

Integral psychotherapy

Annexe for therapists, clients and mentors

Integral psychotherapy

Psychological problems

Henry Laurency's vision, discussed at length in *The Secrets of the Soul*, offers more than just another philosophy. His view of mankind, which has a great deal in common with the vision put forward by, say, Buddhism, challenges us to look at sickness and health in a different way. It brings us to an entirely different explanation for psychological problems than the one commonly used in mental health care, and a very different treatment method too. At the heart of this approach is the recovery of personal autonomy. It provides reference points for therapists, as well as guidelines for the person affected, parents, relatives and mentors about how to support the healing process. This vision may then prompt new answers to questions about a wide range of issues, including:

- Mental confusion and paranormal perception
- The problems of 'children of the new age'
- Spiritual crisis
- Obsessive-compulsive disorders
- Hearing voices
- Schizophrenia

Let us look at the case study below as a way into this approach and see how it differs from a regular psychotherapeutic approach.

Irma is a 56-year-old woman. Fascinated by World War II, she reads everything she can on the subject. Her parents and grandparents were held in concentration camps, so she is effectively a second-generation war victim. At some point she starts feeling as if she is in a camp herself. Not just in her dreams at night, but also during the day, while awake. This happens more and more often, and for increasingly longer periods of time, and in the end she seems to spend large parts of the day and night in the camp. She experiences all kinds of deprivations. At one point she meets some children who beg her for help. Seeing it as her duty to help them as best she can, she becomes more and more intensely involved in the life of the camp. Her life becomes a living hell from which she can no longer escape.

The conventional diagnosis would be that Irma suffers from delusions and hallucinations. These are caused by a brain disorder for which she will be prescribed psychoactive drugs. Although this medication may solve her symptoms, it is not unthinkable that she will remain dependent on it for the best part of her life and that she will never regain her previous stability.

But there is a different approach.

The *integrated approach* posits that the camps that Irma has ended up in represent an existing reality. Her problem is therefore not that she is mentally confused, but that she has become lost in a hidden world. She can put an end to her difficulties by leaving this world again. When viewed from this perspective, Irma is not a powerless victim who is completely dependent on others for her recovery, but someone who can take things into her own hands. By deliberately and repeatedly redirecting her attention to the 'ordinary', everyday reality, she can leave behind the hidden world in which she has become lost and free herself from her problems. And she would be doing it mostly under her own steam. This may appear to be an over-simplified approach, but we intend to demonstrate that it has the potential to resolve Irma's problems. The same is true of others who find themselves in similar situations and who may be given an alarming psychiatric diagnosis. In those cases, integrated therapy can offer an alternative. People who have undergone lengthy treatment with little hope of success can make a surprisingly rapid recovery once they begin to gain an insight into their situation.

Integral psychotherapy

Practitioners in the fields of both psychology and psychiatry tend to work with a biological model based on the premise that we *are* our physical body. With consciousness viewed as a product of the brain, psychological problems suggest an impaired functioning of that brain. Looked at this way, such a disturbance can be resolved by influencing the functioning of the brain, either through medication or through cognitive training. These approaches have been shown to be very effective in recent decades. Many syndromes that used to lead to serious problems have now become much more manageable, enabling a lot of people to function normally again. However, a large number of people continue to have persistent symptoms and they could benefit from an entirely different approach.

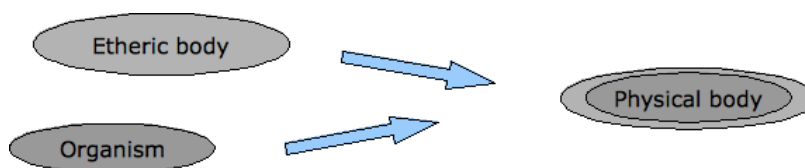
When we start from the idea that we are much more than just our body, we can define psychological problems quite differently and also begin to resolve them differently. This approach could be called *transpersonal*, because it transcends the personal reality, or *integrated*, because it brings all aspects of our existence, both the material and immaterial, together in a single model. This view is not necessarily incompatible with the biological approach. It can complement it, especially in those cases where the regular approach does not produce the desired result.

In the remainder of this annexe we shall outline a non-biological model as well as a potential treatment method for a range of symptoms. Given that we are dealing with a variety of clinical pictures, which tend to develop over the course of several years, it is still too early for definitive conclusions. But the results so far suggest that many clients will benefit from it – if necessary in combination with regular treatment

Mental confusion and paranormal perception

To properly understand the integrated approach, we must be familiar with the constitution of human nature as described in various esoteric traditions. (For a more detailed description, please see the main body of the text.)

What we refer to as ‘our body’ in common parlance can be, more accurately, subdivided into a coarse-material part (the organism or our tangible body) and a fine-material part (the etheric body or the energy field that maintains the organism). Together they form the *physical body* as we know it and with which we function in the everyday physical world.



But besides our physical body we have a number of other bodies.

