



EVOLUTIONARY HEALING
INSTITUTE

Somatic Awareness – There is growing scientific evidence that how we experience our bodies can powerfully influence whether we get sick, how we get sick, and how we manage illness. Somatic awareness is the ability to perceive, interpret, and act on the basis of internal bodily sensations.

For more information we recommend “*Minding the Body, Clinical Uses of Somatic Awareness*” by Donald Bakal, 1999 The Guilford Press. This book is available through Amazon.

SOMATIC FUSION™

By: Paul Canali, DC
[Evolutionary Healing Institute](#)

In this day and age most of us live in a society that does not encourage or give significance to inner feeling. We are generally taught to regard pain, disease, and emotional disturbances as unwelcome obstacles in our lives, rather than opportunities for learning and transformation. Therefore, when annoying emotional or physical issues arise we are taught to suppress the symptoms in one way or another so we can just move on with life. In our society, this approach usually means taking drugs, undergoing surgery, verbal therapy, or simple denial. These practices go on and on and the question we have to ask ourselves is – are we getting better? Why, when comparing humans to other species, are disease and suffering in humans so rampant and so disproportionate? Are the present methodologies really solving our life problems, or are they just suppressing them so they can emerge again in another form later in life? If we were to hear these signals from our bodies and minds earlier, and if upon hearing these alarms we were to listen instead of suppress, could we avoid multiple issues of physical and emotional suffering? Could we live with a far higher level of health than we can presently imagine?

We never have been taught the language of internal or somatic communication and awareness that is brain-body feedback. Most of our concerns have been about self-gratification, being pain free, and basic survival. We have no long-term strategy of health or advancing human development. Somatic Fusion™ is about developing parts of your brain that have been dormant and seldom used. It is a skill that has to be practiced over and over to potentiate, or rewire, the brain. It is essential in the 21st century for humans to evolve their brains with new and evolutionary approaches to life stresses and diseases. One of life's greatest ironies is that in

order for us to truly be healthy and content and on a path of continual development, we must merge with the avoided and often painful parts of our biology.

That's why when asking someone to breathe, tune in and sense, it is often difficult, because many of the things we feel are not pleasant. Feelings, both physical and emotional, that have been avoided most of our lives may begin to surface. One can become fearful, overly aroused and even re-traumatized if not given the tools and skills to negotiate this challenging terrain.

In fact, this process of avoidance and disassociation can happen so quickly that we can be unconscious of the fact that we are even doing avoidance behavior. This is why it is imperative to have trained therapists in all fields to guide, support and provide new and reproducible tools for this brain-body reconnection process. No long term healing, learning or evolutionary development can happen regardless of the therapy, practice or technique you may currently employ unless this brain-body connection is made.

~ Dr. Paul Canali, 2007

Somatic Fusion™ is a key concept in Dr. Canali's approach, called Unified Healing Therapy™. This approach is based on the idea that the body can be taught advanced ways of sensing and communicating, and with this ability develops new powerful, consciously interactive healing strategies.

Somatic awareness is at the cutting edge of the mind-body interface and represents a way to truly empower individuals in their efforts to maintain and restore good health. Somatic awareness constitutes and innate wisdom that people have about their own psychobiological health. It involves utilizing sensory information that is readily available, and that when utilized can contribute to all aspects of health, from preventing migraine, hypertension, and heart disease to regulating auto-immune diseases, and possibly to altering the course of cancer. For virtually all symptoms, diseases, and illness conditions, the mind's awareness of the body's sensations has a very significant role to play.

~ Donald Bakal, Minding the Body, 1999, p.4

In recent years, there has been considerable development in the area of brain imaging devices, like P.E.T. scans and f.M.R.I. These devices have led to incredible breakthroughs in the area of neuroscience. As a result of this research, new understanding of how the brain affects the body, and how the body affects the brain has emerged. For the first time it is possible to actually see what areas of the brain are involved in a variety of thought processes. Unfortunately, it has also been discovered that most of us are disconnected from the parts of our brains that give us deep conscious connection to our bodies. Incredible as it may sound; most of our lives are driven by unconscious and repressed feelings and emotions that take control over our physical bodies, not to mention our emotional states.

Our brains and bodies know far more than is normally available to us. We are conscious of only a fragment of what we deeply know. The central nervous system perceives and processes a great

body of information that is stored outside the range of everyday awareness. Some of this information is best handled on an unconscious basis. But conflict, pain, and unresolved problems can become the source of chronic uneasiness, block growth, and even illness. For most of us, the experiences of hurt and alienation in our childhood and from our culture have caused us to lose trust in our bodies and our feelings.

~ Ann Weiser Cornell, PhD, The Power of Focusing

A good example of this phenomenon is the current epidemic of obesity in America. In obesity, a normal healthy communication between digestive system and brain is lost and replaced with eating not out of hunger but out of suppressing unwanted emotions. Once we lose the ability to sense normal healthy feedback between brain and body, early warning signs of any disease process can go undetected, and we can end up surprised by a health crisis. We have learned to rely on machines and experts to hear early messages from our bodies, when in fact we have the ability built in to our biological and cognitive systems to pick up these signals ourselves.

