

Epilogue

Endings, Endings, and More Endings - an Epilogue of Sorts

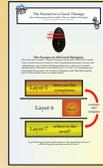
Have you ever had to say goodbye to a good friend, knowing you might never see them again? Did you, in this goodbye, speak of what you had learned from the relationship? This then is what we're about to do. Say our goodbyes. How? By touching on the highlights of what we've talked about. And by me telling you what I have learned from writing this book. The truth? I've learned a lot. Some of which I hope will better your life or the life of someone you sit with regularly. Therapist. Client. Friend. Whomever. And you? Did you come away with anything? Were you surprised by anything you read? Did I get you mad at me at times? Have I raised any new questions in you? If so, know we may have more in common than you as yet may imagine. As you're about to find out in this the epilogue to Plain Talk about Talk Therapy.

Arriving at the Epilogue

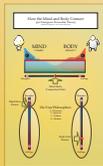
Over my years as a therapist, I have said goodbye to many clients. Some of these goodbyes were tearful. Some were celebratory. And some were premature. Regardless of the specifics though, each goodbye provoked in me some period of self reflection. A time, some brief, some long, wherein I looked back on how we had affected each other. And on how we were now both different for having known each other.

The Matrix of Personality

(according to Emergence Personality Theory)
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	Meta (storage) where we record "what happens in life"	Macro (content) "what happens in life"	Micro (experience) our experience of "what happens in life"
Meta (storage)	a theory of the mind	a theory of personality	a therapy
Macro (content)	$M = I(T)$	Emergence Personality Theory	Emergence Therapy
Micro (experience)	a single thread of similarity	a single move between a layer	a single emergence / submergence



Notice I just used the word “we,” as in how “we” had affected each other. Know this “we” is yet one more way to tell a good therapist from a great therapist. Good therapists help change peoples’ lives. Great therapists allow their clients’ lives to change them as well. How? By being open and real when their clients suffer, by openly admitting to not having all the answers, and by being willing to risk having personally professional relationships with people. At least in the therapy room.

What exactly do I mean by personally professional? For one thing, doing the seven things I mentioned in Chapter Four, the things which make a good therapist differ from a poor therapist. What were they again?

- Good therapists sit at the same level as their clients. Poor therapists sit above them.
- Good therapists take up space in the room. Poor therapists take up no space. Or all the space.
- Good therapists cry *with* their clients. Poor therapists cry *for* their clients.
- Good therapists respect the needs of both themselves and their clients. Poor therapists have no needs.
- Good therapists reveal their faults and make mistakes. Poor therapists hide or deny them.
- Good therapists risk fights in the service of healing. Poor therapists don’t, can’t, or won’t risk a fight.
- Good therapists are always growing, both professionally and personally. Poor therapists haven’t self discovered in years.

All these things are ways to be a *personally professional* therapist. As well as a good therapist in general.

Is this all it takes though? Obviously not. And in fact while these seven things are a good place to start, they are merely what came to mind as I wrote that chapter.

So if I could add but one thing before I go, what would I add?

Mostly that being *personally professional* means being open and real about the things you have in common. Why? Because it’s the relationship between therapist and client that is the real medium for healing. The give and take, love and hate, human interaction.

Why mention this in the epilogue? Because for me, having a relationship with a reader is no exception. Ending a book still requires a goodbye. Including some self reflection on what this writing has been like for me. Along with what I suspect we may now have in common and the things we have yet to learn.

This last thing in fact is one of my strongest values; the idea that as a therapist, teacher, and human being, that I must remain open to and experiencing new learning in order to be worthy of anyone's respect. My own included. Which reminds me of something a woman once told me, many years ago, about saying goodbye to therapists. At the time, for some reason, I felt ashamed when clients chose to stay with me for years. Why? Perhaps because I feared I was somehow creating a dependency in them. Perhaps because I feared other therapists would see me as holding onto them for the money. Or perhaps because I felt concerned they might be too worried about hurting me to leave.

Whatever the case, this woman's comment ended these worries. How? She said she had been okay ending therapy with other therapists, because she'd always left when she'd gotten all she could from them. But that with me, she would miss coming no matter when she stopped, because I was always discovering new things. Including about myself.

Know she told me this long before we ended therapy. And that like many things clients have said to me, her comment changed my life in ways she never would have guessed. As did a retired priest's comments once. At the time, we were having a hearty discussion on spiritual values. Right in the midst of a heated moment then, he lovingly ribbed and honored me by saying, "Hey. Who's the priest here!"