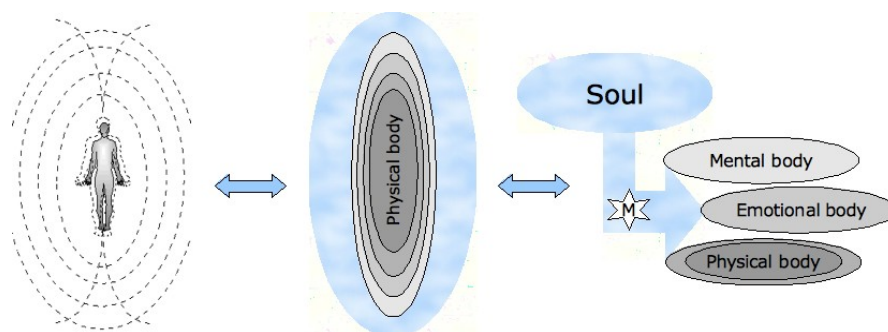
With the help of our *emotional body* we can feel emotions and gain experiences in the emotional world, the world of feelings.

With the help of our *mental body* we can think and gain experiences in the mental world, the world of thoughts.

Our *causal body*, the soul, gathers together our wisdom and gives us access to the causal world, the world of inspiration and intuition.

And so arises the image of our coarse physical body, surrounded by an aura of increasingly subtle bodies enclosing us like envelopes.

The worlds to which these subtle bodies provide access are actual, existing realities even though they are not visible in our everyday physical reality.



As a rule we only identify with our physical body, which we can see and feel. However, we *are* not this body – or indeed any of those other bodies. What we *are* is an immortal core of consciousness that draws on all of these different bodies so it can be conscious of itself and the world around it. With the help of our different bodies, we can function in several worlds at once. All the experiences we gain on a physical, emotional and mental level make us wiser people, who will ultimately be capable of experiencing the subtle vibrations of the soul. In due course, after many lives, this will result in more and more soul consciousness.

So although we are surrounded by different worlds, we can only directly perceive the coarse-material physical world. Since experiences from the other worlds only reach us indirectly, it is easy to forget they exist at all. There are several reasons why we are barely aware of all of these subtle realities.

The *etheric world* forms a unity with our coarse-material world, but our senses are generally not sensitive enough to experience its subtle vibrations. It takes practice to perceive the etheric body. This etheric body forms the link between the organism on the one hand and the subtle bodies (emotional, mental and causal) on the other.¹

We generally experience the *emotional world* as the ‘atmosphere’ of a particular environment. It can be pleasant or frightening, for example. This world is shaped by our own and other people’s emotions. All of our fears and desires, indeed all of our convictions, take shape here. It is also the world where we end up after we die and where – among other things – we can make contact with other deceased people. The direct perception of this reality is tempered by our etheric body, which serves as a bridge between our organism and the other bodies and which effectively blocks all kinds of energies from accessing our consciousness. In this way it protects us from the influx of too many impressions from the emotional (and mental) world.

When the etheric body functions properly, we are barely aware of the emotional world. But physical or emotional problems, stress or drug use can impair the etheric body, preventing it from fulfilling its protective function properly. As a result, the emotional world directly penetrates our brain and our waking consciousness.² When that happens we can see energies or hear voices. Perhaps we can even see deceased people or guides and communicate with them. Like the physical world, the emotional world can manifest itself in an infinite number of ways and everything we perceive there is partly a product of our own expectations and our personal focus. Small children, whose physical bodies (both the coarse and fine ones) are not yet fully developed, and adults, whose etheric body has sustained damage, can face a wide variety of images that originate in the emotional reality.

¹ See also: L.J. Bendit & P.D. Bendit (1977). *The Etheric Body of Man*. Quest Books.

² See also: A.E. Powell (1969). *The Etheric Double*. Quest Books. Chapter XIV, The atomic web.

Many young children can see worlds that ‘non-existent’ for adults and experience the presence of persons invisible to the outside world. For example, they can have contact with deceased relatives or invisible friends. To many parents these are little more than the innocent products of a childish fantasy.

Adults, too, can sometimes perceive the emotional world, although they tend to experience it very differently from children. This phenomenon can occur after a traumatic event, an illness or serious psychological problems, which have left traces in the etheric body. Because these people are often anxious and insecure, they tend to experience frightening energies that originate in the bottom layers of the emotional world. In turn, these images can elicit new negative emotions, potentially landing the person affected in a negative spiral of mounting confusion.

Some people, clairvoyants among them, have developed their contact with the (higher levels of the) emotional world as a special talent. They can perceive it fairly clearly and are also capable of communicating with its occupants. It is by no means certain, however, whether this is a genuine talent. Perhaps it is more of a handicap, since these abilities are all too often based on the improper functioning of the etheric body.³ *A badly functioning etheric body opens a kind of door to another – emotional – world which can be dangerous to people who are not entirely sure what they are doing.* Most of us should steer clear of this reality. There is no true wisdom to be found here and the occupants generally do not have much more to say to us on this level than when they were still in their physical bodies on earth. They have their own tasks in the emotional world and it is generally best not to bother them with our mundane worries. We really ought to leave them alone. When they decide to approach us, we are advised to be friendly but resolute and dismiss them or ignore them altogether. We can make an exception for people who have just died. They usually linger a while in the vicinity of the bereaved in order to say goodbye. Some of those left behind can feel this and derive comfort from it.

Case study: Irma

Taking another look at Irma’s experiences in the concentration camp, we can conclude that the cause of her problem is twofold.

