

# The Satir Approach: Essence and Essentials

## Presentation Overview

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*"Maybe I had so much success with people,  
not because of what I know but because of who I am..."*

-Virginia Satir

The Satir Model is focused on the whole human being, bringing about transformational change within the individual, family and social systems. The therapeutic process is experiential, systemic, positively directional, and change oriented. We are all part of a universal system: The Life Force that provides energy for growth.

A model for growth, focused on potential, and challenging the awareness of human beings on the expression of Self and the crucial need to value self and to feel validated, Self-Esteem is the cornerstone of Satir work.

Changing consciousness from competition to empowering, from self-pity to congruence.

The process requires the therapist have a high level of therapeutic competence, demonstrate congruence, and provide safety and guidance.

I will demonstrate "The Iceberg," one of Satir's vehicles for change, a powerful process of internal transformation, and share how I use the process with individuals, couples, families and myself. Participants will have an opportunity to practice the process in a triad. Session will wrap up with a discussion on the concept of self-validation.

## 1. VIRGINIA SATIR

- The person - the courage to be different, build her theory, push boundaries
- The work - First family in 1951, power of family system, self-worth and congruence
- Evolution – broadening the context from individuals to families, community, larger systems, the world

- Family is microcosm of the world. To change the family is to change the world.
- Her vision and spiritual connection encouraged her to take her work worldwide
- Books and publications for further study

## 2. ESSENCE OF THE SATIR MODEL

- We are manifestations of the Universal Life Force
- The essence of Satir Approach is founded on Virginia's belief that human beings are spiritual beings, magical and everyone has the potential for growth
- Main goal is becoming more fully human
- Satir Model is universal - based on universal human qualities and resources...can be taught in every culture
- Lifelong learning and growth
- Ultimate purpose and meaning is growth: to connect with Life Force and spirit; to raise self-esteem; learn and practice congruence; achieve internal change and transformation; let go of what is no longer useful; appreciate self and other; live the Third Birth
- Third Birth: "...when we become our own choice makers. Recognizing and accepting the personhood of our parents, we can accept and respect our own personhood, and our freedom to choose and be responsible for our decisions and actions." (quote taken from Satir's unfinished and unpublished book)

## 3. CORE BELIEFS OF THE SATIR MODEL

- The family system is the first context of learning.
- Parents do the best they know.
- Change is always possible internally.
- People are of equal value. They need help to manifest their humanness.
- We have the internal resources to move beyond our basic coping level. We can change the impact of early learnings.
- Feelings belong to us. We are in charge.
- The problem is not the problem the coping is.
- Hope is the ingredient of change.
- People connect on the basis of sameness and grow through their differences.
- Similarities help us to connect; differences help us to respect our uniqueness.

- The therapist use of self is based on congruence and connecting with the Life Force of the client

#### 4. GOALS OF THE SATIR MODEL

- Raise self-esteem: Self-esteem is one's own feeling or interpretation about one's own value.
- Encourage people to become their own choice-maker. There is always choice.
- Encourage self-responsibility. Self-responsibility is an ingredient of maturity.
- Facilitate people to be congruent. Congruence is a state of awareness, acceptance and openness manifested as a harmonious flow of life energy through all levels of experiential dimensions of a person's body, mind, feelings and essence.

#### 5. ELEMENTS OF THE SATIR MODEL

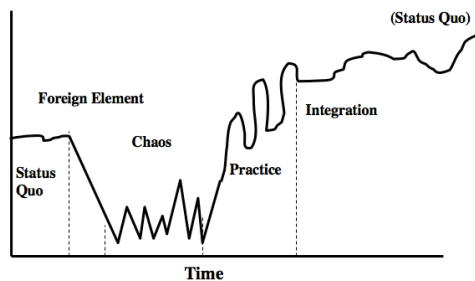
- Experiential
- Systemic – therapy must work within the intrapsychic and interactive systems in which the star experiences his or her life.
- Positively Directional – the focus is on health and possibilities accessing resources and anticipating growth.
- Change Focused – therapy is transformational change
- Therapist's use of Self – the congruence and authenticity of the therapist is essential
- Therapy is a Learning Process – fostering responsibility and choice making.
- The role of therapist is to provide opportunity for people to find their own life force.

