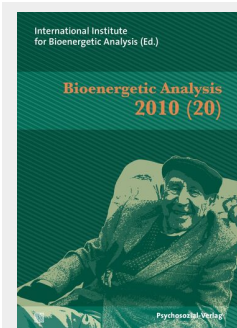


*David J. Finlay*

## Notes on Intimate Connections



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# Notes on Intimate Connections

*David J. Finlay*

Intimacy is an **Art of Creation** – a celebration of aliveness. It is a state where we can feel understood, safe, physically strong and capable, able to empathize and help others. Through intimacy our fears can be tamed. Intimacy as a way of harmony may be our best chance of finding our way home on levels ranging from the cellular to the soul, personally and interpersonally, perhaps even nationally and internationally.

Many of us have histories of broken connections, often beginning in infancy when “Mom and Dad” were not there the way we needed. Our lives became a search for finding close connections within ourselves, to others, to life as a whole. Often we did so without guiding principles around connection and attunement to the various environments in which we lived and functioned. Our search occasionally led to increased desparateness, with despair or death lurking in the background. However, as Au and Canon point out, “When intimacy is accompanied by love, it can become a crucible for our wholeness, stirring up what needs to be integrated and holding us in love as we meet those parts of ourselves which we have feared and hated”, Depending on our personal “condition”, then, we can offer only what we have. But we can create much more if we open our hearts and souls.

What is intimacy? Simply put it is IN-TO-ME-SEE. Paul Tillich described such a condition: “We can discover our souls only through the

mirror of those who look at us.” If so, the plea is: Give me the gift of your empathetic eyes so that I, too, can see. If you see me, then by the same privilege perhaps I can see you and myself as well. We can meet for we both have this basic and passionate human need. And if we meet perhaps we can engage. If we engage, perhaps we can connect from deeper places within ourselves.

In that connection we will have created something different than each of us. In that synthesis or synergy lies a new and expanded life form. If we nurture it, care and tend and give to it, there will be an engagement with life forces. They will encourage similar processes elsewhere perhaps even expanding geometrically and with possibilities of quantum leaps into a sense of partnership, communion and community. But dare I let *you* see into me? Dare we create something between us that heals our broken connections and allows our souls to vibrate and *resonate*, to touch and engage? That would be intimacy.

The miracle of this process of intimacy is no secret, no hidden truth that only some privileged or enlightened few attain. We can see it plainly most days if we observe, if we are receptive to looking and seeing. For example, it is in the healthy bond between mother and infant, the absolute miracle of conception, birth and growth. It is in the germinating seed of life—the little “wiggler” that scores a bull’s eye and begins the process of conception, a growth process that can last forever until death and perhaps beyond. In that **energetic embrace of life** lies the truth of intimate connection.

In this small essay I ruminate on various aspects of intimacy certainly not in a definitive way. I explore, however familiar to others, but as a new expression for me. I shall consider thoughts about how body and self are connected; how intimacy is related to idealized images; how love and hate are joined in a desperate path; the loaded relationship between intimacy and sexuality and the ensuing confusion; the therapeutic relationship and the limitations of the pathology model; and finally, the nature of intimacy in terms of ego-psychology.

## I      The Bodyself

Part of the capacity for intimacy is based on our bodyself—the images and distortions, truth and lies, conscious or unconscious, we believe about ourselves. In coming into the world our Self was largely a body phenomenon. Our emergent or primary Self was connected to mother and our movements in relationship to her. We grasped with our hands, sucked with our lips and mouth, pushed with our feet, sought to focus our eyes, all toward re-establishing contact, a new contact outside the womb. We sought to communicate through our struggling movements, to tell the significant other of our needs. Those needs grew daily and our life-breath carried us forth on a journey of Self and Other discovery. To the extent that our physical and emotional needs were met we flourished, becoming ever more demanding of our environment to satisfy our new “I” and “We”.