- Traumatic experiences during her youth, a result of her family’s wartime past, have left her etheric body vulnerable, making it easier for emotional energies to access her consciousness.
- Concentration camps are an emotionally charged topic, which is why they can be found in the emotional world. By researching her parents’ experiences in the camp and wanting to help the children there, Irma settled more or less permanently in this emotional world (through her own emotions). So in effect it has been her own attention that has landed her in this situation.

To extricate herself from this distressing position, Irma had to realize which world she was in and how she had ended up in it. Next she had to make a conscious decision to leave this world again. Through visualisation all the children who were held captive in this world were freed. This set Irma’s mind at rest. She then systematically and consistently shifted her attention from the emotional world with all its horrors back to the day-to-day physical reality. By paying less and less attention to World War II and by consistently ignoring all camp-related images and thoughts she could gradually withdraw from the emotional world. Finally, she had to deal with the traumas that were at the heart of her interest in World War II. They had been the cause of the weakening of her etheric body in the first place.

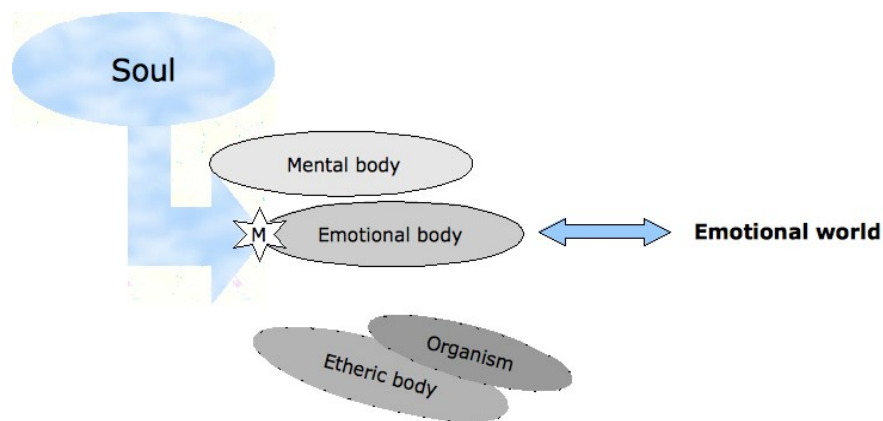
This approach did not view the client’s delusions and hallucinations as a disturbance of the brain, but as the experience of an actual – emotional – reality. By handling it in a pragmatic way, the problems were soon resolved. Once Irma saw what she had been doing all this time, she developed an insight into her situation and with that she regained control over her life. Attention is the

³ The (paranormal) perception of the etheric and/or causal reality is of a different order and can certainly be described as a talent.

instrument that determines what we tune into. When we know what our internal floor plan looks like we can use our attention to travel wherever we want, provided that our consciousness is powerful enough to sustain itself in those different worlds. If we lack the willpower or the ability to concentrate and cannot remain focused, in the case of illness or drug use for instance, we are at risk of losing ourselves in the maze of our inner worlds. An essential component of the integrated approach is that the person affected stops seeing himself as a helpless victim, passively surrendering to his fate, and starts to see himself as the captain of his ship, actively working towards his own recovery.

Life, death and the problems of ‘children of the new age’

We generally identify with our physical body. This is who and what we are, which is why we experience its mortality as our own mortality. But that is an illusion. While we may lose our physical body, and with it our access to the physical world when we die, our emotional, mental and causal bodies live on. With our emotional body we live on in the emotional world, and this is where we stay until our emotional body also wears out and ceases to exist.



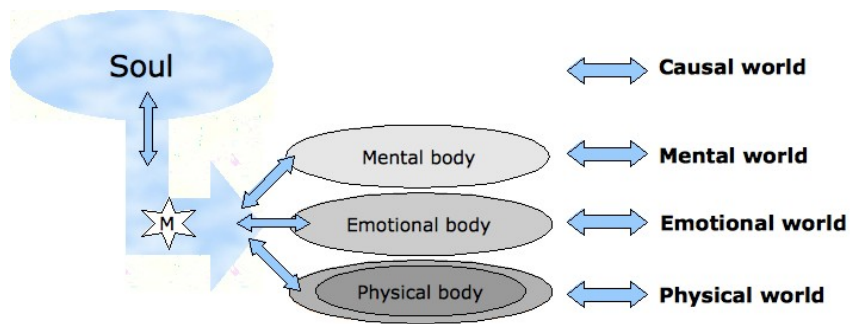
When we no longer have our emotional body at our disposal, we draw on our mental body to move to the mental world where we live on until that body’s life comes to an end as well.

When we have lost our physical, emotional and mental bodies and we no longer have access to the physical, emotional and mental worlds, all we are left with is our causal body, in other words *our soul*. This connects us to the causal world.



Whether or not we can actually experience our soul depends on whether or not – during our physical life – we have already developed a greater or lesser degree of soul consciousness. *Without soul consciousness* we will spend our time in the causal world asleep, whereas *with soul consciousness* we will experience a blissful world of wholeness, connectedness and inspiration.

The great majority of people are barely aware of their soul and they will therefore have little or no memory of the world they inhabited between two successive incarnations. They do not wake up until they reincarnate and come back to life in the physical reality. And because they have no memories of the causal world or of previous incarnations, it feels as if they are alive for the first time.

