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*Satir Around the Globe*

## Living a Spirit Filled Life: Being in the “I AM” for Everything

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Third level congruence reflects Satir’s overall philosophy which recognizes the inner life force of human beings. When we connect at our universal essence, we have the ability to achieve a new universal consciousness ...

Virginia Satir et al., *The Satir Model*, 1991.

Satir described our essence of being or our life force as the “I AM.” It formed the base of her ice berg model of the human being, and it was this level that joined all humans together as One. She believed that we all have access to this expansive and inherent consciousness and indeed it was the life force of all of us. I believe that if Satir continued on her growth and expansion of her work, indeed she would be Avant-garde in both living and outwardly practicing and teaching therapy by how to work from the source of the I AM. I also believe that the “magic” of Satir and her work was that she worked and lived from her connection to the “I AM” and in turn was able to connect to this inner life force for all she came in contact with.

My own life experiences and work using the Satir theory and therapeutic tools led me to my own life force exploration. I wanted to explore how I could maintain my own “magic” moments that I describe as a “red carpet life.” On the red carpet, connected to my life essence, everything naturally and effortlessly rolled into place in front of me and I just walked through life in peace and happiness. I can count multiple distinct times in my life where this has occurred. I can also count multiple distinct times where I felt the presence of “God” work through me, guide me or heal me. One pivotal point on my journey of connection was a trip in Banff National Park, Alberta Canada. It was a red carpet experience for myself and a friend, completely peaceful and spiritually flowing. From that moment, we both decided to live as if our life were a red carpet. We decided that living in that feeling of complete love and connection, or the “I AM” was really our only true way to live. We called it *Living the Love in Life*.

For the next three years this was our goal and constant reminder. Are we living in love? Are we connected to our life source? What do we have to do to get back on the red carpet? Most days it felt that it would be so much easier if we lived in a monastery where we had no other distractions. Always it came down to “How do we live a spirit filled life in every moment in everything, everywhere, with everyone, even with all our distractions?” How can I possibly do this with all the demands of working full time and a single mom of three kids?

The answers that I found were presented in the workshop "Living a Spirit Filled Life: Being in the "I AM" for Everything." The beautiful part of the workshop was that my answers were also everyone else's answers as well. Participants were able to share their experiences and be validated that, yes, we are connected to spirit and yes we can live in the moment in the I AM.

### **WHAT IS THE "I AM?"**

"I believe (spirituality) is our connection to the universe and is basic to our existence" (Satir, 1988, p. 334).

"... We are all part of the same life force ... and we activate rather than create life" (Satir et al., 1991, p. 19).

"This intrinsically positive energy, also called life force, exerts wholesome pulls and pushes on us – physically, emotionally, and spiritual – throughout life" (Satir et al., 1991, p. 19).

Workshop participants could all identify what it felt like for them to feel connected to the source of their energy, to their life force. They could also identify that indeed we are all one and connected. Descriptors such as spaciousness, love, light, peace and connection were universally used for defining the "I AM."

### **HOW DO I ACCESS THE "I AM?"**

"I believe that we also have a pipeline to universal intelligence and wisdom through our intuition, which can be tapped through meditation, prayer, relaxation, awareness, the development of high self-esteem and a reverence for life" (Satir, 1988, p. 338).

"We can more easily reach this wise part of ourselves when we are calm inside, when we feel good about ourselves, and when we know how to take positive approaches. I refer to this as being centred" (Satir, 1988, p. 338).

"I keep on knowing more and more about the deeper layers of the universe without having to give up any of my other awareness. Life talks with life" (Satir, 1983, p. 265).

"I am convinced that all people can grow. It is a matter of connecting them with their inner resources. That is the therapeutic task" (Satir, 1983, p. 265).

Participants all spoke to the basics of how to access and connect to the I AM. The number one answer all begins with the basic breathe. Deep full breathes. Other answers included "feeling love; feeling and seeing light flow through me; and feeling centred into the body with all senses aware."

### **HOW CAN I BE THE "I AM" IN EVERYDAY LIFE?**

"Allow yourself to become intimately connected with all your parts. So free, to have options and to use those options freely and creatively. To know that whatever was in the past, was it the best that we could do, because it represented the best we knew. It

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represented the best in our consciousness. As we move forward knowing more, being more conscious, we also then become more connected with ourselves and in connecting with ourselves, we can form connections with others" (Satir et al., 1991, p. 300).

"Different perception of reality: one that is based on love .... Anything other than love is an illusion. In order to escape the illusion and find inner peace, remember that only love in a situation in real. Everything else is a mistake and doesn't exist. It must be forgiven. We must consciously be willing to let it go" (Williamson, 1992, p. 38).

"The only thing lacking in any situation is our own awareness of love" (Williamson, 1992, p. 39).