Being empathically responded to was our definition of intimacy and little by little in our primary narcissism we could give back in terms of recognition, delight and comfort. “You are my mother”, we seemed to say, “and I have these needs you must fulfill and I’ll try my best to let you know what they are. I shall meet your love, take it in and let you see YourSelf grow as a result. My system is totally open to you, but it must be treated with care. As you respond, so also will I. Isn’t it wonderful that we can have this relationship where you can give fully of yourself and I can receive it to the limits of my capacities? And you’ll be delighted with each movement I make in my development. We shall, of course, test each other so that our bonding will deepen and our attachment will unfold in the merry-go-round we are on. This beginning is only a moment in the memories that will fill our lives. This could be wonderful; as we separate, as I individuate, the nature of our relationship will change, but it will have been built on the solid foundation of an intimate connection.”

We are a product of our socialization, the way we were raised and taught to view ourselves. We are also a product of our imagination as well as the imagination of others. Thus we now need to ask ourselves:

- (1) How do I view my body as Self,
- (2) How much of my emotional energy is directed toward liking/disliking my body as Self,
- (3) What feelings and attitudes are built into the way I bodily present myself to the world? In what postures do I see myself? What happens to these postures as I physically move? Does it change my sense of Self and if so, how?
- (4) If I dislike my body what does that protect me from or how does it help me?
- (5) How has my body failed me? How have I failed my bodyself?
- (6) And what steps, if any, am I willing to take to bring my “body” and “ego” selves together into unity rather than separation? Or do I plan to keep separate compartments for body and mind?

Although we may delude ourselves by separating mind and body, they work as a unit most of the time, at least at an emotional level. The intricacies of that interaction are only partially known in the worlds of biology, psychology, medicine and philosophy. It is still an open frontier of science. And if we had total knowledge of that interaction, what would we do with it? Would it change our behavior and values? In any case, our knowledge has not produced an intimate concern with the quality of life. Our primitiveness remains intact.

The bodyself we hold in our hearts and minds will be reflected in our social interactions at all levels of our being. When we look at our ego images and our body images, disparity is often a measure of disturbance. Weakness of the body image may be compensated for by exaggeration of the ego image (and vice versa). Alexander Lowen states there is a functional identity between the body image and the actual body. If we feel alive, robust and healthy, more than likely my body will be just that unless I live in a world of delusion. If, on the other hand, I conceive of myself as “ugly”, I will probably withdraw my energy into my core and my aliveness will be absent. My heart will be less available to others. What is necessary in health is an inner and outer harmony and without this we are not fully available for

intimate connections. But we must begin that process with openness of the Self, for herein lies the source and foundation of connectedness.

## II Idealized Intimacy

Idealization often takes place in the notion of “romantic love”. With the blush of affection and budding sexuality everything seems perfect for we see through the passion of romance – exciting and wonderful, adventuresome and fanciful, sensuous and sexual. We see through the prisms of illusion and no matter what the age, there is an adolescent quality to it, but it is only a very first stage in the developing of intimacy. Sooner or later-about six months to a year – realities begin to emerge and then the catastrophe hits, the illusion or delusion has to be strengthened, or else persons begin the working through process where they must go deeper. It is then that questions of commitment arise, when tolerance and acceptance are truly joined. The achievement of intimacy is one thing, maintaining it another. Unfortunately, an adolescent attitude often gets prolonged. Romance can be sustained but only in a mature relationship. It requires hard work on both persons’ part. But first it requires us to grow up from fantasy to the development of trust, friendship and support.

Scott Peck argues that in a mature relationship both partners have as an ultimate concern the psychological, physical, emotional and spiritual growth of the other. According to him this absolutely requires **attentive listening** – a total concentration on what the other is saying or trying to say in their expression. So often we hear or see only what we want particularly in conflict situations where listening is cut-off. We begin to formulate replies not on what is being said but on what may have previously happened. We filter information through the lens of what we believe to be true or not true. Our projections then lead to familiar responses and have little to do with attentive listening. We become prisoners of our own making.

To heal such rifts, according to Stephen and Ondrea Levine, requires the development of a “present heart”, a heart that can let go of what we think we cannot accept, a letting go of obsessive “not enoughness” and the

“frightened self”. Instead we must allow the other’s mind into our own hearts. To be fulfilling, such action requires reciprocation and mutuality. This is where sustained empathy comes in.