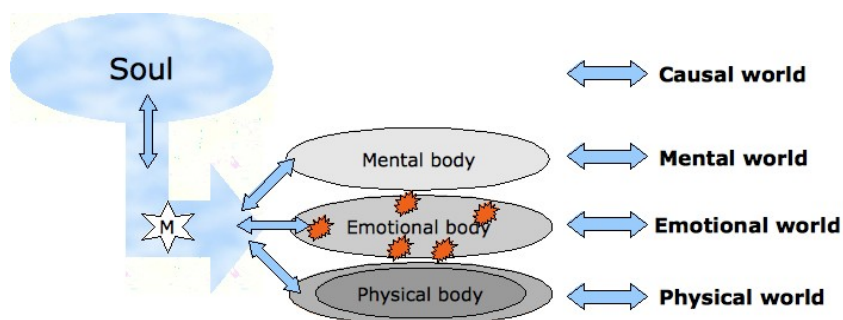


People who do have soul consciousness will return to earth with either vague or vivid memories of the causal world and think back to it with nostalgia. They incarnate in a new physical body, but reluctantly. Their latent memory of the causal reality will affect the way in which they experience life on earth. Vaguely remembered feelings of wholeness and harmony during their sojourn in the causal world will shape the way in which they deal with the earthly reality.

In children who are looked after with tender loving care after birth and who experience no major physical or mental problems, the soul memory tends to slowly sink back into the subconscious. Sometimes they will remember snippets from a previous life, but that will not prevent them from functioning properly on earth. But this is different for children who have difficulties during the first few years of their life, or who – without apparent reason – feel unwelcome or who simply cannot find their feet in spite of their parents’ best efforts. These children feel as if they have been driven out of paradise and, without knowing why, experience an intense sadness. The longing for the sojourn that preceded their birth can be so immense that they never really find their place on earth. They are both here and not here.

It appears that in our time many children are being born who have built up this soul consciousness in previous incarnations. These so-called ‘children of the new age’ are often rather absent-minded and they struggle to find their feet. They are intuitive and sensitive, and either dreamy or hyperactive. Although talented, many of them function below par because they do not feel motivated to shoulder their tasks here on earth. In school they often get bad marks and they cannot seem to find a goal in life. They feel misunderstood and all those negative experiences only confirm them in their belief that this is not the place for them. This can generate new traumas in their emotional body and compound the problems they already had. They can end up in a negative spiral which sees them feeling increasingly unloved and unhappy and withdrawing more and more from the earthly reality.

Growing up, they will tend to focus more on the higher levels of reality, the causal world they remember with such longing. Many are drawn to meditation, drug use, or various more or less spiritual activities such as yoga, astrology, tarot and shamanism, and there is a risk that while engaging in these practices they lose interest in the physical world altogether.



Some highly developed and highly sensitive children function extremely well, but some derail, and in the worst case they develop psychological disorders. Some of them come into contact with social

workers at a very young age. To help these children we need to understand what the fundamental problem is. Since they never incarnated properly, they will need to be coaxed into coming down to earth. For small children, especially, physical contact is extremely important because it helps them experience their body as a safe and enjoyable place. Eye contact is important too, so they know they are being *seen* and realize that there is a place for them here. By listening attentively and showing sympathy for their situation, we can guide these children down to earth. Playing with water, sand and clay can then improve their connection with the earthly reality.

Adults, who may find themselves in similar circumstances and experience similar problems, may find healing in gardening or visiting the sauna. Having never found a purpose in life, some adults may reach the conclusion in later years that the meaning of life has passed them by, that they have lived a meaningless existence. But it is not too late for them to do something. By dealing with the traumas that have prevented them from being fully present, they may eventually come to feel safe and secure here on earth. They can then integrate the feelings of connectedness and wholeness they experienced in the causal world here on earth instead.

Spiritual crisis

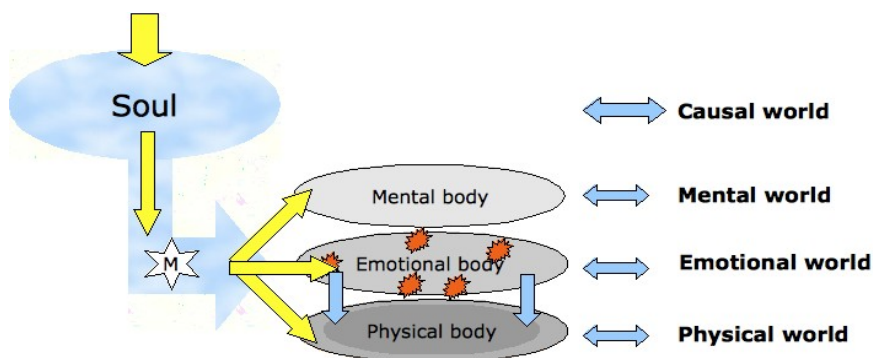
As people develop their consciousness and grow into strong and balanced personalities, they will come to take the signals of the soul for granted and will find it easier to integrate them in their everyday lives. But this process is by no means always straightforward. For those who feel misunderstood, who are unable to find their place in the physical world and who are overwhelmed by all kinds of difficulties, the situation is different. Nostalgic for their soul, they may start focusing on their soul consciousness at the expense of their everyday problems. They may take up meditation, not to balance the 'higher' and the 'lower' aspects of their life but to escape their worries. But along with the attention to the higher levels of consciousness, they activate energies with a higher than usual frequency, and if they lack a sufficiently sound foundation they are at risk of unleashing forces they cannot handle.

