

# **The Satir Growth Model: Theory and practice**

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Jean McLendon, mentored by family-therapy pioneer Virginia Satir, is recognized internationally as a leading Satir practitioner and trainer. The Satir approach is central to Jean's work, whether she is working with individuals, couples, groups, or organizations. In addition to her own clinical practice, Jean has been involved in executive and leadership development training for over 30 years. She has traveled extensively, teaching therapists, managers, and consultants. Jean has also published widely on her approach.

The heart of Jean's methodology is based on the belief that congruence is the single most powerful strategic intervention for changing the health, relationships and performance of individuals, families and organizations.

# Satir Therapeutic Beliefs

- **CHANGE** is possible. Even if external change is limited, internal change is possible.
- **PARENTS** do the best they can at any given time.
- **WE** all have the internal resources we need to cope successfully and to grow.
- **WE** have choices, especially in terms of responding to stress instead of reacting to situations.
- **THERAPY** needs to focus on health and possibilities instead of pathology.
- **HOPE** is a significant component or ingredient for change.
- **PEOPLE** connect on the basis of being similar and grow on the basis of being different.
- **A** major goal of therapy is to become our own choice makers.
- **WE** are all manifestations of the same life force.
- **MOST** people choose familiarity over comfort, especially during times of stress.
- **THE** problem is not the problem; coping is the problem.
- **FEELINGS** belong to us. We all have them.
- **PEOPLE** are basically good. To connect with and validate their own self-worth, they need to find their own inner treasure.
- **PARENTS** often repeat the familiar patterns from their growing up times, even if the patterns are dysfunctional.
- **WE** cannot change past events, only the effects they have on us.
- **APPRECIATING** and accepting the past increases our ability to manage our present.
- **ONE** goal in moving toward wholeness is to accept our parental figures as people and meet them at their level of personhood rather than only in their roles.
- **COPING** is the manifestation of our level of self-worth. The higher our self-worth, the more wholesome our coping.
- **HUMAN** processes are universal and therefore occur in different settings, cultures, and circumstances.
- **PROCESS** is the avenue of change. Content forms the context in which change can take place.
- **CONGRUENCE** and high self-esteem are major goals in the Satir model.
- **HEALTHY** human relationships are built on equality of value.

—Virginia Satir

## **Satir Recipe:**

To raise self-esteem for healing, learning, growing and changing at any system level: individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, etc.

**Ingredients:** (unique SELF with its special seasonings is essential)

<b><u>R</u>esourcefulness</b>	Access self-esteem maintenance kit tools.
<b><u>E</u>mpowerment</b>	Author new possibilities and choices.
<b><u>C</u>ongruence</b>	Connect from positive authenticity.
<b><u>I</u>nnner system</b>	Surface the inner essence which drives outside behaviors.
<b><u>P</u>atterns</b>	Explore family of origin interpersonal patterns for coping w/ 7P's.
<b><u>E</u>xternalization</b>	Externalize inner world with multi-sensory methods (such as the mandala, self-esteem tools, ice-berg, ingredients of an interaction, copings, sculpting, to actualize growth, and 7A's)

## **Satir System – Seven P's**

(primary interpersonal process pattern areas)

1. PAIN: Grieving & Healing
2. PLEASURE: Celebrating & Recognizing
3. PROBLEMS: Learning & Changing
4. PLANS: Creating & Futuring
5. PERFORMANCE: Commitment & Competence
6. POWER: Energy & Connectivity
7. POSSIBILITY: Belief & Hope

\* Healthy process patterns promote: Understanding, Connection, Respect, and Trust \*

## Satir System – Seven A’s

- 1. Awareness**                      Becoming aware of desire for change begins the cycle.
- 2. Acceptance**                      Before we can make a meaningful change, we need to accept ourselves for who we are, appreciate our successes, and acknowledge that our copings arose as survival strategies.
- 3. Authorship**                      Owning of our behaviors and choices. We author our life script and can therefore begin our change process right now.
- 4. Articulation**                      With this step we make our intent to adopt new behaviors known to others. Sometimes, we ask others for help.
- 5. Application**                      We identify opportunities, consider choices, and try out new ways of dealing with situations to practice new behaviors.
- 6. Activism**                          Once we’ve integrated our new behaviors, we begin to be able to recognize the desire for change in others and to offer support and guidance.
- 7. Altruism**                          Building a solid and sustainable core foundation of care and congruence in our own life allows us to give from love by dipping into our unique and overflowing spiritual well.

Process begins by fostering *awareness*, then adding safety and support to create the *acceptance* needed for catalyzing *authorship*. Ideas, feelings and behaviors can be *articulated* for support and further exploration. These new learnings can then be *applied* in one’s life as needed and desired. *Activism* then emerges, than wholeness, not addiction and avoidance. *Altruism* becomes a possibility with the experience of internal abundance.

# The SCULPTING PROCESS

Satir's use of sculpting as a change process incorporates the Seven A's

1. Awareness ("This is real.")
2. Acceptance ("This is me.")
3. Authorship ("I can do something about this.")
4. Articulation ("I'm going public for accountability and support.")
5. Application ("These are my choices...how I can change my world.")
6. Activism ("This is how I can participate in changing the world.")
7. Altruism ("I have an abundance...I want to give.")

Sculpting offers the star and role players an opportunity to externalize feelings, perceptions, expectations, and longings that are embedded in the system's communications. Observing one's self within the context of the larger system creates awareness and provides a foundation for exploration, choice, and practice.

Steps: (Each step reflects partnering between the guide and the client/star.)