Empathy, simply defined, is the ability to see and feel the other-not to become them, but to resonate with them in an attuned way and to know their subjective experience without judgment. As we resonate, we also need to be open to disclosure, to accept the permeability and inter-penetrability of our being. Ego investment is the largest obstacle in this regard for that “I” has only one side and that is “me-ness”.

The conscious or unconscious investment in “me-ness” leaves little room for an-other, however “beloved” we think our attitude is, however “altruistic” or deluded our self image may be. This is often true of personalities who experienced early deprivations. They seldom get beyond their “me-ness”, despite years of analysis or therapy and their consciousness is limited and their actions are sometimes bizarre. Woody Allen marrying his stepdaughter may be an illustration of extreme self-justification.

In the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous there is a passage, which states the following: **Serenity is inversely proportionate to expectations and directly proportionate to acceptance.** Expectations usually lead to disappointment, for so often they are based on hope such as the wish to be rescued or taken care of, to be cherished as though one were a child, or to have our neurotic strivings answered or fulfilled, etc. It is hope rather than faith because the former is illusory and the latter has some basis in reality. To be recognized as we wish and to be recognized as we are, too often has a great disjunction as therapists so often see in the consulting room.

Acceptance, on the other hand, can lead to a peace of mind for we are no longer, “director of the show”. It connotes a consenting mind. Things are what they are and perhaps what they are meant to be. That does not mean that we accept everything for some things are just down-right unacceptable to our consciences or violate our distinguishing of right and wrong. But on a more mundane level we see people fighting in traffic to get one car length ahead of another, regardless of the danger they may create. There will always be insults and violations and acceptance may mean not partici-



pating or getting one's ego involved in the games of fools. We need to step back and relax, not submitting to the temptation to engage in such games as an equally neurotic participant. Acceptance is also the ability to receive, as well as work for, positive change.

There has to be in acceptance an attitude of forgiveness. When we operate or live without consciousness of this process, the temptation is to join the games whatever they may be- the pursuit of money, power, status, image, "winning", or whatever. Consciousness is tricky. To some it is awareness or finding our illusive "internal observer". Some call it "mindfulness". (Tashira Tachi-ren reportedly observed, "To gain the 95 percent of my brain that I haven't used, why did I have to lose the five percent I already had?") To others the task of consciousness is the healing of the soul. However conceived, what are we to be conscious of? Simply put, is it the true, rather than false self? That is difficult to know but if we truly recognize who we are, warts and all, as opposed to our ego ideal, we are less likely to engage the madness of the games. I have seen many people who sincerely believe they have changed and to a certain extent it may be true. Often, however, they have simply made a more functional adaptation and their level of consciousness remains unchanged. Expectations rather than acceptance remain at the core of their being.

In summary, if we want intimacy and serenity in our lives we must drop expectations and false hopes and surrender to acceptance, forgiveness, attentive listening, fair fighting, etc. We must have a willingness to engage in honesty rather than blaming or shaming. It is to accept responsibility including the ability to respond appropriately. We must be willing to give and to receive with gratitude, to pardon the other, to claim a repose or composure that strengthens the self and opens the way to responses from the heart rather than the head.

### III Intimacy, Love and Hate

Intimacy and love are often used synonymously. To be in love, to be with our beloved, to open one's heart to another is considered intimate. However,

one can be intimately engaged with another out of feelings that are just the opposite. “Intimate enemies” has not been an uncommon term because of the ultimate concern about the “other”. When the Cheka, the Tsarist secret police, followed Leon Trotsky in Paris, police documents held by the Hoover Institute at Stanford University indicate minute by minute, hour by day by month, all of Trotsky’s movements, associates, living space, down to the public urinals he used when out of his flat. Super-sleuth spying left nothing private in one’s life and privacy, too, is something we associate with intimacy. The intimate connection between enemies in the cold war even had unwritten rules of conduct, particularly in “wet cases” (assassinations) where tit equaled tat. There were few rules in trying for advantage over the other. **Trust**, another characteristic of intimacy, had meaning only in the sense of the prevailing unwritten rules. If one side could infiltrate the most closed sectors of the other’s decision-making apparatus, it was fair game and to the victor went the spoils.