Then there was the heartfelt thank you message left about a year after a woman ended therapy. Her message said that our work together had led to the best year of her life. What was so meaningful about this? She found out she had cancer only months after that call. And she died only months after that. As did the priest not long after we had that discussion.

To me then, these memories remind me of why I became a therapist. I became a therapist so as to be able to help people to change, as well as to have their lives change me. Which, if you've been a therapist for any length of time, may sound like anathema to the ethical code. Admitting you want to change someone? Whoa. Isn't that wrong? Aren't you supposed to learn to love people as they are? And getting things from your clients? Isn't that wrong too?

In my opinion? No. These things are not wrong and in fact, the whole point of people being in therapy is that there are things about themselves and others they want to change. Including in you as a therapist. And if you as a therapist have nothing you want to change about yourself, then you might want to reconsider your vocation. Or at least do a bit of self reflection. We all have growing left to do. Me included.

This then should be the focus in saying therapeutic goodbyes. Admitting what you felt about life and each other back then. Recalling what changed. And exchanging what have you come to love about life and each other now. As well

as what things still remain unfinished.

Was I aware I'd be doing this with you as I began writing the book? Honestly? Not really. In truth I wrote this book knowing, expecting, and looking forward to the meeting, greeting, and getting to know you stuff without once considering I'd be saying this goodbye.

And now?

I find myself actually looking forward to this experience; to my noting, listing, admitting, and inventorying what has changed in me, and in my practice, during the course of my writing this book. As well as to my mentioning what remains unanswered about what I've discovered. The questions writing this book have provoked in me.

So what was I like before writing this book. And what were you like? And how has this booked changed me and how are you different?

Now sure what you might say? Let's take one more look together, shall we.

What It Was Like and What Changed

Discovering the Actual Mechanism of the Mind Body Connection

The main thing to emerge in me during the writing of this book should be obvious; the roots, nature, mechanism, and syntax of how the mind and body connect. Not just the evidence, mind you. Nor the aftermath. But rather a fractal for the actual mechanism of connection. And yes. I openly admit to not knowing this fractal this before I wrote this book. Which, as I think about it, may have made it a bit presumptuous of me to even think I could write this book. On the other hand, when I look back over what I've written in previous years, there have been glimmers of this discovery in my writings for more than a decade, all of which seem to have converged within this book.

Those who know me as a therapist know I have a favorite question I ask when these kinds of events happen. The question? Why now? My answer? Professional astrologers might point to that Pluto is conjunct my mid heaven. Which it is. Professional researchers might say it came out of my twenty years of longitudinal case studies. Which it has. Career talk therapists might say it happened because I have cared for my clients enough. Which it true. Whatever the case, I want you to know, I feel enormously grateful right now.

As for how it feels to now be able to succinctly think, feel, live, and use this knowledge on a daily basis, I cannot say enough. Literally this discovery has affected my entire life. And continues to affect it every day. Including in my therapy practice.

Here are a few of the ways how.

Body First People / Mind First People

The idea that I can read in people something as simple as peoples' Mind First / Body First preference has changed just about everything about me, including how I think, speak, teach, write, and connect.

This in turn has changed the lives of many of those around me. Including the lives of my students and most of my clients.

For instance, a few chapters back I mentioned how the eight year old daughter of one of my students was injured in a boating accident during the writing of the book. What I did not mention was that the boat propeller twice sliced through this little girl's head. Gift of gifts, not only did she not die, but she is also progressing so rapidly and to such a degree that her doctors see her as a medical miracle. And truly, she is. However miracles aside, this in no small part is also due to the courageous and consciously mindful efforts of her amazing parents, one of whom recently wrote the following about a recent conversation we had.

As Steven and I began talking, I told him that my learning about Body First and Mind First people has changed the way I view everything! Including that my relationships with my husband and daughter have changed immensely because of this. I also see as meaningful the timing of Steven teaching me this, as it occurred only weeks before the accident. In part, because of this, my husband and I have been having a totally connected, totally compassionate experience even with our daughter's accident.

In my mind, it seems to have all come together in how we now understand the differences between Body First people and Mind First people. Due to this, I can now see my husband in ways I could never see him before. Moreover, he too has had his own realizations about me as well, all this coming at such a critical time in our lives. To be honest, I can't explain fully what I have been learning. I just know that it has changed me to the core. I also know the Mind First Body First thing has been the missing piece for both my husband and I, and I can only imagine how many other couples could benefit as well.