A long-term focus on the soul as well as circumstances such as stress, fatigue or drug use can trigger an unexpected influx of causal energy. The effect can be a moment of enlightenment lasting either a mere second or even days. It can provide the person affected with a new and profound insight into his life and the resulting revelation can leave such an impression that it will continue to inspire him for the rest of his life. Such an experience of enlightenment can be the high point of somebody's life, but if he fails to integrate this experience in a balanced way there is a very real danger that his euphoria turns into a terrible hangover. The influx of uncontrolled causal energy can seriously disrupt the functioning of his various bodies.

On a physical level it can cause fatigue, headaches and insomnia.

On an emotional level it can result in anxiety and depression.

On a mental level it can bring about confusion and the inability to focus on everyday reality.

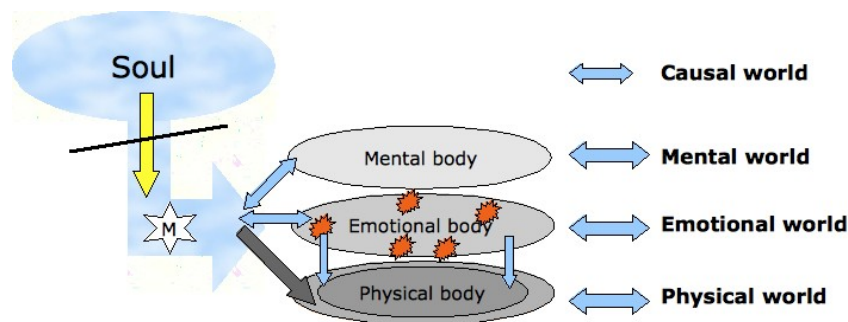


The big influx of powerful energies will also unsettle the etheric body and prevent it from fulfilling its protective function. The potential upshot of this is that energies from the emotional world can

penetrate the organism, i.e. the brain, causing the person affected to see strange images, hear voices or get a sense of being surrounded by entities.

Given the fact that he is already fearful and confused, the energies he now connects with are likely to represent mostly negative feelings and increase his inner chaos even further. The delusions and hallucinations he will experience consequently can become so intense as to warrant a diagnosis of *schizophrenia*.

Since the problem was caused by an excessive influx of causal energy, we have to start by containing this influx. This requires a halt, at least temporarily, to meditation and other activities that activate the higher consciousness. Next up, undivided attention must be directed to the physical body and to earthly activities. Bodily consciousness can be enhanced by, for example, massage or grounding exercises as described in bio-energetics. By focusing attention on the earth and by structuring daily life and doing everyday, practical things, the connection with the ordinary world can be restored.



Wholesome food, exercise, contact with nature, clear water and lots of sunlight contribute to the restoration of the etheric body, enabling it to keep out unwanted energies (especially those originating in the emotional body). At the same time it is important to put an end to the inner confusion and for this we need mental insight. Once the person affected realizes that his plight is partly his own doing, he will find that there is a way back and that in fact he has some control over it. This will encourage him to reconnect with the physical reality. Finally, once he has regained a degree of stability, he will have to process the traumas that caused him to escape everyday reality in the first place. This will be by far the most difficult task.

Obsessive-compulsive disorders

The importance of coming to terms with unresolved traumas, at whatever stage in life, is illustrated by the following example. Small children who have a mishap or hurt themselves will burst into tears. Five minutes later they will have forgotten all about the incident. But children who, for whatever reason, are not allowed to cry will fare rather differently. They will bottle up their grievances and still remember the occasion twenty years later. Sometimes children find themselves in situations in which they are structurally prevented from expressing their emotions, for example when their parents have frequent, heated arguments that make them feel insecure and powerless. They may end up, perhaps unbeknownst to themselves, with a life-long, deep-rooted sense of insecurity. To compensate for that sense of insecurity, even when they have long since grown up, they could get into the habit of double-checking whether the door is locked at night, the windows are closed and the gas has been turned off. This can create a false sense of security that overrides their internal insecurity.

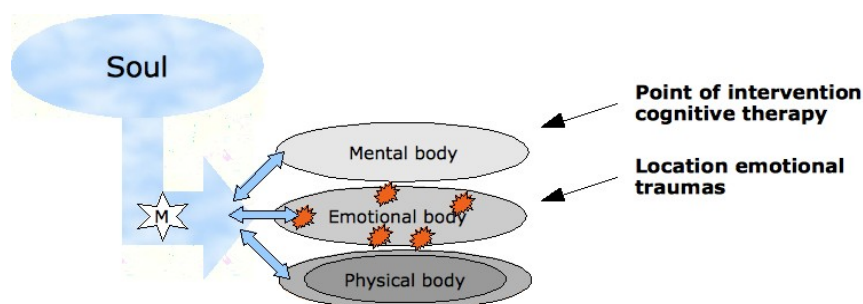
Over the years these actions can proliferate and eventually develop into a ritual that takes up more and more time, perhaps even several hours a day. Such an obsessive-compulsive disorder can cause so much anxiety as to prevent normal functioning.