Intimate enemies also made the line between patriots and traitors very narrow. Vigilantism in the McCarthy era became excessive. Public privacy was violated by notions that, “only those who have something to hide are the ones who hide”. To be an enemy of the state in the Soviet Union meant a Gulag in Siberia. Love and hate become blurred by ideas that you must do unto them as you believe they are doing unto you. Being “correct” is a feather in a high wind. The “passionate pursuit” of truth has as many psychopaths as it has men of God, both justifying their actions as “caring, loving and in the public interest”.

In personal relationships we also find the difference between love and hate, loving connection and violation, a razor’s edge almost as though borderline personalities were engaged with each other. In DSM IV the borderline is described as a person who makes a frantic effort to avoid abandonment and characteristically engages in inappropriate anger. All their relationships are intense and unstable. They idealize and then devalue, feeling the other person does not care enough, is not “there” enough, particularly when it comes to meeting their own needs. They are alternately beneficent and cruelly punitive. They may display extreme sarcasm, enduring bitterness, or simply verbal outbursts.

In abusive relationships, the beginnings may be “good”, but there is a cycle of violence that is progressive. Unless stopped by a re-learning process by both parties, it leads to disaster, pain and ultimately physical injury. Remorse is only a temporary condition. At least one person has to “drop” and not give into or engage in greater or malicious conflict. A “drop” is like a time-out, a removal from the scene, and unwillingness to play the familiar pattern over and over. Participants in re-learning programs may be asked to re-enact the scenes of violence in slow motion (like in a movie) to discover where their decision points were; to recognize where they lost control; and to discover what other alternatives might have been possible in the situation. It takes considerable repetition for new behavior to emerge. Men often begin such programs with the assumption that they were “provoked” and women with the assumption that they are “innocent” of any wrong doings. Both may be correct but yet, in the end, they are false. In any case, why buy into provocation? Innocence is the avoidance of responsibility. Who really suffers in this playing out of love and hate? Both, but in the case of families, it is the children who later in life often repeat the same patterns.

Abuse may be the extreme in love/hate confusion but it is more common that one would like to think. It is estimated that two out of five women in the United States at one time or another have been victims of physical abuse. Child abuse is also a correlate. In New Zealand, for example, it is estimated that three out of five persons have been victims of child abuse.

To correct the sharp line between love and hate there has to be a program of “fair fighting” where rules do exist and the inevitable conflicts arising from just relating are managed in a constructive and healthy way. Without such rules of conduct such as, “no hitting below the belt”, love and intimacy do not exist and we get the condition of intimate enemies.

Intimate enemies always suffer from terminal uniqueness in their “mess”. In healthy intimacy, couples (or nations) know how to be close and still let the winds of heaven blow and dance between them without warfare.

## IV Intimacy and Sexuality

Why do we call the sexual act of intercourse intimate? Most of the reasons professed are merely reflections of traditional values, often prudish and irrelevant, hedonistic and superficial. Certainly the act of creation could be considered intimate by definition. But why is sex otherwise intimate? Primarily, it has been associated with sin, secrecy, desire, and lust in the interpretations of religionists, whether Christian or Moslem. A corollary of this is a devaluing of the “body-me”, and speaks to the “higher nature of man”, while sexuality speaks to his base instincts. Religionists have portrayed man’s sin as carnal while Freud saw the ego and superego as functioning to control the id and its libidinal strivings. Freud’s reality principle is a check on the pleasure principle. Without controls (according to the religionists and Freud) man might run amuck! Arguments from religion and science join.

The intimacy of sex in traditional negative notions connotes something private, sacred only to legitimate relations (i.e., marriage), and intensely personal. The sexual revolution of the 1960’s made a mockery of traditional sexual values, upsetting to the point of violence for those considering themselves the protectors of morality and the family. Homosexuality could not be an intimate relationship because it was “unnatural”. Abortion was a blow to the confinement of sexuality to the role of procreation. Thus sexuality and intimacy even became linked to murder, in some instances leading to arguments for the justifiable killing of doctors performing abortions. In these bizarre aberrations of twisted minds, sex and intimacy were ignored and irrelevant. Love and sex could be equated with justifiable homicide, bombings of abortion clinics, and flaunting of the law! The irony of preaching family values and practicing violent anarchy takes reason beyond the breaking point.

