophy/ principles of supervision	There is always Hope Her value system is more important than her techniques Trusting the Process A ‘super’ vision is needed – look for universal processes Use of Self, Ensuring Safety	- <i>hope is primary to her therapy (Dawn p.1)</i> - <i>the essence of hope has always been very profound in Virginia’s system (Pearl p.1).....</i>
Supervisory relationship: Relational qualities (how she relates with the students)	Treating them as equals – Congruence – Being direct – Being tough with her students – Working towards their full Use of Self	
Techniques used in supervision	Working in triads – Using metaphors – Using a lot of action – Finding the root in the family-of- origin – Focusing on the Whole person of the supervisee – Using herself fully –	

Along the course of my data analysis, I was faced with challenges to shift my focus from finding what could be learnt from Satir's supervision to finding what was 'wrong' about her and her approach, in order not to appear biased. I perceived such recommendations as disapproving of my work, though trusted that the good intention behind was to help me broaden my perspectives and to be 'academic'. At the same time, I did not want to make deliberate effort of fault finding, in the belief that, like all other themes being researched, the weaknesses of Satir and her supervision practices will naturally emerge. I felt deflated, stupid and depressed in this 'academic' endeavour. On the other hand, I felt excited and encouraged as a supervisor because I was inspired by the research process and was constantly discovering and trying out new ways to practise more effectively. This dejected and somewhat schizophrenic state was eating me up, and from March 2007 to February 2008, I took one year suspension to restore my energy and to earn money for the rest of this journey.

The break worked; I resumed my study with renewed energy and I continued to analyse the themes while I tirelessly continued searching for the "right" methodology. I remembered one of my supervisors commented, "It's 2008 and you are still not sure about your methodology?" In fact, I already had found Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and had started re-organizing my thoughts, but not feeling safe enough to share my 'pre-mature' thoughts with my supervisors with a self-induced worry that my academic ability would be doubted and challenged. Though I had drafted the methodology chapter in 2004 and revised it numerous times, I still had not owned it. I just could not allow myself to live in the incongruity of just fitting something into a frame for the sake of academia. Thanks to my perseverance, from the thread of phenomenology, which was recommended by one of my supervisors, I found Gadamer through Husserl and Heidegger. I was enchanted by Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and underwent a meticulous literature

review around this area, which led to my affirmation of the validity of what I had been doing in my “professional life”. What I did was in fact “academic”! I adjusted my course of analysis and embraced the other side of my “split personality”.

I engaged myself into integrating my ‘professional’ development into my academic endeavour. The ‘formal’ hermeneutic process was based on my pre-conception of the identified categories and themes, the drafted stories of four of the participants, three separate draft chapters on results of supervision experiences of the participants from three different settings and other relevant written, audio and video sources as the pool of texts. I then went through an iterative, dialectic process of interpreting concepts and testing them out by applying them into my supervision, or reflecting on my experiences of being supervised, then refining my understanding and interpretation by going back to the texts to look at the whole; and then back to the concept as a part so as to understand the whole better.

Though some researchers use the terms data collection and data analysis in their hermeneutic studies (Cohen, et al., 2000; Fleming, Gaidys, & Robb, 2003), others maintain that data are not collected but rather generated or evolved through the process of research (Koch & Harrington, 1998; Whitehead, 2004). In this study, I choose to use the term text, instead of data. The set of 15 interview transcripts and the preliminary coding summary were treated as the texts. The adjusted analysis process included in-depth interpretation of these texts through a rigorous dialectical process of questioning, dialoguing, understanding and applying, which enabled new understanding to take place.

The thirteen interview transcripts of twelve participants (one being interviewed in 2004 and 2006) were completed in 2006. One was transcribed in 2007. They formed one source of

information. In 2008, I re-interviewed one participant and started to email others in light of capturing their narratives of encountering Satir. These three pieces of information (one transcript and two email responses) were added to the original set of texts. Altogether, fifteen participants' descriptions of their experiences of being supervised by Virginia Satir are used in this study. I started to dialogue with some participants in 2008 through the means I mentioned above. These dialogic process formed part of the genuine conversations between me and the co-interpreters; yet most of the genuine conversations were between me and the texts. The outcome of this hermeneutic process is presented in Chapter 5.

As mentioned above, the other rich pool of texts rested within the written, audio or video records by Satir or about Satir's approach which I have been collecting all along the research journey. I immersed myself into this pool of materials and allowed the emergence of 'the texts' which related to the themes that I had identified from the transcripts and went through the hermeneutic process described above. During the process of reviewing the audio and video records, three short pieces of Satir's demonstrations with supervision elements were identified. A ten-minute session from an audio CD was selected for interpretation in this study (see the transcript in Appendix 4) because it presented a complete supervision process. The results of the interpretation are presented in Chapter 6.

Re-positioning Participants

Researcher as a participant

I repositioned myself as a participative-researcher, who not only joined in the interpretive understanding process, but also consciously, not just naturally, applied what was understood at each 'finitude' into my practice as a supervisor.

Research participants as co-investigators

The participants, i.e., the thirteen interviewees and the two email respondents, were also repositioned as co-interpreters and were invited to engage in the process of ‘genuine conversation’, when I identified questions about some general issues concerning Satir’s philosophy of practice. A detailed description will be presented in Chapter 5. The ‘conversation’ took place through emailing, which was the most preferred way of communication by those participants who were continuously involved in the interpretive process. Since only six of them responded to my questions, I extended the circle of co-interpreters by sending my questions (in Appendix 5) to more people who had learnt directly from Virginia Satir. Nine had responded to my questions, altogether four responded to all five emails. The purpose of recruiting more co-interpreters was to increase the rigour (to be discussed in chapter 7) in the dialoguing process through opening to and being challenged by different views and interpretations. This will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 5.

Using reflecting team to enrich understanding

The purpose of having a reflecting team was to prompt me, the key interpreter, to reflect on different viewpoints and to mediate between the distances or different horizons so as to come up with a “good gestalt” (Kvale, 1996, p. 48) of understanding.

In order to open up more possibilities and to include perspective from my own culture, I invited eleven people to form a reflecting team in order to open up to a diversity of horizons, which in turn facilitated me to dialogue with the texts differently. These sixteen people, who had very limited information about the research, came from a diversity of backgrounds, indeed facilitated me to “grow on the basis of being different” (Satir, et al., 1991, p. 17).

The task of the reflecting team was to review and share their views about one or two interview transcripts as their time allowed, and about the transcript of Virginia Satir's ten-minute consultation session, which I used as a text for an in-depth interpretation in Chapter 6. The source of material is from the public domain, and the permission of usage was obtained from the owner of the intellectual property (see Appendix 6). Besides sharing their views about the texts, responding to my questions emerging from the dialectical process through emails (see appendix 7) they also met as a group twice to review the three identified audio and video recordings in light of facilitating me to access more horizons.

Foregrounding my Pre-conception for Deeper Understanding

I have learnt to appreciate the differences arising from these dialogues, especially the tension induced by the polarity of familiarity and strangeness (Gadamer, 1993). Through mediating between the familiar (my own understanding) and the strange (others' understanding), the past (my pre-conception) and the present (other's conception), and between the part (the particular point being picked up) and the whole (the whole text, or the philosophy of Satir's approach, or even the historic background) I discovered that "the true meaning will emerge fully" (Gadamer, 1993, p. 298). I urged myself to "remain open to the meaning of the other person or text" (p. 269) and to address the differences and/or the distances by mediating between them. This is very important in a hermeneutic process because it allows me to stay in the "true locus of hermeneutics" (Gadamer, 1993, p. 295) and enables me to come to another level of understanding. This mediation process was also prominent in the application process of the hermeneutic circle, where I found myself responding spontaneously to the different horizons of my supervisees. Below is an example illustrating how the mediation process between me, a

reflecting team member, Ida, and the text; and how it helped me understand the text differently.

The text was:

Her [Satir's] idea of a therapist is not to give them [the family] solutions but to give them a kind of enlightenment, if you will, in a picture, symbolic form which is with the language of the unconscious, so they can see on a deeper, unconscious level what is going on with them. And seeing is empowering, and they would come up with ideas. Really, if the therapist is not surprised by the way the family resolves their issues and beginning to work towards solving their issues, then the therapist is, may be, not really freeing their inner healer... and not skilful enough to free the inner healer in the person, and not believing enough in the inner healer of the family. (Transcript of Dawn's interview)

This viewpoint was completely new to me, so there was already a distance for me to mediate. I went through some hermeneutic processes of interpretation, understanding and application and came to this understanding of the above 120-word excerpt, before I read one of the reflecting team members, Ida's response. My interpretation was: First, Satir wanted her supervisees not to work towards solving the family's issues but to enlighten them by reaching their unconscious level through pictures or symbols. Second, there is an inner healer in everybody; and the therapist needs to free their inner healer in order to be able to enlighten the family to free theirs.

My questions were: How can a therapist be able to do what Satir expected? What would help them reach that level of competence?

Ida's perception was: A therapist is not a person that's free from his/her own problems, but is a person that's willing to learn and grow and be opened to deal with his/her own unresolved issue. She did not comment on the enlightenment, neither did she commented about freeing the inner healer. Yet, Ida's view reminded me to go back to the 'whole', i.e., Satir's practice philosophy.

Satir urged therapists to allow themselves to be vulnerable and to reach one's Higher Self by filling the gaps of the vulnerable, fragmented self (Gardner, 1978; Kramer, 1995b). All participants of this study had experienced being empowered through Satir's supervision, and only one mentioned her friend's unsatisfactory supervision experience. This uncommon situation created a great 'temporal distance' for me to contemplate, and in the process of dialoguing back and forth with other texts, and coming back to the original one, I came to a new understanding. In Pearl's transcript: "*Supervision essentially is kind of a gentle guidance towards discovery*", and "*Her [Satir's] supervision always started out ... with recognizing something positive that you did..... she built from a foundation of positiveness..... there was always a foundation of acknowledgment, trust and support*". Martha's: "*She would put me into situations where I not only have to deal with the star but with myself*". Henry's: "*It was really done in a very loving, non-abrasive way... so it was safe to bring it [the vulnerability] to her*".

My understanding was enhanced, and I renewed my understanding [added in italics]: First, Satir wanted her supervisees not to work towards directly solving the family's issues but instead to be curious of how they handle or solve their problems, and to gently guide them through a process of discovery. This process originates from the information the therapist gathers from the family and feeds back to them through presentations of pictures or symbols (especially through sculpting) in the light of bringing the family to a deeper, unconscious level and be enlightened. Second, there is an inner healer in everybody; and the therapists can free their inner healer through their own personal growth process of facing their vulnerability and taking charge of their own choices; this process can also be facilitated through supervision with the supervisor's gentle guidance towards discovery with a loving, non-judgmental and non-abrasive attitude. Therapists who have freed their inner healers are more able to see and

acknowledge the inner healer in their clients and to facilitate them to free theirs.

The above is one of the numerous hermeneutic circles, which took me through exciting processes of renewing my understanding of Satir's practice philosophy in supervision.

The Texts for Interpretation and the Interpretive Process

Two sets of texts were being interpreted: The interview transcripts and the vignette of Satir's ten-minute supervision session. The interpretation of the transcripts started prior to interpreting the vignette, but finished after it because I decided to revisit the 'finitude' of understanding, and to challenge myself with new questions which arose during the process of interpreting the ten-minute session. This last hermeneutic circle had led me to understand some of the transcripts differently and reach a new fusion of horizons.

The iterative process of questioning, dialoguing, understanding and applying went on throughout the process in light of improving understanding. Practice had actually started before 2006, without much deliberation of treating it as part of the 'research'. The formulation of the hermeneutic circle (described earlier) took place in 2008 and was refined in 2009 when I came to an understanding of what I had been doing and what Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics meant. Since then, the hermeneutic process took on a more scholastic path with deliberately organized 'genuine conversations'.

The hermeneutic process has come to a 'finitude' at this moment, and the process of understanding clinical supervision practice and the philosophy of Satir and the like will continue; more cycles of understanding with fusion of horizons at different points will take place in the years to come.

Ethical Considerations

Most of my participants are well known teachers and authors of books and articles about Satir's approach so it was of utmost importance to abide by the ethical guidelines and keep third parties from being identified through the information or discussion presented. Ethics approval was obtained before undertaking this research through the University of New England Human Ethics Committee (Approval No. HE03/185 valid until 30/06/2007). Prior to their participation, and to ensure ethical research, each participant gave their written informed consent to indicate their agreement to be part of the study and for the conversation to be audio-taped. I also reminded participants that their identity would not be disclosed and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. A new ethics approval was obtained (Approval No. HE10/004 valid until 12/02/2011) because of the need for follow up conversations through emails.

Reflectivity and Reflexivity

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is a reflective process. Every move in the hermeneutic process is a result of reflection and reflexion. Here, my definition of reflection is the mediation between the whole and the part, the past and the present, others and myself; while reflexion refers to acknowledging my own prejudices, and locating myself in the historic hermeneutic situation and the sensitivity of each application which signifies a historic finitude. One cannot demand a philosophical hermeneutic to apply a certain methodology to ensure objectivity of the research, because of its ontological nature. Philosophical hermeneutics is not methodology. Gadamer (1993) defended:

It is a naive misunderstanding to fear that the hermeneutic reflection I practice will mean a weakening of scientific objectivity. ... They all mistake the reflective claim of my analyses and thereby also the meaning of application. ... They fail to recognize that reflection about practice is not methodology. The subject of my

reflection is the procedure of the sciences themselves and the restriction of objectivity that is to be discerned in them. It seems to me that nothing less than scientific integrity, to which the philosopher must be accountable, demands that we acknowledge the productive meaning of such restriction- in the form of productive prejudices, for example (p. 556).

“Philosophical hermeneutics concludes that understanding is in fact only possible when one brings one’s own presuppositions into play!” (Gadamer & Palmer, 2007, p. 62) Therefore hermeneutic reflection demands the productive contribution of the interpreter’s reflexivity and ownership on his/her subjective biases and prejudices. It is clear that to “bracket out” these biases is not only impossible but also counter-productive to the hermeneutic process. The best use of these biases is to foreground them and to use them as a base for further understanding. Besides, the natural and necessary distance between time periods, cultures, and between persons, provides the possibilities for mediating through the tension of differentness and can constitute to richer understanding. This temporal distance gives me a space to re-visit the text with openness, and to be challenged to put my prejudices at stake. If I can grasp this moment and create a productive conversation between myself and the text, reflectivity and reflexivity are already manifested.

Issues of Rigour and Validity

The hermeneutic process is, by nature, a rigorous process. In *Truth and Method* Gadamer (1993) describes:

The hermeneutical experience also has its own rigour: that of uninterrupted listening. A thing does present itself to the hermeneutical experience without an effort special to it, namely that of “being negative toward itself.” A person who is trying to understand a text has to keep something at a distance – namely everything that suggests itself, on the basis of his own prejudices, as the meaning expected – as soon as it is rejected by the sense of the text itself. (p. 465)

This hermeneutical process of understanding demands rigour and deliberation. Reflexivity brings rigour (Koch & Harrington, 1998). In this study, the process of locating the texts, recruiting of participants, interviewing, the transcription quality, searching for a matching methodology, and ongoing conversations, whereby I developed codes using words of participants, kept an audit trail whenever a ‘historic finitude’ of a concept was reached; and the dialectic nature of the entire process all ensures rigour in this research.

Again, it is inappropriate to request an objective measure for validity, and the primary validity check can be that with the participants themselves (Parse, 2001) because the validity of hermeneutics lies in its dialogic nature (Saukko, 2005, p. 344). For Gadamer (1993), validity could also be reflected through application, which is essential to the structure of all understanding (p. 555). Hence, application tests the quality of understanding, and can determine whether further investigation into the subject matter is needed. Every understanding starts and ends with the interpreter’s subjective experience. There is no need to aim at objectivity or coming to an absolute truth; instead, the hermeneutic process depends greatly upon the subjective judgment of whether or not the understanding is valid, through cycles of application, questioning and interpreting in order to reach the historic finitude of the process.

Nonetheless, the ‘historic finitude’, i.e., the draft result chapters were sent to participants or reflecting team members to enhance the validity of the interpretation and understanding of the texts. The draft chapter of interpreting participants’ supervision experience were sent to three participants who were able to spare the time to ‘audit’ it, and some revisions were made after dialoguing with their feedback and coming to a renewed horizon of understanding at some parts of the chapter. The draft chapter of the interpretation of the vignette were sent to members of the

reflecting team for their feedback and seven out of eleven responded. It was almost unanimously agreed that the final interpretation of the vignette had taken them to a new horizon of understanding of Satir's supervision practice, which was indeed a co-discovery process that all of them had contributed.

Conclusion

The process of searching for an appropriate methodology for this study provided me with ample opportunities to get to learn different approaches of inquiry by applying them into my project, and finally discovered Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. I was able to acknowledge that the major limitation of the initial research design lies in my inadequacy in research knowledge and experience, and worked hard to fill the gap. With my genuine passion to learn and to explore, I had not settled for 'getting the paper finished' and fitted myself into a research methodology that did not resonate with me, my effort paid off. I am pleased with what I have achieved. There may be some flaws and other limitations that I am still not aware of right now, and I am open to learn from them.

In the next two chapters, I present what I learnt from the natural and structured hermeneutic process of inquiring into Virginia Satir's supervision practice as experienced by her first generation students and from interpreting a ten-minute session of hers.

Chapter 5

Understanding Satir's Supervision through Interpreting Supervisees' Experiences

Introduction

This chapter presents my present horizon of understanding of Satir's supervision through the experiences of her first generation students. In the interpretation process, I followed Gadamer's (1993) advice and tried to make her "arguments even stronger" (p. 292) by applying what I interpreted into my practice. Through application, my interpretation was challenged by the questions that arose, and I discovered what Gadamer (1993) called the *temporal distance*, i.e., the discrepancy between my previous understanding and the new discovery of meanings. I also started dialoguing between my pre-conception and the texts, as well as the 'parts' (a concept) and the 'whole' (her practice philosophy). This cyclical hermeneutic journey of interpreting, understanding and applying led me through many 'ah-ha' moments and different stages of fusion of horizons till I came to the present 'gestalt of understanding' (Kvale, 1996). Below, I present my understanding of the supervision contexts and the summary of supervision experiences in each context, the personal experience of the supervisees, Satir's supervision philosophy and major supervision strategies as well as what we can learn from these experiences.

Amazingly, I found all four areas of my guiding research questions: (1) guiding principles and philosophy; (2) supervision outcome; (3) skills, techniques and strategies used; (4) and the 'use of selves' in supervision (presented on p. 8 of this thesis) were answered even though I had totally forgotten about them during the hermeneutic process.

The Contexts of the Participants' Supervision Experiences

The fifteen participants experienced Satir's supervision in four major contexts, and five of them were supervised by Satir in more than one context. Below is a summary of each of these supervision settings, the different objectives of each setting and the most common experience in each context. More details about the participants' experiences and an analysis of Satir's supervision philosophy and major strategies will be discussed in later sections.

Satir's Earliest Formal Supervision Practice at the Mental Research Institute

The earliest supervision experience reported in the interviews was in the Mental Research Institute where one participant of this study was supervised by Satir as a trainee in a family therapy course. Though it was in the early 60s, live supervision through the one-way mirror was already practiced. The sessions were also taped so that the trainees could discuss with Satir and/or with peers. Supervision was part of the training and sometimes two family therapy sessions were going on simultaneously and Satir was going back and forth between the two observation rooms supervising both therapists and teaching the observing teams at the same time.

The participant admitted that because it occurred such a long time in the past he could not remember many details, however he thought that her approach was not fully developed. He repeatedly commented that "she hadn't got it all out yet". In a way, this period could be seen as a 'trial' period for Satir in refining her family therapy practice and formulating her supervision philosophy. Nonetheless, he was very impressed with Satir's vision, courage and confidence in doing what she did at that time; and he remained Satir's student, friend and colleague, witnessing her robust growth in the 70s and 80s. His remark "I feel sorry that Virginia is not here to lead us to world peace" still rings in my head every now and then. Since my focus was on supervision, I

overlooked following up on that point during the interview, so I do not really know what he meant by the comment. However given that Peace is a theme of Satir's approach it may have been worthy to follow this thread and to have explored more about what he meant.

Satir's experience as a supervisor of family therapists may have started at the Mental Research Institute though her subsequent development did not seem to lead her to developing into a 'formal' or 'regular' supervisor of therapists, but rather most of her supervision practices were tied up with a training program like the one discussed in the next section. Because only one participant had the experience of being supervised in this context, the text for developing more dialogue for further interpretation and understanding how Satir supervised there and then is rather limited. However, when I studied the transcript and asked myself how this supervision practice can be improved, I found myself disagreeing with supervising two therapy sessions at the same time. Though I have not heard or read of other contexts in which a supervisor would practise supervising two therapy sessions simultaneously, this piece of information can still serve to remind supervisors and counsellors of the importance of being fully present with their supervisees and clients in the sessions.

Supervision in the Satir International Summer Institute / the Process Communities

Background – supervising workshop trainers

Virginia Satir ran annual month long workshops, which she called Process Community (formally named the Satir International Summer Institute), under the organization of the Avanta Network (renamed as the Virginia Satir Global Network in 2007) in Crested Butte, Colorado each summer from 1982 to 1988. However, she did not make it for the 1988 program because of being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and needing to go home for medical treatment. She

asked Jean McLendon to substitute for her as the Director of training; McLendon also headed the last process community organized by Avanta in 1989, the year following Satir's death.

Prior to the summer institutes in Crested Butte, Satir had already led month-long workshops in different places in North America and in Europe. The first process community I located was the one in Glenwood Springs, Colorado organized by Laura Dodson and her partners with the Evergreen Institute, Denver, Colorado in 1971 (Dodson, personal communication, 2008). There was one in Montreal, Quebec, Canada in 1980 (Bitter, 1987; Wu, 2006). Another one in Utah was organized by Mary Jo Bulbrook in 1981, whereby Satir started to have interns to work in triads to help facilitating the process (Suarez, personal communication, 2008). Satir called each of these workshops a Process Community because she believed that it was a "living laboratory" which provided the space for people who wanted to learn and identify with the "human validation model" to experience the process of "becoming more fully human" through being and living together (Satir, 1983e).

In each process community, Satir recruited ninety workshop participants, and had three triads of trainers to assist her. She would teach the entire group of ninety people in the morning and then break the group up into three smaller groups, of thirty participants each, to be led by a teaching triad. In the evening, she would have group supervision with all the trainers. Two years after she had started this annual Process Community at Crested Butte, she started the Module two (or advanced level II) training for thirty participants who wanted to understand her work better, not only through experiencing it, but through conceptualizing it so that they could apply it better to their own clinical practices in workshops, groups, therapy and in their teaching at universities. Satir started the program with the group of participants one week before the

Module I Process Community and then would leave the group to the teaching triad formed by Jane Gerber, Maria Gomori and John Banmen for the remaining three weeks. This triad remained the trainers for module II until 1989.

Ambiguity concerning supervision

In the contracts of the trainers of both modules (retrieved from Virginia Satir Archive, Department of Special Collections, Davidson Library, University of California, Santa Barbara), it was stated that "As Director of Training, Virginia is pleased to have you as one of the training team"; there was no job description and nothing about supervision was mentioned. The contract stipulated that all trainers had to meet together for five days with Satir prior to the workshop during the "staff preparation time", and for the two-day "review and evaluation" after the workshop.

Participants disagree with regard to whether a clearly defined supervisory relationship existed in this setting. Their official relationship with Satir was a relationship between the director of training and trainers. Yet, Joshua remarked that with Satir, it was a very strong teacher-student hierarchy, though for him "it was not the controlling kind of hierarchy but you know who the boss is". Maybe Satir came from the position where she was to "be seen as a teacher of how to become more fully human" (Kramer, 1995c, p. 177); she might have engaged in the teacher's role almost all the time and thus she also took up this role with her team of trainers, who had all been her students, in this setting.

Thirteen of participants in this study had worked as trainers in the Process Communities in Crested Butte at different times from 1982 to 1989. Their perception about supervision varied; most participants treated part of the preparation and evaluation meetings, and the evening

debriefing sessions as supervision. Pearl recalled, "I think my supervision, if I call it that, with Virginia flowed out of whatever the training was at that time." Christina's description was that they "sat at Virginia's feet and had supervision in terms of bringing issues to her", while Susan maintained that "the supervision at the Process Community was more of a sitting together and sharing how the training went, and at times with Virginia suggesting how we could have done this or that". Besides the evening sessions, some trainers also shared that they went to Satir with their own triad and sought supervision from her. All recalled that they longed for the evening sessions because a lot of exciting things happened there; and they were there to share, to get validated, to be challenged and to come up with different innovative ideas.

Supervision experiences of the trainers

Since most participants agreed that they were supervised by Satir in their capacity as trainers in this context, and since the experiences they shared reflected that Satir had literally performed as a supervisor by "enhancing the professional functioning of the more junior person(s), and monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the clients" (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004, p. 8), I decided to acknowledge what happened in those sessions as Satir providing group supervision to the participants in their capacity as workshop trainers, and went ahead with my interpretive processes.

Every year, Satir had all the trainers work in triads (groups of three), because she believed that we all "came into this world as part of an original, or primary, triad: mother, father and child" (Satir, et al., 1991, p. 19), and we develop most of our automatic ways of coping, perceiving and relating through the early experiences of the interactions within this primary triad, especially under stress situations. She also believed by working closely in a triad, some

dysfunctional coping patterns would be triggered, and because people have an internal drive to becoming more fully human, these triggered episodes could enable triad members to learn and grow. Though most participants gained some good learning experiences with their triad, Satir was not a good model in terms of working in a triad; details will be discussed in the section under witnessing Satir's weaknesses and incongruity.

Four commented that Satir treated trainers in the two modules differently and that this caused some tension among them. It should not be surprising that a supervisor treats supervisees at different stages of their professional development differently (Worthington, 1987). However, Satir seemed to have missed or even ignored reflecting on and addressing the tension among supervisees, and making use of the processes for learning and growing.

Joshua alleged that she treated Module I trainers as students, and the Module II trainers as graduates, or sometimes even colleagues. These two groups of trainers did share different views about their supervision experiences with Satir. Module I trainers expressed that the sessions helped them to work through difficulties they encountered with their groups, the conflicts among the triad members, or conflict between the triad and their group. As June described, Satir would "focus on it... was very present and very direct, and very much focused on searching out all the information she could get and then asking each person to give their input, and then empowering us to find the answer." Participants shared that Satir used a lot of role playing and 'sculpting' in her supervision. She would approach the issue from a systemic perspective and very often related the situation to the family of origin of the workshop participants or of the trainers wherever appropriate. Most participants agreed that Satir was always very present with them, and her attitude was very loving, non-abrasive, very affirming, positive and hopeful. She was

also described as direct and at times tough, yet they claimed that they felt safe to bring their problems to her because of her genuineness and her love behind her toughness. However, the Module II trainers shared that Satir's supervision with them was more like consultation and more collegial; and at times they acted as her support system and developed a very strong professional connection and friendship with her.

Supervising Family Therapists in a Research Project

Background

Four participants, Joyce, Norman, Susan and Ruth, recalled being part of the team and three of them were supervised by Satir as family therapists in a research project conducted by the Family Institute of Virginia in USA (under the direction of Joan Winter) in 1981 (Satir, 1983b), to study the effectiveness of family therapy with delinquent youths and their families (total 249 families) referred by the state of Virginia juvenile justice system (Winter, 1993).

The fundamental aim of the research was to evaluate the capability of family treatment to keep children out of institutions and jails by working with the family system. A secondary aim was to study the efficacy of family therapy to help juvenile offenders and their families improve the quality and functional level of their personal and interpersonal lives. (Winter, 1993, p. 79)

It also was an “unprecedented opportunity of comparing experienced therapists or supervisors, personally selected and trained by three exemplars in the field of family therapy: Murray Bowen, Jay Haley and Virginia Satir” (Winter, 1993, p. 5). These three masters did not work directly with the families. They were to design a treatment program for the target families, and to train and supervise their selected therapists.

Satir selected six therapists, three men and three women, and three other people as part of the team for this project. The other three included a physician to participate as a co-therapist and

consultant in case the family members responded with psychosomatic symptoms. The eighth member worked with Satir as she contacted the juvenile justice system and acted as a liaison between Satir and the director of the project. The ninth member looked after the logistics of providing support for the team (Satir, 1983b). The liaison person also took up the therapeutic work with three of the families. Four of these nine people took part in this study; three were interviewed by me and one corresponded with me through emails. Three of them also took part in dialoguing with me through emails at a later stage.

In hindsight, as two participants commented, the comparative nature of the study had put Satir and the therapists in a stressful situation and hence challenged the supervision process. Ruth stated “We are talking about a pressure cooker. ... You put it in there and in 5 minutes everything has to cook and come out right” to describe the situation. In this context, supervision was mostly done in group settings accompanied by short individual supervision sessions; extra individual sessions would be offered upon the request of the therapist. Therapists were also encouraged to seek help among each other. The supervision experiences recalled in this context by all participants, except Susan, were positive, helpful and inspiring. Though Susan also found Satir's supervision helpful and inspiring, she commented that Satir was cruel to one therapist who was facing some personal challenges. In addition, all participants remembered and described an episode whereby Satir's disappointment was obvious. It will be presented later in this section under the heading of *Satir's disappointment*.

The therapeutic assignment and supervision arrangement

Since all the families lived in the State of Virginia, the team members had to travel to Virginia from other states. The treatment plan was designed such that the team went together to

Richmond, Virginia, for a four-week period and treated all the sixty-three families intensively, then broke for four weeks and went back for a ten-day follow-up (Winter, 1993). Each of the therapists had to take 10 families, while the liaison person took the extra three families. They provided each family with six therapy sessions in four weeks and then went back after the four-week break to do four more sessions in two weeks. Each of the family therapy sessions was videotaped and Satir would watch the videos with the therapists as a group to supervise and comment on what they did.

The therapy setting and therapeutic intervention

All the family therapy sessions took place in a large rented house, and all the team members also lived there during the intensive treatment weeks. Satir believed that such arrangement facilitated consultation and co-therapy, as well as allowing therapists to maintain ongoing relationship with each other. It also gave the participating families a home-like, welcoming and relaxed context which Satir believed to be “a valuable adjunct to therapy” (Satir, 1983b, p. 263). Satir remarked that though the therapists applied the methods and skills she taught, they all have their own styles. She respected their individual styles. For her, flexibility in doing whatever was needed at the time was of utmost importance, and she claimed, “We did whatever had to be done to get families in and to help them grow” (Satir, 1983b, p. 264). Her primary aim was to find out the most appropriate means to help these families with at least one delinquent child, so that this experience or treatment modality could be replicated elsewhere.

Apart from the therapy sessions conducted by the therapists, Satir conducted weekend workshops which were open to all parties concerned with the project, including the families in treatment, probation officers, judges, and other interested persons (Satir, 1983b; Winter, 1993).

These workshops were attended by two to three hundred people and lasted four to six hours. Satir contended that “the thrust of these weekend workshops was to learn how to live better within a family” (Satir, 1983b, p. 265).

Satir also sent each family a copy of her book *Peoplemaking*, so that these families, who had not met her nor heard of her before, could have an impression that they would not be blamed because Satir contended that her books blame no one – certainly not parents. She wanted this to give them a better feeling about coming to group sessions. She also believed that these group learning experiences for families would enrich the individual family therapy sessions (Satir, 1983b) conducted by her supervisees.

Therapists experienced being trusted and empowered

When the therapists were invited to take part in the research, it was described as an experience of recognition, anticipation, anxiety and excitement. However the sense of being trusted was common to all of them. Susan commented that Satir recruited and selected the people doing the “therapy part” for the research out of two to three hundred people that she knew in 1980, and “she did have ideas of who she wanted”. The message behind this statement was ‘She knows me and she trusts me!’ Norman also appreciated Satir’s choice and remarked, “She was matching personalities and personal traits and experiences as more important than any set of degrees or therapeutic experience”. He recalled Satir telling him how she had chosen these six therapists:

I know something about families who have delinquent kids. And in those families there is a lot of anger. And I know the six of you and that you all handle anger very well; you will not be blown away by any anger. I also know that there is a lot of heaviness in those families and each of you has a great sense of humour and you will inject some lightness into your sessions with them. I also know that each of you in your own lives have been delinquent, rebellious in one way or another

and you have come out successful. I want that kind of a person to be able to relate to these families for they have such little hope for success. (Norman, personal communication, 19 July 2009)

The realization of 'she knows who I am and she trusts that I can do the job well!' was very empowering to the participants.

Satir's trust in her supervisees was also manifested in her toughness with them in supervision. Susan believed that "at some level... maybe she felt less the need to give us positive feedback every time we met, but moved into what we could do differently". Ruth commented that "when she wanted to be tough and she wanted to tell you what she thought was wrong with you, believe me, she went right to the core, and she believed that you can stand on your own two feet too." Norman recalled Satir watching their video tapes with them and commenting on what they did wrong or could do differently; and he asked her to tell them something good that they were doing "and she exclaimed - to paraphrase her - she said, 'oh, you are doing wonderful work, I am just trying to make you perfect'. We all laughed. There was a great deal of playful humour among us." It is apparent that there was mutual trust between Satir and her supervisees; they trusted Satir enough to raise this question, and the unspoken part of Satir's answer was probably, "I trust you! I trust that you know you are good, and I also believe that you can be better. There is no need to spell it out! You are mature enough to validate yourselves".

Learning from Satir's overt disappointment

The participants' very first group supervision experience with Satir in this context was witnessing Satir's disappointment when she saw their therapy video tapes. Joyce recalled that when Satir reviewed their video tapes "She was at a loss for words... very surprised to see the

video tapes... and from her perspective, we did not look like therapists who had been trained by her... it was the worst thing she could have said.” Norman put it in a little lighter tone by saying, “the greatest critique she had of us was that we were sitting too long in our chairs. Within 20 minutes she wanted us up on our feet... sculpting... and ... to be active with more than just our mouths.” Susan’s comment was “the one thing I remember her confronting us (about) was that she felt we did not move enough in our session, we stayed sitting down too long.” Ruth believed that Satir was also saying, “I have trained you to get up, to move, to be connected, to use your eyes, your ears, your touch, your smell, everything, in order to make changes; and if you’re just sitting there... [change] isn’t going to happen.”

They all remembered this experience so vividly that there were not only images of the incident, but also some affects attached to it. They were shocked because this was the first open criticism that they had ever experienced with Satir. Joyce remarked that “She stumbled, she stammered unlike Virginia”, and Susan maintained that “This is the one area where I feel she did not do as good a job as she could have. I feel in part because it was not clear what it is that she wanted or expected from us.” Nonetheless, when they went out to do the next family sessions, they “looked like monkeys” as Joyce described. Though in some ways, they were over doing and “wanted to do it right” (from transcript of Joyce), they had all learnt a profound lesson that *Satir’s approach emphasizes connecting life energy through whole body experiences*. None of them perceived being humiliated or degraded in that experience; though they were shocked by this new experience of being confronted in a group setting. Maybe they all knew Satir very well. For her, “Anything that humiliates people, I won’t do. I will work every way I can to help people to open up. ... You can confront in a REAL way [with dignity, respect and congruence] ... most of my confrontation is like this” (Satir quoted in Starr, 1993a, p. 13).

In retrospect, Susan believed that all the stress of being studied and compared; and the fact that they were all away from their own offices and places of comfort; plus the point that this was the first supervision session might have made it more emotional. She recalled that the supervision was not that intense later on, and she believed that Satir did realize at some level that she had been too harsh. For her, when she looked back at the overall experience, she felt that all of them, including Satir, might have taken the comparison part of the research project too heavily but had not openly talked about it. Yet for her it was a good learning and an esteem building experience.

Learning from an unsatisfactory supervisory relationship

The subtle insights mentioned above might not be picked up by less experienced therapists or therapists with low self-confidence. Hence the toughness could jeopardize the supervision process or be harmful to the therapist's development. Though this group of therapists selected by Satir was seemingly mature enough to joke about it, individual differences among them also existed. For one of the therapists, the supervision experience was so intimidating that she confided to Susan that "all her confidence in her as a therapist was gone", and after the research project, she left Satir and never returned. While Susan expected Satir to have been able to pick up on her peer's predicament, she also believed that Satir felt it was really up to the supervisees to ask for help or to stand up to what they were feeling. Satir's major goal for people was to have their "third birth" (discussed in chapter 2) and to become their own choice maker, so Susan was probably right. Nonetheless, Satir's failure to notice this supervisee's condition was regretful; her insensitivity might have hampered the supervisee's personal and professional growth.

Empowerment and freedom to have their own way

Knowing Satir's steadfast belief in individual's inherent resources and her wish that everybody can become their own choice maker, it can be understood that not only did Satir trust her chosen team of experienced therapists to the point that she expected them to be self-reliant and to work out issues among themselves; she also trusted that they would know when they needed any support from her and to bring their problems to her.