This split (between the mind and body) cannot be overcome by a knowledge of the energetic processes in the body. Knowledge itself is a surface phenomenon and belongs to the realm of the ego. One has to feel the flow and sense the course of the excitation in the body. To do this, however, one must give up the rigidity of one's ego control so that the deep body sensations can reach the surface.

~ Alexander Lowen, MD

Here at **Evolutionary Healing**, you will often hear your doctor or therapist asking you to “tune in to what you are sensing or experiencing at this moment” or, “direct your attention into a specific area of your body.” What we are trying to do is reestablish the precious link that has been lost between brain and body. What we are also doing is establishing a somato-sensory or body-brain connection. We call this *Somatic Fusion™* and this concept is an important aspect of Dr. Paul Canali's *Unified Healing Therapy™*.

When human beings are exposed to high levels of stress, injury, or painful experience their brains disconnect from an inner awareness, or felt sense, of the body. Anything that hurts us, such as mistreatment from others, accidents, natural disaster, physical and emotional abuse, and accumulated stress can cause this condition. It is a biological, unconscious physical state that freezes us in time, keeps us stuck, attached to the past, and unable to move forward in life. It is the source of chronic pain, disease, suffering, fear, and anxiety. It is the main reason why people don't heal from any condition. Understanding how it affects each and every one of us is the most important secret that any therapist or human being can learn.

~ Dr. Paul Canali, 2005

When we are exposed to physical and emotional trauma, or even prolonged high-levels of stress, our brain and nervous system produce a fear-based physiological state called survival mode (see EHI's handouts on *Survival Mode*, and *The Autonomic Nervous System*). In an effort to defend, protect, and simply survive, the brain and nervous system disengage from an inner feeling or felt sense of the body. We literally disconnect from feeling our bodies and our emotions, and become numb to what is going on inside of ourselves. In Survival Mode, the ability to perceive and work with somatic information inside the body without becoming aroused and overwhelmed is absent. Along with numbing out the pain is the loss of the precious ability to feel, to focus, and to communicate with the deepest, most intimate and joyous parts of our selves.

The ego feels especially trapped by the body's vulnerability to pain. Pain, suffering, the intense sensitivity of living tissue and raw nerve – these understandably terrorize the ego, and it seeks to withdraw from the source of pain, to numb and freeze the body so as to reduce its vulnerability to painful vibrations. Although the ego cannot control the body's involuntary sensations, it can and does learn to withdraw awareness from the body, to globally deaden and desensitize it...but this body-deadening is accomplished only at a heavy price. For if it is true that the body is the source of pain, it is also true that it is the source of pleasure. The ego, in killing the source of pain, at the same time kills the source of pleasure. No more suffering...and no more joy.

~ Ken Wilbur, *No Boundary*, 2001

This loss of connection can happen all at once or gradually over time, and for that reason go unnoticed for years. As a result of this lost communication and connection, physical and mental diseases can creep up on us unobserved. These “disease” conditions only become a priority in our awareness when the various symptoms are so great they can no longer be ignored. Research shows that in fact, most diseases give us early warning signs but we don't feel them until it is usually far advanced.

If you try to be still in your mind for even a few seconds you will notice that there is an endless stream of thought that can consume your attention and negatively affect the body and mind.

Through developing the skill of *Somatic Fusion*[™] you will learn how to direct your attention into the body in a positive and evolutionary way. Immediately upon learning how to do this you can begin to have an entirely different life experience. The body can actually be our teacher, an expression of the unconscious mind. By learning to re-establish the broken connections between body and brain true innate healing will take place. You will begin to experience the world quite differently, because you will have new tools or resources with which to navigate and resolve inner conflict.

Fighting against and or hiding from unpleasant or painful sensations will generally make things worse. The more feelings need to be avoided, the more energy is spent on keeping them at bay – energy that should have been used for feeling alive and open to new experience.

~ Bessel A. van der Kolk, MD, Boston University

UHT™ is a scientific, reproducible, life-changing way to reconnect and develop into what humans are supposed to be. That is, not living in pain, fear, or victims of our past traumas (Survival Mode). Most importantly no longer separate from our inner biology, we are able to detect dis-ease before it becomes disease and suffering and before our bodies become overwhelmed. Not bound to disease, trauma or a painful past, energies that were previously frozen are now liberated and available for higher states of consciousness and even higher stages of human development.

For further reading from Evolutionary Healing Institute™ (EHI), see the following handouts:

- *Evolutionary Healing Institute™*
- *Unified Healing Therapy™*
- *Enteric Brain Technique™*
- *What is Suffering? A Message from Dr. Paul Canali*
- *Consciousness & Healing*
- *The Autonomic Nervous System*
- *Survival Mode*

Recommended Reading:

- Peter Levine PhD, *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma*, North Atlantic Books, 1997.
- Eugene T. Gendlin, PhD, *Focusing*, Bantam Books, 1981.
- Ann Weisner Cornell, PhD, *The Power of Focusing: A Practical Guide to Emotional Self-Healing*, New Harbinger Publications, Inc., 1996.
- Donald Bakal, *Minding the Body: Clinical Uses of Somatic Awareness*, The Guilford Press, 1999.

Copyright 2007© by Evolutionary Healing. Printed in the United States of America. All rights reserved.
This document or parts thereof may not be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the author, Dr. Paul Canali, D.C.