Nevertheless, there are at least three different views of the relationship between sex and intimacy. They may be summarized as follows:

- (1) I establish intimacy through the expression of my sexuality;
- (2) I express my sexuality after the establishment of intimacy; and

- (3) my sexuality and intimacy develop simultaneously for they are intertwined and inseparable with no first principle.

In the first view, sexuality is viewed as “experience near” and intimacy as “experience distant”. In the second case, it is just the opposite. The third is the logical and rational approach but perhaps, in fact, the less frequent. I shall conclude this section with a brief synopsis of “coupleship”.

The first position is illustrated in the words of a 46-year-old divorcee who has been through numerous short and long-term relationships.

“A sexual relationship for me is a whole relationship – it is the way my longing for connection is expressed. It is a whole body, mind, emotional and spiritual experience. It grounds me in a relationship with the other because it grounds me in being a woman. Much of my child’s distrust and mind trips are resolved when the sexual connection happens, for my child feels the woman connected to the other, and with that primal relationship in place, she feels secure.”

While these eloquent words have a certain persuasive quality, the need to ground in the other, the need to have her child’s distrust resolved by the other, is indeed primal as in “primary need”. But it is also the voice of a dependent personality, a voice saying to the other, “you will make me feel like a woman”. It is neither the voice of mature sexuality nor of intimacy. It is the voice calling for the lover to fulfill her, to make her whole, to bring about a state of being.

The second position is illustrated by the thoughts of a 50-year-old professional man who has been married three times and despondent of finding “the woman”.

“When I was younger, fucking was sport. Now I don’t want to hop into bed with just anyone. After three marriages, one of which I felt was good, I want and need more. I don’t ‘perform’ anymore and I have to establish at least a solid friendship before sex can be in any way fulfilling. Sex too early on, confuses me because I no longer know what it expresses.”

In this statement there is caution and fear, perhaps realistic given the history. But there is also a withholding, a sense that, “I don’t want to be hurt

again”. Perhaps also, there is a wish for a guarantee before he can fully open to another, and of course no one can give such a promise.

In both of these first two positions the heart is withheld but for different reasons – “make me a woman”, and “prove to me you love me”. Both are probably bound for disappointment in their relationships because they exist at a superficial level. The “other” becomes the power broker in the relationship. They will go from partner to partner alternating between “over-giving” and “over-taking”, with predictable dissatisfaction either on their part or the part of their potential mate.

Closely related to these approaches to intimacy and sexuality is the relationship between independence and dependence. One result of the woman’s movement was to create confusion between the two, thereby seriously affecting the nature of intimate connections. In the rhetoric of the movement there seemed to be double messages such as, “I want to be close to you but also want my independence”. In effect, women often wanted it both ways and on their own terms! They created a paradigm of paradox. Compliant as well as angry men, who now had lost their patriarchal role, did not know what to do and became weaker and weaker, for without that role an identity was lost without a clear replacement. Betty, a 35-year-old woman whose children were fast moving away from home, illustrates the woman’s point of view and ensuing dilemma. She was losing her role as mother and although she was developing a solid professional life, she saw herself as a mother/wife with no identity other than that. To grow and extricate herself, she divorced in order to “find herself”, to be for the first time in her life her own person, independent of relying on Dan, her ex-husband, to “take care of things”. It was a radical solution to working out the balance between independence and dependence. While able to do so for a number of years, always feeling that Dan would be there when needed, she eventually re-married a man who she could dominate, as she felt she had been dominated by her father and by Dan. But in this process she lost a certain amount of her connection to intimacy as she slipped into “me-ness”. She substituted professional achievement and security for the closeness that she wanted and for awhile seemed to shut down her heart. Slowly in her new relationship she began to rebuild.

Fundamental to all of this is the meaning of gender identity. With the sexual revolution, the woman's movement, and changes in traditional roles, the answer (beyond biology) of what it means to be a "man" or "woman" is unclear. Particularly for men there is no model except what they learned often times from absent father, peers, and cultural stereotypes. Robert Bly and James Hillman among many others have fervently addressed these problems and sought to raise the consciousness of men. For them self-expression is part of finding a vision. Yet our cultures persist with confusing notions of gender identity often leading to profound personal confusion.