The standard method of treatment for obsessive-compulsive behaviour is cognitive behavioural therapy. It helps patients to recognize see that their actions are not functional and then seeks to

slowly wean them off. Needless to say, a therapy that focuses primarily on the *mental body* is not necessarily most suited to addressing a problem in the *emotional body*. If we try to convince someone that, from a rational point of view, it does not make sense to keep checking whether the gas has been turned off, he will readily agree, but that does not solve his problem. Far from it. His real problem is the deep-rooted fear that his parents no longer love him and might leave him. Rather than mental confusion, this is an emotional trauma that must be addressed on an emotional level.

Case study: Johan

Johan is 33 years old. His parents had a troubled relationship and divorced when Johan was seven. We can identify the following ‘milestones’ in his life, in chronological order:



12 – 16 years old: Frequent bullying in school.

14: First contact with a psychologist.

16: One-year stay at a psychiatric hospital for anxiety.

18 – 32: Psychiatric treatment for obsessive-compulsive disorder and ADHD.

32: Termination of psychiatric treatment because of ‘untreatability’.

‘Lifelong’ medication alongside compulsive behaviour for 1.5 to 2 hours a day.

Alongside the medication, the treatment that John had received to date had been based primarily on cognitive behavioural therapy. But after more than 15 years and despite intensive support, there was little progress. All efforts had been concentrated on curing him of his unwanted – compulsive – behaviour, but in all those years there had never been any attention to the traumatic experiences of his youth and his unfulfilled desire for safety and security. In fact, this client’s compulsive behaviour was not an out-of-control habit but something with a clear function. He was doing it to regain the sense of security he had lost at some point during his younger years. Therapy aimed at depriving him of this surrogate safety could not be successful as long as it offered no genuine safety in its place and for this to be possible the traumas had to be removed from the emotional body. Thus far, doctors had tried to take his only lifeline away from him – something that was doomed to fail. Another approach was needed.

Following eighteen months of integrated therapy, aimed at removing the youth traumas, the obsessive-compulsive disorder was cured. Johan then found a regular, salaried job and after a while he began feeling like a fully-fledged member of society again.

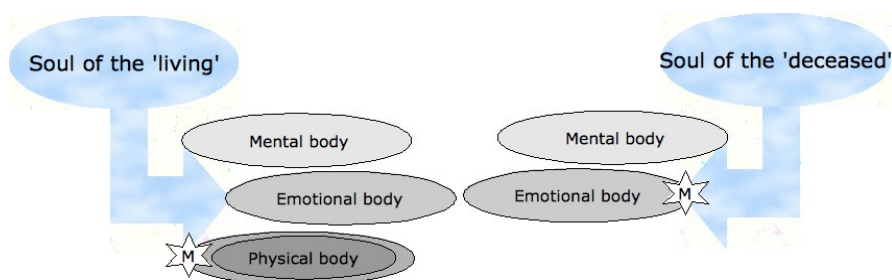
Looking back, he writes:

My therapist soon drew up a plan of action with me, which luckily accommodated those things that were of immediate concern in my life at the time. Leaving aside my day-to-day activities, we looked at my parents’ divorce when I was seven and the years of rowing that preceded it. It helped me to understand the origins of my fears and my parents’ role in my life. Through assignments with and around my parents and my anxieties I was able to process this trauma after all these years. Suddenly I was no longer at odds with them. We developed a pleasant contact, on an equal footing, without any tension or arguments. I have been feeling much stronger since.

Hearing voices

Many people hear the voices of persons that are not actually here or they see energy patterns that are invisible to others. Sometimes these voices are friendly, but more often than not they are angry or threatening and cause serious disruption in the lives of the people affected. The ability to hear these voices generally arises after a difficult period, perhaps involving illness, divorce or the death of a loved one. Many psychiatric patients hear voices too. The conventional approach sees this as a brain disorder which, in severe cases, must be treated with medication. An integrated approach accommodates both another explanation and another solution to this problem.

Our physical body is usually the only body we know and are familiar with. When we die we lose this body as well as our place in the physical world. We then move on to the emotional world. This is where we discover that we are not 'dead' at all, but that we still exist and that we can have contact with 'living' people in the physical world. Both the 'living' and the 'dead' have an emotional body so they can meet in the emotional reality.



As a rule, the deceased person will find his way around in his new surroundings and gradually lose the need for contact with the living.

Other scenarios are conceivable too, especially when someone has died an unexpected or violent death or is struggling to accept his death for some other reason. In that case the deceased may use his emotional body to cling to the living for support.

The following situation could arise. An alcoholic, Mr A, dies and is so confused that he cannot get his bearings in the hereafter. This is why he tries to focus on familiar things, such as a pub (in the physical world) where he liked to go (the emotional experience of which takes place in the emotional reality). In that pub he could come across a drunken man, Mr B. Since this man has the exact same emotions that A is craving, the deceased alcoholic laps up the emotional experiences of the living alcoholic. The fact that it feeds his emotional body is a good reason for the dead Mr A to hook up with B for an extended period of time. Like a parasite, A keeps feeding on B's emotional energy. Since he cannot see the deceased, B is unaware that this is happening. However, he occasionally experiences emotions that are not his. He has impulses that are out of character and he hears strange voices that others cannot hear.

If the deceased had been a balanced person rather than an alcoholic, this would never have happened. Someone on a higher level of consciousness would respect the autonomy of another and certainly not cause him any harm. Having said that, it is possible that shortly after dying someone will linger in the vicinity of a relative to offer comfort or temporary support.