They all recalled that she gave them her full support when they went to her with their difficulties. Joyce recalled that she was preparing to attend an inter-agency meeting to review the placement of a child, and she discussed the situation with Satir and remembered clearly that "she looked at me and said, 'Do you believe the child should stay there?' I said, 'Yes, I do.' She said, 'I do too.'" Satir further assured Joyce that "if they begin talking about removing him, you just tell them 'over your dead body'". Joyce felt "incredibly empowered" when she went to that meeting. She said, "It was like I can feel her standing there with me, you know. 'If this is what you believe then I'm with you. Stand for it' ... so she was very encouraging". When Joyce talked about this experience, she had a big grin on her face, and her body still remembered that kind of energy-filled sensations. Joyce felt empowered and had the freedom to handle the situation in her desired way.

Susan also recalled that "Virginia also gave us the freedom to add our own personality or way of doing things to what she did as long as it was within the understanding that this was the human validation process." This attitude was helpful to the therapists because Susan believed that once they understood the essence then they could do it their way, rather than having to do exactly as Satir did. In this research context of studying the efficacy of three family therapy

approaches of helping the families with delinquent adolescents, there was ongoing evaluation; Satir's trust and encouragement for the therapists to bring in their own style meant even more to them than in ordinary contexts. Satir conveyed a message that there was no need for her to ensure that everybody was doing therapy her way, but rather they were "free" to be who they were and to do what they thought appropriate as long as the essence of "human validation" was present throughout the process. This matched with what she expressed to Gardner (1978) that she did not want her students to be Satirians; she honoured their own styles (Satir, 1983b).

It is noteworthy that one of the other two "Masters", Jay Haley whose approach was being studied in the same research project, used live supervision through one-way mirror and inter-communication devices in every session, and had the lowest client returning rate (Winter, 1993). One explanation for Satir's team's success, in comparison, may be that two core elements in supervision – trusting the supervisee and facilitating the supervisee's 'use of self' in therapy – were predominant in the approach. Offering supervisees the opportunities to grow through the "human validation process" also enables them to live it in their work with families.

Supervising Therapists in Other Therapeutic Settings

Some participants reported being supervised by Satir in other therapeutic settings. These supervision experiences recalled by participants were related to situations where Satir was invited to provide supervision to the therapists in their workplaces, or to individuals who sought help from Satir concerning their therapeutic work. Six participants recalled having this kind of experience. Dawn referred to a 2-year supervision experience with Satir who accepted her invitation to supervise the entire team of 20 colleagues treating schizophrenic adults and their parents at a newly established Mental Health Center in the late 60s and early 70s. In this setting,

supervision was combined with training in the hospital every three months when Satir visited for 3 days; subsequent telephone supervision of half to three hour duration was also arranged every other week. Other than this, five participants recalled that they sought help from Satir with particularly challenging cases on an irregular basis. Since there were not any specific or unique episodes reported in these contexts, the supervisees' experiences will be included in the discussion below.

In the next section, the discussion will be organized into two categories: first, the supervisees' mutual personal experiences with Virginia Satir through being supervised by her; and second, an analysis of Satir's supervision philosophy and major supervision strategies. There will be a concluding section sharing what we can draw from Satir's supervision practice.

Supervisees' Personal Experiences with Satir

Satir's Attitude in Supervision

Supervisees found Satir very positive almost all the time, and the terms 'encouraging' and 'very encouraging' were used most often. The encouragement Satir provided them was encouragement for them to trust themselves and use their 'selves'. Though participants mostly used positive and similar expressions to describe Satir's personal qualities and attitudes in supervision, two of them also criticized Satir during the interviews. Some of the others gave negative comments about Satir when asked. However, they also expressed their understanding and acceptance of this part of Satir. Some used more subtle languages which were mostly regarded as neutral by members of the reflecting team. I offer these descriptions about Satir and her supervision in Table 5.1 and follow with a more detailed discussion. For convenience's sake

I present them in alphabetical order, and categorize them as positive, neutral or negative based on dialoguing with reflecting team members.

It is apparent that these descriptions reflect an imbalance and appeared to be slanted toward more positive characterizations. It is pertinent that these supervisees followed Satir till the end of her life. If the participants were someone who had experienced Satir's supervision and then chose not to continue, there could have been a different picture. Nonetheless, it is still interesting and inspiring to go into more details of what and how these supervisees experienced Satir's supervision of them. After the Table, a thorough discussion is provided.

Table 5.1 Adjectives and phrases participants used to describe Satir and her supervision

Positive	Neutral	Negative (mostly from one participant)
accepting, acknowledging, affectionate, affirming, appreciative, attentive – very attentive, aware of where the person was, comes from a place of abundance,	asked a lot questions, asking about different things	
believe in me, brilliant, very respectful of boundaries,		
caring, clear, congruent, creative – very creative, curious but not nosy, a sense of curiosity, charismatic,	not very complimentary with me,	critical, cruel to one supervisee, very, very critical of me, not clear about what she expected from us,
	direct – very direct, she was different,	it was not democratic the way she operated,
empowering, encouraging – very encouraging, enlightening, experiential, effective – very effective,		not encouraging peer support,
focused – very much focused, focused on the person, a sense of freedom,	firm,	favouring male supervisees,
generous – very generous, highly gifted, genuine		

(to be continued on next page)

a sense of hopefulness, a sense of humorous, humility, helpful, honouring, honoured me, heightening awareness		
intuitive, insightful		intimidating, impatient
kind		
loving – very loving, lively		
magical, modelling congruence		
never negative, never perceive people as a deficit, non-abrasive, non-blaming, non-judgmental, nurturing – very nurturing		
open – very open, a sense of ownership, always looked at a new person as an opportunity		not open
very positive, positive directional, present – fully present, she built from a foundation of positiveness, always very permissive, looking for possibilities,	perceptive, persistent, very personalized way of supervising, powerful – very powerful	picking on the same few people, putting one down in front of others
recognizing their strengths and contribution, respectful, a sense of responsibility	risk taking	
sensitive, supportive, making it safe for me, spiritual, stretching – she forces you to stretch	strict, not shy in getting her across to you	
talented – very multi-talented, trusting, taught in 'universals'	tough – very tough but not harsh, with strong teaching elements,	very, very tough [with a supervisee]
welcoming, willing		
validating		

Understanding supervisees' comments of Satir's attitude

All fifteen supervisees acknowledged that they benefited from Satir's supervision, though most of them did share their negative comments about her when prompted. On a whole, all supervisees described experiencing Satir's love, care, respect, trust, acceptance, firmness,

directness, effectiveness, persistence and power, while a few experienced her being very tough, picking on specific individuals and one commented that she was cruel to one supervisee by not attending to the supervisee's personal predicament at that particular time of her life.

Satir's firmness and directness were not seen as being harsh and controlling, but genuine and caring by most supervisees. One commented that Satir firmly pointed to where their 'dents' were and how they could fill the dents by leading them through experiential and cognitive processes. Most supervisees believed that Satir also firmly conveyed a message that she trusted the supervisee's ability to face their own problems. Some supervisees talked about her persistence and power; June remarked, "She used all of her being to make her point and that she is a very large woman and very dramatic and if you were sitting down, even if you were standing up, she could tower over you". Yet June also learnt to stand up against Satir on her own power which will be discussed in a later section. Harry interpreted Satir's persistence as "being willing to be clear and firm about what resources her supervisee could use ... and [I learnt that] my behaviour – my affect, my face, my voice – is much more powerful than the words I say". While her persistence and the use of power was seen as helpful by some, they were also seen as harmful by others. "She would be consistently tough with the same people"; "She was always picking on me"; and "I don't know that I would use the word 'cruel', what I would say is when she decided to criticize you, you were criticized" are some examples of their negative experience of Satir's persistence.

When teaching her approach or where applying her teaching in therapy was concerned, she was seen as very tough and impatient at times. Supervisees made remarks like, "Virginia did not always apply her wonderful balanced congruent self. When she supervised she could get

very annoyed. She could make comments that were not always appropriate"; "She would put people down in front of the others"; "She always picked on the same few people"; "She wouldn't really always give you a chance to express your viewpoint because she was so convinced of hers"; and "If you were close enough with her and you were going to carry on her work or you were going to carry on responsibilities, she was tough."

When asked whether they had told Satir that 'what she was doing was not helpful', some of them answered, "probably not"; "I wouldn't challenge her ... she is a master who knows her disciples so well that she knows what's good for them. ... I was too scared to speak up, but ... I was never the recipient of it"; "I learnt not to shame her in public, she could not handle being shamed in public"; and "You had to read the timing of when she was available and when she wasn't available". Those who chose to tell her would choose to do it privately; only two insisted on letting Satir understand their stand point on the spot like June's case discussed below. Both of them appreciated Satir's attitude in accepting their view point and making instant shifts.

Some supervisees could not recall any hurtful, harmful, unhelpful, tough moments or unsatisfactory experience with Satir's supervision. Some of them could not associate Satir with these kinds of descriptions. Jeff said, "There was never anything that was unhelpful or harmful. She was not the kind of person who engaged in unhelpful or harmful processes." Pearl maintained, "I have never seen Virginia losing her curiosity and patience with supervisees." Christina asserted, "I don't really remember because I have very selective memory and I tend to just remember the good things." When some did provide their observations or experiences in this aspect, they also expressed their understanding and acceptance of Satir's situation and added expressions like "she was able to be called on that (her mistake) and shifted (changed)"; "she had

blind spots like we all do; none of us is perfect”; “toughness is helpful to me; helping is being there and yet having an expectation”; “I saw her being tough, ... but with such care ... that I hope no one took that or remembers that as being harsh, because tough and harsh to me would be different”; “when she wanted to tell you what she thought was wrong with you, believe me, she went right to the core. You may not like hearing what she was going to say but you never forgot it”; and “she would only do that if she was really close to you ... it would be a high complement to have Virginia really criticize you to your face, person to person.”

However, some participants believed that it really depended on how the recipients reacted or responded to what they experienced. When asked whether she also witnessed Satir being cruel to her supervisees, Pearl responded that she would never use that word with Satir. She believed that it was very important for Satir to be clear and she “wanted to be sure what meaning you made of what she was saying, so that she could be very clear why you were responding in the way you were.” She further commented that “we make meanings and assumptions and then act on them but never even check them out.” Faith also believed that “this was the issue that Virginia had with them (her students) that they could not do that (be congruent with Satir and check out their assumptions) and she did not facilitate that [in the group]”. Faith agreed that while Satir had her weaknesses she was also very quick to respond to their opinions and made instant changes:

She (Satir) did have her weaknesses and those of us who knew her very well we understood this about Virginia and so we could go eye-to-eye and toe-to-toe with her and when we did express things, we can grow. She just would do this little shift – it was so easy with her. She was like, “Oh okay.” It was just like the gear shift, which was really lovely. (Transcript of Faith's interview)

Joshua described their overall experience with Satir's supervision as “a very personalized supervision in terms of how people were using themselves in the relationship or how they were

abusing or misusing or not using themselves in relationship to the process.” It seems to me that those few who had no difficulty directly disagreeing with Satir or who would choose to speak up for themselves in front of Satir were sharing how they genuinely used themselves in those processes and reflected their trust in themselves and Satir. I believe that they also lived the belief that they were equal with Satir.

Susan criticized Satir most in the interview. Interestingly, in the subsequent dialogues with Susan through email exchanges, she seemingly shared her own hermeneutic processes whereby she came to her new understanding of Satir and Satir's supervision through reflecting on her other experiences. In the emails she wrote:

It is interesting for me to see the different feelings and understanding that I have gone through since Grace Yung started her research on Virginia Satir as a supervisor. I remember at first [I have] been critical of Virginia as I shared [in 2004] the areas of where I believed she was too hard and or too critical... Then through the years of Grace's research and especially as I got more involved in the (a program name) teaching, I started to connect more with Virginia's gifts and genius... As I worked with students and with [my training partner], I realized the importance of the six steps of the Virginia Process. I also realized how hard it is to see others doing what you taught them... so I have more understanding of how hard it must have been for Virginia as a supervisor for the research project where she was going to be 'compared' to two other therapists [Bowen and Haley]. (from Susan's email dated 11 July 2010) [and]

I have found to my surprise that if I put what Virginia gave us within this outline (Susan's own outline of supervision); she did a lot, more than I realized indirectly as a supervisor. ... It made me sad to read what I shared. ... [yet,] it helps your [the researcher's] comment as far as the tension that the Research Project created. ... Overall I feel much better about both experiences [i.e., the Process Community and the Research Project] once I used an outline for supervision and see how much she did do in a more clear way. (from Susan's email dated 18 July 2010)

Susan's willingness to take a step backwards and to reflect on the entire process from a teacher and supervisor's stance enabled her to understand Satir's toughness differently.

In the following sections, I shall describe supervisees' other shared experiences in being supervised by Satir. They include: a) meeting their need in searching for meaningful changes in life; b) feeling respected, validated and being seen as important; c) an awakening to live life more fully; d) having the courage to challenge one's own vulnerabilities; e) affirming one's own voice; and f) witnessing and learning from Satir's weaknesses and incongruity.

Meeting Their Need in Searching for Meaningful Changes in Life

It appears that change was an inevitable outcome for the participants after encountering Virginia Satir: All participants reported that they experienced profound transformation in their lives over the years of learning and being with Satir. Though some of them were at the point of their lives where they wanted some meaningful changes, the rest were all inspired to explore this direction after meeting Satir even though their initial intention was to see how she worked with families and to try to learn some skills and techniques.

Jeff was going through a period of feeling stale about his life when he decided to take part in one of Satir's month-long programs. Brigitte mentioned that her professional training had led her to distance herself from others, especially the clients; meeting Satir for her was "an absolute revelation" and really changed the way in which she practiced psychotherapy. Joshua was familiar with Skinner's behavioural psychology and Rogers's person centred psychotherapy in his formal training as a psychologist, but was unsatisfied, and had been searching for the amalgamation of psychology and philosophy for some time. Attending Satir's five-day training program, he "felt really at home"; he found that "the depth" and the "philosophical undertone" of Satir's approach resonated in him.

Ruth met Satir in her early twenties when Satir did a 3-day workshop at the university she studied, and she claimed that “it changed my life!” Christina just went back to school after being a fulltime wife and mother for twenty years when she first joined Satir's family camp. The encounter with Satir inspired her to continue her change process and to pursue professional training and become a therapist. She said, “It was just life changing to meet her, and to know about the possibilities of what could be done.” June also made her career turning point to becoming a therapist after encountering Satir. Pearl, Martha, Joyce, Faith, Jeff, Henry, Joshua and Norman, who were all therapists, decided to follow Virginia Satir around after their first encounter with her because they all wanted to be trained and inspired to practise psychotherapy more effectively with clients by looking at hope and wellness instead of sickness. June's remark, “You wanted to be around her because you could be learning something all the time” could also represent other participants' views.

These were individuals searching for more meaning in life; they found Satir a teacher of the kind. If one finds Roy's remark of ‘hoping that Satir would lead us to world peace’ too grandiose, other remarks of how she impressed her students may help one to understand how she had inspired students to live life more fully: “After I got to know her, I realized that she was always living life more fully and with global purpose. She had a hard time engaging in small talk—at least with me.” “The whole aspect of [Satir's] supervision seems to me is to help people discover meaning in life... what they would like to have different, how they would like their lives to be better.”

Feeling Respected, Validated and Being Seen As Important

The need for validation

The need to be respected, validated and to be seen as important are considered as some universal yearnings of humans by Satir. It seemed apparent that almost all participants recalled episodes of being respected and validated by Satir and considered themselves to be seen as important by her. However, there are subtle differences in their way of presenting this part of their experience. Most of them were able to validate themselves directly and conveyed a sense of ownership in what they described. A few of them attached more importance to external validation, and had only quoted how Satir appreciated them and did not share any self-appreciation. Some also expressed contempt towards other learners of Satir's approach and hinted that he/she was the 'best'. The apparently contemptuous presentation was very different from my pre-conception about how Satir's students would have seen others. This 'temporal distance' led me to have some 'genuine conversation' with the literatures and the texts on hand, and to come to a better understanding about the "hierarchical model" (Satir, et al., 1991, pp. 13-16) as well as the "growth model" (Satir, 1983b, pp. 233-235; Satir, et al., 1991, pp. 13-16) described in the texts. When one lives in the "hierarchical model", he or she cannot fully acknowledge and accept his/her own vulnerabilities and values. He or she depends on others to define his/her value and rely heavily on external validation to feel good. On the contrary, when one lives in the "growth model", he or she would be grounded in his/her authentic self. He or she would take full responsibilities for his/her 'being' and 'doings', would fully accept himself/herself at any given moment in time, and have a sense of value whether being externally validated or not. Meeting experienced 'Satir Model' practitioners who did not appear to have

geared themselves toward the “growth model” philosophy was surprising for me. Supervisees’ need for validation had really taken me into some genuine conversations and I have come up to fusions of horizons at different stages of interpretation and understanding of the difference between the “hierarchical model” and “growth model”. The application of these understandings in my own supervision also generated more dialectical questions for further clarification of these concepts and a better understanding of fulfilling the human yearnings of being validated.

Internalizing external validation into self-validation

While a few participants seemed to depend upon Satir's validation and focused on comments Satir made about their work, most of the other participants, though appreciating the empowerment of being validated by Satir, were able to validate themselves and were not shy to share their self-appreciation. They shared how they got ignited by Satir's validation and moved ahead with the newly uncovered resource to explore their new possibilities. One may say that they appeared to be more grounded in the “growth model”. Faith recognized her giftedness while maintaining that Satir saw this part of her and pushed her to pursue her profession in that area. Pearl remembered how she was impressed by Satir's welcoming and attentive attitude when she approached her after watching her conduct a demonstration for the first time in the late 50s. She felt the total respect and connection right away; and she commented that over the years what stood out for her was Satir's attitude of looking at meeting a new person, including patients (the term they used at that time), as an opportunity, instead of seeing them as sick, mad or bad; and had incorporated this into her belief system.

Many recalled that they were moved and touched by Satir's respecting and nurturing attitude even by simply watching her with others. Faith recalled her first encounter with Satir

and was amazed at how Satir gave her full attention to the person whom she was relating to at the moment. Faith vividly described the situation:

Virginia was talking to this one woman who is actually right next to me on my right and so I could really see her [Satir] and since I was two spaces [from her]. And this [other] woman came up to her and stood right in front of her with a cup of coffee for Virginia; and Virginia is *pausing her conversation* to the woman on her left, *looked up and made eye contact and smiled* to the woman in front of her with the cup of coffee. Took the coffee and said "thank you" and then went back to her conversation in this very smooth way. She just made contact [with the woman offering coffee] in this really incredible way like time stopped and everything was all lit up; and I thought, I want to learn how to do that. (Transcript of Faith's interview)

This attitude of respecting and giving full attention to the other person at the moment of interaction, that Satir demonstrated, was very validating and empowering. She had said in her presentations that at any moment, one can only give full attention and be fully present with one other person. Faith's description illustrated what Satir had said. Satir's modelling of being fully present had a great impact in people like Faith and others who watched her work, and who wanted to learn to do the same. Many of them expressed that as supervisors, they can be equally validating and empowering to their supervisees simply by being fully present with them and giving them full respect. On the contrary, those who depend on external validation can hardly be fully present with another person because they focus too much on themselves and/or their performance.

Redefining validation and forgiveness

Martha was the only person, who asserted that Satir never gave her validation, and that validation came from herself. She further maintained that what she got from Satir was respect and acceptance. She said, "I think, as a supervisor, she accepted me rather than verbally

validated me, she accepted me as equal, she treated me as an equal person, always, I would say.” For Martha, validating and forgiving are somehow hierarchical, it puts the person being validated or forgiven on a one-down position; so she would not validate or forgive anybody, neither would she guide her clients or workshop participants to do so. She would only guide them to understand, respect and accept the other person.

Watching Satir's video tape “Forgiving parents” (Satir, 1986c) and studying the transcript and the analysis of it (Andreas, 1991) helped me understand what Martha meant. In the 73-minute session, Satir not only led the ‘star’, Linda, to move from complaining about her ‘unloving mother’ to “seeing herself and her mother as equals, each doing her best in life with what they know and can do” (Andreas, p. 135). Satir addressed a universal issue of the trans-generational impact on children whose parents were unable to fulfil their yearnings due to their own “holes” in life. She also led the “star”, the audience at the demonstration and the video viewers through a universal trip of reconciliation through meticulous steps to reconnect with oneself and with others in love and compassion. It was a sophisticated transformational process based on Satir's steadfast belief about people's good intentions, and their ability to learn and to redirect their lives. Satir did not use the word ‘forgive’ in the entire session though the word was used in the title of the video. In fact, the process went far beyond forgiveness into a real trans-generational spiritual connection, and a deep appreciation of human pain and suffering as well as honouring the “star's” ability to re-author her life story. The session had a profound effect on Linda. She shared that she had “a whole lot more compassion about my [her] mother and what she's been through in her life, and it's changed my position on how I look at her, and how I feel about her” (Andreas, 1991, p. 129). It also affected Linda's work with parents and their children.

This piece of Satir's work helped me understand Martha's view about guiding someone to understand, respect and accept the other person instead of validating or forgiving him or her.

An Awakening to Live Life More Fully

All participants reported being 'captured' by Satir's 'magic' when they first encountered her, and they started to admire, respect and trust her whole heartedly. Their passion could be difficult for others, who did not have similar experience, to comprehend. One can only gain more understanding of another person or culture by getting inside (Gadamer, 1993). Though some of the participants admitted that they had put Satir on the 'pedestal', more were impressed or even "captured" by her very being. They were able to see and experience Satir's higher self through their personal encounter and through observing her work. Jeff remarked that Satir "moved with grace, poise, courage, sophistication, humour and warmth; and almost every part of her seemed to function at a higher level, like Jesus or Ghandi or Martin Luther King..... Seeing her was verification that we could all live life more fully." What students gained from their experience with her served as an awakening call for them to live life more fully and to reach their own higher self. Every participant has a story in this respect with the common theme being that they all learnt to trust that each person, including themselves and their clients, have their own resources to grow and to cope with their unique life challenges. They strived to shift to a growth orientation which looks at possibilities, strengths and health instead of sticking with the pathological orientation which looks at the problem, the sickness, madness and badness of people and families. They also tried hard to facilitate their clients to reach a higher level of themselves.

After getting to know Satir at a deeper level, having some personal transformational experiences and gaining a good grasp of her demonstrations, they experienced Satir as an exceptional human being, who respected, valued and trusted the people she encountered. Martha remarked, "We all put her on a pedestal... I learnt that as I put her up, I put myself down... through the relationship she constantly demonstrated to me that we are equal, [I realized that] she just knows more and she has more experience." As students accepted the notion of equality of value among humans, many were able to see that Satir was just as human as they were, and she would make mistakes and could be incongruent some of the times; yet they still gave her their full admiration, respect and trust. This 'matured' state of admiration, respect and trust may reflect that the participants had expanded their perspectives and related with their mentor differently by having their "Third Birth" (discussed in chapter 2) and becoming their own "choice makers".

Nonetheless, perhaps due to the nature of the interviews for this study, it was not obvious that the participants showed equal respect and trust in relation to their peers and other humans. When a participant expressed his/her appreciation to another person within the 'Satir circle', it was geared toward appreciating ones 'contributions', not the person. In two cases, there was overt disregard, if not contempt, of others' understanding and their application of Satir's approach. These prompted me to contemplate more deeply in how to live the 'growth model', instead of talking about it and 'teaching' it while living in the 'hierarchical model'.

Having the Courage to Challenge One's Own Vulnerabilities

Facing one's own vulnerabilities

In order to live life more fully, one needs to face and overcome one's own vulnerabilities. Satir once said, "The heart is so important, to open up your heart will make you vulnerable" (Satir, cited in Gardner, 1978, p. 2). Satir urged therapists to recognize that they are just as vulnerable as their clients (Satir, 2000b), and "if they are not vulnerable, they won't be good therapists" (Gardner, 1978, p. 2). This may explain why Satir was tough with her supervisees, she might have wanted them to experience the vulnerability of being challenged and to "begin to work towards solving their issues" as described by Dawn. Dawn further asserted that if the therapists cannot do so, "they may not really free their inner healer". Many participants recalled transformative experiences of being helped to face their own vulnerability in supervision. Martha shared her experience of being "thrown into the lions' den" and learning from it; and she remained one of Satir's closest friends and colleagues. Besides courage, trust is a vital factor in challenging one's own vulnerabilities; and trust has been a repeated and prominent theme throughout the interviews. The participants believed that Satir trusted them and they also trusted her. This might have contributed to the fact that they continued to maintain a close relationship with Satir even after being confronted and challenged by her. Other participants' stories will be covered in subsequent sections.

Living through Chaos as well as living with Chaos

Satir's notion of chaos in the process of change had been extensively quoted and applied in different settings to date. For Satir, chaos is an inevitable stage in any process of change. When a 'foreign element' enters the system, the 'status quo' is disturbed and chaos occurs. One

normally strives to maintain status quo instead of choosing to change because “most people prefer the certainty of misery rather than the misery of uncertainty” (Satir, 1983-1987, p. 12). However, at times of chaos, one is also exposed with opportunities for new learnings. If one responds well to the process, he/she will learn, practice and integrate these new learnings into their life and reach a new status quo (Dodson, 1991b; Satir, 1986a; Satir, et al., 1991). Many participants mentioned how Satir facilitated them to experience chaos.

My pre-conception concerning Satir's “Process of change” was that we would have to *live through* the chaos. When some participants referred to the notion of being able to *live with* one's chaos, I was first surprised and later came to an understanding that being able to live with one's own chaos is a life skill and a vital growth process. Christina remarked that the purpose of their learning as trainers was to learn to live with their own chaos around some of the participants' chaos, and to keep moving through and to keep processing among themselves. She and Henry both shared that one of Satir's primary teachings stressed that a therapist should have worked on himself/herself, and have gone through one's own chaos and learnt to live with his/her own chaos in various settings, otherwise one cannot possibly sit with someone else's chaos and know that it will be alright. In Henry's words, “I always have to have an eye on myself... You cannot help other people in chaos if you are in chaos yourself.” For him, before connecting with anybody else, he had to connect with himself first and know what was going on with himself. He shared, “I think that the whole thing about being quiet or meditating or centring, that the whole start [for any connection] is for me to know what is going on for me.”

Through applying what I interpreted from participants' sharing into my practice, I was enriched in terms of quieting my brain-chatters, spending enough time to get connected with the

centre of my deeper and higher self prior to connecting with my tasks, my clients or students. I am able to accept chaos as part of my life and can choose to keep it in the back stage, and be centred and give my full attention to what is offered or demanded at the moment. This important piece of learning helped me live through, not just survive, this long and winding research journey.

Bridgette, Pearl and Henry all agreed that staying long enough in a confused or chaotic stage instead of hastily trying to get over it would enable one to harvest a lot of good learnings. Pearl even mentioned part of her own supervision practice was to create the kind of chaos in the supervisee so that he/she could have a transformational experience. For her, "if there is no chaos, there is no significant change." Living with one's chaos could invoke vulnerability; it takes a supervisor who loves, trusts, respects, and has the courage and skills to model, facilitate, guide and support a supervisee through the process.

Affirming One's Own Voice

In her audio and video recordings, Satir always invited participants to 'taste' the things she taught and to only swallow what really tasted good for them. She must have been consistent with what she taught, because none of the participants found it impossible to have their own voice with Satir. All of them reported being respected and valued; some found themselves being treated as equals in supervision. When Roy talked about his experience in the early 60s, he said, "One thing about her supervision is we were treated as equals. That was very, very big." Some participants maintained that Satir, as a supervisor, was interested in knowing what they had in mind; though she always guided them to expand their horizon to a broader and deeper level. All were encouraged and facilitated to find and affirm their own voice. Pearl believed that Satir encouraged all her supervisees to forge their own way in their professional journey because this

was what Satir herself had been doing. Even experienced being always picked on by Satir, one participant acknowledged that what she experienced from Satir was “really the freedom to be yourself with the caveat that you are yourself as long as it benefits others”.

Jeff asserted that with Satir, he never felt he lacked his own voice. He remembered Satir telling a bunch of people that she did not want them to be or become ‘Satirians’ or anything like that. He continued, “We were to be our own selves, and people would know that we were part of her group by the way we presented ourselves and maintained our presence with others.”

Christina and Bridgette also recalled that Satir did not want little Virginia Satirs running around doing therapy; she wanted her students to learn from her but to develop their own way of doing therapy. Joshua believed that her ability to make him believe in himself, trust himself and to connect with the universal energy has helped him discover his own voice.

June recalled an episode in the process community when she disagreed with one of Satir's decisions, and Satir “did not take that really lightly... and she used all of her being to make her point”. June did not back off, she “stepped up as a peer to Satir” and told her why she disagreed, and eventually Satir did listen. In fact, June described that when she first worked in the trainers' team, “it was kind of intimidating to go to her and ask her for help... [because] she was very famous. She was an absolute master.” Yet, it is worth noting that June was not talking about being intimidated by Satir, but rather by her own perception and expectation about her own position in relation with a big master. For June, this experience of being able to stand up and disagree with Satir was an accomplishment in her own personal growth and affirmation of self-esteem. June remarked, “I had learnt from her to, on my own power, be able to stand up even to her. And I think she did respect that.” This relates to the congruency that Satir had been trying to

convey throughout the years. Being able to “stand on your feet”; to make your own choices and being responsible to them have been central to Satir's approach.

Pearl, Faith, Martha, Joshua and Joyce reported that Satir even consulted them on different occasions. It may be appropriate to conclude that Satir loved to listen to, respected and treasured what her supervisees had in their minds, and had facilitated her supervisees to have their own voice. It all depends on whether supervisees allow themselves to speak up, which may at times reflect vulnerability. In June's case, if June had not persisted in letting her voice be heard, it might turn out that Satir, the supervisor, had her last word and had successfully imposed her ideas on her supervisee.

Almost all participants mentioned that in supervision, Satir would go to the positives first and asked them to appreciate themselves and to tell her what they thought went well in their work with their clients. There was constant encouragement from Satir for them to discover their “treasure” and use their own resources better. Faith's remark may serve to conclude this section: “Everything that Satir did with people when she worked with, taught, trained, or supervised people was designed to help a person discover their own voice and to use it.”

Witnessing and Learning from Satir's Weaknesses and Incongruity

Satir was consistently described as loving, non-abrasive, positive, safe, supportive, non-judgmental, honest, encouraging, empowering, nurturing, open, very present, very much focused, and very direct by the participants. She was also described by the same group of people as critical, tough, very direct and confronting. Participants did not label these experiences as right or wrong, good or bad; they just talked about their experiences and shared what they considered helpful and what was unhelpful or even hurtful. “Satir had blind spots like we all do; and none

of us is perfect.” This remark from Pearl can lead us into exploring and learning from Satir's blind spots. Two such areas are discussed below.

Inability to co-work as a triad

Satir's belief about learning through triadic experiences

As mentioned before, Satir believed that triadic dynamics and processes provide wonderful experiences for people to re-learn how to handle unmet childhood yearnings, to heal past wounds, to learn new effective ways of coping and to grow towards becoming more fully human; so in her workshops, she created these opportunities by having her students not only learning in triads, but also working in triads when they took up the trainers' role. Joshua did not totally appreciate the idea and recalled that “she wanted us to be in triads ... treated us still as students in some form and therefore, we should be in triads ... to do what she was doing.” Pearl was able to find resonance with Satir, noting that “the importance of the triad, Ma, Pa and the Kid, was a very significant place [for therapists to learn and re-learn] ... and I think that appreciation of being in a triad is very self-expanding.” However, participants have different views about working in triads and had different experiences.

Learning triads vs. working triads

The participants welcomed having different triad experiences and they all learnt from them. Pearl recalled that hers was a very interesting triad, and she thought they all replicated something in their family, and she exclaimed, “You couldn't re-create that kind of a transformation. You have to face up to your demons and that's what [having a triad is] all about.” Joyce also believed that “triads are ideal for learning things about yourself and particularly the things you don't want to face.” For her, when a training triad has problems

among themselves, it is important for them to be able to feel safe enough, and to be open about what's going on with the entire group. By so doing, workshop participants could also feel safe that these trainers were handling their own issues, and could avoid being stressed and worried about the unsettledness among the trainers. Susan also remarked that a training triad could be resources for each other, and others believed that they could be role models for workshop participants.

Christina shared that she wouldn't want to teach alone or do any kind of training by herself; she maintained that working in a dyad or a triad really became a part of her. In her training triads, they would deal with their own upsets and chaos, and she also noticed that a lot of times handling their own conflicts could also "revolve around into dealing with the [workshop] participant who was 'giving them a hard time' in the group." Yet, most of them could not agree with Satir's belief that 'everybody could work with anybody'. Christina maintained that Satir had "the mistaken belief that any three people could work together if they work out their own family of origin stuff... There needs to be some kind of a fit and a trust [in order to be effective as a training triad]." Martha also pointed out the issue of power struggle and the difficulties in working as a training triad when there was a hierarchical or intimacy issue between any two members. For her, there was a lot of learning about herself in working with different triads; and yet she maintained that it is not true that everybody can work with anybody in a triad.

Satir's failure in working in a training triad

Perhaps Satir herself was a solid proof of Martha's conclusion. Some participants commented that Satir could not work in a triad. They recalled that she initiated to co-lead workshops with her student-colleagues in several occasions where she was supposed to be one of

the triad members, and “it turned out to be a Virginia Satir solo performance”. According to Bridgette, “A triad presupposes the willingness to be really feeling like an equal with the other people; and she [Satir] never felt quite like an equal with us [in terms of teaching her approach]... she just couldn't stop herself.” In the aspect of teaching her own approach with another person, Satir did not demonstrate equality with others even though she was observed as “always operating from a position of equality, both verbally and nonverbally” (Andreas, 1989, p. 53) by many who watched her demonstrations or experienced her in different settings. Joshua's remark that ‘they were always students in her eyes’ could explain part of this phenomenon. Three participants contended that Satir could not share the same training stage not only with them but with other trainers as well. In these situations, Satir seemed unable to consider the ‘self, others and context’, which is a key to congruence (Satir, et al., 1991) that she emphasized so much in her teachings, and was probably not honest enough with herself and others about her lack of trust in the co-trainers. Three participants who co-authored two different books with Satir also recalled that she constantly disagreed with their written interpretation of her work; one even joked that if she were still alive, the book would not have been published.

Triad formation in learning settings can be very helpful and productive where all the members are prepared to “learn”. My own experiences with learning triads were very positive. I believe the genuineness and openness of triad members were key factors in the positive learning experiences. Working as a training triad is very different; it provokes one's vulnerabilities, and tests one's congruence in terms of handling possible differences, and processing internal grudges; thus demanding a lot more of the triad members. Not all participants in this study had positive working triad experiences; those who did were in triads where they had experienced deep connection among themselves through working together in learning triads for many years. They

had worked out most of their differences and were able to face the issues that challenged their co-operation.

Group supervision without clear conceptualization

Satir mostly supervised in group settings. Though participants were all very impressed with what they learnt from these experiences, there was something unsettling about these groups. From what they shared, the supervision process was more like a combination of teaching and individual supervision within a group setting, where Satir usually used her supervision with an individual supervisee to teach the entire group. It sounded more like another demonstration or teaching session than supervising a group. Naming her practice as group supervision may not be fair to Satir because this might not be what she intended to do. As Susan commented, Satir "was not training people to be counsellors or therapist; she was teaching an approach and skills for enriching people's lives. Therefore trying to see her as a supervisor creates some kind of conflict given the specific role of supervisors." Yet there is still much to learn from the supervisees' experiences.

Joshua commented that if there was anything to be criticized in Satir's supervision, it would be that he never felt like he was a team member with his fellow supervisees. He remarked with regret that Satir was able to take a few hundred people in conferences or ninety people in the process communities and build a team in which everybody would feel safe to get involved, but she did not achieve this with their supervision teams of nine to twelve people. In his perception, Satir seemingly developed relationships with each of the supervisees but she had not facilitated them to develop relationships among themselves and to work as a team, which is contradictory to what she did in workshops. Satir also did not address the under currents of the

groups, the competitiveness among trainers, and the considerable negative energy flow when there was stress. In short, she did not build the team of the supervisees, nor did she lead group processes to handle the negative dynamics arising from supervisor-supervisee issues, or issues between/among supervisees. From what they described, it was obvious that all participants acknowledged wonderful relationships with Satir. Some participants mentioned that they had built a good team with their triad members, but no one talked about the cohesiveness of the entire group. Some shared a similar perception with Joshua, that Satir did not make any effort to build a team among them.

At least three supervisees mentioned that Satir seemed to be picking on the same person during supervision most of the time, and when that person (or anyone else) was on the hot seat, the others just kept silent. Joshua remarked that no one came to that person's rescue, while Susan admitted that she was happy that it was not her being picked on. Joshua further commented that there was a sense of jealousy, competition and lack of trust within the group of supervisees, but Satir never addressed these issues in the group. Some participants even thought that Satir's position at the centre of stage had created the competitive feelings, probably competing for moving closer to the centre.

Satir was a highly recognized master in group leadership and had superb group facilitation skills, so her lack of awareness or negligence in making the best out of the group supervision experience was not a matter of competence; rather it could be a matter of willingness and congruence. She and her supervisees might benefit more in these supervision groups if she had reflected and addressed her own vulnerabilities triggered by the group experiences, her need for power, need to be the centre of attention and also her incongruity. Since no further dialogue

between the participants and I was conducted around this area, the reason behind Satir's not building a team among her supervisees remains an unresolved mystery to date. Awareness of this incongruity in Satir's supervision, however, can prompt supervisors to look deeply into themselves, to see whether they have faced their own vulnerabilities and whether they possess the necessary strong group leadership and group facilitation skills that are required in terms of attending to group processes, to deal with competitive or protective dynamics within the group, and to be able to guide their supervisees to do the same.