#### 6. PROCESSES AND SCUPTING

- Satir processes are tools and vehicles for change: Triads, The survival stances Family Map, Communication Model, Congruence, Ingredients of an Interaction, Transformation of Rigid Rules to Guidelines, Wheel of Influence, Parts Party, Mandala, Temperature Reading, Family Reconstruction, Iceberg, meditations, exercises, and more
- Processes provide a framework to experience, see, hear and change individual and systemic issues

- Sculpting: The goal of sculpting and role playing is to:
  - o Make the hidden obvious
  - o Make the abstract concrete
  - o Make the implicit explicit
  - o Make the covert overt
  
- Coping Stances, the survival stances
- Congruence
- Acceptance and appreciation of self and other
  
- Growth Model - Transformational

The change process:



## 7. DEMONSTRATION OF “THE ICEBERG” PROCESS

- Overview of the process
- Demonstration
- How I use the process with individuals, couples, families and myself
- Practice in triads
- Discussion about practice experience, questions and comments

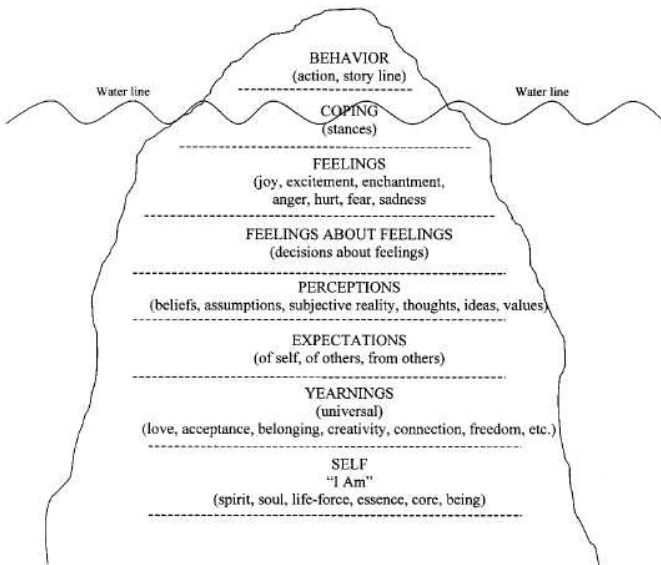


FIGURE 1

The Personal Iceberg Metaphor

## 8. DEMONSTRATION OF "GROWING UP" PROCESS

Five Freedoms:

- To See and hear what is here, instead of what should be, was, or will be
- To Say what one feels and thinks Instead of what one should
- To Feel what one feels, Instead of what one ought
- To Ask for what one wants instead on always waiting for permission
- To Take Risks on one's own behalf, instead of choosing to be "secure" and not rock the boat

## 9. SELF-VALIDATION IS CORNERSTONE OF SATIR WORK

- Discuss the concept of self-validation
- Expression of self
- The need to value self and feel validated

## 10. RECOMMENDED BOOKS, PUBLICATIONS

The Use of Self in Therapy, Satir and Baldwin, 1987

The New Peoplemaking, Satir, 1988:

The Satir Model: Family Therapy and Beyond, Satir, Banmen, Gerber, Gomori, 1991

Personal Alchemy: The Art of Satir Family Reconstruction, Gomori, Adaskin (2009)

Satir Family Therapy in Action, Gomori, 2015

And additionally,

SELECTION OF VIRGINIA SATIR BOOKS:



35

VIRGINIA SATIR BOOKS PUBLISHED IN ASIA:



38

QUOTES FROM The New Peoplemaking, VIRGINIA SATIR, 1988:

**“We are manifestations of the Universal Life Force: providing the energy for all growth”**

**“We are universal and we are unique”**

***“I believe spirituality is our connection to the universe and is basic to our existence...recognizing the power of spirit is what healing, living and spirituality are all about.”***

***“I consider the first step in any change is to contact the spirit. Then together we can clear the way to release the energy for going towards health.”***

***“We are spiritual beings in human form. How we apply our spiritual essence shows how we value life”***

***“My spirituality equals my respect for the life force in myself and all living things. Bringing each of us to the awareness that we are part of the Life Force energy and we are unique opens the door to wholeness, freedom and health.”***