1. Centering (self, star and audience). Check trust level, availability of support and readiness for exploration. (Awareness)
2. Star sets up a visual stress sculpt of the system being studied using role players. Star has a stand-in for him/her self. What do you see? What are you feeling? (Awareness and Acceptance).
3. Guide encourages the star to "take-in" the picture. What stands out to you? What meanings are you making? What makes sense to you? (Authorship and Articulation)
4. Guide assists star to step into the sculpt, and then facilitates real time congruent dialogue with role players. (Articulation and Application)
5. Guide instructs the system to shift in order to maximize comfort, connection and congruence. This is the vision of a more positive future based on universality of human emotional and a positive family trance state. (Application)
6. De-Role the role players. Process learnings, longings, defenses for star, role players, audience and guide. What meaning did the sculpt have for each person in their life today? What learnings might you apply in your work with clients? (Activism) What more do I need to do for myself so I can share fully with others? (Altruism)

# Satir's Self-Esteem Maintenance Tool Kit

*Metaphors of resources needed to maintain one's self-esteem*

## **Detective Hat**

Helps in the search for logical explanations, the ability to analyze and make sense of one's environment.

## **Golden Key**

Opens one's interest in the unknown, innovation, and new possibilities.

## **Yes-No Medallion**

Reflects and supports the building of boundary definition and integrity through awareness and clarity of one's real "yes's" and "no's."

## **Courage Stick**

Helps muster courage to take risks when one feels the need for both caution and change; helps us to make changes despite difficulties.

## **Wishing Wand**

Embodies our dreams, desires, aspirations, and yearnings. These are motivating; they provide energy and commitment for overcoming great challenges.

## **Wisdom Box**

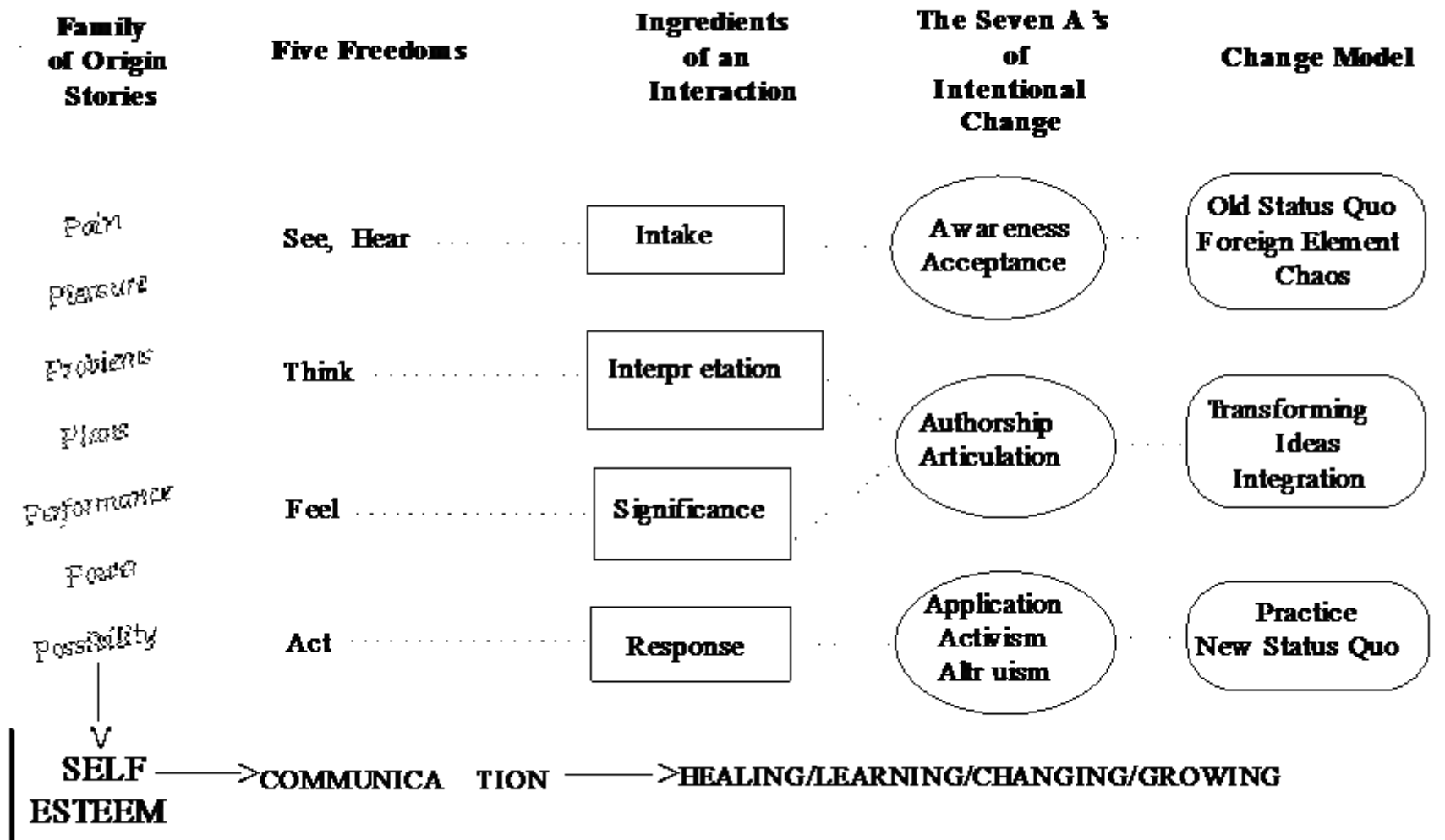
Holds the human ability to be inwardly guided toward wholeness and health. The wisdom box presents the miracle of being human, and of finding one's true path.

## **Heart**

Reminds us that humans have feelings. The ability to care and have compassion are essential for congruence. (Tool added by Jean McLendon).



# SATIR SUMMARY



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