Satir's Supervision Philosophy - Interpreting the Experiences of Satir's Students

Seven key elements were found to be intrinsic to Satir's supervision with these fifteen supervisees. They are: (a) *everybody has the magic and inner-healer inside*- a supervisor's job is to help supervisees find their own magic and free their own inner-healer; (b) *early intervention and timely 'harvest' is desired*- don't wait till the end of the supervision session to harvest the learnings; (c) *in every unique situation there is a universal process – connecting with human needs and human spirit*; (d) *multi-sensory experiencing is the best mode of learning*- supervision is an experience of learning through all senses; (e) *there are always hope and abundance of possibilities*- when there is a problem, there is abundance of opportunities and resources to cope differently; (f) *supervision is a co-discovery process within a growth enhancing environment*- the supervisor's role is to create a growth enhancing environment to facilitate the co-discovery process so that the supervisees can be inspired to do the same with their clients; and (g) *the supervisee is the "star" of the supervision process*- supervision focuses on the supervisee's internal process in relationship with his/her work with clients.

Everybody has the Magic and Inner-Healer Inside

The experiences of the participants reflected Satir's strong belief that every human being is a miracle, and human life is sacred (Satir, 1982). Her approach clearly reflected the belief that each supervisee has his/her own magic and inner-healer inside, and the supervisor's job is to help supervisees find their own magic and free their own inner-healer. Satir demonstrated that her magic manifested through connecting the spiritual essence, or life energy of her supervisees. For her, "the first step in any change is to contact the spirit" (Satir, 1988, p. 341). Similar to what she did with her clients, she relied on connecting to the life energy as a basis to guide supervisees throughout their supervision (Kramer, 1995c; McLendon, 2000a). Martha recalled that when she told Satir that her work "cannot be learnt because it is magic", Satir replied, "The magic is in you and in everybody. My work is to assist people to find their magic." She did. In supervision, Satir aimed at bringing out the magic, the miraculous 'nature' of her supervisees. All participants, though using different expressions, recalled feeling some sort of revelation and transformation through Satir's supervision. Some of them reported a special connectedness with their higher self through supervision.

Martha was one of those who had such an experience. I have to begin her story by mentioning one of Satir's therapeutic vehicles- "family reconstruction" (Gomori & Adaskin, 2008; Nerin, 1986, 1991; Satir, 1986b; Satir, et al., 1991), which she developed to help people, whom she called 'stars', experience positive transformation through new learnings about past family events that kept contaminating their present life. Many of her students conducted family reconstruction processes with her encouragement and/or under her supervision. Martha's first such experience had a life-changing impact on her. She had gone through tough years during

and after World War II, and had hated Germans, yet she guided her very first family reconstruction process in Germany amongst her 'enemies'. It was a struggle for her to go to Germany in the first place. With Satir's persistent invitation, she went, believing that she was there to translate for Satir, and was totally unprepared that she would be asked to guide family reconstruction processes. Though she had attended many family reconstructions, transcribed and studied the processes, she had never led one. She remembered telling Satir that she had never guided family reconstruction, and could not do it. Satir simply said, "Then you have to start somewhere sometime. If you're afraid, I'm here." Martha forged ahead to face her new challenge. After leading a long family reconstruction process with a Jewish lady as the star, and a Czechoslovakian and other Germans playing some roles of the star's family members and other significant people in her life in that particular historical context, Martha transformed. She recalled:

In 2 o'clock in the morning, when I finished and I looked out the window and I realized that I'm in Germany. I looked around and I told them, it came out from my mouth, and it was really, really congruent, I said, never this could happen to role play such a thing in this country. And everybody have tears in their eyes and these people are so beautiful and so wonderful. Suddenly I realized I'm in Germany but this is another generation; why I have my anger and why I have my judgment? But I also want to say that she [Satir] put me into the most difficult situation, and she was... as a secondary purpose, she would put me into situations where I not only have dealt with the star but with myself. And I think, as I look back, I didn't know at that time, as I look back, that was a major learning because of her belief of the Use of Self, because she wanted me to go, not only because, you know I was so goal only oriented, so competent oriented, I was looking outside, and I did not, of course, [admit that] inside I was scared, but I did not realize that I have to give up my judgmental [attitude], I have to go to Germany, to got over this whole war thing and everything, you know, in me. Therefore, I am telling you that sometimes she was tough, not only as a supervisor, but as a friend, as a teacher. And I learnt so much from that, you know, helping is being there and yet having an expectation. (Transcript of Martha's interview)

This was not Martha's only experience of being pushed to face her own vulnerability, to dig into her hidden treasures, free her inner-healer and find her 'magic'. She also recalled when Satir asked her and her two triad members to join her to lead an advanced level training workshop. Satir would only be there for the first week, and then the triad had to continue for three more weeks while Satir started another training program, the process community module I, nearby. Martha believed that the participants went to the training because of Satir, and she also perceived that some of them did not trust the triad's competence. She said all three of them were "really scared" after Satir left, and "there was absolutely no support for us in the group [of workshop participants]". Martha thought that it was the biggest risk she had ever taken professionally. The outcome was that they learnt to trust themselves and found their own magic. The participants also trusted that they "really knew something" and could contribute to their professional growth.

Faith also recalled being asked by Satir to lead a group of her peers, without prior notice, through a process where Satir was also present. The process was not an easy one but she found her own magic when she was exposed with challenges during the process. She experienced being courageous and creative, and thus unfolded her potential. Satir's supervision was not confined within the therapy room; she created and utilized live situations, and relied on the process to help supervisees challenge their own vulnerabilities and find their own 'magic'. One may argue that Satir should prepare her students well before she assigned them to work independently. Others may find her trusting and having confidence in her supervisees, encouraging, empowering and pushing supervisees to move beyond their comfort zone and to reach a higher level of being and competence.

These were not random assignments; I believe they came from Satir's practice philosophy. Pearl said, "there was always a very important part of Virginia: her spiritual aspect, a deep abiding respect for people, a deep sense of the unexplainable... she truly respected other people, and she saw us as miracles." Pearl was inspired to realize that "we really are miracles and we came into this world with everything we need". For her, it was hard to put spirituality into words; it was more a felt sense, a sense of profound connectedness. She asserted that the most important thing she learnt about supervision from Satir was the necessity to have a connection, a connection at the soul and spirit level between the people involved in supervision.

Five of the participants recalled that Satir consulted them, and one claimed that she had literally supervised Satir. These validating experiences had a "magical" impact on the participants and they became even more confident. To them, the experiences of being trusted and consulted by one's own mentor were very empowering. Satir truly believed in the potential of her supervisees and conveyed this trust through her full presence with the supervisees: her emotional proximity, physical touch, cognitive conceptualization, high expectation, and most importantly her positive energy and spiritual presence. This full presence was experienced by all the participants, and it helped bring out the magic in them.

Early Intervention and Timely 'Harvest' is Desired

Participants remembered that Satir would ask them to stop the video tape very early in the supervision session, and would ask them to share their successes, followed by asking them questions which would lead them into exploring some areas that were overlooked, or to come up with alternatives that were more effective, or to access into the supervisee's deepest unmet yearnings. Henry recalled hearing Satir say many times, "don't wait till the end of the session to

harvest the learnings". The participants clearly recalled that Satir would also draw up maps while listening to the supervisee's presentation and start to clarify what was in her mind before she had heard the whole story. The supervisees did not feel offended, on the contrary, they marvelled at how accurately she knew about the families they were describing. From the description of the participants, they welcomed this kind of early intervention; no-one complained that they were not being listened to enough. Ruth shared one of Satir's sayings that "You only have to watch the first five minutes of an interview to know how it's going to turn out" and she agreed that there is truth in this statement. Satir wanted to see a connection at the energy level between the therapist and the client at a very early stage of the session.

Martha claimed, "Virginia has something like a computer in her head. When you say xxx, she pushes a button and knows the answer and the picture comes up." However, it was not always a didactic way of giving the supervisee the answer or the picture; it was sometimes like what June described, "empowering me to find the answer based on what I knew". Dawn portrayed the process as Satir being more active in the beginning of the session in helping supervisees see what they were doing. She described, "It's kind of interpretive, but interpretive in a picture, in a whole body way, in a whole system's way, in a non-blaming way, with the full realization that she [Satir herself] might be wrong." Christina recalled hearing Satir say very early in the supervision session, "First I want to hear what you think went well" then after listening to that she would ask, "Well, let's take a look at it. What are all the options? Let's list all the options, no matter how absurd some of them might sound, just list anything that pops into your head." By so doing, she was not just telling her supervisees what they should do, but trying to connect with their energy, their resources and to nurture their potential.

However, the participants' involved in the research project had a negative experience of early intervention during supervision, which was discussed earlier in this chapter under the heading '*Learning from Satir's overt disappointment*'. I will further discuss this in Chapter 7.

In Every Unique Situation there is a Universal Process – Connected with Human Needs and Human Spirit

Many supervisees mentioned Satir's magic of being able to ask them questions which pointed directly to the core issue of the individuals or families that they were presenting. Henry marvelled at Satir's ability in "putting a concept out and picking the universal process". For example, she was able to go beyond what was presented and to capture the family theme as "peace at any price"; or to comment that it was "a story about power", or "a story about intimacy", or "a story about shame" etc. According to the participants, Satir was able to pick up the universal theme behind each family's presenting problem and guide them to understand the family at a deeper level. Joyce mentioned that "she would create for you scenarios about possible meanings, about the facts, or about the content of the story. You had the feeling that she had a sense of what the family was like even without seeing them." Dawn noticed how Satir had led supervisees to shift from working on the problems toward addressing the universal processes of change and the universal human yearnings:

She would go to the place of their strengths, first. ... when couples are in terrible troubles, and the family therapist and the couple therapist or the individual therapist is trying to address the problem or the pain, Virginia would say "the problem is not the problem", and she would look deeper to the system and its underpinnings, like where is the hope in the system, where did the disappointment begin, when did people hope for something and began to feel the disappointment, and she would help the therapist relate to the disappointment, and to the initial hope. And then the question becomes what clouded the hope, and usually it has to do with people having gotten together on the edge of their growth possibilities, not their illness... (Transcript of Dawn's interview)

Dawn believed that Satir's universal process about clients is that "they are having pain and they are disappointed people, not sick, crazy, bad, wrong, stupid people... and they did have at some point hope." This reflection on the universal process behind a presenting issue and the connection with hope was echoed by other participants including Pearl, Joyce, Martha, Christina, Susan, June and Ruth.

Ruth remarked that it is crucial for a therapist "to understand what's going on systemically" and she admired Satir's brilliant ability in understanding the underlying factors of what was presented. She claimed, "she [Satir] was very, very gifted in her understanding of abuse and woundedness in people, in how that could have happened and then what you have to do to fix it." For Satir, any abuse and woundedness in people denotes one or more unmet yearnings (McLendon, 1996); she saw them as people in pain due to their woundedness and hunger for love and recognition (Satir, 1983f, 1983-1987). They either yearned for intensive care to heal the wound, or craved love to feed their starving heart for many years. Satir's ability to reframe what was seen as sick, bad, mad or stupid into needs opened an avenue for her students and supervisees to understand universal human needs and to connect with human spirit, which is the deepest universality of human. As Pearl described, "there was always a very important part of her: her spiritual aspect, a deep abiding respect for people, a deep sense of the unexplainable ... the sense of the soul, that was always very deep in her, her person"; and that "believing the fact that we really are miracles and that we come into this world with everything we need ... come from the same energy source ... that was one of the very important connections between the two of us (Satir and Pearl)." One can understand that Satir's view of universality comes from the 'oneness' of the same life force which Satir had mentioned in numerous occasions. This ability of 'connecting with the universals' did not only come from her

giftedness; it also came from years of substantial work and deep connection with people at the spiritual level. Rasheed, Marley, and Rasheed (2010) asserted that "Satir's innate ability was actually the result of many years of learning and appreciating human and family processes" (p. 149). Supervisors desirous of heading in a similar direction may be able to reach this level of being and supervising only by putting in ample effort to learn and to practice.

Multi-sensory Experiencing is the Best Mode of Learning

In the participants' descriptions, Satir always created processes for her supervisees to learn through experiencing with all their senses. All participants recalled that none of their supervision sessions was motionless; Satir would ask them to get on their feet and to 'sculpt' (to express themselves and/or the situation using body postures) or to role play the situation at a very early stage of the sessions. Satir believed that getting on their feet allowed one to experience the flow of energy and become more ready to connect with all the levels of one's being. Ruth also recalled that Satir sent all her trainers to Outward Bound School to experience how they could work as a team; and she remarked that experience had completely changed their ability to teach and work together. For unknown reasons, Satir had only done this once with all her trainers over the years; however, it also provides us a glimpse of how important it was for Satir to open up her supervisees to opportunities to experience with all senses.

All participants recalled that Satir would ask them to show her what they were experiencing with their triad members, workshop participants, or clients during therapy sessions, and sometimes what they were experiencing at the moment of supervision by what she called "sculpting". She would ask the supervisees to use body posture, distance, altitude, facial expression as well as using tools like ropes to elucidate their internal processes. They were

amazed with the richness of the learning through these experiential processes and inspired to do the same with their stars.

What I learnt from this through my own application is that multi-sensory experiencing is not merely a technique or skill that the supervisor uses in the supervision process; it is a whole person experience of both the supervisor and supervisee. When supervisors take sculpting or role playing as a skill or technique and guide supervisees in such processes, there will be very limited energy connection between the supervisor and the supervisee. Hence, it will be quite impossible for them to connect the client's energy during the supervision session, and the supervisee's learning will remain superficial, behavioural or intellectual. So a supervisor needs to first engage in a multi-sensory "whole person" process, by opening up all sensory receptors and allowing himself/herself to fully experience the moment, and to allow his/her own energy to connect with the supervisee's energy and the energy beyond them. When the supervisor is able to do so and can be fully present with the supervisee, the context and the processes, any sculpting or role playing will come out naturally as a result of energy connecting; a multi-sensory co-discovery process will be activated. For a supervisor to be able to reach this integrated stage, one has to devote deliberate effort in learning and practising; and these processes need to be incorporated into the formal training of counsellors and supervisors using Satir's approach.

There are Always Hope and Abundance of Possibilities

I would like to start this section with Dawn's remark that Satir's "attitude towards all clients is that when they are having pain, first of all, they are disappointed people, they are not sick, crazy, bad, wrong, stupid people, they are disappointed people, and they did have at some point *hope*." Like many others, Dawn asserted that "*hope* is primary to her [Satir's] therapy so

she would go to the place of their [clients'] strengths." Pearl also maintained that "the essence of hope has always been very profound in Virginia's system ... It was always poking around to find the gold that we could work with ... Her supervision always started out with recognizing something positive that you did."

Satir's students found themselves being introduced to a totally different way of being and were fascinated by this experience. Pearl believed that this "comes from a place of abundance, not shortage" by which she meant when one feels he/she really comes into this world with everything one needed, and if he/she frees himself/herself, he/she could draw on these abundant resources and would always feel hopeful. Martha affirmed that meeting Virginia Satir let her find hope again. For her, Satir was a solid proof that there were people in the world who believe, practice and work with the values she had yearned for. All other participants made similar comments about getting in touch with their own hopefulness after encountering Satir as presented in previous sections. Yet, neither they nor Satir clearly defined what they meant by hope. I shall further discuss this in chapter 7.

Supervision is a Co-discovery Process within a Growth Enhancing Environment

Participants enjoyed the supervision processes because for them these were exciting journeys into the unknown. They knew that with Satir, there was a lot of room to explore, and they were not looking for a single absolute solution. As Pearl said, "Supervision essentially is kind of a gentle guidance towards discovery." This co-discovery process usually started with supervisees showing Satir what they were doing, either by showing their therapy tapes or by role playing. Satir was always able to find out the treasures in her supervisees before exploring what could be done differently or more effectively. Supervisees asserted that through responding to

the questions Satir asked, they were prompted to go through a co-discovery process which enabled them to expand their horizon by reflecting deeper into their intrapsychic processes as well as the interactive processes with their clients. Supervisions during the research project appeared to be an exception, where the supervisor, Satir, and the supervisees seemed to have focused more on 'doing better therapy' as discussed earlier.

Dawn maintained that Satir always looked at her supervisees as a treasure themselves and she considered what they did not know was in fact kept somewhere in their unconscious, and her job was to awaken it. Her supervision was not as if she had a truth and the supervisees had to be manipulated to her truth. It was a co-discovery process whereby Satir, as a supervisor, would always create a growth enhancing environment and lead the supervisees "*by following half a step behind*". For Dawn, this was a very fine art, and it required a lot of trust. Dawn further shared that one of the things which was most important for the supervisee in that process was taking risk and being able to work beyond his/her own comfort zone as well as that of the client's. She continued, "When you take that risk, you will do it with that attitude that you might be wrong. But if you don't stir the pot and take the risk, then you can just have a cup of coffee and have a nice time, and no real transformation occurs." She further asserted that "what the supervisee learnt was to trust the process and not to have the pressure that 'I got to cure this person'". In this growth enhancing environment, the supervisor was creating an atmosphere of trust, and a non-blaming container that could generate healing. Dawn's description of the supervision process seemed like a summary of what the other participants experienced in their supervision.

They all felt safe to bring to Satir their mistakes as well as their successes. Almost all of them commented that she was very direct, and sometimes tough; and the toughness sometimes

caused uncomfortable feelings and yet, they unanimously expressed that they could feel Satir's genuineness, love and respect for them. They welcomed the directness because it pushed them to another level of awareness and hence stimulated them to explore new grounds. Perhaps as Dawn described, "Virginia is an artist in framing things so that even the most poignant constructive criticism can be heard", which enabled supervisees to comprehend her constructive criticisms, while feeling her love and genuineness.

Supervisees were also able to be genuine with Satir. June, Susan, Pearl, Faith, Joyce, Ruth and Henry recalled having disagreement with Satir and being able to bring it to Satir. Some did it openly in the group as in June's case discussed above, but most of them chose to do it privately. Henry's remark that "you need to know when the right time is to disagree with your supervisor" indicated that he was also concerned with the supervisor's need for respect and security. Susan shared that over the years she realized that "for many leaders (including herself), it is better to do the difficult talks in private". It is probably true that a leader or a supervisor is as vulnerable as the supervisees, and he/she also needs a 'growth enhancing environment' to co-discover with her supervisees some cutting edge growth opportunities for himself/herself.

The Supervisee is the "Star" of the Supervision Process

Although one major function of supervision is to ensure the quality of therapeutic intervention with clients, the focus of attention of Satir's supervision was always on the supervisee. Hence, the supervisee is the 'star' of the supervision process. Her supervision focused on tracking the supervisee's internal process in relationship to his/her personal growth issues as well as his/her work with clients. Roy remarked that "Virginia had great success going from one place to another demonstrating family therapy. People learnt techniques but she was

disappointed and felt that just using her techniques without her value system wasn't enough."

This focus on the supervisees as 'stars' of the supervision sessions reflected that Satir did not want to merely teach them skills, but to go deeper into their innate ability to grow and to connect with love. Many recalled that Satir asked them to 'sculpt' themselves in relation with the family or the workshop participants they were working with, i.e., to invite fellow supervisees as role players and use their body postures and distance to display a picture to show what they perceived was going on within the therapy or workshop processes. When placing himself/herself in that physical position with the other people in the context, the supervisee was able to gain insight about his/her own personal issues and have professional enlightenment through the whole-person multi-sensory learning experience.

Even when the supervision session was geared towards finding alternative ways to work with the clients, the focus was still always on 'how could the supervisee do differently'; 'what was happening with the supervisee when he or she comes up with this alternative'; and 'how did the supervisee feel when getting caught in this difficult situation'. The focus of the supervision session was always on the being and doing of the supervisee and the internal processes of the supervisee at the time of supervision (i.e., the here and now experience). The participants were all very grateful to be able to have such remarkable and very often transformative supervision experience with Satir.

Here is an illustration of how Satir treated her supervisee as the star of the session. Pearl remembered once when she was discussing her case with Satir in supervision, and suddenly Satir said, "Pearl, your voice is not supporting your words." Pearl knew that her voice was getting "thinned" [softer] but she did not really know what Satir was referring to. Satir continued to say

to her, "Pearl, take a breath, and now on the out breath say your name." So Pearl took a deep breath and said, "Pearl" while breathing out. Satir said, "Don't take a breath and say your name." And Pearl could feel the difference that it made. She could understand then what Satir meant by commenting that her voice was not supporting her words. Pearl realized that she was not connecting with her "whole person" when talking about her "case". So, in turn with her clients, she could work on their breathing and facilitate them to connect with their deeper self. It wasn't that Satir manipulated what Pearl had to do, but in doing it with Pearl, Pearl experienced and learnt from it, and could internalize it, then could apply it in helping clients. So Pearl remarked that Satir's supervision with her was always very subtle because her clients were not the star of the supervision, but she was. She was inspired by Satir so much that she even remarked that "there should have been more Virginia available."

Ruth "submitted herself to many different types of people who were exemplars in the field, who were at the top of their game", such as Murray Bowen, Jay Haley and Milton Erickson; and she claimed that "I got the most in terms of any supervision from her [Satir]". Jeff also highly commended her teaching and supervision and said, "She helped me to live life more fully, with more emotional honesty, and with integrity. I do everything to keep Satir's memory and work alive; because she did everything she could to help me come alive."

Another area in which Satir treated her students or supervisees as stars, described by Susan, was having the "freedom" to be themselves. She said, "Virginia respected what I brought with myself and she supported how to use this within what she was teaching me. And she did that with others too." Satir demonstrated to her supervisees that she really saw each of them as a miracle and a gem, and her job was to facilitate the miracle to function as such. Jeff exclaimed

that he wished to have another twenty years with Satir because the ten years being able to participate with her in training were the best of his life!

Conclusion

The above identified seven key elements in Satir's supervision shed light on the four areas of my guiding research questions: they reflected Satir's (a) supervision principles and philosophy were also grounded in her primary conviction of human validation, connecting the spirit of the supervisees and unfold the inner treasure of each of them; (b) the supervision outcomes were manifested in her supervisees having transformative experiences and reaching a higher level of the self; (c) her supervision skills, techniques and strategies were multi-sensory experiential co-discovery based; and (d) there is a strong emphasis on the 'use of selves', i.e., the supervisor and supervisees, in supervision.

Over the long span of Satir's professional life, she reached, inspired and facilitated positive changes in the lives of many people through her teachings and demonstrations in different places of the world. This chapter explored her practice of clinical supervision, as informed by fifteen of her students, in light of being inspired to practise supervision more effectively. Through interpreting and understanding the participants' experiences of being supervised by Virginia Satir, I am able to connect with the 'magic' they experienced, and to add some treasures to my own practice of clinical supervision; I am also able to acknowledge the 'trash' they witnessed and be inspired to reflect on the 'trash' of my own practice and learn from it. By organizing these learnings, I believe this study is also contributing to the current clinical supervision practices especially for supervisors who attach importance to the 'use of self' in

therapy and in supervision, who honour the strength and potential in people, and who are open to holistic experiences and to spiritual connection between and among humans.

The experiences that participants found helpful and inspiring informed us that the 'magic' behind Satir's approach rests in her genuine belief in the 'magic' in other people, including her clients and supervisees. Her seemingly 'right on target' interventions reflected her passionate attempts and cumulative experience connecting and working with families. Supervisors today can do the same, i.e., intervene at an early stage and with enough practice guide supervisees to tease out the universal theme behind each presenting problem. It has been clearly shown that a sense of hopefulness is a vital factor in Satir's supervision and therapy; supervisors wanting to adopt Satir's approach need to hold or to acquire this sense of hopefulness towards life. We also found out that although Satir took on a teacher's role, her modality of teaching was not dry didactic teaching. She facilitated multi-sensory experiential learning within a safe, growth enhancing environment that she provided for the supervisees, the 'stars' of supervision, and guided them through co-discovery processes to reach new possibilities, and enabling them to learn to do the same with their clients, the 'stars' of the counselling processes.

We are also inspired to learn through Satir's weaknesses and limitations. In both the research project and the process communities, there were no clear job descriptions of what was expected from the therapists or the workshop trainers. There were also no clear distinctions between supervision, consultation, and training. It is necessary to have clear communication as well as expressed and agreed expectations. Contracting for supervision is helpful to both supervisor and supervisee.

Another key learning is that there is great potential in using triads in training and supervision. Teachers and supervisors can be inspired to make better use of the triad dynamics and triadic relationships to effect personal growth and professional development in themselves as well as in their supervisees.

One major shift in my conception about Satir's approach is that I no longer call it the "Satir Model", which has a misleading tendency to "worshiping" or "glorifying" 'one Satir', and that this is the "only way" to practice what she taught. Satir called her approach *The Growth Model*, *The Seed Model*, and *The Human Validation Process Model*; she had never name it "the Satir Model". Now I choose to call Satir's approach the 'The Satir Growth Model' because it reflects the spirit of her approach, and it was her wish that people would not just copy her, but be inspired by what she taught and to find their own 'magic'. She also urged people to enjoy their own freedom to adapt and add on whatever is appropriate in their own personal and professional application. Lastly, this name spells out clearly its applicability in numerous areas beyond family therapy, which also gear towards "growth" in human and in human communities.

In the next chapter, I will present an in-depth interpretation of a 10-minute audio recording of a supervision session by Satir.

Chapter 6

Understanding Satir's Supervision through Interpreting a Vignette of Her Work

Introduction

In this chapter, an in-depth interpretation of a 10-minute audio recording of a supervision session by Satir is presented. This short piece of work was extracted through a total of more than 1000 hours of listening to audio and watching video recordings of Virginia Satir's teaching, conference presentations and demonstrations. It stood out as "this is what I have been looking for!" – Satir demonstrating supervision! Corrales (1989) commented: "Videos and audiotapes of her [Satir's] seminars and case consultations capture her genius much better than do her essays or books" (p. 45). I believed that an in-depth hermeneutic study of this vignette would help broaden and deepen my understanding of Satir's clinical supervision, especially in how she uses language and how she keeps an emotional proximity as mentioned earlier. It would also allow me to follow closely with the supervisory process and to see what has happened in the transactions between the supervisor and supervisee, and to find answers for the research questions.

Satir (2000b) maintained that "techniques and approaches are tools. They come out differently in different hands" (p. 19). She also emphasized that the therapist and the patient, as human beings, would inevitably affect each other, hence the therapist's 'self' or 'personhood' would be involved "regardless of, and in addition to, his/her treatment philosophy or approach" (p. 19). For her, the "process of change would be an inhuman endeavour without human caring and empathy and without an eye to the soul and person of the individual in front of you as well

as yourself ... Without the humanity, it [technique] becomes just brainwashing" (Bandler, Grinder, & Satir, 1976, p. 178). I also analysed the techniques and went beyond them to capture the philosophy behind the interventions and present them in this chapter.

As discussed in the last chapter, Andreas (1989) criticized Satir's students for not being able to use the methods and techniques that she had developed, instead they "demonstrated the exact opposite of the patterns Virginia used" (Andreas, p. 52). As a result, he warned: "Those who wish to preserve Virginia's legacy for family therapy need to recognize a basic discrepancy between what she taught about her work and what she actually did" (Andreas, p. 52). I do not agree with Andreas' description of how Satir taught about her work, because Satir taught by talking and modelling. The talking part was mostly around her beliefs, philosophy and principles of her practice, in light of explaining the philosophy behind what she was doing as well as her perspectives about the universal human processes under different unique situations. The modelling part included leading her students through experiential processes as well as demonstrating how she worked with families; there were very little didactic teaching of what and how to practise. Hence, she left a lot of room for her students to work out their own learning, and to integrate it into their own philosophy of practice. Nonetheless, I agree that if we want to learn from her, we need to pay meticulous attention to what she actually modelled, and to interpret and understand from the base of her beliefs system as well as her practice philosophy. Though she had expressed her strong reluctance to teach skills and techniques (Gardner, 1978), she had actually taught them at a subtle and much profound level.

Satir's therapeutic approach was frequently described as powerfully effective and being able to produce in-depth and long lasting changes in people and in systems (Andreas, 1989;

Brothers, 2000b; Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008; Kramer, 1995b; McLendon, 2000a); while at the same time being disdained as faith healing (Pittman, 1989), touchy-feely (Freeman, 1999; Gurman, 2008; Schwartz, 1995) and inadequately theorized (Innes, 2002; Luepnitz, 1989). So, this study is an effort and an attempt to bridge the gap between the practical side and the theoretical side of Satir's supervision practice. I have interpreted the observable technical and methodological aspects of her supervision, and have sorted out the philosophical and theoretical aspects behind these skills and techniques. I present my understanding of Satir's supervision and my learning from this ten-minute session in this chapter. The process also helped me understand more deeply the experiences of the participants of this research, and enhanced my analysis in Chapter 5; and the experiences of the participants also helped me understand Satir's work in these ten minutes at a deeper level. The hermeneutic processes intertwined and spiralled in a way that went beyond my initial expectation.

Background of the Supervision Session

The vignette was taken from the audio CD EP85.WS3b (Satir, 1985) of the first Evolution of Psychotherapy Conference, organized by the Erickson Foundation, held in Phoenix, Arizona in 1985. The series of 3 CDs recorded Virginia Satir's workshop on "Use of Self", whereby Satir presented a video tape in which she demonstrated the use of touch as part of the therapeutic intervention. The third CD recorded the last part of the workshop, in which Satir opened the platform for puzzles and feedback, and had participants going on stage to ask their questions or to make comments. The verbatim transcript of this 10-minute session is included as Appendix 4.

Though it was a “question and answer period” in a conference setting, Satir had actually conducted a ten-minute supervision session with an American therapist, Joyce, who was bothered by an internal conflict with using touch in therapy. The participants of this research agreed that what Satir did with Joyce: the connection, role playing, and being directive etc., happened very frequently in her supervision with them.

In the ten-minute session, Satir focused on the personhood and attended to the self of the therapist, as well as having ‘an eye to the soul and person’ of all three persons: Satir herself, Joyce who was in front of her, and the client Joyce was talking about. Satir demonstrated a very brief intervention process, which yielded a positive outcome. In the end of these ten minutes, the supervisee, Joyce, found the process helpful, and had shown obvious shift in her bodily expressions. The dialogue between Joyce and Virginia in the last thirty seconds proceeds as follows:

J: That's really helpful. (Tone of voice changed)

V: Thank you. Something happened for you in your face... what was it?
(Applause from the audience)

J: Oh, a freeing... (Inaudible because of the applause)

V: I wish you (the audience) could have been up here. May be some of you did see how Joyce's face changed. (“Yes”, from the audience) and it got loosen and the lights came on in your eyes. I saw fear before, now I don't see it.
Thank you, thank you for allowing this to happen.

J: Thank you.

V: You're welcome.

Satir had used some techniques which were very effective, yet her ‘use of self’ and her steadfast belief in the human potential to learn and to grow (Satir, 1988), and the belief in the “goodness of people and the ‘healing power of love’” (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008, p. 223) had guided her entire process.

Prior to interpreting her supervision, it would be helpful to know how she described her wish to future therapists just a few months before she died, from the following excerpt of a 1988 interview:

When asked "how would she like future family therapists to view her work, what would she hope would happen in the family therapy field into the future"; she replied, "one of the hopes I have is that people will learn how to love themselves- that's the first thing... and that we would learn how to grow and that we could all be teachers- I'd like to get rid of the label therapists- instead, we could all be seen as teachers of how to become more fully human and we would look at the learning model as the paradigm of change- that we could expand our abilities to see the many ways in which human beings adapt instead of comparing." (Kramer, 1995b, p. 177)

It seemed that in this ten-minute session, Satir demonstrated her own willingness and readiness to be a teacher and her genuine wish for Joyce to learn to be at peace with herself, hence with her clients. Through this vignette, Satir also conveyed her wish that therapist can be "able to look at small pieces and see the whole" (Kramer, 1995, p. 1) and showed her ability to see the 'whole' picture or the 'universal' (Brothers, 1991b) through a small piece of information provided. The analysis below represents a fusion of horizons resulting from the interpretation process through the hermeneutic circle described in Chapter 4. I, the researcher, have made effort to have genuine conversations with the text and to weave between the 'whole', i.e., the philosophical underpinning of Satir's approach, and the 'parts', i.e., the specific areas that stood out in the text; as well as to have dialogues with reflecting team members and take their horizons into consideration so as to come to this stage of understanding.

A Brief Summary of the Dialogic Hermeneutic Process

This ten-minute session was extracted from the pool of Satir's audio and video recordings. My first impression of this vignette was that Satir was literally supervising Joyce, and I went through a preliminary hermeneutic circle by first immersing myself into the audio tape and transcribing the contents. I asked myself what is present in these ten minutes that makes me judge that it is a piece of supervision. To me, supervision is a process where the supervisee not only affirms his/her prior competence, but is also helped to move beyond his/her present state in terms of professional knowledge and skills and in managing his/her personal pitfalls that impede his/her work with clients. This ten-minute session seemingly matches my expectation of supervision, so I started my in-depth interpretation of the text by having rounds and rounds of 'genuine conversation' with the original text, other materials by Satir or on Satir's approach and by having dialogues with the co-interpreters of the reflecting team.

Satir's Supervision Practice as Understood from the Vignette

The following is the only source of literature that I have found to date that directly describes Satir's supervision: "For Satir, the concept of 'people-making' was the same in supervision as in therapy. Therefore, Satir created for her students the same kind of experiences..." (Minuchin, et al., 1996, p. 43). In this vignette, Minuchin's statement can easily be verified, because the theme of 'people making' prevailed the entire session. Satir believed that "the therapist can be in the same position as the patient... while therapists facilitate and enhance patients' ability and need to grow, they should at the same time be aware that they have the same ability and need" (Satir, 2000b, p. 21). Satir was clear about what kind of experiences she wanted to create for Joyce, in order to facilitate her to meet her needs that might even be

beyond her awareness. In the ten-minute session, her practice philosophy was reflected through nine major conceptual themes identified by the researcher. Under these themes Satir addressed five needs of the supervisee, Joyce, and used ten major techniques or strategies to lead her to gain insight into the issue that had been bothering her.

Nine Conceptual Themes

I have identified nine conceptual themes from the hermeneutic journey of understanding the vignette. Most of them matched with what was presented in the previous chapter, and the themes: "*taking charge of the process*", and "*supervisors and therapists need to be teachers*" were new additions to what was identified in the last chapter. The nine conceptual themes are:

- (1) Creating a loving and safe context;
- (2) Early intervention – setting the direction and focus of the session;
- (3) Experiential learning - working on the firm belief that the best learning is through accessing all avenues of experience;
- (4) Use of self – being fully present and demonstrating the confidence and courage to directly address the issues that had not been openly acknowledged;
- (5) Taking charge of the process, gearing towards a positive direction, focusing on the person, not the problem - staying very closely with the internal processes of the supervisee, and activating the human potential in light of 'people making', not only 'problem solving';
- (6) Taking the supervisee to a higher level of being - trusting the supervisee's abilities and potential for growth, having a vision of universal human yearnings and providing

a bigger, universal and existential picture, as well as taking the supervisee through a spiritual journey in supervision;

- (7) All humans are equal in value, and we share some universal yearnings, as well as similar vulnerabilities and strengths;
- (8) Supervisors and therapists need to be teachers – teaching was the most prominent supervisory task in the entire process; and
- (9) Everybody (supervisor, supervisee and client) has the resources to cope, to grow and to take responsibility for oneself.

Five Needs of the Supervisee

During the process, Satir addressed five needs of the supervisee. They were the needs to: (1) have a sense of security– to be understood and empowered; (2) have a sense of ‘being in control’ and to feel good about oneself; (3) establish a positive direction, which focused on peace, health and choices, not pathology or problems; (4) grow and expand - move beyond the present stage of being and knowing and to reach the ‘higher self’; and (5) take risk in order to experience new possibilities and release trapped energy. The supervisee might not be conscious about some of these needs; it was the supervisor’s “super vision” and practice philosophy that ensured these needs were addressed during the process. Though they may appear to be the specific needs of the supervisee in this case, they are actually universal needs of all supervisees. To avoid verbosity, these needs and the abovementioned themes will be represented in *italics* within the presentation of ‘the ten major skills or techniques’ below.

Satir expressed her reluctance around teaching others skills and techniques on different occasions (Bandler, et al., 1976; Gardner, 1978; Satir, 2000b). We can understand the reason behind her reservation from the following excerpt:

I am scared to death of offering people techniques: a technique is nothing unless it's set in a relevant context. Skills and techniques by themselves are probably only accidentally going to be relevant; but when they flow out of a real understanding of the situation, then they become good tools for making something happen..... You've got to relate head and feelings and heart too... The heart is so important, to open up your heart will make you vulnerable and one of the things I tell my trainee therapists is that if they are not vulnerable, they won't be good therapists. So, as a therapist, you have to relate your skills to your own being. (Gardner, 1978, p. 2)

However, skills and techniques were vital components of her work; and a significant factor for the effectiveness in therapy and supervision. Hence, I put in considerable effort in relating the skills and techniques that Satir used in the process with her philosophy of 'being' and 'doing'; and into understanding them with all my senses, including an 'open heart', and connecting the 'head' with the 'feelings' as Satir urged therapists to do. Since application was an integral part of the hermeneutic process in this research, I allowed myself to face my vulnerability and to try out the skills, experience the processes, and to examine the outcomes in different contexts.