The situation is quite different when the deceased person is in a confused and negative state of mind. In that case he may want to feed his emotional body with the vibrations of others and he will probably have a preference for anxious or aggressive feelings, since he is most familiar with those. Once he has found someone with such emotions, he will do his best to cultivate them in his victim. It should not come as a surprise that somebody needs such negative vibrations. Just think of the many violent games and horror films that are hugely popular. They give the kind of emotional stimulus that dead people, too, can be addicted to.

Highly developed entities that need high-emotional vibrations will generally not bother us. It

tends to be the lesser developed entities with their need for low emotions that feed on the energy of their victims. The latter should meet two criteria:

- They must have a weakened etheric body, so that others can gain access.
- They must generate enough low-emotional vibrations.

People who are comfortable in their own skin and who are strong and self-aware are unlikely to be bothered by parasitic entities. Sick or traumatised people, on the other hand, are suitable candidates and as long as they remain scared and insecure they continue to generate the emotional energies on which lower entities can feed. To shake off such unwanted guests, three measures are needed:

- First of all, the etheric body must be strengthened so it can fulfil its protective function again.
- Secondly, the quality of the emotional energy must be improved.
- Finally, any existing traumas must be dealt with to prevent the occurrence of new attachments.

The condition of the etheric body can be improved through healthy living and by cultivating feelings of authority and autonomy. Such feelings strengthen the etheric body by increasing its vitality. Next up it is a good idea to tune into higher emotions. Beautiful music, the beauty of nature, art and feel-good movies can boost our level of vibration. Likewise, a mental insight in the situation can help reduce anxiety and support the recovery process. If necessary, visualisations can help cleanse the aura and thus remove unwanted energies. And if this still does not yield the desired result, it is also possible to enter into a dialogue with the unwelcome guests. Why are they here? What is it they want to say? They may also be guided towards their own destination.

It should be mentioned here that the voices people hear are not exclusively those of deceased persons. Inanimate energies can also manifest themselves as a 'voice'. In both cases, the solution to the problem calls for a similar approach.

Schizophrenia

One of the hardest to treat conditions is schizophrenia, a virtually incurable disorder characterized by psychotic episodes, delusions and hallucinations. The diagnosis for this illness is always made on the basis of the symptoms experienced by the patient. But because the causes of those symptoms can be extremely diverse, not every case of schizophrenia is the same and the course of the illness can also be quite different. We can differentiate between '*severe schizophrenia*', which involves a process of progressive alienation, and '*milder forms of schizophrenia*', which tends to involve problems in the patients' day-to-day functioning. On the basis of improved diagnostics, it may be possible to differentiate between the various disorders and to treat them accordingly. Those adhering to the biological perspective view the patient's strange experiences as an effect of impaired brain function which must be treated with medication. When viewed from an integrated perspective, the treatment could also be aimed at strengthening the etheric body, although the use of medication – especially in crisis situations – may be inevitable. Let us look at the approach to this illness by considering the experiences of two clients.

Case study: Albert

Albert is a 24-year-old man.

From an early age he has seen 'images' and heard 'voices'.

14 years old: Father's suicide, followed by frequent marijuana use.

18: Diagnosis of paranoia.

19: Admission to psychiatric hospital for 2 months following diagnosis of schizophrenia.

19 – 24: Frequent admissions to various psychiatric hospitals.

Use of antipsychotic drugs for several years.

Albert has been receiving mental health care for several years now and throughout this time his therapists have been treating him like a sick man. They urge him to be cautious and stress his

dependence on medication. Slowly but surely, Albert loses any confidence in himself and in his qualities. Over time his circle of friends narrows to fellow patients and his career prospects vanish. All this leads to further hospitalisation and a progressive loss of any sense of autonomy. The one thing he knows is that he is a psychiatric patient before all else, someone who will have to accommodate his illness for the rest of his life.

This approach will sap the energy levels of the person affected and he will increasingly retreat from day-to-day reality. He will function less well and his confidence in his own body will diminish. His attention to the physical reality will wane, unlike his attention to the emotional reality, so that his problem, the perception of strange energies, becomes aggravated over time. The side effects of the medicines further restrict his functioning. They make him passive and listless and severely hamper his ability to focus on the physical reality.

Those of us who adhere to an integrated model assume that the delusions and hallucinations experienced by the client originate in the emotional world and that they are the result of a weakening of his etheric body. Treatment is aimed at strengthening this energetic body and for this the patient's autonomy must be stressed. This approach is fundamentally different from the conventional treatment. The patient is stimulated to redevelop his inner authority and encouraged to make plans for the future the way healthy people do. The origins of unusual phenomena, such as seeing energy patterns and hearing voices, are discussed in general terms, thus allowing the person affected to place his experiences in a broader context. He will then realize that the more attention they receive, the more powerful those phenomena become, so he should ignore them as much as possible. The integrated approach seeks to return the client to day-to-day realities. By improving his personal stability and convincing him to take little or no notice of confusing experiences, he will gradually break free from their insidious grip. At the same time the client is encouraged to live healthily, and this further strengthens his etheric body. Once a certain degree of stability has been achieved, the client can start dealing with the traumas that landed him in this situation in the first place.

Within a year Albert's symptoms had almost completely disappeared and his medication, in consultation with the psychiatrist, was greatly reduced.