Can you imagine what it feels like to hear this what with everything that has happened to them? If not, then let me say this. If this one event were to be the only thing to result from these writings, then it would still feel totally worth my efforts. No exaggeration. I mean this with all my heart.

As for how this discovery has affected my everyday life, I simply cannot count how many people have made breakthroughs simply from being able to see through what were previously unseen barriers in their relationships. The barriers which exist between Mind First people and Body First people. Barriers

which are now falling away. Along with judgments and misunderstandings about everything from why Body First people do not respond to questions quickly to what makes it harder for Mind First people to learn to play sports. Or not want to dance. And be clumsy in general.

It's not faults. It's differences. Which, when understood, change peoples' lives. No small thing to be sure. And something I'm still excited about.

The Idea That Technology Can Reveal Human Personality - That We Are All Psychophysical

The idea that we can gain insights into human personality by deconstructing what underlies our technology is not a new one. However, I rarely see people do this to the extent I've done it in this book. I also felt delighted when I discovered that this phrase has been in print since the 1860's. And when I saw this, it raised a heck of a big question in me; why did this wonderful perspective fade from professional sight?

My thoughts? For most of the Twentieth Century, the mind body connection was forgotten. Or ignored. Or believed to already be understood. Or seen as beneath the purview of serious science. This despite the fact that medical researchers to spiritual teachers all make assumptions about the mechanism of this connection. Assumptions which they all, in fact, in some way fail to mention while at the same time, they base their work on.

Thus while most serious scientists still avoid the phrase, the "mind body connection," in some circles, it has become quite popular in recent decades. Unfortunately, for most of these folks, it has more come to mean something like that we should additively remember to address our health. Body and mind both. That this does little to nothing as far as connecting the mind and the body has made this akin to the folks in the story, *The Emperor's New Clothes*. In other words, no one mentions we haven't known the actual mechanism. But despite this lack, we have all been acting as if we have known. Me included.

So what did I think I was going to write about as I began the book? Honestly? The same kinds of things everyone has been saying. That we should remember to address both the body and the mind. How? Additively, of course.

And now?

I am amazed.

Moreover, I simply cannot believe I did not see how this worked before. Descartes' two experiences. Spinoza's continuum. Leibniz's two watches. And Herbart's line. Combine them all in one diagram and there it is. The actual mechanism of the mind body connection. Along with the obvious reason why we have not seen this before. The connection lies below our normal threshold of perception.

As for the actual psychophysical connections I've mentioned in the book, for instance, the stuff about how movie film and the human mind both have frame rates, as well as how this explains a lot of what is beneath everything from the experience of addiction to spiritual experiences? How has this changed me?

Perhaps the most obvious things is that I now love talking about this stuff more than ever. As well as about how some of these ideas emerged in me through revisiting my years working in computers as well as an audio engineer. I often think about how computer mirror our minds but I haven't thought of time code sync and how analog and digital differ in years. And learning how shutters in movie projectors fool the brain. Wow. What an interesting invention. I so admire these kinds of things. Don't you?

The Myth of Asking People What They Think and Feel

Next year I'll have been a talk therapist for twenty years. During these years, I simply cannot count how many times I have asked people what they think and feel. I also cannot count how many times I've told people we were not necessarily looking to find any literal facts. Rather what we needed to find was a representative event. A sort of visual place marker for the original wounding scene. A composite of sorts, part real, part imaginary, within which we could forensically reconstruct the wounding event.

The thing is, while it is obvious from this that I have known all along that the original event might never be known, at the same time, I have been assuming that I have been exploring peoples' literal thoughts and feelings. In other words, while I knew in all likelihood we were forensically approximating peoples' wounding events, not once did I consider that the thoughts and feelings people were reporting were anything but a literal truth.

To hear me say this was what I believed now feels odd to say the least. Why? Because right from my start as a therapist, I agreed with William James about how people revise history as they recall events. In other words, I have always believed the facts people report were in all likelihood being rewritten each time they revisited their live events. This in fact is what has freed me from the bondage of needing a literal truth. At least, a truth involving the actual facts. Despite my having this belief though, not once did I ever consider that the thoughts and feelings people were telling me did not include at least the literal remnants of what they had originally thought and felt.

And now?