Ten Major Skills or Techniques Identified

Ten major skills or techniques Satir demonstrated in these ten minutes are identified as follows :

1. Interrupting
2. Asking questions and tracking supervisee's internal process closely through

3. Reframing with appropriate wordings and non-judgmental attitude
4. Being direct and persistent
5. Role playing
6. Distancing: psychologically and physically
7. Using humour
8. Teaching or educating
9. Affirming or anchoring
10. Sequencing

Below I present my interpretation of this supervision process under the heading of each of these skills with a description of how each skill connects to the needs of the supervisee and the practice philosophy of Virginia Satir. *Italics* will be used to highlight *the supervisee's needs* and *Satir's practice philosophy* or *conceptual themes* within the text.

1. Interrupting

Satir interrupted Joyce twice, in line 2 and line 20, during the entire 10-minute conversation. The first time was very early; in fact it was the first response from Satir, when Joyce was narrating what had been bothering her. Satir cut in and said, "Wait a minute, now tell me, what you did with that?" (Line 2) The second interruption happened when Joyce mentioned that she "would like to leap into the hug, but I..." (Line 19) Satir interrupted and said, "I know, so did she, so did she." (Line 20)

These two interruptions had different functions. The first one served to *steer the direction* [theme 2] from the 'outside' to the 'inside', and to *change the focus of attention* [need 3] from the 'problem' to the 'person'. In other words, it shifted the focus from the 'content' of the problem that Joyce was describing, to the internal 'process' that Joyce had experienced or might even have been experiencing at the moment while she was talking. The interruption also reflected Satir's philosophy of *early intervention* [theme 2] and *taking charge of the process* [theme 5]. Tracking the internal processes of the supervisee was significant in understanding Joyce as a person, and paving the way for further exploration or intervention.

Satir stopped Joyce at this very early stage by using two imperatives in a row: 'wait a minute', and 'tell me'. This was not, and still is not, a 'usual' way that most professionals would have spoken to clients, especially at this initial stage of rapport building. Some supervisors could have been practising this in supervision, probably from a hierarchical, superior position. We have to understand that Satir worked on the premise that '*we are all equal* [theme 7] and we are all the manifestation of the same life force'. She connected people by *using her 'self'* [theme 4], with the full presence of her physical, intellectual, emotional, sensual and spiritual self and her positive energy. For her, there was no need to 'beat around the bush'. Her 'power of love' did not manifest through paraphrasing or reflection of feelings using empathic professional jargons, but through her genuine intention *to bring the client or the supervisee to another level of knowing and being* [theme 6; need 4].

In this interaction, Satir seemingly wanted to lead Joyce *to move beyond the content of her narrative and to go directly to the internal process of her experience* [theme 5], where her energy was blocked. Simon (1989) recognized Satir's "deeply rooted principle" as a therapist,

which was “her unshakeable conviction about people’s potential for growth and the need for therapists to assume a respectful role in the process of change” (p. 38). Satir’s action reflected what Simon described. She had a strong trust in Joyce’s readiness for change by her very action of *choosing to go up to the stage and share her concerns* [need 4]. Satir also had not doubted Joyce’s ability to ‘take care’ of her own vulnerability; and yet she was very respectful to Joyce’s *need for taking control for herself* [need 2] and her *need for security* [need 1]. All through the ten-minute session, Satir demonstrated her skills of manoeuvring between taking Joyce forward and respecting her needs for security and to take control for herself. She had a steadfast belief that *people are all equal* [theme 7], and that *everybody has the resources to cope, to grow and to take responsibility for oneself* [theme 9]. She was very directive in her therapy and also in this short piece of supervision. Joyce’s spontaneous humorous response to Satir, “she’s dead, I can’t...” reflected that she was also treating Satir as an equal.

The second interruption happened when Joyce finally disclosed that she “would like to leap into the hug” (Line 19) and that was why she was ‘lousy’ in role playing. Satir interrupted with “I know, so did she, so did she” (Line 20), not only to help Joyce look at her client from another angle, but also *to make a point* [theme 8], which was important *to teach* Joyce her belief about one of the *universal yearnings in humans* [theme 7], which was ‘we all yearned to be loved and connected’. The belief that *‘we are all equal’* [theme 7] was also implicitly conveyed.

Satir’s authenticity was a powerful factor in *establishing a safe environment* [theme 1; need 1] for the supervisee to be authentic and to be prepared to face more challenges along the process. Satir’s interruption reflected her intention *to take charge of the process, not the person* [theme 5], *as early as possible* [theme 2], so that the energy would be freed from the possibly

unhealthy perpetual self-defeating pathology and be *redirected to possibilities for health and growth* [theme 5, need 3]. She knew what she was doing and was very confident in herself.

Satir's interruption by saying, "I know. So did she, so did she" reflected her urge to *take on the 'teacher-role'* [theme 8]. It also served the purpose of *taking charge of the process, opening up to new possibilities* [theme 5] and preventing Joyce from going into a probably self-defeating state of mind. This short statement was a powerful one, in terms of *shedding new light into Joyce's perception of her client and their innate connection as humans* [need 4]. However, instead of pausing and allowing Joyce some time to process this new information, Satir shifted to tap the altruistic part of Joyce by *sharing with* [theme 8] her the purpose of the role play (line 20) that it was also for the need of "a lot of people", namely, the audience. Satir's belief about the positive impact of the role play seemed to have preceded her concern for Joyce's *need to process what she heard* [need 2], which could be a piece of new information to her. Like what she did in another therapy demonstration (Satir, 1983d), Satir could have paused for a while to allow the time and space for Joyce to take in this piece of new information about the possibility that her client might also like to leap into the hug; and to move beyond her pre-conceptions and feelings. With more time and space, Joyce might also be able to connect with her 'self' at a deeper yearning level.

Supervisors may be inspired to strive for a balance between *taking the supervisee to another level of knowing and being* [theme 6] and *respecting need for security* [theme 1, need 1] and *'being in control'* [need 2] of herself, as well as being mindful about the time and space that supervisees need to process some new information. It is important for supervisors to have a clear

boundary in terms of *taking charge of the process* [theme 5] and respecting the *supervisees' need to be in control of himself/herself* [need 2].

This technique of “interrupting” illuminates Satir's concern of people using techniques without the “heart” because it needs to be accompanied with having full respect for the supervisee and connecting with a higher purpose in “peoplemaking”.

2. Asking questions and tracking supervisee's internal process closely

In the ten minute discourse, there were thirty-two exchanges of dialogues between Satir and Joyce. Satir used the questioning technique twenty-one times, i.e. 65.6% of the discourse. This reveals Satir's respect for the supervisee by not imposing meanings on her, and Satir's concern for Joyce's *need for security* [need 1] and to *establish a loving and safe context* [theme 1]. Satir also used these questions to *take charge of the process* [theme 5] by framing them towards a *positive direction* [theme 5, need 3], and to track and follow Joyce's internal processes closely. Her emphasis on the internal process was noted and echoed by Piercy, Sprenkle, and Wetchler (1996); they commented: “after all, internal experience is seen as infinitely more valid than external, intellectual, non-experiential data” (p. 83).

The functions of Satir's questions include (i) understanding Joyce's internal process; (ii) checking Satir's interpretation or assumption; (iii) clarifying Joyce's meaning; (iv) adjusting the focus or direction; (v) releasing trapped energy; and (vi) anchoring new discovery and learning.

On the surface, the first question: “Now tell me, what did you do with that?” (Line 2) served to check how Joyce coped with the ‘first bubble’ she mentioned. In fact, it set a tone for the session, which was: working with *the therapist's 'inner process'* [theme 5] so as to help her to be more aware of her client's ‘inner process’. When Joyce did not answer Satir's question,

she came back to her later and asked: "what did you do when she went back?" (Line 12) This time Joyce shared her vulnerable feeling "Sensing freak out..." (Line 13) This prompted Satir to *create a safer environment* [theme 1, need 1] by initiating to *role-play* [theme 3] with her.

Later, instead of giving Joyce (who was role playing her client) a hug, Satir (who was role playing Joyce) asked her five questions about being hugged:

- (1) "So I say, 'I would like to give you a hug.' Then you back off like that. Will you do that?" (Line 18)
- (2) "Amelia (the name given to the role), tell me, what happened for you when I said I would like to give you a hug?" (Line 22)
- (3) "What happened for you, Amelia, when I said I wanted to give you a hug?" (Line 28)
- (4) "So, now if I say to you, ... how would it feel to you if you were hugged by me as you feel it now?" (Line 40)
- (5) "So I'm saying sometimes people are afraid of what will be the outcome, the next step after a hug. Do you have something like that?" (Line 44)

It was as if Satir had her pre-conception about Joyce's dilemma, and she went back again and again to the issue of hugging and being hugged; and yet, she also demonstrated genuine *respect to Joyce's boundary* [needs 1 & 2] and her understanding and acceptance of Joyce's unsettling feeling about physical contacts in a therapeutic setting. Hence, she *created sufficient room for Joyce to feel safe enough* [theme 1, need 1] to address the almost ineffable internal conflict.

Satir also closely tracked Joyce's internal process by going deeper than just settling with the superficial meaning:

V: What happened for you, Amelia, when I said I wanted to hug you?

J: It wouldn't be big enough.

V: It wouldn't be big enough. The it (stopped without finishing the sentence). Now I'm prob (stopped abruptly without finishing the word). What's the "it"? (Line 30)

J: The hug.

V: You mean that all my arms and all my 16 point square feet of skin... Wouldn't be enough to envelope you; is that what you're saying?

J: OK.

V: How much of you do you think that I could manage?

J: (sighs) A tenth.

V: Ok, now. Is it that you're saying to me that if you can't have everything that you don't want nothing?

J: (resigned laugh) (heavy sigh) I think I'm saying the pain is too big to hold. (Line 28 to line 39)

In this short discourse, Satir did not try to interpret Joyce's meaning, or assume that she had understood Joyce. Instead, she used questions to track Joyce's internal process and thus was able to lead Joyce step by step to disclose her deep hidden predicament. It is interesting to note on line 30 where Satir stopped and changed her wordings twice and came up with a very simple question: "What's the 'it'?" This indicated that she wanted to be very clear about what Joyce was saying and did not want to impose her meaning on Joyce. Her effort was rewarded. Joyce was able to allow herself to become vulnerable and to go deeper and deeper, and allowed 'the dam to burst' (Joyce's own word in line 41), resulted in *releasing her trapped energy* [theme 6, need 5].

In terms of releasing trapped energy, the question: "And maybe you are asking me do I have sexual feelings for you, are you?" (line 48) was audacious and yet powerful. This question

not only clarified Joyce's meaning of 'sexual', it also suggested to Joyce and the audience that it was alright to talk about this issue in an open, clear and direct manner.

Satir also asked a very simple question: "You believe me?" (line 52) before she proceeded to another piece of '*experiential learning*' [theme 3] for Joyce. Someone commented that everybody would answer yes to this question. They may be right. Another possibility is that as a master of communication, Satir did not just listen to the words; she followed the affects and sensed the energy of the other person. Perhaps Satir used this simple question to track Joyce's internal process, to assess their relationship and the effect of the role play. She then moved one step further and led Joyce into another learning experience, which will be discussed under item 8.

Asking questions and tracking supervisee's internal process closely is necessary and significant in understanding the supervisee, and in adjusting the pace and setting the direction for the supervision process.

3. Reframing with appropriate wordings and non-judgmental attitude

Besides using questions, Satir also followed Joyce's clues about her vulnerability and *established a sense of security* [theme 1] by reframing what she heard with a non-judgmental, non-blaming attitude and neutral wordings. She used "I heard that" instead of "you told me" or "you said" to show Joyce what she taught about "the ingredients of an interaction" (Satir, et al., 1991, pp. 121-145); that she was taking full responsibility for what she heard and how she interpreted it. The reframed statement "I hear that you engaged in a transaction with somebody where you didn't know that there were reactions that didn't come out to the surface" (line 4) modelled how she interpreted Joyce's narrative without any judgement. Satir did not hold individuals accountable for the 'transaction' (which was also reported by her supervisees – the

participants of this study); she just reflected what had happened as she understood it. She did not blame Joyce's friend for not disclosing her 'real' feelings about Joyce rubbing her back or the friend's speculation of whether Joyce was Lesbian; neither did she blame Joyce for not being sensitive to her friend's conjecture. This statement was significant in terms of *creating a loving and safe context* [theme 1; need 1] which addressed what was there without any value judgment and enabled Joyce to look deeper into the issue, and at the same time allowed Joyce to assess Satir, and to decide whether she could *trust this supervisory relationship* [need 2]. In fact, Joyce seemed to have no hesitation to agreeing with Satir's interpretation by saying two 'right's in a row. Satir's reframing also opened the possibility for Joyce to see the issue from an existential, non-pathological perspective. This was an attempt to *take her supervisee to a higher level of being and knowing* [theme 6].

Satir also reframed Joyce's uncertain response "I guess that it would be sexual" (line 47) into an assumption: "I think I'm hearing you say, 'women have sexual feelings towards one another.'" and then addressed its universal and existential nature: "I think that everybody knows that" (line 48). This process of addressing directly the issue of sexuality, or homosexuality, and reframing it as a universal and existential issue, further assured Joyce that *it was safe for her to take risk* [needs 1 and 5] to face the issue and its impact on her. It takes exceptional courage and discernment for a supervisor to be able to move in such depth with the supervisee's trapped energy, and yet any supervisor can develop a health-focused, non-judgmental and non-blaming attitude and practise *unconditional love and acceptance* [theme 1] as well as *reframing* what was presented by the supervisee *toward a non-pathological, growth-enhancing direction* [theme 5].

4. *Being direct and persistent*

Satir used the metaphor of the control tower position in the airport (Brothers, 1999; Satir, et al., 1991; Suhd, et al., 2000) to teach therapists that one of their responsibilities was to have a full picture of the context, in order to help their clients gain insight into their present situation. For her, taking the 'control tower position' and *taking charge of the process* (but not the persons) [theme 5] was significant in therapy; and thus in supervision. As a supervisor, she would also take the 'control tower position' in order to have 'super vision'. This may explain her directness and persistence, in terms of working towards positive changes in individuals, and in nurturing healthy relationships.

Very early in the session, Satir showed how she persisted in making her point by using four no's in a row (line 4) to *take charge of the process* [theme 5] and to try to shift the direction of focus from the outside, i.e., what had happened to Joyce, to the impact inside, i.e., what Joyce's internal process was. Her subsequent statement, "You did something to yourself about that" had skilfully *re-located Joyce from the passive position, or even the victim role, into the active position* [theme 5 & 9], the choice maker role, which laid the ground work for change to take place. Satir was able to do so because she had the strong belief that '*we have choices*', and '*we are responsible for all our choices*' [theme 9]. Though Joyce had not responded directly to her question, she agreed with Satir's interpretation of her narrative. Satir's persistence enabled her to make an initial contact with Joyce, and to set the foundation for change to happen.

From line 14 to line 18, Satir persisted to invite Joyce to role play the situation between her and her client. Her invitation was very direct, "I want to do a little role play with you, ok?" (line 14); "I'm going to be you now, and you be her" and "Then you back off like that. Will you

do that?" (Line 18). Instead of diverting her attention to other areas, such as exploring Joyce's resistance, Satir persisted in *creating more and more safety* [need 1] for Joyce to engage in the role play so that she could be *open to new possibilities* [theme 6 & 9] through the experience. Satir was in the '*control tower position*' and she believed that the *experiential process* [theme 3] would help Joyce to *move beyond her present stage of knowing and being* [theme 6] and hence gain insight to handle her 'bubbles'. Besides, she was *following Joyce's internal processes closely* [theme 5] to ensure Joyce would have the space she needed while believing that being able to push Joyce to *take risk* [need 5] was a vital step for her to learn and grow. Satir's being directive and persistent were the keys to free Joyce from being hostage of her own emotions and to reach a higher level of professional competence.

Though most of the reflecting team members attributed the positive outcome of this ten-minute session to Satir's directedness and persistence, Satir's directness was also seen as dangerous by one of her students who is also a participant of this research. She warned that her experience of watching Satir with another supervisee and her own experience with a client had taught her that the persons at the other side of the therapeutic or supervision dyad might not be as prepared and as authentic as what Satir had assessed; they might placate her and follow her lead. The possible negative impact may not have a chance to be handled and processed, especially during demonstrations. Three members in the reflecting team also mentioned that if they were Joyce they would feel anxious and the process would be embarrassing. Supervisors need to be very clear about their intention and objectives for being direct and persistent; they should also be knowledgeable and mature enough to take 'the control tower position', while keeping track of the supervisee's internal processes, especially the genuine feeling and the energy flow.

5. Role playing

Satir invited Joyce to role play her client and she role played Joyce. Since Satir was known for her ability for creating learning experiences through body movement, sculpture and role playing, and Joyce also mentioned that she was 'very physical' (line 1); then in this supervision context, role playing would be an appropriate mode. Satir paid attention to but did not further explore Joyce's emotions when she said, "Sensing freak out" (line 13) and continued to *take charge of the process* [theme 5] by leading Joyce right into the role play and *disregarded her repeated 'plead' to back off* [theme 9]. Satir had "an ability to pick out the forest from the trees" (Spiegler, 1991), i.e., *mapping the specific with the universals* [theme 2 & 6]. For her, Joyce's backing off was a parallel process with her client's: both wanted to be hugged, which symbolized wanting to be understood, accepted, valued, supported and comforted, and yet was restricted by some sort of rules or values, which were learnt from past experience. So when Joyce showed her reluctance, Satir did not address her resistance, instead, she assured Joyce that she "will do perfect" with what she's asking her to do in the role play (line 16). She also addressed Joyce's concern by *giving her a little education* (line 18, this will be discussed in item 7) [theme 8]. She respected Joyce's boundary and attempted to *increase her sense of security* [need 1] by asking her about being hugged instead of really hugging her, and reminding her that she was role playing (line 24 and 46). She also tried to convince her that the role play was for everybody in the audience by saying: "I want you to do this now because I want to demonstrate to you a piece that a lot of people need to have but don't have" (line 20). By so doing, she was subtly *empowering Joyce's altruistic part and pushing her to transcend her present 'self' and move towards becoming 'more fully human'* [theme 6, need 4 & 5], which was Satir's goal for everybody.

Role playing provided a platform for people to *learn through all senses* [theme 3]. In this case, the most sensitive issue was about physical touch; so instead of going directly to the physical area, Satir appealed to the visual and sensual senses by asking Joyce, "you have an image of this one... how would it feel to you if you were hugged by me, as you feel it now?" (Line 40) This was powerful in the sense that Joyce did not have to experience and become overwhelmed by the physical contact, i.e., the hug, and at the same time, was able to visualize and 'sense' herself having the experience and responded "As if the dam may burst" (line 41). After all, Satir had not hugged Joyce, and yet *had facilitated the same kind of experience through other sensual avenues* [theme 3, 8 & 9; need 2 & 4].

Joyce was able to trust Satir and travelled an internal journey through role playing. The role play opened up an opportunity for Joyce to experience the subtle dynamics between the therapist and the client. She learnt something new about her client and herself, their relationship, her own reaction in the relationship, as well as some universal issues about having physical contact [need 4]. There was no actual 'hugging' in the process, so the purpose of the role play was not to have Joyce play the role and experience being hugged, it was for Joyce *to open up for more perspectives about universal human yearnings* [theme 6; need 4], about how to proceed with a 'difficult situation' in therapy, and most important of all *to free her own trapped energy* [theme 6, need 5]. Supervisors who want to use role playing in supervision need to have a 'super vision' as a pre-requisite.

6. Distancing: psychological and physical

Satir was sensitive to Joyce's *need for security*, and created some distance for her to feel safe. These distances included both psychological and physical ones. Role playing provided

Joyce a chance to create a psychological distance from her own emotional disturbances and to look at the issue from her client's position. Satir called her by the made-up name of the role, and reminded her twice that she was role playing, which also served the same purpose.

Joyce presented four different ways of resisting role play: "Oh dear, I'm really lousy at role play." (Line 15); "I'll freak out." (Line 17); "I said I was lousy at role playing, see, cause I would like to leap into the hug, but I..." (Line 19); and "This shouldn't be." (Line 21). Satir's approach, in addition to creating more psychological distance by assigning a name, Amelia, to the role that Joyce was invited to play, was to assure Joyce that she was aware of *her needs in being comfortable with the physical distance* [need 2]. Satir said, "OK, fine, I'm going to stay right here" (Line 22) and later, "I may even back up one step" (Line 22). Though I only had the audio recording of the session, I am certain that Satir had literally taken one step backward thus creating more physical distance between Joyce and her; and yet shortening the psychological distance between them. By so doing, she *gained more trust from Joyce* [needs 1 & 2]. In fact, the only physical contact (which was under Joyce's control) that they had during the session was when Satir *invited Joyce to put her hand on Satir's* (line 54) to *create a teaching context* [themes 3, 5 and 8]. This will be discussed in detail under points 8 and 9 later.

When Joyce said "As if the dam may burst" (Line 41), Satir asked, "Do you have any objection to the dam bursting?" and did not give her enough room to respond, and went straight to share her interpretation that "Most of the time when people tell me that it means tears" and then used humour "I got plenty of Kleenex" to loosen up the atmosphere a little bit and Joyce laughed. By creating this psychological distance, she then went straight to comment on Joyce's incongruity: "So we're fiddling around with something, you know that" (Line 42) after asking

Joyce "Is that what you mean?" (Line 42) and did not leave any room for Joyce to respond to this question. Joyce's subsequent response: "I had this feeling that the splitter would get burst. But I didn't know that it was mine" (Line 43) indicated that she was more willing to talk about her inner feeling because she *felt safe* and knew that *she was in control* [needs 1 & 2]. Joyce's statement also reflected that she had been in her own internal process because she was not responding directly to Satir's question. This showed that she had shortened the distance she guarded for herself, and Satir had to remind her that she was role playing (Line 46). Maybe Satir was concerned about keeping privacy for Joyce, and did not want Joyce to go into some self-disclosure. It could still be better for Satir to pause for some time instead of saying two long sentences (line 42 and 44) in a role while Joyce was obviously in a deep process.

7. Using humour

In this ten-minute session, it is obvious that Satir's way of connecting with people was straight forward, friendly and humorous. She was able to understand the supervisee's fear and vulnerability and yet she kept being hopeful and worked tirelessly towards unfolding new possibilities. Her sense of humour was one of her greatest assets. She used humour several times (lines 26, 32, 36 and 42) to release the tension, lighten the 'heaviness in the air' and further establish safety, while keeping the content of the humour relevant to the topic being discussed.

When Joyce hesitated, she created safety by using humour again: "You're role playing, remember that" (line 46). Satir's sense of humour came very naturally and it appears to have contributed significantly to the effectiveness of this ten minutes session. This may be a unique quality of individuals; supervisors who are humorous in life may find integrating this part into their supervision an added asset.

8. *Teaching or educating*

It is obvious that Satir walked her talk in terms of being “seen as teachers of how to become more fully human” (Kramer, 1995b, p. 177). “She saw psychotherapy as intertwined with education and firmly believed that education was a major ingredient in change, an essential ingredient to the development of a new consciousness” (Dodson, 1991b, p. 121). In this ten-minute session, she *assumed the teacher role* [theme 8] and based her supervision on “the learning model as the paradigm of change” (Kramer 1995b, p. 177). She grasped every chance to create a learning opportunity for Joyce, and for the entire audience, to develop a new consciousness, while *maintaining a close connection* [theme 5] with Joyce’s internal process. Her pedagogy was mainly *experiential* [theme 3] and supplemented with a little didactic teaching.

For Joyce, I believe, the most important piece of learning was through the experiment of putting her hand on Satir’s and then deciding to remove it (line 54). She experienced *being in control* (line 55) [need 2]. This was in contrast to Joyce’s state of mind at that time when she had been feeling apprehended by the ‘two bubbles’ and was experiencing internal conflict. She later expressed that she had a freeing experience (line 61), which might have been what she had hoped for when she decided to go up to the stage and asked her question. This piece of education symbolised Satir’s hallmark of *experiential teaching* [theme 3], and her quest for *taking charge of the process, not the person* [theme 5]. She created the platform for Joyce to experience, while respecting Joyce’s unique outcome from the experience. Satir had no pre-set ‘model answer’ for any of the experiences; instead she was interested in Joyce’s internal process and honoured whatever she got from the experience.

However, Satir did not go right into asking Joyce to relieve the role playing (line 56) when Joyce had that significant *experience of being in control* (line 55) [need 2] and hastily went into her teaching mode, which was probably mainly for the audience. There was not enough time for Joyce to anchor this renewed experience of being able to take charge of and make appropriate choices for herself; there was also no time for Joyce to consider transferring this experience to her 'real life' situation with her client. This 'flaw' was reflected in Joyce's remark "I am intrigued by it. I have to kind of process for awhile and... I think I'm partially intrigued by it because I have not yet resolved how to deal with the woman I'm still seeing in therapy, and how to get beyond her fears with it" (line 57). This could be one of those areas that was left unfinished in supervision if the supervisee was not able to process as quickly, and to express as genuinely, as Joyce, which enabled the supervisor, Satir to pick it up and address it beautifully. She *shared one of her beliefs* [theme 8] of how one pays high prices for getting yearnings met and prompted Joyce to provide a different modelling for her client, which resolved Joyce's puzzle.

Another important piece of teaching occurred earlier in line 44 through 48 where Satir touched on the issue of uncertainty and also made explicit comments on sexuality. Her first teaching point was: therapists need to be sensitive about the *universal issues*; in this case, they were fear of uncertainty and homophobia. Her second teaching point was: therapists need to be congruent, free and courageous to talk about these issues, instead of letting them remain unspoken in therapy sessions.

She *used herself* [theme 4] as a vehicle to bring Joyce through an internal journey to freedom. She encouraged Joyce (in the role of Amelia) to talk about the uncertainty by *sharing*

her bigger picture [theme 8] about the complex, universal human issue reflected by Joyce and her client's transaction. She said, "What we're doing is looking at a whole lot of things in relation to this. So I'm saying sometimes people are afraid of what will be the outcome, the next step after a hug" (line 44). Satir led Joyce and the audience to look at a universal issue, which was the fear of uncertainty. Then she related it back to the specific situation that Joyce was facing: "the next step after a hug"; and finally got Joyce's (Amelia's) answer: "I guess that it would be sexual" (line 47). Satir (in the role of Joyce) moved on to demonstrate the *freedom and courage* [need 2] to speak up: "I think I'm hearing you say, 'women have sexual feelings towards one another'" (line 48); and then addressed its universal and existential nature: "I think that everybody knows that" (line 48). The process was labelled as generalization or normalization by some of the members of the reflection team. This indicated an underpinning that the issue being discussed was not 'general' or 'normal'. However, from Satir's perspective, these issues simply existed, they were, and still are universal and existential, so I won't name the process generalization or normalization. What she tried to do was to guide Joyce to acknowledge it, look into it and talk about it as it was.

Satir (in the role of Joyce) did not wait for Joyce's (in the role of Amelia) response and went on with a question which could have been the 'real bubble' that had been bothering Joyce: "Maybe you are asking me do I have sexual feelings for you, are you" (line 48)? Again, she demonstrated *congruence, freedom and courage* and allowed herself to be *vulnerable* (Gardner, 1978) [theme 8], i.e., going into the unfamiliar area and *to face the uncertainty* [need 5], in the role of Joyce. Satir demonstrated how a therapist could check openly, clearly and directly her assumption of her client's internal process in a respectful, non-judgmental and non-blaming manner. She had also created *safety* [theme 1; need 1] for Joyce to be able to *free her trapped*

energy [need 5] in the role of Amelia. Even though Joyce was role playing, the affects and emotions were truly hers.

Here is a summary of Satir's teaching on the issue of uncertainty. The topic was brought up in line 44, where Satir directly addressed Joyce's worry about the outcome after a hug. The process of education continued when Satir echoed Joyce's remark that "it sounds like a foreign question" (line 49), whereby she invited everybody in the audience "to ask more of these foreign questions" (line 50), which means *taking risks and responsibility for change* [need 5]. This matched her notion of "looking at the learning model as paradigm of change" (Kramer, 1995b, p. 177); and highlighted an important stage in her theory of the 'Process of Change' (Dodson, 1991b; Satir & Baldwin, 1983; Satir, et al., 1991). This important stage was described as "going on to the unknown" (Dodson, 1991b, p. 123); and "going beyond the protected and defended areas to those [frightening and unfamiliar] areas" (Satir & Baldwin, 1983, p. 216). Within the learning model, Satir encouraged the audience to learn to ask more of these foreign questions, so as to effect changes in our interaction with others. She believed that this new learning through finding answers to the foreign questions, could help opening up our energy for the unfamiliar and uncertainty, and to make the unknowns known.

So Satir (in the role of Joyce) answered Joyce's (in the role of Amelia) foreign question: "At this moment in time, for me, I don't have any sexual feeling towards you. What I felt more of you [is that you are] like a little child that I wanted to give something to" (line 50). With this answer, she offered Joyce a new possibility- an alternative interpretation for touching other than sexuality, and led her and the audience to an opportunity of developing *a new consciousness* (Dodson, 1991b; Laign, 1988) [need 4].

After this, Satir further led Joyce into another piece of *experiential learning* [theme 3], which was often forgotten or neglected during therapy sessions. Satir moved one step further by inviting Joyce to “see what happens if you [Joyce] put out your hand in mine [Satir’s]”; and then “see what happens if you decide to remove your hand, and remove it, see what happens” (line 54). Satir led Joyce into a process, which enabled her to re-learn about touching and being touched, and at the same time to un-learn the helplessness by experiencing being able to take charge of and to make appropriate choices for herself. Joyce’s response of *feeling “in control”* (line 55) [need 2] reflected that this piece of education was effective.

Satir was clear about her intention and goal for the session. She quickly identified that the core issue was the unspoken, complex internal processes within Joyce, her client and between them, which formed the wall that stopped Joyce’s life force or energy from flowing freely (Kramer, 1995b). Her goal was to help Joyce free herself from this trapped energy by trying to give a voice to what had been kept silent by both the therapist and her client. She first mentioned this issue in line 18, where she said, “You see, this probably is one of the things [that has been bothering you], [and] unless there is a follow up or something, that you [would] get into this business about asking about [but not taking necessary steps to find out the answer]; and then you never going to know what is happening” (line 18) in response to Joyce’s reluctance to go into the role play. She later taught Joyce and the audience explicitly that “Whatever goes silent in a treatment, you can blow it in all kinds of ways” (line 56) because in her experience, “a lot of people don’t do this last part [of re-educating the client with positive experiences]” (line 56) and thought they “just blew it” (line 56). She concluded with the statement: “Anything that can be shared in an owned way is going to relieve the atmosphere and move to new possibility” (line 58); and she literally modelled it.

For Satir, 'Leaving issues to go silent in a treatment' was not only Joyce's issue; it was a universal issue that contributed to therapists' fear and discomfort, and the 'blowing up' of the therapeutic process. So after relieving Joyce and herself from the role playing, she went on teaching and explained the intervention process and her conceptualization about the hands' metaphors for relationships (line 56). She further explained that "That's one of the reasons that I do a lot of work with hands. When I asked you [Joyce] to hold my hands after we had gotten through some of these other things, then asked you to remove it, and you could remove it without difficulty then *you knew you were in control* [need 2 & 4] and the vulnerability up here becomes less" (line 56).

Here she highlighted three points: (1) therapists could also learn to do experiential works with the hands; (2) therapists need to "have gotten through some of these other things", which contribute to creating a safe environment for the client to learn, unlearn and re-learn, to re-experience and re-affirm her own autonomy in life; and (3) the vulnerability has nothing to do with the problem, it depends on whether the person (therapist or client) knows how to cope with it and has a sense of being in control.

When Joyce still "had not yet resolved how to deal with the woman she's still seeing in therapy, and how to get beyond her fears with it" (Line 57), Satir patiently acknowledged Joyce's concern and made a 'bold' assumption by emphasizing that she could bet almost with her bottom dollar; and she went on with her assumption: "When she [Joyce's client] was growing up, she had to pay a terrible price for anything that she got; and so it was an invitation to slavery to have that [what she got]. And why should she expect that you're going to be different?" (Line 58) Some reflecting team members find it puzzling or uncomfortable that Satir

sounded so confident about what had happened to Joyce's client. They questioned what her ground for making such a definite assumption was, and argued that she should have checked with Joyce. For me, it is not important to prove Satir right or wrong; but rather to capture what she wanted to teach in this short piece of 'lecturing'. The main points I extracted are: (1) the client, like most of us and our other clients, was wounded [from the past] and starving [for unconditional love]; (2) it was difficult for a client to move into the unfamiliar area of believing that her therapist would love her unconditionally. These explain why Satir had gone through so many steps with Joyce in order to bring her some insight.

Though Joyce experienced some changes, she did not seem to have anchored any of the learnings up to the point when she made that remark about not having resolved her problem with the client she was seeing (line 57). She started her statement with "I am intrigued by it" and then she said "I think I am partially intrigued by it..." By choosing to be open and honest to share her unmet expectation, Joyce later gained insight and had an "a-ha" experience, which was evident on her face (line 60). It makes the statement in line 58 much more meaningful: "Unless you provide a different modelling. It wouldn't matter whether you're gay or heterosexual, it wouldn't matter. That is all irrelevant for that transaction." Joyce's facial expression and her verbal response of "a freeing..." (Line 61) indicated that she had set herself free from the 'homophobia', and had found out "how to deal with the woman she's still seeing in therapy". She would most likely provide a different modelling.

9. Affirming / anchoring

I have hesitation to use the term "technique" for Satir's affirmation or anchoring. This simply was not a technique to her. 'Standard' formats or jargons to show empathy or

appreciation were not her 'cup of tea'. Rather, Satir had her own unique and genuine way to give affirmations; and it did not always come in verbal forms, at least not in this session. I listed this as one of the key 'techniques' because I, as a supervisor, want to learn her congruent way of affirming her supervisees; and I believe other supervisors want to do the same. A reflecting team member said that Satir had verbally clearly affirmed Joyce only once by saying: "You'll do perfect" (Line 16). To me, it was not an affirmation; it was only an assurance for Joyce to feel safe with role playing.

However, the entire 10-minute process was a good demonstration of affirmation and unconditional positive regard. She respected Joyce's boundary and honoured the psychological and physical distance Joyce needed. She treated Joyce as an equal and talked to her in a direct, open, natural and genuine manner. She followed closely Joyce's internal process, clarified with her and paced her intervention accordingly. She used all her being to create learning opportunities for Joyce to move into another level of knowing and being. All these demonstrated Satir's congruence and her high level of respect and affirmation of the supervisee.

10. Sequencing

One of Satir's assets was her ability to pace with the person or the family she was working with. In her own words: "When I first begin to work with someone, I am not interested in changing them. I am interested in finding their rhythms, being able to join with them, and helping them go into those scary places" (Satir, quoted in Simon, 1989, p. 38). She described her style as "leading the change process by following half a step behind" (Satir (1969) as cited in Dodson, 1991b, p. 119). In this short supervision piece with Joyce, she demonstrated exactly what she described herself doing. She found Joyce's rhythms; joined her and helped her go into

the scary places. One thing she had not mentioned was that in order to be able to follow half a step behind, she also needed to sequence her steps to respect Joyce's pace and boundary, and yet lead the process by showing other possible alternatives so that changes could happen.

I have identified two levels of sequencing. I name them the 'macro level of sequencing' and the 'micro level of sequencing'. The macro level refers to Satir's overall assessment and pacing of the steps of her intervention. The micro level refers to her detailed step by step guidance within one intervention. She herself pointed out the sequencing of her intervention in line 56 by saying "When I ask you to hold my hands after we've gotten through some of these other things, then ask you to remove it, and you could remove it without difficulty then you knew you were in control and the vulnerability up here became less." This indicated that she was aware of the macro level of sequencing, i.e., what needed to come first, what next, and then next; in order to reach the outcome that would meet Joyce's needs of being in control and experiencing the reduced apprehension of feeling vulnerable. The entire process was a good demonstration of the macro level of sequencing. Satir was very clear about her direction, and she was confident of the route that she was leading. She had not detoured for a split second, but she could slow down, check out Joyce's condition, gave her more assurance, showed her a clearer roadmap, and waited for Joyce to move along. She was leading the changing process by following Joyce half a step behind (Dodson, 1991b)!