Case study: Gerda

Gerda is 41 years old.

She hears voices and strange noises and claims that she is being watched round the clock by creatures from other planets. In fact, they abducted her once and implanted microchips in her head through which they monitor her and control her thoughts. In an effort to end the observation, she has contacted the police and the judiciary and even NASA, but to no avail. Gerda, too, has been diagnosed with schizophrenia, something she rejects most indignantly.

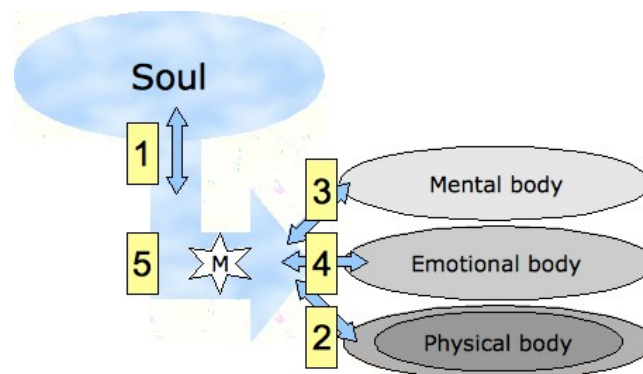
There is a huge difference between the two patients. Albert knows he experiences strange phenomena and he is able to identify which are 'normal' and which are aberrant. Because he can make this distinction, he can also deliberately focus his attention on the normal reality and ignore the aberrations as much as possible. By strengthening the good experiences and weakening the others, he can keep piloting himself out of his confusion.

Gerda, on the other hand, is incapable of distinguishing between different realities. Because everything she experiences is 'true', she cannot free herself from the emotional world in which she is a prisoner. She is reliant on the biological approach that treats her symptoms with medication.

The essence of integral therapy

Integral therapy is extremely practical and is aimed primarily at restoring a person's sense of authority. It is only effective in people who are, to a greater or lesser extent, aware of their situation and who are capable of directing their attention. Drug use and other circumstances that can interfere

with the clarity of our consciousness are best avoided. Integral therapy is aimed first and foremost at restoring stability and then (or at the same time) at dispelling the traumas that caused the confusion. It can be divided into five tasks that the person affected should carry out to aid his recovery.



1. Reducing the influx of causal energy (where relevant) by stopping meditation and other spiritual practices. Intense mental exertion is also best avoided.
2. Strengthening the physical body (and with it the etheric body) through a healthy lifestyle and by focusing attention on everyday reality. Fostering a sense of self-worth and identity is paramount for the recovery of the etheric body. Massage, sauna, grounding exercises and doing practical things can be useful. It is also advisable to introduce a structure and everyday commitments in order to get a renewed grip on life.
3. Developing a mental insight which creates an internal map to help structure one's experiences.
4. Cleansing the emotional body, with particular emphasis on clearing up childhood traumas.
5. Learning to remain sufficiently detached from everyday problems, without escaping reality.

The integral approach does not suit everyone. The therapy works by the grace of the patient's ability to keep his attention focused on the objective reality. If the illness is so severe that the patient can no longer tell delusion from reality, he will not be able to free himself from his inner confusion. Temporary confusion is not a problem. With good care (and the right medication) it can generally be overcome. But if the patient is structurally incapable of making the distinction, integrated therapy cannot help him out. In that case all that remains is the biological approach which can reduce his symptoms.

Summary

Fortunately, many people with serious psychological problems make a good recovery. But if this is not the case, and conventional mental care proves to be ineffective, integral therapy can bring relief. This therapy is based on the idea that, instead of being the result of a brain disorder, a patient's delusions and hallucinations are genuine images from another reality, i.e. from the emotional world. An innate susceptibility, trauma, stress or drug use as well as meditation or concentration exercises can damage or deform the etheric body and take away its protective function. The emotional world can then penetrate the consciousness of the person affected and result in major confusion. Recovery requires the following:

- an explanatory model, which can serve as a useful map for the world in which one has ended up.
- the clarity to find one's bearings in this world.
- the strength to free oneself from this world.

Regaining one's strength tends to be the solution to the problem. A (renewed) sense of one's own strength suggests that the etheric body has been revitalised and that it can once again fulfil its

protective function. So the key to the recovery process lies mainly in regaining one's own authority. Everything that reinforces this authority has a healing effect, and everything that undermines it hinders the healing process. The patient's personal autonomy is crucial, for only he can choose where to direct his attention and which reality to activate.

There are people who vigorously defend their confused ideas. It goes without saying that this is not what we mean by *personal authority*. This requires a clear insight into one's situation. As such we can distinguish between:

- People who are aware of their problems and who are in a position to tell 'normal reality' from delusions.
- People who are structurally incapable of distinguishing between the two realities.

Only the first group will benefit from the integral approach.

The main difference between the biological and the integral approach may be their respective emphasis on the patient's autonomy. A small difference in approach can have a major impact on the course of the illness and in turn bring about a totally different outcome. A therapist who is familiar with the integral approach can decide on the best possible course of action, while relatives and others who are directly involved can help the patient find his way out of the labyrinth of confusing experiences. They can accompany him back to everyday reality and help him regain his self-confidence.

More information on integral therapy can be found at: www.integralepsy.nl and on www.transpersoonlijk.nl.