Truthfully, a part of me is still shocked by the notion that this wasn't true. At the same time, it now seems dead obvious to me that the mind does not store thoughts and feelings. Only memories of sensations. Moreover, when I ask people now what they think or feel, I not only advise them we are not looking

for literal facts. I also remind them that what they are about to tell me is not coming from their memories but rather from some combination of what they can physically sense now. About what happened then, yes. But based on what they sense here in the present.

How has this simple disclaimer changed my practice?

Remarkably, it has allowed people to speak more freely about what they think and feel. It is almost as if the some inner truth test was suddenly gone. Along with the need to report literally true thoughts and feelings. Sensations are all they need to report.

In other words, it seems this simple statement has made it okay for people to report just what they feel in their bodies. And by doing this, they bypass a lot of what must have been fabricated self reporting.

In addition, by doing this, people are allowing their bodies to guide their responses in therapy. Awkwardly at first of course. But still. The results have been dramatic, and I've seen improvements both in the depth of our work together and out in their real lives as well.

Finding a Pragmatic Face for ADD

For years I've wanted to find a pragmatic alternative to putting children with ADD on medication. And adults as well. And while my work in and around Emergence Personality Theory's Social Priorities does address some features of this condition, this knowledge more remained a Mind First description than a remedial path.

So what has changed?

Probably my favorite new idea here is that we all have ADD. Only some folks have it in their bodies and others, in their minds. What I'm saying is, I've grown quite fond of admitting I have ADD in my body. I'm a spaz in some ways, and admitting this feels wonderfully open and true.

The thing is, it would not feel anywhere near as good as it does were I to have no way to change this. However, I do have a way. I ask Body First people to teach me how they do things. And then I marvel at how my arrogance has kept me from learning so much in life. And I say thank for knowing now.

Then too there is the idea that these requests have opened a door for me to an incredible amount of new human connections. And made teachers out of some of the very folks who saw themselves as being slower and dumber than me. My father included.

Here, discovering my father was a Body First person has added a whole dimension to my love and respect for him. And deepened my understanding about what had kept us apart for years. That we overcame this barrier even without understanding the mind body connection has meaning, of course. But

that we might have overcome it earlier and more. Sadly, I can only wonder what might have been.

Helping People to Understand Overeating

Issues in and around food, weight, and overeating have been a big part of my practice. In some way or another, these issues seem to have affected almost every single client I've ever had. I've also found it rather easy to feel compassion in all these cases. The result of my childhood exposure to my mother's anorexia no doubt.

Even so, I've often felt inadequate with regard to having answers. And while I did help in many ways, I always felt something missing.

Since making these discoveries though, I feel a confidence I never felt before, especially with regard to how I explain to people why they overeat. And while I do have a way to go before I can turn this knowledge into a practical program, even now, my clients feel a less ashamed. And more hopeful. And excited to discover these things together.

On a personal level, this discovery has changed me as well. For instance, I now have a daily relationship with food and my weight I've been wanting to have for what seems like forever. And yes. When I look at myself in the mirror, I still do wonder at times why I feel this struggle, what with me being thinner than many folks who struggle with weight. Still, if you cannot understand why a normal sized man might feel this way, then you might want to explore your own beliefs about food, weight, and overeating, including how normal and even small sized people can daily fight an inner war with food as well.

How many people struggle with food today? I'm not sure I know too many who do not, including me. Thankfully, learning to slow the rate at which I notice my body's sensations has changed a lot of this. Permanently. And for the better. So much so in fact that I still find it hard to believe it could have been this simple. Years of struggles to end my war with food and all the time, the key was right in front of me; slow down and notice the sensations in your gut. Not just mentally note them, but sense them, the actual sensations, *in an ongoing way*.

Add to this the idea that this led me to see how Ayurvedic system of seven chakras so mirrors my decimal body speedometer and you have one heck of a good idea of how much this book has affected me. Certainly in and around food and eating. And definitely in and around every other physical aspect of my life. Including sitting meditation.

The Idea of Momentary Hollowness in Relationships

I no longer remember a time wherein I did not speak consciously about the blankness in peoples' eyes. Most of my clients don't either. So while I do

know there was such a time once, it's been so long, I take doing it for granted most days.

Know that seeing this blankness is what assures me people who do wrongdoings are innocent. Thus I see discovering the significance of empty eyes as one of my greatest blessings.