One example, from line 22 to 39, discusses the micro level of sequencing that I interpreted Satir doing. First, Satir created a safer context for Joyce to explore the issue by assigning Joyce to play the role of Amelia, then she physically stepped back to ensure more safety for Joyce. When she heard Joyce sighed (line 23), she reminded her that she was role

playing Amelia, and used her humour to lighten up the atmosphere. Satir was directive and firm, but she took small, prudent steps to convey two messages to Joyce: Her directness and firmness conveyed to Joyce that it was safe to follow her lead and to move ahead. The role play and her sense of humour assured Joyce that she did not need to disclose her personal issue. Satir knew that even though Joyce was playing a role, her internal process was real and belonged to her; and would lead her resolve her own internal conflict. When Joyce entered into the role playing process, Satir continued her micro level of sequencing to better understand Joyce's internal process. The sequence started from clarifying the meaning of the word 'it' (line 30) used by Joyce who was still reluctant to role play; and gradually came to the point where Joyce acknowledged her emotional state and admitted that: "I think I'm saying the pain is too big to hold" (line 39). In this micro process, of exchanging five dialogues, Satir did not assume that she had known enough. She just paced with Joyce closely by asking questions that would help her understand Joyce better. By so doing, she was able to lead Joyce into a better understanding of herself (even though she was playing the role of Amelia) by going deeper into her internal process.

Satir stopped clarifying Joyce's internal process in line 40 and moved one step forward in her micro level of sequencing by exploring Joyce's possible reaction or response, as Amelia, to being hugged by Satir (role playing Joyce). Joyce went into a deeper internal process, most probably with the image of being hugged in mind. Now, Satir started to include herself (in the role of Joyce) into the process, so that at a later stage (line 48), she could "educate" Amelia about the possibility of "hugging without sexual implication" by using herself. As I dialogued numerous times with the text and came to this horizon of understanding, I was in awe of the meticulous micro sequence embedded in this seemingly smooth process. It is very inspiring to

me, as a frontline counsellor, supervisor and teacher of supervisors. If the sequence of clarification from line 32 to 39 did not exist, and Satir made the direct exploration she did in line 40 by saying: "So, now if I say to you ... you have an image of this one... how would it feel to you if you were hugged by me as you feel it now?" in response to Joyce's saying "The hug" line 32 it would sound like a logical sequence, and I also think that some supervisors would do this instead. Yet the process might become more superficial because security was not established. The micro level of sequencing is desirable because it literally prepared Joyce to go deeper and deeper into the internal process while feeling increasingly safe with Satir and the process.

Conclusion

The primary role of Satir in that context was a conference speaker, and her major responsibility was to facilitate the conference participants to learn. I think it was because of this that she had to have the audience in her mind all the time; and she had to shift her attention between Joyce and Joyce plus the audience. However, it was an effective ten-minute supervision process, and she always was there with Joyce even when she had to shift to teach the huge group of audience. Should it be a 'real' supervision session, she might have done differently and be more focus on her only "star".

Satir's supervision with Joyce was a healing and re-educating process. She was able to truly connect with Joyce and understand her inner experiences; and to create rich learning opportunities for her to gain insight about how to 'be' and how to 'do'. Satir did not need much content of Joyce's story, especially in this open public event, it is even more important to establish safety for the supervisee by not exposing too much of her and her client; after all the focus was on Joyce's internal process. Satir's supervision was very dynamic, directive and very

'people making' oriented. This vignette verified Simon's (1989) comment: "At the core of her approach was her unshakeable conviction about people's potential for growth and the respectful role helpers needed to assume in the process of change" (p. 38). These were her deep rooted principles which formed the basis of her view of therapists' task. So she had total faith in Joyce's potential for growth; and she was also trying to move Joyce to have the same beliefs with her clients.

This text of a live situation of Satir's supervision echoed the text from the interviews of the participants of this research and cross-validated each other. Both sets of text enriched my understanding of Satir's supervision practice. This vignette provides a succinct text for my hermeneutic journey. Though it is a 'part' of the 'whole' of Satir's supervision practice, it embraces the richness of the 'whole' by providing significant answers to my research questions concerning (1) guiding principles and philosophy; (2) supervision outcome; (3) skills, techniques and strategies used; (4) and the 'use of selves' in supervision (stated on p. 8). In the next chapter, another fusion of horizons from integrating what was interpreted from the last and this chapter shall be presented.

Chapter 7

Discussion – What can be Learnt from Satir’s Clinical Supervision Practice

Introduction

In this chapter I shall be dialoguing with the supervision literature reviewed in chapter 3, and to discuss what and how the hermeneutic processes presented in chapters 5 and 6 inform and inspire me as a person, a counsellor, a teacher and a supervisor. I shall share how I have transcended my pre-conceptions and learnt from the hermeneutic circles of interpreting, understanding and applying what I understood as the philosophy, beliefs, concepts and skills of Satir’s supervision practice. I shall also discuss how I am inspired by and have learnt from her incongruity and weaknesses.

The Philosophical Underpinning of Satir’s Clinical Supervision Practice

In this section, I lay out what has been unfolded during this long process of study guided by Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics. It has been a solemn dialectical process enriched by cycles of ‘interpretation, understanding and application’. I reveal my present horizon of understanding of the philosophical underpinning of Satir’s clinical supervision practice and will follow with a discussion on their relevance and applicability to supervision practices today.

Espousal of the Humanistic-Existential-Transpersonal Perspectives

I identified seven key elements in Satir’s supervision practice from the experience of Satir’s fifteen students, and presented them in Chapter 5. Nine conceptual themes of her supervision, five needs of supervisees and ten major skills had emerged from Satir’s 10-minute supervision vignette and were presented in Chapter 6. These two sets of interpretation

complement and resonate with each other. They reflect that Satir’s supervision had a strong cohesion with humanistic philosophy and fundamental beliefs. They also embraced the existential perspectives of supervision, and was fundamentally grounded in the transpersonal paradigm, as discussed in Chapter 3. Below, I shall organize and discuss the overall philosophical underpinning and the overarching conceptual framework of her approach by listing her fundamental beliefs, guiding principles and supervision attitudes by comparing the results in Chapters 5 and 6 while dialoguing with texts explored in Chapter 3, and comment on how today’s supervisors can benefit from this ‘historic finitude’ of my hermeneutic process. In a later section, I shall also discuss how supervisors can learn from her major supervision techniques based on these beliefs and guiding principles.

An Approach Grounded in the Transpersonal Paradigm

As discussed in Chapter 3, transpersonal psychology aims at studying humanity’s highest potential, and recognizing, understanding and realizing the intuitive, spiritual and transcendent states of consciousness (Boorstein, 2000; Hartelius, et al., 2007); transpersonal supervision begins with the supervisor’s internal state of consciousness and a commitment to connect with the supervisee even before meeting him/her (Rowan, 2006). Hence, a supervision approach embracing transpersonal philosophy is concerned with humanity’s highest potential. It enhances supervisees to facilitate individuals, families and groups to transcend beyond the ego-state of human experiences, with the goal of connecting with one’s higher self, to reach to the interconnectedness of the human species within a much larger context and to manifest the spiritual essence of humanity. Satir had been working along these paths and moving towards facilitating the experiences of the ‘transpersonal spirit of oneness’ implied in her incomplete

manuscript *The Third Birth* (Satir, 1983-1987), where she wrote, “The fourth birth comes when one recognizes that all life is one – then one comes to the state where one joins all consciousness” (p. 25).

Rowan pointed out that transpersonal supervision “requires an act of will on the part of the supervisor, to affirm that all supervision begins with the supervisor’s internal state of consciousness and a commitment to work from the ‘inside out’ before even meeting the supervisee” (p. 232). The means he suggested to achieve this internal state of consciousness includes: a ‘personal mindfulness-awareness meditation practice’ for both supervisor and supervisee (Rabin and Walker, n.d. cited in Rowan, 2006); the developing of an ‘energetic self-awareness’ in the therapist, [that I believe is also required in the supervisor] (Cameron, 2004 cited in Rowan, 2006); and acknowledging and utilizing ‘intuition’, ‘hunch’ or ‘gut feeling’ during supervision to explore the subtlety or areas in the supervisee’s presentation of which he or she is unaware (Charles, 2004 cited in Rowan, 2006). Satir’s notion of connecting the spirituality of human, and her use of self in therapy and supervision has a lot in common with the above described characteristics.

It was clear in the participants’ experiences (presented in Chapter 5) and in the supervision session with Joyce (presented in Chapter 6) that Satir’s supervision focused on the internal processes of her ‘star’, the supervisee, and that of the supervisee’s ‘star’, his/her client. She was interested in their ‘being’ more than their ‘doing’ or ‘coping’, and strived at guiding them through holistic experiences of being human, instead of focusing on handling the specific issues they brought into the consultation room. She started her work at the transpersonal level in terms of connecting with her own life energy and spiritual aspects, and from there connecting

with the spirituality of the persons she worked with directly (i.e., her star – the supervisee) and indirectly (i.e., supervisee’s star).

One of Satir’s principles is that each one of us is a miracle and that all of us are manifestations of the same life force. By being in touch with this miraculous nature of the self and others, and connecting with the same life force, it is not difficult for anyone to connect at the spiritual level. For Satir, by always checking her own centeredness, she was able to sense the vibrations of energy through sounds, colours, touches and movements, and to be connected with others through these energies (Kramer, 1995a). She also worked with supervisees to develop what she called “a new consciousness” (Laign, 1988, p. 32) of getting connected with one’s own spirituality, or self-worth (a more comprehensible term Satir used to illustrate her idea of spirituality). For her, they are the same (Kramer, 1995a). She also maintained that “Spirituality is the soul and life force in operation” (Laign, 1988, p. 32). So in her supervision, she tried to connect her supervisees at the spiritual level, by recognizing the ‘treasures’ in each of them and facilitating them to connect with and take responsibility of their self-worth. Hence, they would be able to do the same with their clients.

Transpersonal counsellors share two other common viewpoints including the belief that each human being has innate drive and capacity toward spiritual growth (Boorstein, 1997; Clark, 1977; Cortright, 1997; Wellings & McCormick, 2004), and that there are different dimensions of consciousness. Thus transpersonal psychotherapy strives to show individuals the levels of consciousness beyond the physical manifestation and to reach cosmic connectedness (Boorstein, 1996; Cortright, 1997; Rowan, 1993, 2009; Wilber, 2000). Openness to the transpersonal dimension, which is believed to offer the greatest healing potential, is the first requirement for

transpersonal counsellors (Scotton, 1985). Satir had demonstrated these in her counselling and supervision practices.

Embracing the Existential Perspectives of Supervision

As discussed in Chapter 3, in actual supervision practices, existential perspectives facilitate (i) the creation of an environment that facilitates deep reflections; (ii) an open, facilitative and collaborative supervisory relationship whereby supervisor and supervisee can be authentic about their experiences during therapy and supervision; (iii) a holistic and relational perspective about the client’s, the supervisee’s and the supervisor’s own situations; iv) taking part in the supervisory process as a co-director and co-explorer ; (v) going beyond the ‘ontic’ i.e., the presenting issues, and addressing the ‘ontological’, i.e., universal, fundamental challenges in life (Neswald-McCalip, et al., 2003; van Deurzen & Young, 2009).

From both hermeneutic processes reported in the previous two chapters, Satir definitely attached much importance to creating a growth enhancing environment for her stars (supervisees and families in counselling) and facilitating them to connect deeply with their essence through experiential processes. The supervisory relationships were generally reported by supervisees as ‘open and facilitative’ though not always ‘collaborative’. Most concluded that supervision with Satir as a co-discovery process whereby the supervisory dyad could engage in authentic exchanges, though others perceived the supervisory relationship as a teacher-student hierarchy and were not always authentic about their experiences, especially when under stress and given a lack of clearly articulated expectations.

Satir also worked from a holistic and relational perspective about the client’s and the supervisee’s situations; yet her teacher role seemed to have blocked her from addressing her own

situation in the supervisory process in the supervisor’s role. Satir was highly complimented in terms of her taking part in the supervisory process as a co-director and co-explorer, though some also recalled her being very persistent with her own views. She was seen as a master of picking up the universals from each unique situation, and had always worked from the ‘ontological’ standpoint by guiding supervisees to address the challenges in life.

Satir’s supervision approach appeared to be highly existential. The major difference between the two is that Satir was ‘relentlessly optimistic’ towards humanity while the existential perspective is much more neutral, thus Satir’s supervision has combined directive elements with the explorative processes.

A Strong Cohesion with the Humanistic Philosophy and Fundamental Beliefs

In Chapter 3, I have summarized six basic principles and beliefs that guide humanistic counsellors and supervisors: (i) people are basically good; (ii) to be human is to live out the essence of one’s Self by realizing one’s potential holistically; (iii) growth and change are the goals of humanistic approaches; (iv) humanistic counselling works on the premises of abundance, not deficiency with the view that one builds on what is present, not what is absent; (v) consciousness and intentionality are the keys to self-discovery, self-making and self-growth; and (vi) authenticity or congruence is the process and an outcome of a person fully realizing his/her potential. Though Satir might not have used the same language, it is not difficult to identify the above components in her supervision practice as understood from the two sets of text discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Satir maintained that that people are basically good and her beliefs that ‘parents [people] are doing their best at any moment in time’, and that ‘there is a good intention underneath every

deed’ were not totally accepted by learners and evoked much discussion among them. However, this has been a hallmark of Satir’s approach and she lived out the essence of her Self and worked tirelessly to facilitate others to do so by realizing one’s potential holistically. Her workshops, therapy and supervision were all geared towards growth and change, and she even described her approach as a ‘Growth Model’. She dauntlessly led the originally labelled ‘sick, bad, mad and stupid’ people to recognize that they could depend on themselves by getting in touch with their strengths and their abundant possibilities and as a result living life more healthily and happily. She persevered despite being criticized to the extent that she was marginalized and rejected by the patriarchal power of the field.

In Satir’s work with families, she paid particular attention to the internal processes of people when they were under stress, because she believed that this could reflect a person’s previous learning of how to survive and how to interpret the experiences. By taking the journey together with the person into his/her internal processes, she had the key to guide that person to free the trapped energy and to take charge of his/her own life. This kind of changes always involves looking at the old situations with new perspectives. In her supervision with Joyce, she was also demonstrating how to help her, as a therapist, to acquire this, so that she could help her clients to do the same.

Not only that this short piece of supervision reflected Satir’s humanistic beliefs about the goodness in people, the abundance of possibilities, and about one’s potential to grow and change through self-discovery and conscious choices, it also reflected Satir’s strong belief that “the problem is not the problem” (Satir, et al., 1991, p. 149); what she was concerned about was the unmet yearning and the self doubt of both Joyce and her client. Her goal was for Joyce to get in

touch with her worthiness and to be able to re-gain autonomy in facing this stressful life situation, with a belief that the transformation would last.

Her steadfast beliefs in the growth potentials and her deliberate effort in peoplemaking helped countless individuals to live life more congruently and authentically, and move toward their higher self. The fact that all participants in this research claimed that Satir had facilitated them to find their own voice is a good indicator that her supervision practice embraced all the humanistic qualities stated above.

What is Learnt from Satir’s Supervision Practice Philosophy

In this section, I shall delineate my present horizon of what I learnt from understanding Virginia Satir’s fundamental beliefs, guiding principles, and attitudes of practice of clinical supervision rooted in her humanistic-existential-transpersonal philosophy of life. The discussion is a result of dialoguing with the texts reviewed in Chapters 2, 3, 5 and 6.

Peoplemaking - the central premise of Satir’s supervision

Satir’s central premise in supervision was “Peoplemaking”, a concept that she started to articulate in the early 70s (Satir, 1972) to the massive public through her book *Peoplemaking*, which matured into her clear vision and mission that “therapy is an educational process for becoming more fully human” (Satir, 1982, p. 22) in the early 80s. It was clearly articulated by her supervisees (the 15 participants of this research) and demonstrated by Satir’s supervision with Joyce (in the vignette) that her most important mission was to take the supervisees to a higher level of self-worth and a higher-level of being and functioning. Her conviction was to convey a message to people that, “you matter, you are important, you are worthy of love” and for

them to believe that “I matter, I am important, I am worthy of love”. She also conveyed this to the massive audience in many settings.

Satir wanted therapists “to get rid of the label therapists – instead, to be seen as teachers of how to become more fully human” (Kramer, 1995c). ‘Peoplemaking’ or ‘becoming more fully human’ has been Satir’s major premise in all her endeavours. She believed that to become more fully human, one needs to be a healthy person who takes full responsibility to satisfy the following human needs:

We need to love and be loved, to be noticed, recognized, and respected, to be
literally and figuratively touched.

We need to matter and have a purpose.

We need to be stimulated and to learn new things.

We need to have satisfying and intimate relationships.

We need to have fun and humour.

We need to be economically secure.

We need to be mentally and physically healthy.

We need to belong.

We need to be part of a vital community of friends and colleagues.

We need to be in touch with our life force, our religion, our divinity.

(Satir, 1988, p. 355)

Her tenet of ‘peoplemaking’ or ‘becoming more fully human’ was fully unfolded in her supervision. All participants of this research maintained that they found their own voice, and were able to believe that each of them was unique and was basically a miracle, and that they all had their own ‘magic’. Joyce was also empowered to trust herself and to transform her fear into connecting with the unmet yearnings of hers and that of her clients. Satir explicitly told Kramer, eight months before her death, that one of her hopes is that, “people will learn how to love themselves – that’s the first thing ... And that we would learn how to grow and ... to get rid of the label therapists ... [and] be seen as teachers of how to become more fully human” (Kramer,

1995c, p. 177). She pushed her supervisees, including Joyce, beyond their comfort zone in order to actualize their abilities and potentials for growth. She also provided them with a bigger, universal and existential picture of universal human processes to guide them through spiritual journeys of self-transcendence in the processes of supervision. In this sense, her supervision was a continuation of her teaching and/or therapy.

The central premise – peoplemaking – of Satir’s supervision connotes that the supervisor, supervisee and client will all benefit from the supervision process, gaining access to their nourishing potentials and learning how to use them to move towards becoming more fully human, (Satir, 1982) and enabling them to midwife their own *Third Birth*: becoming their own decision-makers, taking charge of their life and living as a congruent being (Satir, 1983-1987).

Through application, I am convinced that “everybody comes to this world with all he/she needs to grow and to cope with life situations”, my job as a supervisor is to live out this belief and to guide supervisees through co-discovery processes to unfold the innate resources as well as to add on what are needed in order to growth fully as a human, and to develop into a counsellor who can also appreciate the beautiful process of “peoplemaking”.

Hope being a cornerstone of supervision

Satir had shown her supervisees that a supervisor needs to live with the belief in the abundance of human resources and the positive orientation of human motivation, i.e., that human beings are motivated to change for betterment and health instead of avoiding pain and sickness. She had the ability to go beyond supervisee’s vulnerabilities and get to the core universal yearnings and the ‘treasure’ through working tirelessly towards unfolding new possibilities. For Virginia Satir, *hope is always there*: when there is a problem, there is an abundance of

opportunities and resources to cope differently. Underneath the seemingly hopeless situations in therapy or in supervision, she could always connect her clients and supervisees with hope, and possibilities.

Hoffman labelled this as Satir’s “relentless optimism” (Hoffman, 1993, p. 59), and Haber (2002) also described how “her approach to life emphasized hope and learning rather than despair and surrender” (p. 26). Her remark that “you have your own magic” not only had brought hope to her supervisees, but also to me. One of my discoveries through my own application of ‘upholding hope even in very, very difficult situations’ is: “Below each hard, protective rib-cage, there is a tender heart.” My job is to reach the tender heart of each individual whom I encounter in counselling, supervision and life.

Erik Erikson (cited in Smith, 2007) maintained that “Hope is the first and most fundamental strength emerging from Primal Trust versus Primal Mistrust” (p. 82). Erikson believed that for the human infant to learn to trust discerningly, he/she must go through considerable experiences of mistrust. He asserted that “there would be neither conviction nor efficacy in an overall hopefulness without a (conscious or unconscious) struggle with a persistent temptation to succumb to hopelessness” (Smith, 2007, p. 82). In my application, I noticed a lot of times when my supervisees reframed their client’s predicament into something positive, they were rejected by the clients. Through analysing Satir’s videos, I found out that very often Satir would first acknowledge the hopelessness before connecting the hopefulness, while my supervisees avoided or ignored the clients’ ‘temptation to succumb to hopelessness’. Like Satir, I had not defined hope in a clear and comprehensible way like Erikson, and hence failed to guide my supervisees to honour clients’ struggle with the temptation of hopelessness. From this new horizon, connecting hope of the supervisees and clients is no longer a frustrating ‘ideal’ for

supervisees, but accompanied with some feasible concrete skills. Satir did not avoid or ignore the clients’ or supervisees’ natural tendency to be attracted by hopelessness and perpetual self-defeating thoughts. In her powerful directive interventions, she addressed this part of her clients and supervisees. It was probably due to the lack of a clear definition for ‘hope’, and her “very general, lacking clear and specific instructions” (Andreas, 1989, p. 52) that learners of Satir’s approach misunderstood hopefulness and hopelessness, and had limited themselves to connecting only with the ‘positives’.

Counsellors and supervisors need to challenge themselves with a new vision about hope and to respect the process of feeling despair in order to be able to connect with those who would easily surrender to challenges, and to reach their deeply hidden hopefulness.

It is safe to take risks

A supervisor is responsible to create a growth enhancing environment, which is authentic, loving, containing, supportive, and confronting with respect and congruence. Within such an environment, the supervisees would feel encouraged to take risks and explore their own blockages and vulnerabilities and to face their issues of low self-esteem. In her supervision with Joyce, Satir demonstrated how she meticulously took little steps to prepare the supervisee to take the risks that resulted in the change that opened up her energy, expanded her perception, and renewed her self-image and her sense of hope. This kind of risk taking is based on a clear vision about human yearnings and a steadfast belief in human potential. It also depends on the supervisor’s openness and readiness to face her own vulnerabilities, which could be triggered by making inappropriate assumptions, or touching his/her own unhealed spots during the supervision process.

In one of her therapeutic tools, the *Ingredients of an Interaction*, Satir laid out the internal processes of how people make meaning from what he/she saw, heard and sensed (touched, smelt, tasted etc.). When perceiving some sort of threat, one would go back to the familiar survival pattern that he/she had automatically acquired in coping with past threats, because he/she was not responding to the original message from a person or any source in the context, but rather, an automatic reaction to the his/her own interpretation of the message. Satir believed that people prefer the certainty of misery to the misery of uncertainty and would like people to set themselves free from past restricted beliefs, which might have protected them but also hindered their growth. She persisted to guide Joyce to do so through the role playing experience described in Chapter 6. Some saw Satir as compelling while I interpreted her as persisting. Through my own application, I came to believe (what Satir expressed) that people usually are not aware of the resources and possibilities that are there for them. When they choose to take risk and to step out of their comfort zone (the familiar or the certainty of misery in Satir’s terms), they awaken their resources and experience new possibilities. I learn to follow closely with my supervisees and would be persistent to guide them to take risk when necessary.

Risk-taking is a major tenet in Satir’s central premise of people-making, and her life-long effort of promoting Peace from within. It is a vital step for people to be able to take any ‘unpleasant surprises’ as opportunities for midwifing one’s own Third Birth and becoming more fully human. The supervisor needs to have gone through her/his ‘Third Birth’ in order to facilitate the process in supervisees. A congruent supervisor could have survived numerous risk takings, is always prepared to enter into the unknowns, and is committed to accompany the supervisees through their journeys.

Every supervisee has magic inside – and so has the client

Successes in therapy rest in trusting and unfolding the resources of clients. According to the participants, Satir’s supervision helped them establish the frame of mind to look at the clients as resourceful, to connect with what they have and to build on it as an asset, to find out their strengths, and connect them with hope. They were convinced that putting labels on people was counter-productive, and they could always find something strengthening in their clients. These descriptions were quite different from Andreas’s (1989) observation.

In the 1989 annual conference of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, which pay special tribute to Virginia Satir, Andreas attended session after session and watched the work Satir’s students did; he saw very little use of the methods that Satir had developed. He claimed, “In fact, nearly every workshop he attended demonstrated the exact opposite of the patterns Virginia used” (Andreas, 1989, p. 52). He noticed that Satir’s students “were oriented toward tracing the roots of problem behaviours in the past, offering descriptions of clients that were replete with blaming and presuppositions of bad intention. The therapists stayed glued in their chairs; there was no touching, action, or enactment” (p. 52). This significant variation between the two sources of texts, i.e., the transcripts of interviews and Andreas’ article, may be understood from the perspective that transformations and development of the supervisees had taken place over time and they had altered their practice pattern. Or perhaps Andreas’ observations were amiss or incomplete. Regardless, Satir and her students believed that everybody has one’s own magic as well as one’s own inner-healer, and Pearl’s remark that “She [Satir] could see so much good and so much potential in people” suggests how therapists today can connect the magic in themselves and others.

If a supervisor believes that every person has magic inside, then his/her job is to connect first with his/her own ‘magic’ and his/her belief of supervisees’ and their clients’ magic; then to facilitate supervisees to discover their own magic, so that they can do the same with their clients. A supervisor with high self-esteem does not need the supervision process to ‘show his/her magic’, but rather tries tirelessly to explore and co-explore with the supervisees their magic. Through dialoguing with the texts from the interviews and from my own experience of observing demonstrations of some teachers of ‘the Satir Model’, I noticed that not all practitioners of Satir’s approach share this belief. In some situations, it was apparent that they put the ‘spotlight’ on themselves and became the “star” of the session. Their goal was to let the others notice his/her ‘magic’. I was reminded to be reflexive about whether I genuinely believe that every individual has his/her own magic, and to commit myself in the co-discovery process of finding such magic. I also was prompted to always be grounded in my own magic while being humble and courageous to admit what I still do not know and be open to new possibilities. One of the reminders I give myself in working with my ‘stars’ (clients or supervisees) is “I know very little about you, I need your help to travel this co-discovery process of unfolding your treasure and magic.” This helps.

In every unique situation there is a universal process

Most participants mentioned Satir’s magic of being able to ask them questions which pointed directly to the core issue of the individuals or families that they were presenting. This probably resulted from what and how she had learnt from her life journey. Satir started to visit families when she was in her early twenties working as a school teacher (Satir, 1982), and over the years she probably had seen more families than any of her fellow family therapists (Brothers,

2000a). These rich experiences and her eagerness in reading and learning from all sources contributed to her being able to draw out universal themes in human struggles and to establish her belief that behind every presenting problem there is a universal theme.

For Satir, all human beings have universal yearning such as to love, to be loved, to understand, to be understood, to be accepted, to be free... and to have peace within, peace between and peace among. Satir’s supervision geared towards honouring the uniqueness of the supervisee and their clients while always being able to connect and intervene at the deeper universal yearning level. She believed that the universal themes of individuals in therapy were always related to unmet yearnings that had been carried forward since early childhood. The experiences of yearnings not being met were accumulated through numerous repeated or similar incidents that happened to the client and thus confirmed the client’s self-defeating beliefs about his/her worthiness.

One of the supervisors’ priorities is to be familiar and updated with the universal human processes, to be mindful about ‘making the unconscious conscious’ by surfacing the universal process, such as unmet yearnings and self-defeating beliefs, underneath his/her own specific presenting issue, and to be able to facilitate the supervisees to do the same. ‘Connecting with the universals’ was a brand new concept for me. It had never come into my mind through the years of studying ‘the Satir Model’. The new information I got from the interviews created a ‘temporal distance’ and had led me through numerous hermeneutic cycles, and I find richness and abundance of possibilities in it. I was also able to identify the universal processes Satir addressed in Joyce’s case presented in Chapter 6.

Satir’s seemingly automatic response and brilliant ability of ‘connecting with the universals’ did not only come from her giftedness; it also came from years of substantial work and deep connection with people at the spiritual level. Rasheed, Marley, and Rasheed (2010) asserted that “Satir’s innate ability was actually the result of many years of learning and appreciating human and family processes” (p. 149). Supervisors desirous of heading in a similar direction may be able to reach this level of being and supervising only by putting in ample effort to learn and to practice. I firmly believe that it is learnable and trainable.

After asking and responding to my own repeated dialectical question “What is the universal process behind this situation?” in different situations, and considering all the answers in greater depth, I gathered a repertoire of universal processes, and came up with a realization that “Within each presenting problem, there is an issue of low self-esteem and unmet yearnings.” This guides me to explore the keys to unblocking the self-healing energy in each individual, the keys to acquiring higher self-esteem and fulfilling unmet yearnings. The dialogic process is still going on, but this belief really inspires me in many aspects, especially in the existential and transpersonal aspects.

Multi-sensory experiencing is the best mode of learning

Satir believed that the best learning happens through accessing all avenues of experiencing, and her supervision was also strongly guided by this belief. The supervision experiences presented in the previous two chapters all pointed to this powerful means of learning. In fact, Satir was constantly demonstrating that healing cannot be completed unless counsellors help clients relearn with all their senses. For her, traumatic learning from the past had been deeply ‘engraved’ in one’s body through all senses, so re-educating one’s body would help break

down the wall that had been set up to protect the person from further hurt. By putting down the wall, the person’s energy would be freed, and he/she would be able to reconnect with his/her entire being: body, mind, emotions and spirit through this free flow of energy.

I was attracted to Satir’s approach by its optimistic and magnanimous beliefs, as well as the ‘magic’ of experiential learning. Only after I experienced extensively with different teachers and co-learners, and applied the experiences to my own practices, did I come to a deeper understanding and greater appreciation of the notion of multi-sensory experiential learning. Through my own application, I also learnt that multi-sensory experiencing is not merely a technique or skill that the supervisor uses in the supervision process; it is a whole person experience of both the supervisor and supervisee. When supervisors take sculpting or role playing as a skill or technique and guide supervisees in such processes, there will be very limited energy connection between the supervisor and the supervisee. Hence, it will be quite impossible for them to connect the client’s energy during the supervision session, and the supervisee’s learning will remain superficial, behavioural or intellectual. A supervisor needs to first engage in a multi-sensory “whole person” process, by opening up all sensory receptors and allowing himself/herself to fully experience the moment, and to allow his/her own energy to connect with the supervisee’s energy and the energy beyond them. When the supervisor is able to do so and can be fully present with the supervisee, with the context and with the processes, a multi-sensory co-discovery process will be activated; sculpting or role playing will come out naturally as a result of energy connecting.

The multi-sensory experiencing process must necessarily be grounded firmly in the set of humanistic-existential-transpersonal beliefs and principles reflected from Satir’s approach, and be centred in the trust of the process and of the ‘self, others and context’. It is not an application

of an intervention strategy, but a manifestation of believing in the abundant possibilities awaiting for discovery. Supervisors, who want to achieve results similar to Satir’s, need to nurture the whole person of their Self, and be grounded in the set of principles and beliefs demonstrated by Satir while going through the process of ‘testing the water’. By reflecting deeply and honestly into one’s experience, the supervisor will move towards being able to establish the appropriate environment to provide opportunities for supervisees to open up all their senses to experience and to learn through fully utilizing all of them.

For a supervisor to be able to reach this integrated stage, one has to devote deliberate effort in learning and practising; and these processes need to be incorporated into the formal training of counsellors and supervisors using Satir’s approach.

Supervision is a co-discovery process

As discussed above, a growth enhancing environment can facilitate risk taking; hence it also facilitates a co-discovery process. Satir attached much effort to guiding the supervisees to discover for themselves through multi-sensory experiences, role playing, sculpting etc., encouraging them to be empowered to go beyond their original horizon and explore more possibilities for their personal and professional enrichment, and to be inspired to do the same with their clients.

Satir usually led the co-discovery process by role playing the situation with her supervisees so that they could be able to understand themselves and their clients from different perspectives. Dawn believed that Satir’s idea of supervising therapists with role plays was not to give them solutions but to give them a kind of enlightenment, in a picture, a symbolic form which was also the language of the unconscious, so they could see on a deeper, unconscious

level what was going on with them. She also believed that seeing was empowering, and it would also stimulate supervisees to free their “inner healer” and to come up with new ideas about helping themselves as well as their clients.

Supervisees, such as Pearl and Dawn named Satir’s supervision a co-discovery process; and Carroll (2010b) describes this process of supervision as ‘letting go’ and ‘letting come’, whereby one challenges one’s pre-conceptions and tries to see a bigger picture. What I learnt from my own practice of supervision is that supervisors need to model the ability of ‘letting go’ and ‘letting come’ otherwise supervision will become an overt or subtle ‘battle field’ for power.

In my application of choosing to view supervision and counselling as co-discovery processes to unfold resources and possibilities together with my stars (supervisees or clients), I experienced much freedom and was rewarded with many ‘a-ha’ moments. I came to a firm belief that everybody is equip with all necessities to cope with one’s own life situations; my job as a supervisor or counsellor is to travel an internal journey with the star and to facilitate the discovery of these necessities and to co-create new possibility for the star’s own ‘people-making’ journey. I believe that supervisors choose to acquire a similar perceptive will also enjoy the freedom and rewards.

Supervisors and counsellors need to be teachers and to be seen as teachers

It was Satir’s belief that therapy is all about learning and she proposed that she would like counsellors to be teachers of how to become more fully human (Kramer, 1995b; Satir, 1983-1987; Starr, 1993a), and for others to see them as such (Kramer, 1995b). Hence, it is not surprising that the teaching element was prominent in her supervision processes. Yet,

supervisors (teachers) need to be mindful that the goal is to facilitate supervisees’ learning, not just to ‘teach’.

If we look more closely to Satir’s supervision process with Joyce in the vignette, we notice that she used different ‘teaching’ strategies with the same aim: Joyce could learn something helpful to her and her client. These strategies include sharing her beliefs about universal human phenomena, setting up a role play for Joyce to experience by herself, and being a role model. When she wanted to convey her beliefs or to lead Joyce to “let in” the universal processes underneath the presenting issue, she would share them directly even to the extent of using an expression “I would bet my bottom dollar”. When she wanted Joyce to shift to embrace a more hopeful perspective and to choose alternate means to face her predicament, Satir would lead the supervisee through an experiential process, to taste whether this alternative fit with her or not. It was also reported that she used similar strategies with the participants of this study to facilitate them to become more fully human.

If a supervisor chooses to be a teacher of ‘becoming more fully human’, one should have gone through some major learning and transformative processes of ‘being more fully human’, and demonstrates the willingness and openness in continuing this growth process. Otherwise the ‘teaching efficacy’ would be minimal.

Taking the “control tower” position

One of Satir’s hallmarks in therapy was her ability to move quickly beyond the presenting issues into the underneath, innermost ‘whispers’ of human yearnings. She also demonstrates this in her supervision. By so doing, she sets the direction and the focus of the session: co-discovering possibilities and leading supervisees to another level of being. Satir’s

rich experiences in working with individuals and families contributed to her confidence and competence to take the ‘control tower position’ and to guide the ‘pilot’ (the therapist) to manage the ‘aeroplane’ (the counselling process and the relationships involving in it). Satir had ‘radar’ (universal human processes) in her mind and she was able to make up her ‘aviation map’ for a particular journey (specific goals and concerns of the presenting case) in a very short time span, as she communicated with the ‘pilot’ (counsellor) and gathered more information about the ‘aircraft’.

Supervisors wanting to adopt this into their supervision practice must be very confident and comfortable being in the ‘control tower’ position, as well as being grounded with ample knowledge and experience of universal human processes. They also need to be congruent enough to get ready to let go of their assumptions with the notion that “I may be wrong”, and to let in new information and possibilities so as to be able to track the supervisees’ internal process more closely while simultaneously connecting and/or re-connecting with them. One also need to be mindful about being ‘persistent’ but not ‘compelling’ by constantly checking one’s assumptions with the supervisee.

The significance of checking assumptions

One of my learnings from this hermeneutic process is ‘to assume and not to assume’ in supervision, counselling and in daily encounters with people. This sounds paradoxical, and yet it is of utmost importance in opening up new possibilities for the supervisee and the supervision process, hence the counselling process. In short, this means the supervisor needs to make bold assumptions and to meticulously check out these assumptions directly through dialoguing with

supervisees, and indirectly through observations and being sensitive to the supervisee’s non-verbal expressions, emotions and energy flow during the supervision process.

One of the major functions of supervision is to open up new possibilities. Satir was a master in this aspect. Her willingness and courage to assume, her openness to check out her assumptions, and her decisive actions in dropping or holding back the assumptions provides a lot of room for fellow supervisors to reflect upon. In the case of Joyce (described in Chapter 6), her demonstration of “allowing the dam to burst” is a very good demonstration of risk taking, assuming and checking the assumptions.

Persisting and backing off – the importance of maintaining an optimal distance

Satir demonstrated her persistence in getting to the ‘core’ of human yearnings and her ability to facilitate full use of supervisees’ and their clients’ potentials in her supervision. This could be seen as the backbone of her supervision and therapy. However, she also showed her genuine respect to the supervisees by backing off, or by finding other avenues to access these areas. In Joyce’s case, she demonstrated her respect of the supervisee’s physical and psychological distance and her trust of the deepest human yearnings, and moved back and forth between persisting and backing off till the supervisee chose to engage more deeply in the co-discovery process. Supervisors need to nurture their own sensitivity and respect for needs and strive to maintain an optimal distance whereby supervisee can feel safe enough to take risks.

The supervisee is the “star” of the supervision process

Satir’s supervision focused on the supervisee’s internal process in relationship to the supervision process, the supervisory relationship, the counselling relationship and with his/her work with clients. This also reflects that Satir was always following her central humanistic-

existential-transpersonal premise of ‘peoplemaking’, not problem solving or case handling as in most supervision practices. Satir’s supervision gears towards the co-exploration of the supervisee’s internal processes, which leads to a better understanding of one’s ‘Self’, and utilizing one’s resources more fully and becoming one’s own choice maker.