Consider the case of Bob, a 55 year old successful business man. Bob's persona is that of a man's man. Underneath there is another story.

"Father was not there for me and he used alcohol to cover his woundedness and I had to be there, and wanted to be there for him. I didn't have any options. The feelings in me were intense and over-powering. There was a role reversal. I had to father my father in the hope that I could restore him in order to be his son. I had a strong realization of the 'wounded boy' in my father, and how he drank to avoid his pain. I realized how powerful and inter-generational this was on my male side as my grandfather was also a wounded person who drank.

There was an incident recently with a close friend who had several drinks one night and I remembered it all. The thoughts and feelings were that I wanted to offer my body to him to fuck. I wanted to go to his bed and somehow offer myself completely so he could be consoled and restored from his desperation. I wanted to be his 'wife' so that he could be whole. I was prepared to sacrifice everything so that then he could offer me a way out of my trap. I realized that by trying to restore my father to his masculinity I avoid my rage at his failure to have a strong heart and sexuality, to show me how to be a man and thereby save me from the castrating bitches. By being passive and 'wifely' with my sexuality I avoided the oedipal issue and avoid confronting the issue with my wife. She has my balls. By trying to restore his heart, I avoid my own broken heart and despair."

This small vignette raises the question of how does anyone become secure in his or her gender identity when there are few norms or inadequate models by which to evaluate it. Thus I wonder whether we are entering some kind of androgynous or confused age where culture and biology have not attained harmony?

The third position that sex and intimacy develop simultaneously is difficult to illustrate because it is not a condition often seen in the consulting room. People who have a “present heart” are able to clear the way in allowing their expression of self to deepen, to correspond to the other and to realize a “fulfillment”, however illusive that term might seem. Their sexual relationship revolves around pleasure, in whatever exciting forms they choose or discover. They become partners in a voyage of total discovery. Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse summarizes characteristics of such “Couple-ship”:

- Have an outlook that is a couple’s orientation toward shared experience.
- Give each other full and honest information.
- Trust each other.
- Take responsibility for self and are responsible to each other.
- Are loyally devoted to the other and have eliminated jealousy from their partnership.
- Are assertive, without being obnoxious, sarcastic and aggressive.
- Know how to fight fair and frequently.
- Are very affectionate.
- Are self and other accepting.
- Know how to discern what is important and what isn’t.
- Have a sense of humor.
- Stick together in the hard or down times.
- Know how to play and laugh together.
- Are sexual with each other and maintain a sexually exclusive relationship.
- Know how to pray together.

Certainly the relationship between intimacy and sexuality has many complicated dimensions and one need not agree with the above characterization. Yet it is suggestive that a healthy relationship is a total participation in intimate connections. It is present oriented rather than being trapped in, say, the tyranny of the past.



I think the common denominator in sexuality and intimacy is the extent to which the heart is involved. One can have sex without intimacy and intimacy without sex. When they are combined in heart feelings, the power of each is doubled and a synergy developed as a new creation. The intimacy of sex is unique when it is an integration of body, mind, emotions and spirit. Soul as Eros and Eros as Soul!

## V Intimacy and Psychotherapy

By its very nature, psychotherapy is an intimate endeavor as two subjectivities work out a relationship, in the name of helping the one called, client. They create a reality between them that has all the aspects of intimacy already mentioned, minus sexual contact and the therapist revealing himself as would personal friends. The therapist works within the bounds of professional ethics and responsibility. It is the therapist's responsibility to protect boundaries and yet to encourage the client to go into himself in a deep and thorough way, to understand his own dynamics and change them if he so desires. The therapist may guide from time to time but more often is simply a partner on the journey of self-discovery. Rather than some, "behind the couch" neutrality, the therapist is there as a "real person" supporting insight rather than giving directives or making evaluations. Nevertheless, we must recognize the split among therapists regarding this approach. James Masterston argues that the therapist must be absolutely neutral, whereas Carl Rogers argued for a more positive identification with the client's process. The use of counter-transference is now a large issue in psychotherapy, particularly around early developmental issues.

