



# SANE Newsletter

Newsletter of the Sensory Awareness Foundation

Fall 2007

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Two experimenters at our recent conference.

Note: All class photos in this issue are from the conference compliments of Lisa Goettel.

## Breathing as Teacher

By Charlotte Selver

excerpt from Chapter 40, *Reclaiming Vitality and Presence*

Just as our heart beats, breathing can happen without effort, without being directed. The air exchange happens all by itself. When the exhalation wants to become deeper, let it become deeper. Don't direct it. Even the slightest attempt to breathe is unnecessary. It happens by itself.

Do you feel your heart beat right now? You may want to use one of your hands to feel it. You don't have to tell your heart, "beat." It beats by itself. Wonderful! My heart beats! Enjoy it! Here it is, a sign of life. You have no duty; it beats anyhow.

You can even feel how it's easiest for your heart to beat just by being peaceful, feeling the natural movements of your own heart which you don't create. How do

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You can help support the future of Sensory Awareness

Please renew your SAF yearly membership now for 2008

... or become a new member. With your membership you ensure that the Sensory Awareness Foundation can continue with its work through publications, web site, conferences, sponsored workshops and more ...

Memberships are by calendar year. If you have not renewed your membership for 2008 please do so now. Thank you!

For more information and membership benefits see page 9 and 10 and the President's letter.

## The Value of Sensing

By Charles Brooks

excerpt from chapter 4, *Reclaiming Vitality and Presence*

Attention to sensing quiets what is compulsive in our thought, so that the mind becomes free and available for its normal function of perception. When the radio in the mind is stilled, everything else can come to life. The camper's lantern is blown out, and the darkness fills with stars as the woods deepen and widen for him. The primitive world in which things appear and disappear, bloom and fade, eat and are eaten can be perceived surrounding us - and including us. I myself have feared this world, in which I have had little practice in living. I have spent much of my life in the half makebelieve world of words and know that, though it may often bore one,

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it is comfortable, and one is loath to give it up. This is the familiar and the "secure," even in its insecurity. When it seems inadequate one can always dwell in the past or add a new dimension like heaven, or tomorrow. In the world of perception the present is infinite; the only authority is I, the perceiver. We cannot know the future, and only the least trace of the past. But when we breathe the air of the night woods, and let their forms and almost imperceptible sounds into us, or when we stand silent in the sunlight that glows on rocks and leaves and city buildings, and perhaps feel the earth sustaining us, we know that we exist, at first hand, surrounded by innumerable other beings who exist too. Need we ask more?

The study of this work is our whole organismic functioning in the world we perceive, of which we are a part-our



personal ecology: how we go about our activities, how we relate to people, to situations, to objects. We aim to discover what is natural in this functioning and what is conditioned: what is our nature, which evolution has designed to keep us in touch with the rest of the world, and what has become our "second nature," as Charlotte likes to call it, which tends to keep us apart. We shall discover a spectrum spreading from the perceived to the conceived, in which our upbringing has found us at one end and pushed us to the other, where it has held us. In sensing, we shall gradually return to that broad area in the center of the spectrum where our birthright is balanced with our culture, and from where we are freer to move in any direction.

Editor's Note: We intend to have more *Personal Stories in Sensing....* to help document the importance of this work in peoples' lives. We invite you to send us yours.

### *Personal Stories in Sensing....*

*In the early 70s I had my first opportunity to study with Charlotte and Charles. The whole experience with them was one of coming home to my self. At that time I was a student of dance, and I remember that during a break - this was at the New York School for Social Research in New York, and there was a veranda outside the classroom - I started to dance and had the experience that "it" was dancing me. It was effortless and I felt myself being carried like a sail in the wind.*

*Later, I had a dream in which I was having a similar experience and Charlotte was there nodding and smiling, "The less you do, the more you dance," she repeated several times.*

*Pamela Strong, San Francisco*