This said, because of my new awareness with regard to how the gut is a second brain, I now have a second level of blankness to observe and note. The blankness which occurs in the gut. And like learning to notice blankness in the eyes, noticing blankness in the gut affects even conversations between well connected human beings.

What I'm saying is this. While I'm used to noting blankness in peoples' eyes, I had never realized the importance of feeling an emptiness in my gut. And yes. I have been using this feeling when the room is in turmoil. But as a line by line feedback loop in normal conversation? This alone has taken my relationships to a whole other level. From a conversation by conversation level to a line by line and at times, word by word level.

What has been the result? I feel a deeper level of honesty, both in my interpersonal relationship and with myself. I also see more of what happens on the periphery of relationships and that intuition is more about sensing what machines do not register than about sensing some magical mystery substance.

Sensation at low levels is not imagination. It's intuition. And trusting this low level sensation adds a whole layer to what can be known and chosen. Especially in interpersonal relationships.

Feeling A Renewed Interest in the Works of the Great Philosophers

I have felt forever that I am a philosopher at heart. Yet as I began my search for the roots of the mind body connection, I realized I have never really known what it was that drove someone to be a philosopher. Let alone how Descartes was in many ways the impetus for much of modernity.

That he invented Cartesian coordinates and said *cogito ergo sum*. Yes. I've known that. But to know from the inside the search for the how the mind and body connect? Wow. What a trip.

And now?

After writing this book, I find myself longing to revisit all the great philosophers. To take a look at what they thought through the eyes of one for whom life has finally prescribed the right eye glasses.

I also find that I can now read even philosophies I've never read before and find my bearings easily in how and in what they state, merely by noticing what they assume about how the mind and body do or do not connect.

What makes this so personally meaningful? The idea that by discovering an

underlying syntax hidden within the beliefs and lives of so many great men and women melds me indelibly to them in their searches for this very same comfort. And truth. And mystery. And awe.

To wit. I now feel more alive and more human than ever before. Moreover, the mystery of how life entwines with the flesh now feels more tangible. More palpable. And more personally human. And indelibly real. .

This Chapter's Session Notes

Therapists used to talk a lot about something called, “closure.” To me, they were describing yet one more of talk therapy’s false ideas. The idea that human relationships close. In physical ways, they do, of course. But in the mind and body? I think not.

So how about in books? Is there ever such a thing as getting closure in a book? Can there in fact ever be a final word or a last remark?

A final word? No. And if you don’t believe me, ask a writer. There is always one more tweak left in a writer’s pen. This necessary evil, in fact, to stop tweaking your words, is one of the main things which makes writing hard. Knowing when to stop when you know there can always be more.

So why subtitle this section, “closing comments on closing comments” then?

Perhaps because I so like making fun of reified theoretical words and ideas.

Perhaps because I so desire a world in which people can use words like smiles.

And perhaps because I so dislike the idea that so much of talk therapy teaches people to speak therapy type words like “inappropriate” rather than “I don’t like that.” Or “abuse” rather than “you hurt me.” And “closure” rather than “goodbye.”

All this of course is in part why I’ve titled the book as I have; Plain Talk about Talk Therapy. Which brings me to a question I need to ask you. Have I talked plainly enough for you in the book? In spots, I suspect not. For this, I apologize. Know I do this as I’m trying to build a bridge between what is known and accepted; traditional therapies, and what I know to be true, like the mind body connection. Moreover, doing this requires I use some of those technical words and phrases. Ergo the times wherein I have used psycho babblish words and terms.

Then too, there are technical sounding terms and words I have come to love during the writing of this book. *Psychophysical* being but one. *Mind First people* and *Body First people* being another.

As for my unanswered questions, I’m not sure I even know where to begin.

I'd certainly like to have a systemized pragmatic therapy which could cure, not mask, both ADD and overeating. On this front, I'm working and taking baby steps each week.

Addictions is another area in which I'd like to formalize a better approach. Here I suspect the show first tell first method might be useful. Along with teaching people to recognize the before and after states of consciousness in their bodies as well.

Next on my agenda though is a book I've partially written already. Tentatively titled, "What Kills the Love of Learning." I actually had this book all but finished. At least I thought I did. Until my mind body discoveries tilted the whole game into reset.

This then is where I'll be focusing my attentions next. On children. On learning. And on how not knowing about the mind body connection has prevented us from learning more.

Until the next book then.

I hope you are well,

Steven