In therapy a client literally spills his guts. This, among other things, leads to both love and hate of the therapist. Without an attuned and empathetic response from the therapist, the therapy will fail. The client's awareness and understanding may be a first time experience and thus will provoke many reactions. In seeing his own transference he will also be acutely aware of the counter-transference received from the therapist, however camouflaged

the therapist may feel he is. Eventually, they stand rather naked before one another. Theirs is an intimate connection of soul meeting soul, the place where healing takes place.

Psychotherapy has elements of the intimacy of the confessional, but, except for certain types of behavioral therapy, there is no absolution. Instead there is interplay of dialectics recognizing the polarities in life. Therapy seeks to empower the individual to make choices, accept the consequences, and to function as part of a larger interdependence. The soul to soul contact with the therapist is to bring the person into the present rather than being mired in the past or futurizing. Being present also means dropping agendas represented, for example, by expectations or obsessions.

Therapy is a **reparative task** and as long as the “blocks” from the past are in full operation, neither therapist or client can succeed in their roles. To be a whole person, one needs to resolve the issues restricting personal integrity and have a zest for living in a complicated and often pessimistic world. Walking the line between pleasure and reality is not an easy task for anyone, including the therapist.

Where therapy falls short as an intimate connection is in adherence to a pathological model. The assumption of disturbance creates an atmosphere, which negates intimacy or the searching of two partners. Correcting pathology supersedes spiritual growth. The “me doctor”, “you patient”, removes an element of compassion or humanness from the scene. Assuming that the therapist is the expert in the human condition effectively puts the client in a one-down position and distorts the reality of his experience. Both the therapist and the client must enter the realms of mystery and paradox as partners. Interventions by the therapist follow the client’s lead, not the opposite. The therapist is not some wizard, but if he really believes he has answers then he does come from Oz, and not all emotional problems can be reduced to a sexual etiology.

This is, however, a time of transition in psychotherapy. The traditional intimacy of the therapeutic relationship is in considerable jeopardy because of managed care, impositions by insurance companies, malpractice suits,

the lack of concern about public health, etc. These developments are beyond the scope of this essay but the reader can find an excellent analysis in Lawrence E. Hedges, Robert Hilton, Virginia W. Hilton and O. Brandt Caudill Jr., Therapists At Risk: Perils Of The Intimacy Of The Therapeutic Relationship.

## VI Ego Psychology and Intimacy

The earth is an organism just as are our bodies. We either live in harmony or else we destroy it and ourselves at the same time. If Freud was basically right about persons having a “death wish”, he was certainly right on a global scale. Instead of a sacred and intimate trust to preserve and protect the earth, man’s total record is largely one of destruction, pillage and rape. Theodore Roszack asks the question, “Can the earth afford us?”, if we do not live in intimacy and harmony with it? Can we respect the limits of the environments? Man’s belief in the endless frontier is a psychotic dream.

I could present statistic after statistic concerning the destruction going on around us but what would be the point? The more pertinent question is about our beliefs and attitudes. Even in “green” New Zealand the sunburn warnings can get down to as little as three minutes because of the hole in the ozone layer in the Antarctic. And yet, this is a country that does not require catalytic converters in automobiles, thanks to the influence of the Petroleum industry. The incidence of melanoma there and in Australia has shown dramatic increases. Perhaps not until people are dying daily will there be a concentrated concern! How sad it is.

We live not in intimacy and harmony with the earth. Like the barbarians of old we seek to conquer rather than accept the damage we create. And if you have ever been to Bangkok or Sao Paulo you can see and feel what an inordinate disaster people can make out of a “city”. “City Pox” is a yet another symptom. We still live with the positivist notion of “progress”, celebrating man’s arrogance to the peril of us all.

## VII Conclusion

Intimacy is a sacred trust, which has the quality of Grace-the incarnation of love, compassion and empathy. To be realized, it demands knowing our souls and a willingness to express that in our relationships and to the world as a whole. In that case we are never alone and we have the power to create, perhaps even a sane and sensible existence.