As Dawn, one of the participants, remarked, “Therapists need to free their inner healers first and to believe in the inner healer of the family or the individual” (from interview transcript). What Satir did was to help the supervisee to free his/her inner healer. She believed that whenever the supervisee got stuck in the counselling process, there would be a blockage of energy in both parties of the counselling dyad. Treating the supervisee as the ‘star’ of supervision, and facilitating him/her to address and process the internal experiences in the ‘here and now’ context contributes to the supervisee’s release of energy trapped inside the ‘role’ of a counsellor and allows the emergence of the authentic self. These processes always lead to a supervisee’s gaining a better acceptance of the self, gaining insight about his/her own personal and professional strengths and weaknesses, finding directions and areas for further enrichment; and miraculously having more confidence in working with the clients.

The Problem is not the problem and coping is not the goal in supervision

One of Satir’s most quoted sayings is “the problem is not the problem, coping is.” However, not only did Satir’s supervision not focus on the problems; neither did she focus on coping, which means her supervision did not focus on helping the supervisee, or helping supervisee to help clients to cope differently, or to find solutions. They are only by-products of the supervision processes. Many supervisors, including me in the past, would have gone in that direction. Satir went directly behind the problem and to the universal process, the unmet human

yearnings and the internal process of the supervisee. By connecting with the self of the supervisee, listening to the inner whispers, and tapping into the strengths and possibilities, the supervisee experiences transformations that may be beyond his/her expectation (like in Joyce’s case in Chapter 6). With renewed strength and confidence, coping with the problem may no longer be the issue. Supervisors wanting to adopt Satir’s approach into their practices need to move from focusing on coping to focusing on the person of the supervisee and his/her transcendence of the ‘old self’ into the higher self.

Hanging on to the positive aspects while not ignoring the negatives

Satir’s basic tenet of ‘therapy’ was to work on utilizing the human potential for health, growth and peace, which involved clients’ discovery of new possibilities through tasting different experiences in the sessions so that they would be more equipped and more able to make appropriate choices for themselves. Her supervision was the same. When her supervisees fixed their focus on the problem, she guided them to acquire a different and a fuller perspective of the issue through multi-sensory experiences, without demeaning the supervisees’ concern or dismissing the negative impact of the problem on the supervisees and the clients.

Believing firmly that her supervisees and their clients have enough resources to cope with their own life situation, it was not difficult for her to maintain such an attitude. Grounding from this, she congruently demonstrated to her supervisees that she was centred, very hopeful, very positive, integrated, confident, humorous, and free. Her love, respect, acceptance, validation, encouragement, curiosity, and ‘treasure hunting’ attitude also brought hope and positive energy to her supervisees. They had a sense of worthiness and being trusted; and they trusted her and felt safe with her. Satir persistently guided them through the co-discovery processes to come up

with their expanded perspectives of the issues they brought into supervision and discovered new possibilities to work around them, so that the supervisees were able to get in touch of their own hopefulness toward moving forward in their co-discovery journeys with their ‘stars’.

Always think and work systemically with clear boundaries

Satir always had in her mind the map of the Self, Others and Context, and constructed a systemic picture when listening to the supervisee’s presentation. She demonstrated in her supervision that she was part of the larger system, and was at the same time outside the sub-systems, influencing them without controlling. She guided her supervisees to first reflect on, and then to position themselves appropriately in relation with these systems, in order to better use themselves in the counselling processes. She also demonstrated and facilitated the process of being connected with clients while keeping appropriate boundaries. Supervisors need to be able to guide supervisees to be responsible *for* themselves, and *for* the supervision context; to be responsible *to* the clients and *to* the other related context; supervisees are not responsible *for* the clients, the clients are. Supervisees also need to be prepared to facilitate the same level of awareness and sense of responsibility in clients.

One major system Satir had in her mind was the family-of-origin system. She believed that most of a person’s learning rooted from his/her experience from early childhood within the triadic system of “ma-pa-kid” as well as the family sub-systems of siblings and parents’ families-of-origin. Many participants, i.e., her supervisees, practising supervision by starting from having their supervisees draw their family maps and exploring their learnings from the family system. By so doing, they have a clearer understanding of the supervisees, especially their strengths, weaknesses and coping patterns under stress.

Taking charge of the process by leading half a step behind

It is discussed in the last two chapters that Satir always took charge of the supervision process, but did not take charge of the supervisee. She did this by leading half a step behind the supervisee. This means she first listened to and explored with the supervisee what he or she needed from a holistic perspective, and then guided the co-discovery process. She maintained that supervisors and counsellors; need to take the ‘control tower position’, to have a full picture of the context, and to locate the person of the supervisee in the context, so as to stay very closely connected to the internal processes of the supervisee. She took charge to the process at a very early stage of supervision to set the direction for supervisee to gear toward deeper personal reflection and broader professional perspectives.

Being able to guide supervisees to look at themselves and their clients from other horizons at an early stage of supervision was a hallmark of Satir’s practice, and by so doing she took charge of the process and led supervisees through co-discovery journeys of personal and professional enlightenment. Though early intervention could be efficient and effective, the supervisor needs to have the ‘spot light’ on supervisees and always lead the process at least ‘half-a-step’ behind supervisees, in order to facilitate them to take charge of themselves, and to activate the human potential in light of ‘peoplemaking’, not merely ‘problem solving’ or case handling. By following a supervisee’s internal process close enough, supervisor are able to lead more effectively and appropriately.

Satir’s Supervision Outcomes

Worthen and McNeill (1996) listed the outcomes of good supervision from the supervisees’ perspective as: “strengthened confidence; refined professional identity; increased

therapeutic perception; expanded ability to conceptualize and intervene; positive anticipation to reengage in the struggle; [and] strengthened supervisory alliance” (p. 28). It is also important to recognize that good supervision outcome also builds on good supervision processes (Bradley, 2001; Gillespie, 2005; Hoffman, 2005; Kilminster & Jolly, 2000; Lambert, 1987; Ladany, 1999; White, 1995; Worthen & McNeill, 1996). Satir’s supervisees, i.e., the participants of this research, and Joyce, presented in Chapter 6, had apparently experienced all the above mentioned outcomes. The following presentation, under the topic of Worthen and McNeill’s six listed outcomes, discusses the processes and the relational factors of the supervisory dyad that had contributed to Satir’s supervision outcomes, as well as what supervisors can learn.

Strengthened confidence – supervisees finding their own voice

It was unanimously reported by the participants that they all found their own voice from being supervised by Satir, and it was also noticed that Satir gave enough room for Joyce (the star in Chapter 6) to listen to her own needs and to have her own voice during the ten-minute supervision process. Satir’s beliefs in the “magic” that each of her supervisees, and her trusting, caring and encouraging attitude had contributed to the co-discovery process whereby the supervisees found their own voice, and enhanced their self-confidence.

However, successful supervision outcome cannot be guaranteed, because it was also reported by a participant, Susan, that one of her fellow-supervisees lost “all” her confidence through her experience of working as a family therapist and being supervised by Satir under a research project mentioned in Chapter 5. According to Susan, Satir did not attend to this supervisee’s personal needs and relationship difficulties at that stage of her life, but only focused on her therapeutic performance. Though the participants, including Susan, agreed that this was

not the “usual” Satir, this unfavourable supervision outcome leaves room for us, supervisors, to reflect on our own practice.

It is worth noticing that Satir was also willing to be tough in her supervision. Though her directness and toughness pushed most of her supervisees to another level of being and knowing, hence becoming more confident; it did not work with this particular supervisee. Satir, herself, attached much importance to the ‘being’ part of a therapist, and urge people to work through one’s vulnerability toward “becoming more fully human”. Yet, in that particular context, she ignored her vulnerable position of being compared with two other master therapists and only focused on the ‘doing’ part, hence, neglected the need of her supervisee and ‘killed’ her confidence. I am reminded to attend to the ‘being’ parts of the supervisory dyad, and to work through the blockages, prior to focus on the ‘doing’ part. I was rewarded with supervisees feeling much more confident and started to feel the flow in their counselling sessions.

What I learnt is that supervisee’s confidence is strengthened through having a better sense of self and a more grounded set of beliefs, prior to acquiring a set of skills and technique.

Refined professional identity – supervisees discovering their own “magic”

It was also discussed in Chapter 5 that Satir’s supervisees discovered their own “magic” through her “idiosyncratic” way of supervision (as described by Minuchin, 2006). They no longer needed to follow their teacher closely and work under her shadow; they could build up their own style in their professional work with their own voice and “magic”. We can also notice that Joyce, when freed from her personal struggle about ‘touching’, regain her confidence to work with her client; thus refined her professional identity. This good supervision outcome also came from Satir’s hopeful attitude and her steadfast belief in human potential and the deep

rooted yearnings in human processes. Her supervision did not gear toward helping her supervisees solve their problem, but guided them to expand their horizon, transcend to another level of ‘being’ and ‘doing’ and to refine their professional identity.

Increased therapeutic perception

It is also generally believed that what supervisees learnt from supervision were more “caught that taught” (Shulman, 2005, p. 24), and the participants of this study also ‘caught’ most of their learning through the experiential processes in Satir’s supervision and through her demonstrations. From my application of what was interpreted, I learnt that counsellors need to acquire some general perceptions including leading ‘half-a-step in front of client’ by working through their own personal issues; and to lead ‘half-a-step behind’ clients by connecting and understanding the clients’ final goal and yearnings underneath each presenting problem. They also need to look into the universal processes within each unique situation, but maintaining the focus on the client’s specific needs; and to go through co-discovery processes with clients for them to unfold their “treasures” or potentials and to discover new ways to cope with their own life situations. These increased therapeutic perceptions are unique to Satir’s approach of counselling and supervision.

Expanded ability to conceptualize and intervene

All these outcomes are inter-connected. Not to repeat what has been discussed, I use Joyce’s, in Chapter 6, case to illustrate how Satir’s supervision also had this outcome. Joyce was trapped by her puzzlement about touching in therapy triggered by her friend’s doubt about her sexual orientation because Joyce ‘rubbed her back every time when giving her a goodbye hug’ as well as her client’s ‘rejection’ towards her ‘friendly and supportive’ touch. Satir guided Joyce

through an experiential process accompanied with a short sharing of her beliefs about the universal unmet yearnings, and the under-nurtured self-esteem of her client. She also led Joyce experienced that she can take charge of herself about whether to accept the touch, and when to withdraw from it. By so doing, Satir was about to help Joyce to re-conceptualize the issue of touching, and to intervene differently with her client. Similar processes were reported by Satir’s other supervisees.

Satir’s supervision geared toward guiding her supervisees to move away from the problem base, or pathological base of conceptualization, and to ground themselves to conceptualize from a growth base counselling orientation. The problems are interpreted as signals for help, and opportunities for growth and new learnings. Clients are seen as stars of the counselling process, and have abundant resources to be uncovered and activated. Interventions in the counselling process are not geared toward problem solving, but people-making. All supervisees, and I, have benefited from Satir’s supervision and teaching in terms of expanding the ability of conceptualize and intervene.

Positive anticipation to co-discover new possibilities with clients

Satir’s supervision outcome differed with Worthen and McNeill’s (1996) “Positive anticipation to reengage in the struggle” (p. 28), because she viewed struggles or difficulties as learning opportunities, so it was not the case that her supervisees would anticipate to reengage in the “struggle”. Instead they were empowered to uphold the belief that all clients have the resources they need to face their life challenges, and to explore with them new possibilities of tapping into their potentials and turning struggles or problems into positive goals. Supervisees would have positive anticipation to reengage in the co-discovery process with their clients with

hope and renewed energy; hence, guiding them to be in touch with their own positive energy and sense of hopefulness.

Strengthened supervisory alliance

It is also true that Satir’s supervision led to strengthened supervisory alliance. Ladany, Ellis and Friedlander (1999) pointed out that “when the supervisory working alliance is strong, the trainee and supervisor share a strong emotional bond and agree on the goals and tasks of supervision” (p. 447). All participants reported a strong emotional bond with Satir, and did not only agree to, but strongly admired what she guided them to see in supervision. Some even expressed that they would like to have more time with Satir.

Satir’s Supervision Skills, Techniques

Satir (2000b) maintained that “techniques and approaches are tools. They come out differently in different hands” (p. 19). She was also reluctant to teach skills and techniques (Gardner, 1978) because she did not want people to use the techniques mechanically without heart and soul (Brothers, 1993; Gardner, 1978; Satir, 1982; Simon, 1989; Starr, 1993b). This part of the discussion aims at sorting out the techniques identified in Chapters 5 and 6, and at looking deep into the ‘heart and soul’ of the person using these techniques, in order to bring out the life of these techniques, so that others who want to use them can connect with their own ‘heart and soul’ through the ‘heart and soul’ of these techniques. Eleven major skills are identified and discussed below.

Multi-sensory processing and connecting

Satir utilized the abundant resources and potentials of herself and of the supervisees in supervision. She believed that present in any human being are an unlimited pool of resources, and she demonstrated that everybody, especially the supervisee in this context, can fully use these resources and potentials at any single moment. With a belief that multi-sensory experiencing is the best means for learning, Satir naturally developed technique or techniques to realize this belief. The collective name I attach to this set of techniques is ‘*Multi-sensory processing and connecting*’. It includes different means such as role playing, sculpting, touching, distancing and rehearsing etc. However, the most important point is not whether the supervisor knows the above means or skills to perform, but the principles of using these techniques at the appropriate moment in time. By so doing, the supervisor needs to be fully present with the process and to know what he/she is experiencing as well as intending to do. This is a process that requires the supervisor to have the ability to perform multi-tasks.

The multi-tasks Satir performed simultaneously during supervision include: watching, listening, sensing, feeling, interpreting, searching, making internal connections, touching, assuming, verbalizing the assumptions and checking, organizing and re-organizing, directing and redirecting, formulating the sequence of actions and many more. These were seen as Satir’s magic by many of her students or observers of her demonstrations. I believe that this magic comes from the supervisor’s centeredness, groundedness and the full spectrum of experiences. It also comes from supervisor’s steadfast beliefs that the process is far more important than the contents, that the supervisee has all the resources, the supervisor does not have all the answers, and that supervision is a co-discovery process. Supervisors who acquire this state of groundedness and uphold these beliefs are able to *lead* the process ‘intuitively’ by taking half-a-

step *behind* the supervisee so that the supervisee’s energy can flow as freely as possible, thus opening up more possibilities and facilitating effective learning.

Interrupting for early intervention and adjustment of direction and focus

The early interventions, that Satir demonstrated in the vignette and those described by her supervisees, were not the ‘random’ or the ‘authoritarian’ types of interruptions. The interruptions for early intervention were rooted in her rich personal and professional experiences in identifying universal human processes; she was able to go beyond the presenting issues to understand the internal processes from a broader and deeper perspective. “An effective start in therapy greatly enhances the probability that it will end in success. This is as true in supervision as it is in therapy” (Liddle, 1988, p. 153). Satir interrupts at a very early stage to adjust the direction and focus of exploration, to lead the supervisee to move from content to process, from past to the present, from outside to inside; and to focus on strengths, resources, good intentions, connection and health; instead of focusing on the pathology. When necessary, she also interrupts during the supervision process, again for adjusting the direction and focus, such as to explore new possibilities, to focus on hope, or to expand the perspectives. These interruptions come from total trust in a supervisee’s ability to make appropriate choices for himself/herself, a total trust in the supervisor’s ability to face the possibilities of misunderstanding the supervisee and misjudging the context, and a total trust in the process. These interruptions are guided by love, care and compassion for the ‘self, others and contexts’.

Tracking and following closely the supervisee’s internal process

Satir would connect with her own ‘essence’ – the spirit and life energy – prior to the supervision sessions, which was purported to enable her to connect with the supervisee’s essence.

During supervision, Satir would construct a holistic mental picture about the ‘self-others-contexts’ from what the supervisee presented, with reference to the universalities of human processes, at a very early stage of supervision. Though supervisees recalled that she would draw the family-of-origin map and pointed out the dynamic among family members, I gathered that she was addressing a larger picture than just the family context, as in Joyce’s case, so I use Satir’s other concept ‘self-others-contexts’ to describe her process of constructing the mental picture. She would then check her interpretation with supervisees and would explore more deeply with every verbal and non-verbal clue the supervisee displayed; and her focus was not the facts and contents, but the impact and internal processes of supervisees. She was also mindful of maintaining the connection between the supervisee and herself throughout the supervision session (as she does in the counselling sessions), in order to stay in tune with the needs and internal process.

Maintaining appropriate psychological and physical distance

Satir’s multi-sensory processing and tracking seemed to have enabled her to maintain high sensitivity to supervisees’ needs and boundaries, so that she could keep appropriate psychological and physical proximity with supervisees. She was criticized by some observers as staying too close to clients and being too “touchy-feely”. However, there was not any complaint from clients and supervisees. This may have to do with the energy connection between the dyad in interaction, which cannot perhaps be fully understood by outsiders. She believed in the sensation and connection of energies, and she was comfortable with staying very close to clients and supervisees. She had faith that her energy could translate in a positive way to others and that they would choose to connect with it (Simon, 1989). When she sensed the blockage of energy,

she distanced herself a little bit from the supervisee or client for more clarification or exploration. In this manner, she would keep the physical and psychological distance at a comfortable level to maximize learning in supervision, as in the case of Joyce.

Reframing

Satir was an expert in reframing and she used different means to reframe. Her spectrum of reframing ranged from simply using one statement to comment on the situation, to going through a complicated journey of family reconstruction. The statement could be a humorous one (to be discussed later); or a non-value-laden statement reflecting what she interpreted the supervisee to be saying, such as “I hear that you engaged in a transaction with somebody where you didn’t know that there were reactions [of your friend] that didn’t come out to the surface” (line 4 of the vignette used for Chapter 6); or a statement with a positive connotation, such as commenting on a symptom, which the supervisee describes, as a survival skill. Her reframing not only reframed the meaning of what was being expressed, but always ‘re-framed’ the contexts by enlarging the ‘frame’, especially through including the universalities of human experiences into the presenting issue, for example in the vignette interpreted in Chapter 6, when Satir said that she could bet almost with her bottom dollar about Joyce’s client. Even if she ‘loses the bet’, she has already inspired the supervisee to enlarge her ‘frame of reference’. My understanding from this hermeneutic process of interpreting the large pool of texts is that Satir used less reframing in supervision than in therapy. She was more directive and tough in supervision.

Being directive, tough and persistent

Satir’s directness and persistence indicated that she wanted to take the supervisees through the stages of being emotionally honest, then to have emotional and perceptual harmony

with self, and then to congruence, i.e., the state of spiritual connection with self, others and contexts (discussed in Chapter 2). We can also describe it from the transpersonal perspectives that Satir wanted the supervisees to develop from a state of unstable mental ego, to healthy mental ego and to a higher level of self, which is a transpersonal stage of authentic self – soul connecting soul (discussed in Chapter 3). As Ruth described, “when she wanted to be tough and she wanted to tell you what she thought was wrong with you, believe me, she went right to the core, and she believed that you can stand on your own two feet too” (from interview transcript).

Satir upheld a view that every deed has a positive intention, and her toughness, directedness and persistence all emanated from great love, care and compassion. Supervisees who do not share this belief nor appreciate the ‘tough love’ may not benefit as much from such directness, toughness and persistence. Satir also upheld that everybody has all the resources one needs to grow and to cope with life challenges and that one can make choices for oneself and be responsible for them. Supervisees who give up their freedom and autonomy of being equally direct, tough and persistent towards their supervisors when circumstances call for such courage, may not benefit as much from supervision. Of course, supervisees also need to connect with their good intention which is based on love (self-love and love for others), not defensiveness or revenge. Supervisors need to encourage these qualities in supervisees.

Sculpting, role playing and addressing family-of-origin experiences

These techniques were grouped under the ‘technique’ *multi-sensory processing and connecting* in a previous section. A more detailed description of them is provided here.

Sculpting and role playing are seen as the hallmark of Satir’s techniques; they enable supervisees to have holistic multi-sensory learning experiences, which lead to the expansion of horizons in

terms of understanding themselves, as humans and as counsellors. Satir was also sensitive about the subtlety of how past learning from the family-of-origin, that influences the supervisee as a person and as a counsellor, got triggered in the counselling and supervision processes. She would use sculpting, role playing and other means to address these issues in light of facilitating the supervisee to transcend from the original understanding of the ‘self, others and contexts’ to a new level of understanding, or at least to open up to a broader frame of reference, and to become more effective in counselling. For her, what she used in counselling and in supervision were not gimmicks; they all came from a deep connection with the spirituality of the ‘self, others and contexts’ relevant to the client and supervisee. This level of connection houses the heart and soul of the ‘intervention strategies and techniques’.

Using humour

Satir often used humour in supervision, to connect with the person of the supervisee, to release the tension within the supervisee or in the supervisory relationship, to lighten the ‘heaviness’ in the atmosphere, and to connect the specific issue with the universal phenomena. Satir attached importance to the sense of security in a relationship and within a context; she also wanted supervisees to take risks – to open up to the unknowns, to realize that there are infinite possibilities for a ‘problem’, and that there does not exist ‘one right answer’. She maintained that humans and human processes are just part of a ‘cosmic joke’ (Baldwin, 2000; McLendon, 1996), and she sometimes laughed at herself and her acquaintances for taking their ‘self’ too seriously, and working too hard to find out answers for all questions of life. For her, being able to genuinely laugh at oneself is an important step towards ‘becoming more fully human’. Her humour served to establish safety in supervision, to facilitate supervisees’ risk taking, as well as

enhancing an open and accepting attitude towards whatever came out in supervision, counselling and life.

Reassuring, affirming, and anchoring

It is important to note that the reassurance, and affirmation the supervisees experienced were not something Satir did unto them, rather they emerge from the processes of co-exploration and co-discovery. Supervisees came to their own assurance and re-assurance, as well as the affirmation of their own voices, their own perspectives and their own value. They experienced transformations at different levels, and these transformations were long-lasting. The heart and soul behind this ‘supervisor-led self-affirmation’ process is Satir’s unshakable belief in the internal resources and the potential in the supervisees, and the unyielding effort of co-voyaging with the supervisees to unfold these treasures. Any supervisor who genuinely believes in and honours the ‘magic’ within each individual would find no difficulty practising this.

Teaching, educating and preaching

It was Satir’s wish that all ‘therapists’ see themselves as teachers of how to ‘become more fully human’, and that they work towards bringing about new learnings which lead to holistic changes in individuals, families and communities. Her supervision was filled with incidents where learning was espoused. These learnings included learning something new about the supervisee’s self; some new perspectives to look at a person, a relationship, an event, and the universalities of humans; and new experiences of ‘being human’. Satir taught, educated and preached through didactic sharing of a belief, by commenting, suggesting, or checking her interpretation with the supervisee; or inviting the supervisee into a multi-sensory experiential process as well as many other means. Even when she was ‘preaching’ she was not trying to

impose anything on the supervisee from a dogmatic, authoritarian stand point; she only persistently invited the supervisee to try out first before deciding whether it fitted for him or her. Therefore, the teaching and educating part in Satir’s supervision was always a co-discovery process even though Satir had been very persistent in her belief and saw it her mission to ‘promote’ these beliefs to the world.

Humanistic counsellors, especially the ones in the person-centred school, refrain from giving suggestions. Satir, on the contrary, did not hesitate to give suggestions. This came from her trust and full respect of the supervisees and clients, believing that they were capable of being their own choice maker, and that they would only take in whatever fit for them. Her zealous effort to convey messages such as abundance, possibilities, hope, power of love and compassion, connecting in our sameness and growing from our differentness ... was described as “evangelical” by people such as Laign (1988), Minuchin (cited in Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008), and Nichols and Schwartz (1991). In fact, “preaching” could be referred to as one of her major techniques.

Sequencing

Satir demonstrated her ability to gather relevant information from the supervisees and to put that information into perspective in relation to the specific context and the universal human experiences. She also was sensitive to the supervisee’s internal processes, and formulated a road map in her mind of what to explore first, and what next. The vignette in Chapter 6 is an excellent example of this mastery level of sequencing. This ability was the result of years of working conscientiously with families and accumulating ample experiences through learning from these families and individuals in families. In fact, judging from her tireless efforts in

helping Joyce to acquire her own inner peace during the 10-minute vignette (discussed in Chapter 6), we can say that her primary goal in supervision was to help supervisees be centred and grounded in their essence, especially in their own self-worth and abundance of resources. Hence, her famous saying of ‘peace within, peace between, peace among’ can be used as a very good guideline for sequencing the supervision process.

If supervisors were to practise these skills, which reflect Satir’s way of working, with their “heart and soul”, supervision would be more experiential in nature and offer the potential of activating more resources of supervisees, thus enhancing the effectiveness of his/her counselling with clients. Satir’s reluctance to teach skills and techniques may have been more harmful than helpful. Had she achieved a balance between teaching skills and techniques and advancing the merits of experiential aspects of her approach in supervision, this may have led to her work achieving greater respect and its impact being more far-reaching.

The importance of ‘Use of Self’- the best tool in supervision and counselling

Satir had used a metaphor of the revolving door in a 1985 interview (Simon, 1989) to describe her “Use of Self”. She said if there was only room for one, and by choosing to go first, she had the faith that her energies would translate in a positive way to the other person and that they would follow. Once they get outside, she would no longer set the direction, she would work on finding out where the others wanted to go. In the vignette chosen for this study, she knew that in order to bring Joyce out from where she was stuck, she needed to show Joyce another direction, which was the inward direction, to activate her ‘inner-healer’ and to first have ‘peace within’. By guiding her supervisees through connecting with their inner healer, she was able to help them free their healing energy and become more capable in connecting the inner healers of

their clients and in facilitating them to utilize their own healing energy. She showed Joyce the direction by going first through the ‘revolving door’ and to address the vulnerable areas with full confidence and persistence.

Satir’s notion of “use of self” in therapy geared toward connecting deeply with and to empower clients. It was noticed that she tried to do the same in supervision, though sometimes she was seen to be over-powering instead of empowering supervisees. The ‘self’ can be the best tool in counselling and supervision, yet for this ‘tool’ to function as such, supervisors need to be mindful of their own congruence and that of the supervisees. Satir persistently reminded supervisees to get connected with their deepest spiritual self, acknowledging that they are as vulnerable, and as precious as their clients; believing that they have their magic to share and the clients also have their magic to share. She demonstrated her full presence with her stars in the counselling and supervision contexts, and her openness to following the clue of her stars and lead half-a-step behind. She was also tirelessly involved in preparing supervisees to be fully present with themselves, which included facing their own ‘demons’ and to growing through challenging their own vulnerabilities. By so doing, they could use themselves better and be able to really connect with themselves, and with the supervision context, while remaining mindful of the counselling context being discussed in the process, and connecting with the clients more effectively.

In my application of supervising supervisors and counsellors, supervisors who have worked through their own issues are more able to demonstrate openness, confidence and courage to explore deeply into the unknown, and to directly address the vulnerable issues, such as something that had not been openly acknowledged, their own incongruity, and/or supervisees’ incongruity; and/or issues concerning the supervisory relationship. It is the same with counsellor.

In other words, individuals who have freed their trapped energy from their vulnerabilities can ‘use their selves’ more effectively and appropriately in counselling and supervision.

A Brief Summary of Satir’s Supervision

The key question I asked in this study was: “What legacies can be extracted from the exploration of Virginia Satir’s clinical supervision practice?” I also had guiding research questions organized into four areas: (1) guiding principles and philosophy; (2) supervision outcome; (3) skills, techniques and strategies used; (4) and the ‘use of selves’ in supervision. (p. 8). The above discussion provided answers to all these four areas. A brief summary of Satir’s legacies in supervision is presented, followed by discussions on what was learnt from her weaknesses and incongruity.

Satir’s supervision on a whole reflected her central premise of *peoplemaking* that she demonstrated in processes of unfolding with supervisees the “treasure” and “magic” within each of them. It was often a healing and re-educating process, as recalled by the supervisees, and as demonstrated with Joyce. I believe that as her supervisees matured, there would not be so much need for healing, and supervision would move to a more collegial mode, as described by some participants. Her supervision was very dynamic, directive and very true to the ‘peoplemaking’ orientation. She was able to truly and deeply connect with her supervisees on an individual basis, to understand his/her inner experiences; and to create rich learning opportunities for him or her to gain insight about how to ‘be’ and how to ‘do’. Simon’s (1989) remark, “At the core of her approach was her unshakeable conviction about people’s potential for growth and the respectful role helpers needed to assume in the process of change” (p. 38) suggested an explanation for

success in her supervision. Yet, her supervision was not flawless; the following section discusses what can be gained from the awareness of her imperfection.

What Can Be Learnt from Satir’s Incongruity and Weaknesses

When I presented part of the results of this study in the Satir 2010 conference, and shared some quotes from the interview transcripts such as: “Virginia did not always apply her wonderful balanced congruent self. When she supervised she could get very annoyed. She could make comments that were not always appropriate”, and “she asked us to work in triads, but she couldn’t, she just took over. She just couldn’t stop herself.” I asked the audience how they felt and what they thought. Almost all shared that they felt relieved and they were convinced that we humans are the same in terms of having our weaknesses, and no one is perfect, and no one has to be so. Coming so close to a ‘master’s’ vulnerabilities humbled and encouraged me. Satir once said, “to open up your heart will make you vulnerable, and one of the things I tell my trainee therapists is that if they are not vulnerable, they won’t be good therapists” (Gardner, 1978, p. 2). I believe she also allowed herself to be vulnerable as a supervisor and thus she became a good supervisor. I always share with my colleagues, students and clients: “Don’t be intimidated by mistakes and failures; they help us grow!” It has become a motto where I work. I believe that learning from one’s own weaknesses as well as from other’s imperfections will help us grow toward becoming more competent, confident and congruent; and at the same time more humble. Below are four areas within which I have become inspired through dialoguing with the texts around Satir’s inadequacy.

The importance of becoming a ‘healed’ healer

It is true that we cannot always be congruent, and the more grudges we hold, the less able we are to keep our balance. Satir had admitted that the relationship with men remained an issue for her (discussed in Chapter 2), and some of her supervisees also mentioned this in the interviews. Her relationship issue with her sister was left unresolved till the end of her life. It was not that she did not have the opportunity, but she did not choose to attend to it. Pearl might have been more troubled by the issue than Satir, and recalled that at her dying bed, she offered, “Virginia, ‘would you like me to sit with you and your sister and see if we can make some peace?’ ‘No, Pearl,’ she said, ‘it’s too late.’” Pearl believed that Satir “never came to terms with her own family relationships, especially her sister. They never made peace with each other.” This unresolved issue could have been the ‘fuse’ that ignited the incongruities; after all, people tend to lose balance when under stress. One may have to pay a high price to protect oneself from being hurt again by old wounds. My interpretation for her not being able to work in a triad, and her negligence in building a team among the members of the supervision group (as presented in Chapter 5) is that it reflects that she had not healed herself from her unsatisfactory childhood experiences, especially her parents’ poor modelling of partnering. The failures in her two marriages could have been another ‘wound’, thus she was observed to have become apprehensive when relationships became intimate.

Being able to work harmoniously in a triad involves the art of handling power and intimacy. There are also power issues among supervision group members, as revealed in the interviews. My personal experiences of being a fellow supervisee in group settings as well as supervising groups of counsellors have also unveiled some overt competitions and subtle power

struggles among members. Satir’s choice of having each of her supervisees connecting with her and being intimate with her individually, while not trying to facilitate mutual connection among them remained puzzling to her students. She had once even forbidden two of her supervisees from seeing each other in the evenings during one of the process communities, where they were trainers of the two different modules. We can say to ourselves that Satir’s decision came from good intentions, yet this seemingly unclear and unreasonable measure left much room for us to contemplate. We need to continue to ask more dialectical questions such as what intentions might be behind those seemingly inappropriate behaviours. What and how could one benefit from these processes?

My own application of allowing myself to be vulnerable, to face my “internal monster”, and to go through the pain of acknowledging and accepting that this is a part of me (no matter how I resented it), has benefited me greatly and led me to whole person transformation and spiritual transcendence. The process freed my trapped energy, healed my wounds and allowed me to love freely and be compassionate to myself, becoming more integrated, grounded and congruent. My own process of becoming a ‘healed’ healer and my application in terms of accompanying my supervisees to go through similar processes affirm my belief that it is not helpful if one remains a ‘wounded’ healer. We need to heal and free our inner healer, and commit ourselves to continue the journey of cleansing and nurturing our ‘selves’, so as to keep us as healthy as possible before we can be a congruent teacher of accompanying others to grow towards becoming more fully human.

Making better use of learning and working triads

Satir’s practice of forming learning triads in training programs has merits. As an indirect recipient of her method, I have benefited a lot from these experiences. However, I also witnessed ‘disastrous’ triads. I believe that some sort of supervision at the beginning phase, along with structure and guidelines would serve as ‘quality control’ for these triad meetings. Learning from the texts, as well as from how the participants added on to what they learnt from Satir, I have adapted in my applications of having learning triads in the training programs by ‘building-in’ the following structure: allow at least one ‘process-checking’ period during the triad meetings, and incorporate a ‘reflection period’ at the end of each meeting.

Process-checking as a built-in practice

Process-checking serves to respond to the internal process of each triad member within a certain context at a certain period of time. Satir’s tools such as the ‘iceberg’ metaphor, ‘the ingredient of an interaction’, and her notions of ‘self, other, context’ and ‘peace within, peace between, and peace among’ are helpful means to guide the process of self-reflection. *Process-checking* also helps triad members to monitor themselves in terms of moving toward congruence and becoming more fully human. I have added *the physiological aspect (body)* to the Iceberg Metaphor to make it a comprehensive representation of a whole person, and to reflect Satir’s approach more appropriately. I have full confidence that this addition would be supported by Satir. When Starr interviewed Satir in 1985, and asked her whether she had changed some of her concepts or ways of thinking about families, Satir responded, “Everything that I started off with in the beginning is still present but I have expanded my methods. *I do lots and lots of work with the body* [italic added], with energy, with metaphor, with the whole spiritual business” (Starr,

1993b, p. 4). This piece of information supports my addition of the physiological aspect to the iceberg metaphor; and I have been presenting this version to my clients, students and supervisees for many years.

Adding a reflection period before closing up the session

The reflection period at the end of a meeting consists of two parts – group reflection and individual reflection. *Group reflection* enables trainees to consolidate what they have learnt from the meeting and from each other, what they appreciate, doubt and disagree. The Satir tool ‘temperature reading’ and the concept of congruence are very helpful in this process. The *individual reflection* period provides some personal space for each triad member to make real contact with oneself, to reflect on his/her own deeper processes and to tease out what is/are needed for him/her to work on in terms of personal and professional growth. Satir’s four meta-goals for therapy (proposed by Banmen, discussed and re-worded by me in Chapter 2), and other concepts, such as dysfunctional versus congruent communication, our many faces etc. are also recommended means for this self-reflection process. Members are also encouraged to reflect on and write down the experience(s) that they held back in the *process checking* and the *group reflection* periods of the session. They can later choose to take the risk and to share this part with the group, or they can promise themselves to explore deeper into it in light of understanding his or her ‘self’ better and enhancing the relationships with self, and others; and to translate these learnings outside the triadic context.

The triad meetings are recommended to end with a meditative closure whereby members centre themselves, anchor their learning experiences, validate themselves and other members, and prepare themselves to transit into another context of their life.

Working triads consider a wider and much more sophisticated set of requirements, and appears to be workable though I haven’t undertaken the complete hermeneutic journey in reference to this format. It is an area worth investigating further in future studies, despite being beyond the scope of this research.

Peer supervision in triads, or any group size, can also adopt the rationale and structural guidelines described above. Additional guidelines on preparation for supervision, giving and receiving feedback, as well as setting clear individual learning goals and group learning goals can also be worked out within the triad.

Satir’s supervision philosophy can be applied to the Triadic supervision format (discussed in Chapter 2) and serves to alleviate a major drawback of this supervision modality. It is discussed below.

Enhancing Triadic Supervision

Triadic supervision, where one supervisor works with two other supervisees simultaneously, was added as an approved modality and an alternative to individual supervision in counsellor training programs for accreditation in the USA since 2001 (Hein & Lawson, 2008), and has become a popular supervision modality in the past decade as reviewed in chapter three. Satir was a pioneer in using triad formation in her trainings and supervisions; I believe her philosophy can contribute to the current practices of triadic supervision.

Literature reported that one of the defects about triadic supervision was reflected in the feedback process (Hein & Lawson, 2009) because some supervisors found it difficult to give critical feedback to a supervisee when a second supervisee was around. This is not merely a matter of professional competence; it is a complex issue concerning the supervisor’s congruence,

and his/her belief about relationship. He or she may have grown up in a context where ‘peace at any price’ could be a survival theme, and how supervision is conducted could still be contaminated by this limiting belief. He or she might automatically shift to his/her familiar dysfunctional coping pattern in order to avoid confrontation and to maintain ‘harmony’ in the triad.

Satir’s fundamental objective of enabling students to resolve unfinished childhood issues through triadic experiences can be helpful in this aspect and can be incorporated into the practice of triadic supervision especially when challenged by the dilemma of giving honest but critical feedback and the fear of ruining the supervisory relationship. Satir’s notion of congruent living can help transform supervisors’ and supervisees’ automatic dysfunctional copings into honest interactions. Satir’s advocacy of facing one’s own vulnerabilities and working through one’s personal issues through triadic experiences also provides opportunities for the supervision triad to build a functional supervision team, as well as laying a foundation for resolving possible transference issues within the triadic supervisory relationship.

The Contribution of Satir’s Approach to Group Supervision

Dialoguing between the transcripts describing Satir’s supervision practice and relevant literature from the 60s to the early 80s led me to a new horizon of understanding. If we make reference to the studies of Holloway and Johnston (1985) and Prieto (1996) about group supervision being widely practised but poorly understood, we might possibly conclude that Satir was one of those practitioners of group supervision who had not fully understood why, what and how group supervision was to be conducted. However, though Satir did not always address group dynamic and relationship issues with her supervisees in group supervision settings, her

expertise in these areas as well as giving empowering feedback can still inspire supervisors to conduct group supervision more effectively.

Holloway and Johnston (1985) pointed out that the goals of group supervision include a varying degree of attention to case conceptualization, didactic information, and interpersonal process material. They also pointed out that focusing on inter- and intrapersonal awareness was essential to training of counsellors in group settings. Studies also reported that supervisors adopting the role-model approaches to supervision usually adopted three roles, namely, teacher, counsellor and consultant (Holloway, Freund, Gardner, Nelson, & Walker, 1989); and supervisors in family therapy tended to maintain the apprenticeship model in individual supervision (Beavers, 1986a).

The participants’ experiences discussed in chapter 5 have shown that in Satir’s practice of group supervision, she excelled in paying attention to case conceptualization from a systemic perspective, and was able to address the intrapersonal awareness of individual supervisees but failed to look into interpersonal processes during the supervision session and did not encourage a supportive atmosphere among group members. We can be inspired by both her strengths and weaknesses stated above to improve our group supervision practice.

Satir’s connection and relationship with each individual supervisee strongly resembled the role-model approach and the apprenticeship model which was practised in individual supervision. In fact, she and her students used the term apprentice to describe the trainers-in-training or interns in their workshops. Satir seemed not to have fully distinguished the different needs and functions between individual and group supervision, and missed one of the important aspects - interpersonal process awareness, during group supervision.

Group supervision is the most widely practiced modality in supervision practice today, and yet it has been but poorly conceptualized (Holloway & Johnston, 1985; Prieto, 1996). Satir also widely practiced supervision in group settings, though she might have treated it as an extension of her training sessions. Regardless of how she viewed these group meetings, she did not fully utilize the potentials and the characteristics of groups to facilitate more effective learnings of supervisees or trainees. She was a master in building relationship with each individual member within the group, but was seen as not attempting to build a team among the members. On the contrary, she was judged by two participants as having indirectly created competition and jealousy; and two more also believed that she did not try to build a team among supervisees. I do not want to focus on finding the ‘real’ cause for these competitive and envious attitudes because it does not contribute to informing good supervision. What I focus on is how supervisors can be sensitive to and address these phenomena in group settings.

It is identified that ‘between member problems’ are one of the five group processes that hinder supervisee development (Enyedy et al., 2003); addressing these issues and turning them into learning opportunities enables growth instead of remaining hindrances. Research also suggests that supervisees highly value and prefer to receive feedback from their peers in group supervision (Linton & Hedstrom, 2006; Riva & Erickson Cornish, 2008). Satir’s negligence in these areas can serve to inspire supervisors, like me, who want to adopt her philosophy into their own practices, to address the following aspects of group processes in supervision: building a team among the members including the supervisor; surfacing the ‘between-member’ issues and ‘supervisor-supervisee’ issues through practising; and facilitating congruent communication, as well as encouraging feedback among supervisees. Group supervision, when guided effectively,

contributes much more to enhancing this kind of intrapersonal reflection and interpersonal exchanges than individual supervision.

Satir never established a formal structure for supervision. Her philosophy of supervision and her practice wisdom discussed in previous sections can provide much insight for today’s supervisors, and can contribute to the clinical supervision practices in individual, triadic and group supervision settings. Supervisors wanting to adopt Satir’s approach in their supervision could reflect on their own supervision philosophy and relate it to Satir’s practice philosophy and to updated studies on supervision, in order to develop their own practice guidelines.

Conclusion – The Importance of Having a Clear Conceptualization

Satir’s work on the whole, encompassing supervision, has been criticized as not having a strong conceptualization. However, perhaps this criticism itself is a misconception. Satir had her limitations, especially in supervision, which had never been her focus. These limitations include that she did not address the practicalities of being a supervisor, (such as contracting, ethical decision making, evaluating, and monitoring supervisee development), nor the organizational aspects, the tasks of supervision, and the functions of supervision (Carroll, 2010a). Nonetheless, she had her clear conceptualization about training and counselling, even though she did not spend enough time in organizing her thoughts, and putting them down in written format. When one watches her videos, and listens to how she explains what she does, one can definitely appreciate how clear she is about what she does. The dearth in literature leaves a lot of room for others to fill the gaps. One of the co-authors of *The Satir Model* told me jokingly that if Satir were still alive, the book would not have been published, because Satir would always disagree with at least part of what they presented to her, and come up with new

ideas and explanations. Over the years, many have attempted to conceptualize Satir’s work and presented it in different publications with similarities and variations. It is a healthy phenomenon that matches the inclusive characteristic of Satir’s approach and her notion of there not being only ‘one right way’. Nonetheless, I can sum up her major concept of supervision in one sentence: “Supervision is a co-discovery process for supervisees to unfold their abundant resources and to be grounded on their strengths in order for them to do the same with their clients.”

Satir’s work is highly process oriented, and she refrained herself from teaching techniques or setting up any structure to be followed. It was her greatest wish that people would take whatever fit for them and develop their own way of practice. However, counsellors and supervisors learning her approach demand more structure. Some authors have interpreted her work and teased out her patterns (such as Andreas, 1991; Bitter, 2009; Braverman, 1986; McLendon, 1999; Rasheed, et al., 2010); some wrote exclusively on family reconstruction (namely Gomori & Adaskin, 2008; Nerin, 1986; Wegscheider-Cruse, et al., 1994); Loeschen (2002) has presented a six-phase structure concerning how Satir facilitated changes; and Banmen (Banmen, 2002a, 2008a) proposed a framework on how the ‘Satir Transformational Systemic Therapy’ could be practiced. All these authors offer some practical guidelines for counsellors and supervisors to contemplate and to formulate their own structure of practice.

Satir encouraged people to taste and decide for themselves what to swallow. Hence, I recommend those who want to learn Satir’s approach, to taste the dishes from the one who created the recipe, which is to gain access to Satir’s primary materials, i.e., through reading and watching Satir’s work and developing their own conception before buying into any secondary

material, i.e., other authors’ presentation. There are benefits to making one’s own assessment and to establishing the conceptualization and structure which fits for oneself. Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics is very helpful in terms of moving around and between all these horizons, dialoguing with these texts, and coming up with one’s own fusion of horizons. Supervisors having a clear conceptualization and structure of practice may help supervisees develop their own.

Chapter 8

Conclusion – A Growth Oriented Approach to Clinical Supervision

Introduction

This chapter discusses the contributions and limitations of this research, the limitations of the methodology of this study, and proposes some areas and direction for future research.

This research has not only unfolded the supervision practice philosophy of the pioneer of family therapy, Virginia Satir. It also fills a big gap in current supervision frameworks. Most of the current supervision models or approaches emphasize the pragmatic aspects of supervision, and focus heavily on what and how to *do*; such as the *Competency-Based Approach* (Falender & Shafranske, 2004; Falender & Shafranske, 2007), *Psychotherapy-Based Approaches* based on different theoretical orientations (Beck, Sarnat, & Veronica, 2008; Falender & Shafranske, 2010; Pearson, 2006; Watkins, 1995), *Development Approaches* (Glickman, 1980; Holloway, 1987; Marovic & Snyders, 2010; Stoltenberg, 1981; Stoltenberg & Delworth, 1988); *Process-Based Approaches* including the *Discrimination Model* (Bernard, 1997), the *Systems Approach* (Holloway, 1995), and the *Interpersonal Approach* (Hess, 1997). Very few supervision approaches or models outline the importance of the “self” of the persons involved in the supervision process; when they do discuss the persons, they emphasize the role, function, task, competency and the professional development of the supervisors and the supervisees. Other than transpersonal supervision, none of the other approaches look into the “personhood” or the “self” of the persons involved in supervision. Satir’s supervision practice pointed to an area and a direction that supervisors could benefit from. It addressed the “*being*” of the persons involved in the supervision process prior to the “*doing*” and “*becoming*”. Since there cannot be one uniform

model for all supervisors, each practitioner is encouraged to allow him/herself to be inspired by Satir's practice philosophy and to create a supervision framework that fits his/her own "*being*", guides his/her own "*doing*" and encourages his/her own "*becoming*".

Below I would like to share one of my major discoveries in this hermeneutic process: The naming of Satir's Approach.

The Naming of Satir's approach

It is important for me to share one part of my research which does not directly relate to clinical supervision but is significant to the understanding of how people in the 'Satir' community (the word Satir has somehow become an adjective) see the nomenclature of her approach, and how I came up to the present naming as I refer to Satir's approach.

In Chinese culture, "naming" is a very serious matter. Most often, a name embeds a philosophy, a belief, a direction or a wish and love for the person or an institute. A name can tell a lot. Confucius said, "If nomenclature is not appropriate, then what is said would not be convincing. If what is said is not convincing, then work cannot be accomplished" (Confucius, the Analects). Maybe this is why I attach so much importance to the nomenclature of Satir's approach.

When I started this study, Satir's approach was known to me as The Satir Model after the book (Satir, et al., 1991). Twenty years after Virginia Satir's death, there is a growing collection of books, chapters and papers written about Satir's teaching, mainly referred to as the *Satir Model*. However, Satir herself *never* claimed her approach as The Satir Model, but rather spoke of the growth model or growth therapy (Satir, 1967), the process model (Satir, 1982), the seed

model (Satir, 1986d), and Human Validation Process Model (Satir & Baldwin, 1983; Satir & Bitter, 2000). As I travel further in my research journey and understand Satir’s philosophy more, I have doubts about naming her approach ‘The Satir Model’.

In the literatures reviewed, including Satir’s own writing, interviews with Satir, articles, book chapters and books, videos about her, and personal conversations with her students; it became very clear to me that Satir did not want ‘copy cats’ (Baldwin & Baldwin, 1993; Bitter, 1987; Satir, 1983-1987; Wegscheider-Cruse, et al., 1994). Her central message for students is to take in whatever fits for them and to come up with their own practice wisdom. She wanted each of her students to learn how to love themselves first (Kramer, 1995c), and to relate what they learnt from her with their own being, instead of merely copying her. She even said that she would disown them if they “ever become a Satirian” (Gardner, 1978).

To me, the name ‘The Satir Model’ does not match her philosophy – the dialectical question I asked myself was “would she really want to have a model named after her?” So I decided to explore this naming process in light of understanding more about how others perceive this issue, and if possible, searching for a more appropriate name for her approach. I sent out the following questions to twenty-two friends in the Satir circle:

1. When was the name “Satir Model” first used? I really am puzzled, I read from what she wrote and listened to what she said (in audio tapes), and I learnt that she called her model the Growth Model, Seed Model and Human Validation Model. How come it is called the Satir Model now?
2. Did Virginia Satir agree with it? Or was she aware of it?
3. She said in an interview in 1978, *“I could never see myself becoming a devotee of any one approach, because I treat everything as resources, and that’s how I trained my students. There ain’t any school of my following. I say to my students, ‘For goodness’ sake, if you ever become a Satirian, I’ll disown you.’”*
Did she maintain the same view 10 years after that? Or had she changed?

4. *I have found on page 38 of the book Women of Power by Laurel King who interviewed Virginia in May and July 1988 (she died in September 1988) a quote:
“The chief thing I'm doing now is to make my work synonymous with my name so people who know my work will be able to do this, and that's happening all over. I do not believe that anything dominated by an individual can live... what you have to do is work that out so it can be done. I don't have any need to be on top of anything.” (King, 1989, p. 38)*
5. Can you share how you interpret this statement?

Fifteen of them responded to my email, and nine answered every question. It was unanimously agreed that the name was first used when the book “The Satir Model– family therapy and beyond” was published in 1991, three years after Satir’s death. The three co-authors of the book had consensus to use this name and they believed Satir already knew how the book would probably be named, though she did not contribute to the naming process. Other than the co-authors, only one clearly agreed with this name, six objected to it and five did not share their comment about using this name to represent Satir’s approach, though they appreciated that the book was written. More than half reiterated the names that Satir had used, and some shared other names that they use for the approach such as Satir’s teaching, Satir System, Satir Process and the Integrative Process Model. One commented that “it wasn’t Virginia’s language” and another quoted from the preface which Satir wrote, “I am delighted that this book is being written”. To him, Satir refers to it as “this book” which indicates that at least in this preface she herself did not use the name “Satir Model”.

One declared that using this name is a proponent of a “One Way” model; another also shared a worry that it [the book] could make this the one and only way to see Virginia Satir and her teachings, as though it is a Bible. One further commented that the book “The Satir Model” is just a collection of techniques Satir used, not the heart of the meaning of her way of working. It does not represent what she thought of as “Satir’s Way”. For Satir, the Way was Growth Model.

Another mentioned that Satir talked about her methods as tools and vehicles for change [which the authors of the book also introduced], not the essence of her work. The essence is, when she used the tools and vehicles for change with someone, she was always looking for the whole person and was hoping to present that view back to the person, to the “self” with whom she was working. Another person thought that Human Validation Model is the most appropriate way to refer to Satir’s work, because that is what she did. He wrote, “Carrying that kind of validating spirit into the presence of someone seeking help is in itself adding to that person’s human growth” and “When you came into her presence, you felt someone loving you and validating you.” He, in his 80’s, is convinced that his love for whoever comes to him, does more to help them than all the “therapeutic” approaches, techniques, models, or tools at his disposal.

When discussing about how she’d like her name to be “synonymous to her work”, one connected with Satir’s will: She left her legacy for “creating a university for becoming more fully human”; and interpreted it as a concept about inviting people who would continue to add on and expand her work. Many of them mentioned that Satir was forever learning and growing, and she explored concepts which could help her teach and she added and changed as she grew. One believes that when Satir reminded others: “Beware of the one right way”, she included herself and her students. She and her teaching were never static. Another student stressed that Satir’s biggest wish was that people who she taught could help her realize her mission of teaching every person in the world that they mattered, which was very different from what most of us were brought up with.

Most of us were taught that people have different value because of their social status, credentials, wealth and role etc. Going back and forth between this perspective and the pool of

texts reflecting Satir’s working principle, I came to a realization that, in my initial journey of studying ‘The Satir Model’, I held a very clear hierarchy that Satir was the ‘best’ and my ‘Satir mentors’ were ‘best’ students of Satir, and hence were better than any others in the Satir circle. I literally heard one of my teachers repeatedly say to us, “You have already got the best [teacher of ‘The Satir Model’]”. Even though I experienced some transformative changes in perception, feelings and behaviours, and confirmed that I am ok, I mattered; the ‘self’ was not really nurtured to the level that I matter as much as everyone else; the ‘hierarchical’ ideation and atmosphere were strong, and still are in some ‘Satir communities’. I used to put the blame on one of my teachers for always rejecting my idea of inviting other trainers to Hong Kong by saying, “Why do you want them? You’ve already got the best.” Now I realize that this was a co-created process. I, who have lived and been educated in this hierarchical world, just automatically put my teacher on the pedestal, thinking that I didn’t matter, and submitted to whatever the teacher said. I did not give myself the “Third Birth” (discussed in Chapter 2), and I had not learnt to see my teachers as equals. Though I perceived the name ‘The Satir Model’ as creating a new orthodoxy, I was not aware that I was participating in creating that orthodoxy!

Through this hermeneutic process, I have arrived at my present horizon: There is no right or wrong about using the name ‘The Satir Model’ or any name for Satir’s approach; it all depends on whether the messages conveyed are “synonymous to her work”. I choose to use other nomenclatures. Satir’s statement quoted above was made when she shared with the interviewer that she sent some of her trainers to teach in Hong Kong and that resulted in the setting up of a Satir institute, and similar institutes were developing in other places to teach her approach. My present understanding of the first part of the statement, “*The chief thing I’m doing now is to make my work synonymous with my name so people who know my work will be able to*

do this” (King, 1989, p. 38) is that since her name was already attached to institutes in these places, she wanted what was being taught using her name to really represent her work. My understanding about the second part of the statement, “*I do not believe that anything dominated by an individual can live... what you [people in the Avanta network] have to do is work that out so it can be done. I don't have any need to be on top of anything*” (King, 1989, p. 38) is that she encouraged her students to grow and develop from what they learnt from her, instead of stereotyping or sticking to the ‘only right way’. She still would NOT like to see people becoming Satirists or Satirians. She only hoped her work could be continued. She would also like people to be their own “*choice makers*” and if one chooses, he/she can continue her work as they interpreted.

The name I choose to use to represent Satir’s approach is ‘*The Satir Growth Model*’, which is also used by the Virginia Satir Global Network and some other institutes. I would also use ‘A growth oriented approach to counselling/supervision inspired by Virginia Satir’ for what I develop from interpreting what she taught.

Implications of this Study - its Relevance to Supervision Practice Today

Capturing Satir’s Enduring Legacies in Clinical Supervision

It was discussed in the last chapter that this study not only answered my research questions and laid out what today’s supervisor can learn from what Satir demonstrated, but also shed light into how we can also learn from her limitations and inadequacies. The following elaborates what legacies we can draw from studying Satir’s supervision practice.

Insights from My own Experience of Being Supervised

One of my supervisors prompted me to answer the question “what do you think that all counsellors and all supervisors could learn and profit from this study, that it would be useful in their own supervision or in their own counselling.” He also kept prompting me to look at the dark side of Virginia Satir and to keep asking myself why I want to study Satir’s approach when this world is becoming more technical in treatment modality that more “matched treatment”, “manualized treatment, brief therapy and all others approaches emphasizing on intervention have emerged ... with research to support their effectiveness. Why study Satir?” I was asked, “The study cannot lead you to mainstream academic...”

To be honest, I was not very comfortable when I first heard these remarks. For some years, the research-student part of me was deflated and very discouraged. When I regain my self-confidence and re-convened my energy into the study guided by Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics, I tried to dialogue with my supervision notes hoping to dig out the treasure from my supervisors’ advice, and I did. I owe him a lot despite neglecting his positive and encouraging remarks at that time, and I regret not being able to appreciate his good intention underneath those seemingly negative remarks about my study and about Satir. I also learnt the following:

We do not and cannot have all the answers

I do not think that ‘*all* counsellors and *all* supervisors could learn and profit from this study’ and I do not think any study can provide answers for everybody. Still, there are merits and credit in research studies that go through vigorous processes; this study is one of those that has endured meticulous hermeneutic processes of interpretation, understanding and application.

I believe this study is contributing to the current clinical supervision practices especially for supervisors who attach importance to the ‘use of self’ in therapy and in supervision, who honour the strength and potential in people, and who are open to holistic experiences and to spiritual connection between and among humans. I also believe that many counsellors and supervisors would find it useful in their own supervision or in their own counselling.

Supervision needs to be a process that enhances supervisees to develop the ‘higher self’

Supervision and counselling should not be seen separate from a person’s life. One has to live an integrated life in order to ‘do their job’ effectively. Through *growth oriented approaches* of counselling and supervision, one experiences ongoing development not only in the professions, but also as a person; thus gradually reaching one’s ‘*higher self*’.

“Matched treatment”, “manualized treatment” (as described by my supervisor), brief therapy and all others approaches that emphasize on intervention are helpful to the users because they are ready made, structured, and have clear instructions for users. The good intentions underneath them may include: enhancing performance, providing clear structure for intervention and evaluation, and safe-guarding quality. However, these manualized treatment protocols do not facilitate the connection of humans at the “human level” nor respects the uniqueness of each individual. They encourage categorizing people, sticking labels to people, and they also encourage dependency and create a sense of inadequacy on the users’ part. These rigid guidelines not only cannot facilitate practitioners to cultivate their own resources, but also contribute to reinforcing a habit of looking up to model answers (which do not really exist), rather than guiding supervisees to develop their potentials and to reach their ‘higher self’.

The importance of understanding the supervisee

At certain junctures of my research journey, I almost quit. The biggest force that pulled me there was that I did not feel fully understood by my ‘chosen’ supervisor, though I was grateful that he kept responding positively and supportively to my plea of ‘*keep having confidence*’ in my ability to manage to the finishing line. I had misunderstood him and the process, but I am very happy that I have come to this historic finitude.

The insight I get from my own experiences of not being understood and from my supervision with my students, who were not being understood by me, is that “*It is much more important to understand your supervisees than having them understand you!*” While I could appreciate then, and more so now, that my supervisor wanted me to be more ‘academic’ by not getting biased about Satir and to have a more balanced portrayal of her, my feeling of constantly not being heard was so overwhelming that I wanted to quit.

When I read the transcripts of my supervision sessions and the email exchanges with my supervisors, I noticed the following insightful and encouraging remark from my supervisor:

Regarding you feeling more and more inadequate during this process, what would Virginia say to you about that? How might she supervise you with respect to these feelings that are getting in the way of your creativity and forgiveness of your imperfections? How might you supervise another therapist who presented this as an issue? It seems to me that answering these questions would be a wonderful introduction to your thesis (and your book that will follow).

There are many other similar comments that encouraged me, but *I chose to assign so much more power to the ‘negative’ remarks that I almost ‘killed’ the student-researcher part of me.* I took the remarks such as “XX, I’m not convinced that Grace understood what you mean”; “Grace, I don’t think you have understood ...”; “I’m not so sure whether you understand what

we are saying”; and “I went to one of her lectures, I have some sense that she was stubborn, that she was impatient, that she was distracted, that she was over-committed, that she was a self-grandiose in some ways, and self-promoting” as knives and stabbed myself. I did not take them as opportunities to expand my perception; I was indulged in my self-pity mood of not being understood. I was also disappointed with myself for not expressing honestly, “I don’t think you have understood me” and “I think you are also biased.” Many months later, I had another supervision session with all three supervisors (one was new), I started by saying, “I need ten minutes to say what I want to say without interruption.” I had more than ten minutes and I am proud of myself. I learnt that it is important to stand on one’s own feet and let one’s voice be heard. Yet, not until I went through the above hermeneutic process did I realize how I had misunderstood my supervisors, and hurt myself by not taking my own responsibilities. However, most supervisees do not have this capacity to go through such in-depth self reflection; supervisors still need to take initiatives to understand them.

I also learnt from my own supervision practice with my students that “no matter how good the supervisor’s intention is, it cannot be appreciated by the students if they do not experience being heard and understood.” When the supervisor does not have enough room for supervisees to voice out their concerns and to be fully heard, the supervisee will have no room to understand what the supervisor offers, and there is no connection between the supervisory dyad.

More Insights Gained from the Study

Most of Satir’s ideas and her experiential means of facilitating a training session or working with families in therapy have already been widely adopted into different arenas of practices, such as counselling, supervision, education, coaching, and corporate consultation. Yet

never before has a study on Satir's approach to supervision reached this depth and breadth. With a thorough understanding, and applying her principle of taking in whatever fits to our current practice, I teased out from her many creative concepts and tools, the following simple and most significant concepts and recommend them to supervisors of all disciplines for consideration as add-ons to enhance their present practice. This study indeed brings new light to supervision practice today.

Enhancing effectiveness of supervision through strengthening connections

No literature on supervision addresses the depth and intensity of human connections as Satir showed us in her practice, and as reported by her supervisees. Over the years, practitioners have found that it was not the techniques, diagnoses, analyses, or theories that were most helpful to clients, but the human connection between therapists and clients, and the characteristics of the therapist (Hubble, et al., 1999; Kramer, 2000; Norcross, 2002; Truax & Carkhuff, 2008). As alerted by Kilminster and Jolly (2000) "the supervision relationship is probably the single most important factor for the effectiveness of supervision, more important than the supervisory methods used" (Kilminster & Jolly, 2000, p. 827). Satir's approach shows us one of the profound ways of making such a connection. We, supervisors, can be inspired by this study to enhance our supervisory relationship and connection between the supervisory dyad through connecting at the spiritual and energy level; through being fully present with the supervisee so that he/she feels being respected and understood; through maintaining appropriate physical and psychological distance with the supervisee so that he/she feels safe enough to take risks and to face his/her own vulnerabilities; and through checking all assumptions with supervisees so that we can lead the supervision process 'half-a-step' behind the supervisee.

Transcending Satir's notion of "use of self" to "use of selves"

One major contribution of this study is that it has tapped into the depth and breadth of Satir's notion of 'use of self in therapy', which actually should be re-directed as '*use of selves in therapy*'. Though Satir wrote and advocated in her trainings the importance of positive use of self of the therapist, and she shared her own stories and processes of how she prepared herself to be fully present with the other person she was going to meet (Satir, 1983f, 2000b), she actually demonstrated in her therapy and supervision that she was not only using her 'self', she was facilitating the clients and supervisees to use their 'selves'.

Realizing the essence of "Self"

Supervisors are invited to uphold the belief that "all men are equal", that supervisees and supervisors only have different roles, and they are equal in value as a spiritual being with a human body, and that they are all "manifestation of the same life force". They are also invited to believe that we (supervisors and supervisees) have all the resources we need to grow and learn. These resources include the abilities to see, hear, feel, touch ... and the abilities to love, to think, to learn and re-learn. Supervisors' need to focus on cultivating their own potentials and acquiring high self-esteem, so as to facilitate the supervisees to discover and realize their potential from a holistic perspective and to reach their integrated and higher self. In other words, a growth oriented approach to supervision aims at enhancing the 'selves' of the supervisee and supervisor, which will lead to enhancing the 'selves' of the clients of the supervisee.

Applying the concept of 'use of selves' into practice

Practitioners applying what Satir wrote into their supervision practice could be inspired to "recognize that they are just as vulnerable as the clients" (Satir, 2000b, p. 21) and may become

aware of their own defences – denying, distorting, or projecting needs – being activated by clients or supervisees. They may also be motivated to work on resolving issues “with his/her own family-of-origin” (p. 21), aiming for growth “toward a more integrated self” (p. 24). However, it is common that many supervisors can be found to have a strong tendency toward shouldering more responsibility than they should, to an extent that hinders the clients or supervisees to take up their own share of responsibilities. One extreme situation I have experienced is that the supervisor becomes too self-focused to the point of appearing narcissistic.

Johnson (2006) shares how she walks with a client through the process of healing shame, and stresses that the “therapist must face his/her own shame issues” (p. 12) and “use supervision and self-reflective meditation to keep her personal system in balance” (p. 13). She delineates how she, as a counsellor, acknowledges her own issue being activated by the self of the client in the counselling process, and take responsibilities to *heal her own inner healer* so that she can be really effective with her client. Johnson’s process resembles what Satir described as “*the third birth*”; she takes responsibilities for herself and has made appropriate choices to move towards a more balanced state of being. This process is a good illustration of how a counsellor faces one’s own vulnerability and becomes a ‘*healed healer*’.

Aponte and Carlsen (2009) developed an instrument for ‘person-of-the-therapist supervision’, which addresses both the technical and personal components of the therapeutic process. It is a good supplement to Satir’s approach which downplayed the importance of helping supervisees acquire knowledge and competence in the technical aspect, which according to Aponte and Carlsen, “includes a philosophy about therapy, standards for evaluation, and an arsenal of interventions to facilitate change” (p. 395). However, this instrument also focuses

only on the ‘self’ of the therapist. Supervisors can consider designing an instrument for ‘persons-of-the-supervisory-triad’ by adding on some items to remind themselves and the counsellors to look at ‘the use of selves’ in counselling and supervision instead of ‘the use of self’.

I agree with Andreas (Andreas, 1989) that we have to learn from watching what Satir does in the sessions, rather than only take in what she wrote and expressed verbally. Supervisors need to bear in mind that Satir’s approach to supervision does not only rely on the supervisors’ ‘use of self’, but rather on their facilitation of the ‘use of selves’ of all parties in the supervisory triad, i.e., the supervisor, supervisee and the clients under his/her service and care.

Adopting Satir’s Notion of “Self, Other, Context” in Clinical Supervision Practices

A number of supervision literatures address the importance of taking the ‘selves’, others and the contexts into consideration, but none of them comprehensively presents them as a systemic entity. Here I am referring to the ‘selves’ as the supervisor and supervisee; the ‘others’ as all clients under the care of the supervisee and the people impacting the ‘selves’ and the ‘others’, such as the family-of-origin members of the client’s family, and the significant others of the supervisor and supervisee that they subconsciously bring into the supervision sessions. The ‘contexts’ refers to the ‘here and now’ supervision context, the present and past family contexts as well as other significant contexts that influence the therapeutic and supervision process, such as school, work place, religious communities etc.

Liddle (1988) commented that the supervisory situation “challenges both participants personally and professionally in a context in which the best and worst of a supervisor’s or therapist’s individual style can emerge” (p. 154). He pointed out that research has shown that

“supervisors asked for superordinate models to guide their training” (p. 154), and provided an “‘overlay of overlays’ – a framework under which all other elements of the training process can be subsumed” (p. 155). Satir’s notion of ‘self, others, contexts’ can add-on to his framework and provide a road-map for supervisors to keep track of the supervisee’s perceived destination and to take the ‘traffic controller’ position of guiding the supervisee through.

Carroll (2010a) points out that even though there are central values of supervision from the existential perspectives, many supervisors have also been addressing issues such as “the centrality of the relationship, the focus on the supervisee, the importance of reflective collaboration and dialogue, the questioning of assumptions for all participants, as well as dealing with ‘big stuff’ of life” (p. 154), without knowing or naming them ‘existential’. This is also true in the case of Satir’s practice.

Satir’s notion of ‘self, other, context’ addresses similar issues as stated above; so it can also be viewed as the central value of supervision and counselling. This notion stresses the relationship with the self, i.e., the ‘star’s’ (supervisor’s, supervisee’s, or client’s) overall relationship with himself/herself; and their relationship with others, especially relationships with the significant others within the contexts that affect the star’s present well-being; as well as the star’s relationship of him/her self within different contexts, and with the world. In short, Satir was concerned with how people live in the world, and provides an avenue to live peacefully with the self, others and whatever contexts one is in. Satir’s view embraces the existential perspectives of reaching out to the ‘big stuff’ in life.

Adopting Satir’s Notion of “Peace Within, Peace Between, and Peace Among” in Clinical Supervision Practice

Storm, Todd, Sprenkle, and Morgan (2001) assert that “there is no evidence that one theoretical approach to supervision is generally better than any other orientation” (p. 233), and they believe that supervisors should give major emphasis to the supervisory relationship, rather than overvaluing technique. They suggest to supervisors that they make use of the ‘common factors’ that enhance this relationship, which include the qualities of warmth and support, empathic listening, acting genuinely, and expressing humour and optimism. They maintain that “these factors are crucial in the best practice of supervision because it is important for supervisees to trust the supervisory process to feel safe in revealing vulnerabilities, uncertainties, and mistakes, and to openly discuss personal issues” (p. 234).

Satir, way ahead of her time, focused on the power of connection and nurturing relationships in her workshops, therapy and supervision. Minuchin provides the reason behind this through his remark in an interview via satellite for the last plenary session of the Pan Pacific Family Therapy Congress in 2001, when he said, “At the time when other clinicians were concerned with power and with cybernetic explanations of family functioning, Satir, ahead of her time, was focused on the power of connections as a healing tool” (Stagoll, 2002, p. 124). She passes on this power of connection to the world through one of her most quoted notions: “Peace Within, Peace Between, and Peace Among” (Satir, 1988, p. 368).

Supervisors bearing this notion in mind are able to try all means to pursue internal peace, and to create real ‘*peace within*’ for themselves. When they meet another person, they can see he/she as another miracle; can connect with him/her at the spiritual level, at the samenesses and be open to learn and grow from the differentnesses (a word used by Satir); thus create ‘*peace*

between'. In fact, counselling and supervision depend on this very much, because very often, the client or supervisee comes to the session without 'peace within'; the experience of having 'peace between' himself/herself and the counsellor/supervisor can enable him/her to come to his/her own 'peace within'. Supervisors who are able to connect with the larger system, and be centred as part of the universal life force are more able to lead supervisees to a higher level of being and to experience 'peace among'. This notion provides an overarching principle of establishing harmonious, nurturing relationship with self, others, the systems, the environment and the universe.

Is There a Need for Creating another Supervision Model Inspired by Satir?

In discussing models of supervision, Bernard and Goodyear (2004), after studying Patterson and Popper, came up with "six criteria to evaluate a theory: (i) *preciseness and clarity*, (ii) *parsimony or simplicity*, (iii) *operationality*, (iv) *practicality*, (v) *comprehensiveness*, and (vi) *falsifiability*" (pp. 73-74). If we judge from this perspective, Satir's approach still needs some organization in order to become a model for supervision. I do not think that establishing such a 'model' is necessary, though it may be a good contribution to the field. It *may also create a new orthodoxy*, which we do not need.

Supervision is a complicated endeavour which is expected to have a chain effect on counsellors' personal and professional development as well as clients' growth. Supervision practices need to be guided by a set of clear philosophical beliefs and practice guidelines within an 'elastic' structure. Supervisors can develop their own approach for supervision inspired by Satir's approach, if they like. My growth oriented approach to clinical supervision inspired by Virginia Satir, which situates in the humanistic- existential-transpersonal paradigm, is one example. The

more variations developed to meet specific needs of different counselling and supervision contexts, the more room there is for us to learn and grow.

To this end, I realized that my present ‘finitude’ indicates that I have totally given up my authoritarian, orthodox perspective about ‘The Satir Model’. I feel much more grounded, humbled and connected with the energies of all the predecessors of the field of counselling, supervision, philosophy and beyond. There exists no best model; it is only a matter of whether something fits or not. There are rooms for diversity, and there is much room for us to learn to live harmoniously in our differences, and to acquire ‘peace within, peace between, and peace among’.

The Limitations of the Study

Due to time and focus constraints, I was unable to explore or address many related areas that are relevant and worthy of deeper investigation. The following are some limitations to this study that offer opportunities for further research study.

Homogeneity of Participants

All 15 participants were Satir’s students who might be seen as her followers, believers or even ‘worshippers’. They had been with her for 10 to 31 years and had been close to her till she died, so they would inevitably be inclined to recall more positive experiences. Though there seemed to be a good balance of unsatisfactory supervisory experiences reported, it may still be helpful to locate more diversified horizons by interviewing people who might have had a negative experience with Satir or Satir’s approach to see what that reveals about her supervision practice.

Not Addressing the Cultural Issue

In fact, as a Chinese, spending six years in a secondary school run by the Confucian Academy, the humanistic aspect is not unfamiliar to me. I cannot claim scholarship in Daoism [or Taoism] and Buddhism, which together with Confucianism have been the three main pillars of traditional Chinese philosophy. Nonetheless, the ‘existential-transpersonal’ ideology radiating through these two major traditional oriental schools of thoughts have significantly influenced my own ‘journey to self’. In fact, there are indications that the American transpersonal movement was highly influenced by oriental philosophies. Owing to the focus of this study and the time constraint, I chose not to dig into this aspect though the connections were quite obvious: for example, Jung who is being acknowledged as a founder of Western transpersonal psychology, never hid his interest in and influence from Eastern thoughts, such as the *I Ching* (the *Book of Changes*) (Boorstein, 1996; Wellings & McCormick, 2004).

This decision, on one hand, harnesses my curious and inquisitive mind, which is always tempted to go further and deeper into whatever excites me; and on the other hand has limited the discussion of the topic from a Chinese cultural perspective, which I had hoped to achieve. It has to be left for another research project to look into the cultural factors which contribute to the increasing popularity of Satir’s approach in Asia.

Unconventional Research Methodology – Not Soliciting External Validation

In fact, this cannot be considered as a limitation, but rather a defence, because due to its interpretive nature, the validity of hermeneutics cannot be approached using a pre-determined set of criteria applied in a mechanical fashion (Klein & Myers, 1999). The hermeneutical process of understanding demands rigour and deliberation. In the study, the process of locating the texts,

recruiting and interviewing participants, conducting ongoing conversations, and improving the transcription quality may all reflect aspects of rigour in the research. Because the study depicts a subjective process, it is not appropriate to request an objective measure of validity, as noted earlier. As the validity of hermeneutics lies in its dialogic nature (Saukko, 2005), the participants themselves, including the researcher, may provide primary validity checking (Parse, 2001).

For Gadamer (1993), application proves essential to the structure of all understanding. Hence, application testifies to the quality of understanding and may determine whether the subject matter merits further investigation. Gadamer proffers ample examples with legal and theological hermeneutics to illustrate the importance of applications, which depend on valid interpretation. Every understanding, the researcher asserts, begins and ends with the interpreter's subjective experience. There is no need to aim at objectivity or at deriving an absolute truth. Instead, to reach the historic finitude of the process, the hermeneutic process depends primarily upon the subjective judgment of whether or not the understanding proves valid.

When applying Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics as the guiding principle of inquiry and interpretation, my goal was to be comfortable in concluding the findings of the study are based on the harmony of the parts within the whole, which has been accomplished at this present horizon.

The Accessibility of Participants

All the participants live in North America; this made face-to-face follow up interviews very difficult. Telephone follow up is also difficult to arrange due to the time differences, and the telephone conversations were quite impossible to be recorded due to my limited technical knowledge and skill in this aspect. I finally chose to use email to communicate with the

participants, which provided me with more ‘texts’. Still not everyone is comfortable with the computer and internet, so I missed the chances for further dialoguing with some of the participants, thus sacrificing the thickness of the texts.

My Interviewing Technique

Though I have listed a set of guiding questions for the semi-structured interviews with the help of my supervisor at the onset of the research, I did not ask well articulated probing follow up questions to the degree that I now wish I had. I believe that my fondness of *The Satir Model* clouded me; I was a little carried away by the fact that I was *really* interviewing Satir’s first generation students, and with my ‘very encounter’ with the ‘masters’ in the Satir circle, whose names I had read from books and articles. I felt like I was going on a pilgrimage. Hence, I did not stay as objective as might have been ideal. Later, when I identified better with my researcher’s role, my interview skills improved. But by the time I was able to ask much better follow up questions, the interviews were almost finished.

The Functions of the Reflecting Teams

It is good practice to have reflecting teams to interpret some of the texts independently, and to provide more horizons for me, the researcher, to dialogue with, to expand my pre-understanding of the original texts and point to new areas of application. There was only two occasions that one reflection team with 16 members got together to review two video and one audio records of Satir’s supervision. They were asked to make their individual interpretation, then shared in small groups of 3 to 4, and came up with their fusion of horizons; and then put forth their ‘finitude’ of understanding to the large group, to stimulate more interpretations. The grouping criterion was that each group had to be as homogeneous as possible in terms of their

experiences with Satir's approach, so that they could probably be interpreting the text from similar perspectives. Five sets of data from the groups and a final set that was generated from the open large group discussion were collected, and as a result I could dialogue with these six horizons, in terms of interpreting one video piece and one audio piece, and come to another horizon of understanding of Satir's supervision. Due to the time constraints, I was able to do this only twice. The other occasions when the reflecting team members helped in the process, was to provide written feedback on my dialectical questions, and to interpret the vignette I used in Chapter six on an individual basis. This practice, on one hand broadened my perspectives, and on the other, gave me loads of information which added on to the pressures of meeting the time limit. As a result, I selectively dialogued more intensively and conducted true conversations with only some of the texts provided by the reflecting team. If I had identified Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics much earlier in this research process, I would have made better use of the reflecting teams.

Gender Issues in Supervision

I believe that we, as humans, all possess 'feminine' and 'masculine' aspects, and there is no negative connotation about a male manifesting his feminine side or a female manifesting her masculine side. It is reported in the interviews that Satir had favoured male supervisees. My own experience of being supervised during this research process also revealed my different responses toward supervisors of different gender, or more precisely, to the manifestation of 'femininity' and 'masculinity'. I responded with more confidence and trust toward female supervisors and male supervisors who manifest more of their 'feminine' sides during supervision. This may be true with others' supervision experiences. I could have explored in greater detail in

terms of how for Satir, femininity and masculinity were manifested and experienced in supervision.

Possible Areas for Further Exploration in Future Research

Cultural Factors

As discussed above, there is a need to look into the cultural factors which contribute to the increasing popularity of Satir's approach in Asia. Besides, the transpersonal orientation of Satir's approach could be better discussed and illustrated by oriental cultures because she herself also acknowledged that her experience with Esalen where she was exposed to traditional Asian cultures. It is worth exploring these areas in future studies of Satir's approach of people-making in workshops, therapy and supervision.

The Personal and Professional Development of Counsellor and Supervisor

In Rønnestad and Skovholt's 2001 study, they learnt from 12 senior therapists, with an average age of 74, four primary learning arenas that contributed to professional development. The question they asked was, "What lessons can senior psychotherapists teach other practitioners about their development throughout the professional life span?" (Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2001, p. 181). The four arenas that they identified are: early life experience, cumulative professional experience, interaction with professional elders, and experiences in adult personal life. These results indicate that profound experiences in any of these primary arenas can radically affect the professional work of the practitioner. The authors maintain that "To develop optimally, the practitioner needs to continually process and reflect on experiences in both personal and professional life domains" (Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2001, p. 181).

The average age of the participants of this study is also 74. I think it would be worthwhile to go back to the texts and tease out how they processed and reflected on some major experiences in both personal and professional life domains, and see what we can learn from them. In fact, only a few longer interviews in this study may be able to serve this function as most interviews did not touch on this area. It is also worthwhile to ask them whether they have ‘continually processed and reflected on experiences in both personal and professional life domains’, how they carried out these processes, what did they learn from them, and what advice they might give to the younger generation practitioners, so that they can find and use their own magic.

Mixed Mode of Inquiry May Be Considered

Taking what I have learnt from this study forward, I would like to evaluate the growth oriented approach of supervision, which I proposed and am applying, to learn more about the supervisees’ experiences. I believe a mixed mode of inquiry, namely a qualitative inquiry into the lived experiences and a survey based on the themes identified in previous studies that contribute to supervisee satisfaction, supervisory relationships, effective feedback (Lambert & Ogles, 1997; Lambie, 2006; Storm, et al., 2001; Werstlein & Borders, 1997; Worthen & McNeill, 1996) and other relevant areas will enable a larger pool of participants to share their supervision experiences in the survey, and generate a deeper and perhaps richer set of texts from the interviews. The objectives of such a study would be to facilitate supervisors’ reflection on their practice, and to be informed on how to practice supervision to meet supervisees’ needs.

Another branch of study that needs to be implemented is the supervision factor, in terms of the ‘use of selves’, and application of the notions of ‘self, others, contexts’ and ‘peace within, peace between, and peace among’, to see how these affect the supervision process.

Direct Effect of Supervision on Counselling Outcome Needs Further Exploration

Another area to be studied is to address the direct effect of supervision on counselling outcome. Research in supervision addresses the effectiveness of supervision in terms of supervisee development, supervisory relationship and case conceptualization (Cottrell, et al., 2002; Grant, 2006; Grimmer & Tribe, 2001; Holloway & Wolleat, 1994; Kilminster & Jolly, 2000; Worthen & McNeill, 1996), however very few address the issue of client outcomes in relation to supervision (Bartle-Haring, et al., 2009; Lambert, 2005; Nyman, Nafziger, & Smith, 2010).

Carroll (2010b) maintains that “Supervision is about a new way of looking, a super way of visioning. With new visions come new perspectives and new meanings... Supervision is always about the quality of awareness” (p. 13). Future inquiry needs to address the quality of awareness, and the outcome of the new awareness on the supervisee, and how this outcome can be transferred to benefiting the clients.

Reviewing the Growth Oriented Approach to Supervision presented above

It is my hope and wish that a comprehensive review of the Growth Oriented Approach to Supervision Inspired by Satir that I developed and presented in an earlier section will emerge, authored by other researchers who share the interest in Satir’s contributions.

Conclusion

I have travelled a total of over 500,000 kilometres between Hong Kong and North America for the interviews, and between Hong Kong and Australia to attend intensive schools, post-grad conferences, and supervisions during the entire process of my study. As a part time student, I had to work hard to pay for my tuition and my travelling while working on the thesis. I am almost broke financially at the end of this journey, yet very fulfilled academically and very rich spiritually. This is a worthwhile journey.

Nonetheless, at one point I was really lost and confused because of some issues concerning my own thesis supervision arrangement. Around that time I felt torn and almost wanted to give up my academic study because the academic researcher part of me felt deflated and believed that I was not able to think ‘academically’, and most of what I had written did not seem ‘right’. The professional supervisor part of me got very excited and encouraged about all the new learnings I had from the study. Fortunately, I chose to trust my supervisors and believed in their good intention of helping me to broaden my perspectives behind the ‘disapprovals’. I also experienced the need to be extra courageous and persevering in order to survive this journey. I tried to re-centre myself by having two retreats and started to re-organize what I had done and written, keeping the relevant and filling in the missing, and continued with the journey. I persevered, and I found Gadamer, the light at the end of the tunnel, and reached this horizon.

This has been an extraordinary journey for me. Amid all I have learnt, I found the concept of congruence (discussed in chapter 2) and moving towards being more fully human resonated most deeply with my own endeavour to find meaning of life. I have also modified Satir’s graphical representation of congruence into one that fits the Chinese culture more, and I

believe Satir would find it more relevant to what she has been advocating: Being harmonious with ‘self, others and context’ and moving towards having ‘Peace Within, Peace Between, and Peace Among’. Below are two graphical representation of the state of congruence:

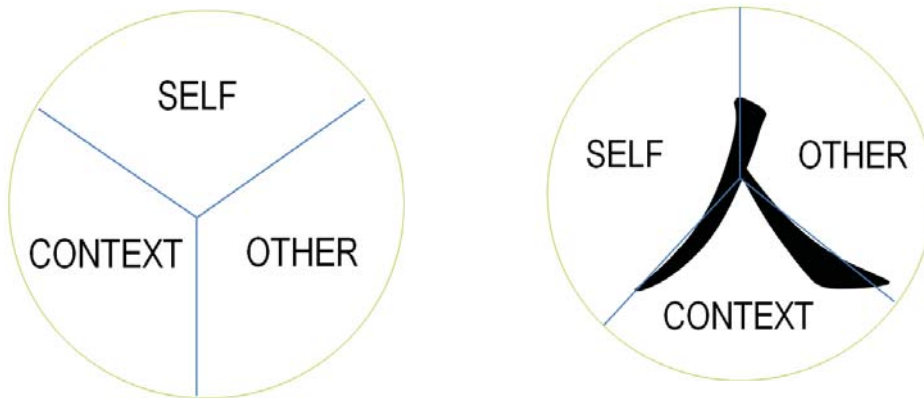


Figure 8.1 Two graphical representations of the state of congruence

On the left is Satir’s representation of congruence (Satir, et al., 1991, p. 66); on the right is my representation using the Chinese character of ‘human’ in the middle to denote the notion of becoming more fully human, which to my understanding, connotes the message of the need to fully consider, value and respect the integrity and the boundaries of all three existential components – self, other, and context – in the congruent state of being as well as in a congruent communication. By so doing, one reaches the state of ‘peace within, peace between, and peace among’. This study had led me to transform one of Satir’s legacies into this cultural appropriate presentation, and I would like to dedicate it to Virginia Satir.

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Appendix 1

Information Sheets for Participants

30 July 2004

Dear

INFORMATION SHEET
on a PhD research project-

On becoming a Satir Clinical Supervisor — a study into the personal and professional development process, and the theory and practice of experienced Satir Clinical Supervisors

I am Grace Yung, practising as a counsellor, a clinical supervisor and a trainer of counsellors in the private sector in Hong Kong. I am presently enrolled in a Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of New England, Armidale, Australia, and shall be taking up a research project with the captioned title. My research supervisors are: Associate Professor Margot Schofield from the University of New England, Armidale, Australia; and Associate Professor John Banmen from the University of British Columbia, Canada.

My personal experience with the Satir Model started in 1988 when I took a Certificate course in counselling. Since then I have never stopped learning and practising the Satir Model. My three clinical mentors are Jane Gerber, Maria Gomori and John Banmen. I am still learning from the latter two because they are still travelling to the east and teach in Hong Kong each year. In fact, John is also a co-supervisor of my research project.

The aim of this research is to learn from experienced Satir Clinical Supervisors, in terms of how they were developed as a supervisor and how they currently practise supervision, and to establish a framework for training and practice of Clinical Supervision using the Satir Model of Therapy.

I invite you to participate in this project. Since you have been contributing to the development of the Satir Model, I think you will find this as another good opportunity to further your contribution. The project will entail in-depth face-to-face, or telephone interviews with prospective participants. I came to know your name through the literature, the internet, or the recommendation of John, Maria or members of the Avanta network. Since I do not have full information of whether you are currently practising or have practised as a clinical supervisor, or

whether you have been supervised by Virginia. I would like you to clarify this point in the reply consent form. Even if you might not be able to help in this project for some reasons, your energy and your previous work have already contributed to the conception of this project.

I shall arrange with you a suitable time and place for an interview, either face-to-face, or through telephone at a mutually-agreed place. The interview, lasting for about one hour, will be completely confidential and you will not be identified with any particular piece of information. However, you may choose whether or not your name will appear in the acknowledgement list, to show my gratitude for your contribution. All interviews will be recorded on audiotape and written transcriptions of these recordings will be made. No name will be attached to the records. Only a code number will be used to identify them and any information which could link them to you will be kept in a separate place in case I need to contact you again before the end of the study.

Prior to the interview, I will send you a copy of the major questions for your preparation and better understanding of the interview. All the data collected will be analysed and a preliminary proposal of the training and practice framework will be sent to all participants for further recommendation. This could be done by a focus group discussion. Another invitation letter will be sent to you in due course.

I would also like to assure you that all information given will remain confidential, only my supervisors, Prof. Margot Schofield, and Prof. John Banmen and I have access to the data. Five years after the project ends, the data and the tapes will be destroyed. You are free to withdraw this consent at any time during the study for any reason. If this happens, then any information which has already been collected from you will be destroyed if you so wish. You will have the same respect from me whether you participate in this study or not.

Enclosed please find a consent form for your completion and return in the enclosed addressed and stamped envelope. Thank you for spending time to read this letter. I hope I shall be able to learn from you in the process of this research project.

If you have any questions concerning the project, please email me or my supervisor Associate Professor Margot Schofield.

Full contact details below:

Grace Yung: 3, Tai Lam Wu Village, Sai Kung, Hong Kong. Tel: 852-9468-4729;

Email: gracesmy@netvigator.com

Assoc. Prof. Margot Schofield: School of Health, University of New England, Armidale, NSW 2351 Australia, Tel: 61 3 9639 1809 mschofi2@pobox.une.edu.au

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE03/185 valid until 30/06/2007)

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the Research Ethics Officer at the following address:

Research Services
University of New England
Armidale, NSW 2351.
Telephone: (02) 6773 3449 Facsimile (02) 6773 3543
Email: Ethics@metz.une.edu.au

Yours sincerely

Grace Yung

New Information Sheet in 2010 after new Ethics Approval was granted

INFORMATION SHEET
on a PhD research project-

*Enduring the legacy of Virginia Satir –
a study of clinical supervision experience of her students*

12 February, 2010

Dear

I wish to invite you to participate in my research on the above topic. I am Grace Yung, practising as a counsellor, a clinical supervisor and a trainer of counsellors in the private sector in Hong Kong. I am presently enrolled in a Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of New England, Armidale, Australia, and have been taking up a research project with the captioned title, and Prof. Victor Minichiello, Prof. Jeffrey Kottler and Dr. David Leary my supervisors.

The aim of this research is to explore how Virginia Satir, one of the pioneers of family therapy, supervised her students, and how these supervision experiences impacted on them in their personal and professional life; and to see what legacy can we pass on to the coming generations of mental health practitioners.

Since you have been contributing to passing on and developing the teaching of Satir, I think you will find this a good opportunity to further your contribution. The project will entail in-depth face-to-face, or telephone interviews, and email follow ups (if necessary) with prospective participants.

I located your name through reviewing literature, the internet, and the recommendation of some members of the Virginia Satir Global Network (formerly the Avanta Virginia Satir network).

This project started in 2004 and is coming to the final stage, as the project developed; I need to re-interview you, and/or to invite new participants to enrich the data.

I would like to arrange with you a suitable time and place for an interview, either face-to-face, or over the telephone. If you prefer to do it through email, it is also an option. The interview, will last for less than an one hour; and if I need any further clarifications, I may follow up with you by phone or email.

These interviews will be audiotape recorded or electronically captured. Following the interview, a transcript will be provided to you if you wish to see one. All data will be completely confidential and you will not be identified with any particular piece of information. No name will be attached to the records. Only a code number will be used to identify them

and any information which could link them to you will be kept in a separate place in case I need to contact you again before the end of the study. However, if you agree, your name will appear in the acknowledgement list, to show my gratification for your contribution.

The audio records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the researcher's office. The transcriptions will be kept in the same manner for five (5) years following thesis submission and then destroyed.

I would also like to assure you that you are free to withdraw your consent at any time during the study for any reason. If this happens, then any information which has already been collected from you will be destroyed if you so wish. You will have the same respect from me whether you participate in this study or not.

It is anticipated that this research will be completed by the 23 July 2010. The results may also be presented at conferences or written up in journals or books without any identifying information.

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE10/004, Valid to 12/02/2011; Previous approval no. HE03/185, valid until 30/06/2007).

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the Research Ethics Officer at the following address:

Research Services
University of New England
Armidale, NSW 2351.
Telephone: (02) 6773 3449 Facsimile (02) 6773 3543
Email: ethics@une.edu.au

If you have any questions concerning the project, please email or mail to:

Mrs Grace Yung
9/F, Wofoo Commercial Building
574-576, Nathan Road, Kowloon
Hong Kong
gyungtsa@une.edu.au

Professor Victor Minichiello
Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean
Faculty of The Professions
University of New England
NSW 2351 Australia
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Prof Jeffrey Kottler
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Dr. David Leary
Adjunct Senior Lecturer
School of Health, Faculty of The Professions
University of New England
NSW 2351 Australia
david.leary@une.edu.au

Enclosed please find a consent form for your completion and return.

Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to further contact with you.

Yours sincerely,

Grace Yung

Appendix 2

Declaration Statement for Informed Consent

Consent Form

I understand that the investigator, Grace Yung, is inviting me to participate in a research project entitled: *On becoming a Satir Clinical Supervisor — a study into the personal and professional development process, and theory and practice of experienced Satir Clinical Supervisors.*

I confirm that:

- Virginia Satir had provided me with supervision for at least 5 years. YES /NO
- I am currently practising or have practised as a clinical supervisor. YES /NO
- I have worked or have been working as a clinical supervisor for __ years.
- The Satir Model is my major theoretical orientation of clinical practice. YES /NO

I, _____ have read the information contained in the Invitation letter (Information Sheet for Participants) and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I may withdraw at any time.

I agree that what I say in the research process will be audio-taped.

I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published, and my name will only appear in the acknowledgement list.

Participant or Authorised Representative

Date

Investigator

Date

Consent form in 2010

Declaration statement for informed-consent

I understand that the investigator, Grace Yung, is inviting me to participate in a research project entitled: *Enduring the Legacy of Virginia Satir –a study of clinical supervision experiences of her students.*

I have been a student of Virginia Satir, and had the experience of being supervised by her as a workshop trainer/therapist. I have had/do not have the experience of supervising students/therapists/workshop trainers/others.

I, _____, have read the information contained in the Information Sheet for Participants and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.	Yes	No
I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw at any time.	Yes	No
I agree that research data gathered from me for the study may be published using a pseudonym.	Yes	No
I agree to the interview being audiotape recorded or electronically captured and transcribed.	Yes	No
I agree to respond to follow up questions through face-to-face or telephone interviews, or through emails, on my discretion.	Yes	No
I give permission for my name to appear in the acknowledgement list.	Yes	No

_____	_____
Participant	Date

_____	_____
Investigator	Date

Additional information from participant

Participant's correspondence:

Email: _____ Tel: _____ Fax: _____

Address: _____

Appendix 3

Initial Interview Guides and Follow-up Probing Questions

Interview guidelines developed in 2003 for the pilot interviews and focus group discussion

Interview Guidelines for Sample 1 (3-6 Therapists who were directly supervised by Virginia Satir)

1. I shall divide the interview into two parts: one is you being supervised by Virginia and the other part is how you were developed as and practise(d) as a clinical supervisor.
2. I would invite you to go back to one of those experiences of being supervised by Virginia... Can you visualize yourself there? ... Please describe your experience.
3. What was most helpful and how was it helpful?
4. Were there any difficult moments for you when you were being supervised by Virginia? Have you told her your experience or given her any recommendation for making the experience less difficult for you?
5. How had these experiences, both helpful and difficult, influenced your practice as a therapist / supervisor?
6. If you are to add something to this supervision, what would you add?

Interview Guidelines for Sample 2 (6-8 Satir Therapists who practice or had practiced as Clinical Supervisors)

1. Please share with me your process of becoming a clinical supervisor.
2. Please describe the context, the philosophy and the development of your supervision practice.
3. How would you describe your clinical supervision practice in relation with the Satir Model?
4. If you are to train Satir clinical supervisors, how will you do so?

Guided Questions for Focus Group Discussion

1. I would like to invite you to do a “temperature reading” on the proposed framework for training and practice of clinical supervision using the Satir Model, which was given to you a few weeks ago. (Temperature Reading is a Satir tool to share appreciations, puzzles and concerns, complaints/criticisms with recommendations, new information, hopes and wishes.)
2. I would like to briefly sum up what has been discussed and see whether you have anything to add.

Revised interview guidelines developed in 2004

1. Please describe your experience of being supervised as a therapist.
2. When and how did the Satir Model become your major therapeutic approach? What role did the Satir Model play in your process of being supervised?
3. When and how did you become a clinical supervisor? Please describe how you were prepared for this role.
4. Who and what have been the major influence in your development as a supervisor? How were you influenced?
5. In what context do/did you practice clinical supervision? What are/were your goals of supervision? How do/did you negotiate a contract with you supervisee?
6. What do you think are the roles of a supervisor? How do you perform these roles?
7. Please describe, in general, your experience of the development of a supervisory relationship. To what extent do you tailor your supervision practice to supervisees at different developmental stages? Please describe a specific example from your supervision practice of how you would work with a beginning therapist, a therapist with a few years experience, and an experienced therapist.
8. What do you like most about your supervision practice and what do you think needs to improve?
9. What do you think are the core factors, aspects or components, which are influential to the process and outcome of supervision?
10. How do you relate your supervision practice with your understanding of the Satir Model?
11. How do you comment on the idea that therapists be trained as supervisors in the Satir Model?
12. Please describe the essential elements of the Satir supervision training model you would use. How would you develop confidence, competence and congruence in the trainee supervisors? How might you train them to handle differences with her supervisees?
13. Please sum up by describing what you think is most unique about a Satir Model of supervision. How would a Satir Model for training supervisors be recognizable from other models? How would the model achieve both personal and professional development in trainees?
14. What do you think are the common aspects of most supervision models?

Some follow-up probing questions used in the interviews from 2006 onward

1. What attracted you to Satir or the Satir Model?
2. Can you recall an experience that you were supervised by Virginia?
3. I am interested in how can she mix these very extreme parts, like being confronting and loving, how did she do that?
4. Can you tell me in a short summary what are the most important aspects she brought in the supervision, the supervision relationship with you and other supervisory aspects?
5. What were helpful?
6. Were there any unhelpful, or even harmful or hurtful experiences?
7. How did this/these inform or inspire you in terms of your own supervision?
8. Have you discovered your own voice through supervision or learning from Satir? How?
9. What will you add to “the Satir Model supervision”?
10. How did you become a clinical supervisor? And what are the most important elements that you uphold in your supervision?
11. I'd like you to help me by summarizing what you have learned from Virginia Satir in terms of supervision, in terms of doing your own clinical supervision.
12. When she had some difficulties with the ideas or the way her supervisees are doing, how did she put forth her comments or what did she do?
13. How do you see her toughness or did you experience any of her toughness?
14. Does that have some special meaning to you when you are talking about this now?
15. Were the recipients reactive or did they challenge her? Or defensive?
16. How did this help you as a therapist and as a supervisor?
17. Besides those qualities you just mentioned, what else comes across to you as a supervisor, that these kinds of qualities can really nurture or help your supervisees to grow?
18. What are your goals of doing the family map? Did you do it right at the beginning or do you have a contract with the supervisee first?
19. When you say that don't let the supervisees' personal stuff get in the way of his or her therapeutic practice, do you get into therapy with the supervisee? Did Virginia do you a lot of this?
20. Is there anything else you can share with me? What else would you like to add?

Appendix 4

Transcript of a 10-minute Vignette of Satir's Supervision

In 1985, at the first Evolution of Psychotherapy Conference, organized by the Erickson Foundation and held in Phoenix, Arizona, Virginia Satir led a workshop on "Use of Self". After presenting a tape where she demonstrated the use of touch as part of her therapeutic intervention, she led some discussion and then opened the platform for questions.

I am grateful to Dr. Jeffrey Zeig, Director of the Milton H. Erikson Foundation, organizer of the 1985 Evolution of Psychotherapy Conference, for permission to transcribe the audio-recording of the session, to interpret the process of consultation, and permission to print here the transcription of the conversation. The interpretations, along with any errors of transcription, are of course the researcher's alone. Below is the transcript of Virginia Satir's ten-minute consultation session with an American therapist named Joyce; and my interpretation of the actions taken by Satir.

Dialogue between Virginia Satir and Joyce

1. J: Two very clear bubbles emerge for me in a large and more obvious conflict I have about the use of touch in a professional setting. That's very important for me because I am very physical and I really like a lot of touch. But the two things that come up are with... one individual that I knew socially that we were quite close and there was always a hug hello and a hug goodbye. Couple of years ago she suicided, and sometime later I had access to a private notes, in which... she's a bit psychotic, in one of those notes I read, she said "Joyce always rubs my back when she gives me a hug, does that mean that she is Lesbian" which was really unsettling cause I've never had the foggiest notion that any strange thought like that was going on about me. The other bubble, not at all related...
2. V: Wait a minute, now, tell me, what you did with that?
3. J: She's dead, I couldn't talk... (laughter from the audience)
4. V: No, no, no, no, you did something with yourself about that... because... let me tell you what I hear. I hear that you engaged in a transaction with somebody where you didn't know that there were reactions that didn't come out to the surface.
5. J: Right

6. V: That's what you're telling me.
7. J: Right
8. V: Now, does that help you to learn something that what you might do in the future?
9. J: I'm trying to.
10. V: What could it be?
11. J: This is the other bubble, a patient that I have in my private practice who I feel tremendous empathy with... she has a tremendous tragedy in her life, and she just was, she just has total body agony and after listening to her, I am feeling the pain and said, I just want to give you a hug, and she jumped back. She said, "no, no, no." I remembered couple of sessions back she, though currently very happily married, had told me she had been in a lesbian relationship. And I thought, again, you know, this is very strange for me, I felt that some kind of physical contact would be very helpful for her, would be helpful for me to express my empathy... and
12. V: What did you do when she went back?
13. J: Sensing freak out...
14. V: Alright, I want to do a little role play with you, ok?
15. J: Oh, dear. (laughter) I'm really lousy at role play.
16. V: You'll do perfect with what I'm going to ask you to do.
17. J: I'll freak out. (laughter)
18. V: You see, this probably is one of the things, unless there is a follow up or something, that you get into this business about asking out and then you never going to know what is happening. I'm going to be you now, and you be her. So I'm feeling all these pain and I'm feeling in your body... my body's reaching out and wanting to be touched and so on, ok.
So I say, "I would like to give you a hug." Then you back off like that. Will you do that?
19. J: I said I was lousy at role playing, see, cause I would like to leap into the hug, but I...
20. V: I know, so did she, so did she. But I want you to do this now, because I want to demonstrate to you a piece that a lot of people need to have but don't have. So I'm going to say to you, I feel all these and I'm going to say, "I want to give you a hug." Back off now.
21. J: This shouldn't be.
22. V: Ok, fine, I'm going to stay right here. And I am going to give you a new name. I am going to give you the name of Amila. "Amila, tell me, what happened for you when I said I would like to give you a hug?" and I may even back up one step.
23. J: (slight sigh, audible breathing)

24. V: You be Amila now.
25. J: Amila
26. V: Yes, that's the lady you're talking about. That's the way I keep confidentiality.
27. J: (laughed) (audience laughed too)
28. V: What happened for you, Amila, when I said I wanted to hug you?
29. J: It wouldn't be big enough.
30. V: It wouldn't be big enough. The it (stopped without finishing the sentence). Now I'm prob (stopped abruptly without finishing the word). What's the "it"?
31. J: The hug.
32. V: You mean that all my arms and all my 16 point square feet of skin [wouldn't be big enough]? I got more, because it's normal, I'm bigger than normal.
33. J: (laughed)
34. V: Wouldn't be enough to envelope you; is that what you're saying?
35. J: Ok
36. V: How much of you do you think that I could manage? (laughter from audience)
37. J: (sighs) A tenth.
38. V: Ok, now. Is it that you're saying to me that if you can't have everything that you don't want nothing?
39. J: (resigned laugh) (heavy sigh) I think I'm saying the pain is too big to hold.
40. V: So, now if I say to you, how would it feel to you, what kind of... you have an image of this one... how would it feel to you if you were hugged by me as you feel it now?
41. J: (pause) As if the dam may burst.
42. V: If the dam may burst. Ok, do you have any objection to the dam bursting? Most of the time when people tell me that it means tears, and I got plenty of Kleenex. (J laughs) Is that what you mean? So we're fiddling around with something, you know that.
43. J: I had this feeling that the sprinter would get burst. But I didn't know that it was mine.
44. V: Ok, now, you see what we're doing here. I'm back at this point. But what we're doing is looking at a whole lot of things in relation to this. So I'm saying sometimes people are afraid of what will be the outcome, the next step after a hug. Do you have something like that?
45. J: (sighs)
46. V: You're role playing, remember that.
47. J: I'm role playing. (laughs, paused) I guess that it would be sexual.
48. V: Ok, look at me now. I think I'm hearing you say, "women have sexual feelings towards one another." I think that everybody knows that. And maybe you are asking me do I

have sexual feelings for you, are you?

49. J: (sighs) May be so. It sounds like a foreign question, but may be so.
50. V: Yes, we need to ask more of these foreign questions. (laughter from audience) So then I can say, at this moment in time, for me, I don't have any sexual feeling towards you. What I felt more of you like a little child that I wanted to give something to. How do you feel about my saying that?
51. J: That feels good.
52. V: You believe me?
53. J: Yes I do.
54. V: Let's see what happen if you put out your hand in mine ... now let's see what happen if you decide to remove your hand, and remove it, see what happens. How did you feel about that?
55. J: In control.
56. V: Ok, now. Relieve the role playing for a minute. I went a whole lot of things that happen with people. The hands are metaphors for relationship as well. Some of you must know that. That's one of the reasons that I do a lot of work with hands. When I ask you to hold my hands after we had gotten through some of these other things, then ask you to remove it, and you could remove it without difficulty then you knew you were in control and the vulnerability up here becomes less. But see, a lot of people don't do this last part, they think, "oh my God, I just did it, I just blew it." Whatever goes silent in a treatment, you can blow it in all kinds of ways. Do you ever have a temper tantrum? So what do you do then? You go and apologize, or say, hey, I just had a terrible temper tantrum. You know how to do that. Tell you what happen to me when I did with it so we can see about it. How do you feel about it what I'm saying to you, Joyce?
57. J: (pause) I am intrigued by it. I have to kind of process for awhile and... I think I'm partially intrigued by it because I have not yet resolved how to deal with the woman I'm still seeing in therapy, and how to get beyond her fears with it.
58. V: This is a possibility. And anything that can be shared in an owned way is going to relieve the atmosphere and move to some new possibilities. When you said, "Oh, I want so much." That's the way that woman is too. But I can bet you with almost my bottom dollar, I won't lose that one. When she was growing up, she had to pay a terrible price for anything that she got. And so it was an invitation to slavery to have that. And why should she expect that you're going to be different? Unless you provide a different modelling. It wouldn't matter whether you're gay or heterosexual, it wouldn't matter. That is all irrelevant for that transaction.

59. J: That's really helpful. (tone of voice changed)
60. V: Thank you. Something happened for you in your face... what was it? (applause)
61. J: Oh, a freeing... (inaudible because of the applause)
62. V: I wish you could have been up here. May be some of you did see how Joyce's face changed. ("yes", from the audience) and it got loosed and the lights came on in your eyes. I saw fear before, now I don't see it. Thank you, thank you for allowing this to happen.
63. J: Thank you.
64. V: You're welcome.

Appendix 5

Questions Emerging from the Dialectical Process

Questions emailed to participants on 18 April 09:

1. When was the name "Satir Model" first used?
2. Did Virginia Satir agree with it? or did she know it?
3. She said in an interview in 1978 'I could never see myself becoming a devotee of any one approach, because I treat everything as resources, and that's how I trained my students. There ain't any school of my following. I say to my students, "For goodness' sake, if you ever become a Satirian, I'll disown you.'" Did she maintain the same view 10 years after that? or had she changed?

Questions emailed to four participants on 14 July 2009 for supplementary information:

1. In what context were you supervised by Virginia Satir? for how long? how much clinical experience did you have then (no. of years of practice)?
2. I would invite you to go back to some of those experiences of being supervised by Virginia Satir. Can you visualize yourself there? Please describe your experiences.
3. What was most helpful and how was it helpful?
4. Were there any unhelpful or even harmful experiences, please describe, and how would you like to have it differently?
5. How had these experiences influenced your practice as a therapist/supervisor?
6. If you are to add something to or take away something from this supervision, what would you add or delete?
7. Have you supervised any clinicians? if yes, for how long? in what capacity?
8. Have you developed your own way of supervising? if yes, can you share with me the basic philosophy or principle, and the approach of your supervision.

Questions emailed on 19 Feb 2010:

1. What attracted you to Satir / the Satir Model? (some of you have already told me in the interviews)
2. There had been so many innovations, developments and permutations since then, in which Satir's work has been subsumed in the other theories, how is it that you still feel such an attachment and loyalty to Satir? (exact wordings from one of my supervisors)
3. How have you discovered your own voice through supervision or learning from Satir?

Appendix 6

Consent to Use Material from the Public Domain

Consent given by Dr Jeffrey Zeig on June 24, 2011 to use the intellectual property of the Milton H. Erickson Foundation

Researcher's email to, dated 20 June 2010, seeking Dr. Zeig's consent:

Dear Jeff,

I am writing to seek your consent for me to transcribe and to analyse the content of the transcription of a 10 minute section of one of the 1985 Evolution of Psychotherapy audio CDs. Details of the CD is as follows:

EP85.WS3b Becoming More Effective As a Therapist Featuring Use of Self (19:05 - 29:15).

The topic of my research is "Enduring the Legacy of Virginia Satir: being inspired by her supervision practice."

Attached is the transcription of the section for your reference.

I look forward to your favourable reply.

Yours sincerely,

Grace

(PhD candidate, University of New England, Australia)

Dr. Zeig's response, dated 24 June 2011:

Permission granted. Please indicate that it is provided from the 1985 Evolution of Psychotherapy Conference, www.evolutionofpsychotherapy.com organized by the Milton H. Erickson Foundation, www.erickson-foundation.org.

Thanks

Jeff

Appendix 7

Questions for Commenting on the 10-minute Supervision Vignette

Part 1: Questions sent to the 15 participants, on 30 June 2010, for them to comment on the 10-minute vignette of Satir's supervision in light of expanding my horizon

Since I have been working on hearing from different people, to get different views in order to reach a better understanding of Virginia's supervision; I am seeking your view towards Virginia's 10-min consultation piece at the first Evolution of Psychotherapy Conference in 1985.

If you can spare 30 minutes to 1 hour to listen to the sound track and comment on the transcript, please do so and send me back your views. If you cannot do that, please let me know. I respect and appreciate you the same no matter you say "yes" or "no".

Here are some of my puzzles:

1. Will you consider this as something that would happen in a supervision session?
2. Is this experience familiar to you? Did Virginia do similar things to you? If yes, can you highlight one experience? If not, can you tell me what you got from her instead?
3. She appeared to be very directive, or even forceful. Somehow Joyce could not resist the invitation to role play. What do you think had contributed this?
4. In row 48 Virginia was interpreting what she heard from Joyce, and then checked with her with the question "may be you are asking me do I have sexual feelings for you, are you?" Though the interpretation seemed straight forward to me, the question that followed was somehow "foreign to me", and yet makes a lot of sense. How come she was able to come up with this?
5. What was in Virginia that enabled her to ask this question? She only met Joyce for a few minutes!
6. What do you think a supervisor/therapist need to possess before he/she can come up with this kind of understanding, and straight-forwardness to ask such a question?

Part 2: Questions sent to reflecting team members, in July 2010, for their comment on the 10-minute vignette of Satir's supervision in light of expanding my horizon

Please listen to the entire sound track and read the entire transcript, and write down your comments (if any) on the right column, before reading and answering the questions that I posted at the end of the transcript:

1. What is your overall impression about Virginia Satir's supervision? Do you consider it effective, why? Or ineffective, why? What do you appreciate? If you have any concerns, puzzles or objections to this 10 minutes of supervision, what would they be?
2. Virginia interrupted Joyce at a very early stage (in row 2), what do you think she was trying to do? What was the intention behind it?
3. In row 14, she initiated to have a role play with Joyce. Somehow, in row 15, 17 and 19 Joyce expressed "I'm lousy in role play", "I'll freak out", and "I said I am really lousy in role play..." yet, the role play took place. What do you think had contributed to this? What was the outcome?
4. In row 48 Virginia was interpreting what she heard from Joyce by saying (a) "*I think I'm hearing you say, 'women have sexual feelings towards one another.'*" Followed with a comment (b) "*I think that everybody knows that.*" And then asked, (c) "*May be you are asking me do I have sexual feelings for you, are you?*" What do you think about (a) the interpretation? What do you think about (b) the comment that followed, what was the intention behind making this comment? What do you think about (c) the question? What do you think Virginia was trying to do? What enabled her to ask this question? (After all, she only met Joyce for a few minutes!)
5. If you were Joyce, how would you describe your experience? (from considering to come up to ask the question to the end of the session)