Living in the Present: "The present is the only time there is ..." "We place the past and the future as well into the hands of God" (Williamson, 1992, p. 70).

Participants discussed where in moments of daily stress they allowed abundance/universe/light/love to flow through them and wash over them. Breathing deep and slow, connecting to their life force. As this life force energy flowed through them, negativity, difficulty and dis-ease washed away and they were able to let it go, reconnecting to feelings of peace, calm and love.

#### **HOW CAN I BE THE "I AM" WITH OTHERS?**

"When I can be in touch with another person's spiritual energy, and he or she with mine, there is a change in the state of consciousness. We each have the whole world within us, and we each have special functions .... We are part of one universal whole. I am part of the whole and also the whole" (Satir et al., 1991, p. 81).

"It think now that this happened because I was working to contact their spirits, loving them as I went along .... It was as though I saw through to the inner core of each being, seeing the shining light of the spirit trapped in a thick black cylinder of limitation and self-rejection. My effort was to enable the person to see what I see; then together we could turn the dark cylinder into a large, lighted screen and build new possibilities" (Satir, 1988, p. 340-341).

"Everything that someone does, says the Course, is either "love or a call for love." If someone treats us with love, then of course love is the appropriate response. If they treat us with fear, we are to see their behaviour as a call for love" (Williamson, 1992, p. 99).

Participants experienced chances within the workshop to transform feelings of upset or negativity towards another within the state of connecting to their life force of love. After accessing love, they were able to have that love go towards the other, washing away negative feelings, transforming moments that they could remember and experiencing being with that person from a state of love and connection to their life force.

#### **HOW CAN I BE THE "I AM" VS THE EGO?**

"Distinguishing past from present experiences is an essential step toward discovering life's abundance .... Otherwise people will continue to limit how they express their life force. As a magnificent example of the universal energy that supports life, the human spirit is capable of many manifestations. Until people integrate their experiences and make sense of the world from a state of abundance, though, they limit themselves to expressing only a few aspects of themselves" (Satir et al., 1991, p. 225).

"Our entire network of fearful perceptions, all stemming from that first false belief in our separation from God and one another is called the ego .... Thought separated from love is a profound miscreation. It's our own power turned against ourselves" (Williamson, 1992, p. 35).

"The Ego is quite literally a fearful thought" (as cited in Foundation for Inner Peace, 1975).

Participants participated in an exercise of transforming fear they feel towards a certain event with their connection to their life force love and light.

## **BECOMING MORE FULLY HUMAN**

"3rd level of congruence is being in harmony with our Self and our life energy, spirituality or God. Change at any of these (congruence levels) produces an internal shift that lets the person feel more responsible" (Satir et al., 1991, p. 171).

"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 toward health. This is spirituality in action" (Satir, 1988, p. 341).

"The creation of life comes from a power much greater than our own. The challenge of becoming more fully human is to be open to and to contact that power we call by many names, God being one frequently used. I believe that successful living depends on our making and accepting a relationship to our life force" (Satir, 1988, p. 336).

Participants experienced staying connected to their "I AM" with eyes open in the room as a group without needing to fall back to their own comfortable mediation rituals. One of the most remarkable results and wonderful gifts presented to everyone at the workshop was during this exercise. As everyone breathed deeply and connected to their "I AM," the energy of the circle of human beings in the room tangibly changed. The energy was palpable and smooth. There was a connected peace and calmness. As we were all basking in the communal and connected life force energy, a participant innocently and with positive intent asked the room at what time the wine and cheese was to be held in the evening. Immediately the energy changed to one of tangible, palpable, light fizzy bubbles. When asked, everyone could feel how the energy they were all connected to changed. Immediately, they were reminded to just breathe and return to their "I AM." In the moment that everyone breathed and connected (it happened in the length of time it takes to take a breath) the energy returned to being palpably smooth, calm and peaceful. Connection took a breath, disconnection took a thought, and connection took a breath. The gift of this event was that every single person in the room (about 40) all had the exact same experience, physically illustrating the realness of oneness and connection when we are in our life force. We all flow through and from each other.

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The I AM is our power, our life force, our only true existence. We are all One in the ever expanding love filled being. This workshop allowed me to experience more than I would have every experienced on my own and reminded me once again of the power of living from our "I AM" and that the "I AM" is truly our source for all. I wish to appreciate all the participants for joining me in our collective experience and allowing each other to live and feel each other as the "I AM."

"Living a Spirit filled life is living from Spirit in connecting to your true source. It is deeply feeling the Omni presence of who you really are, letting this Love flow through you to others. It is surrendering deeply to inner wisdom knowing all is peace in every moment. It is becoming fully human." Karla Lang

Karla as worked in the mental health field for over 20 years. Trained as a Marriage and Family Therapist, she was introduced to Satir's training in 2000. Since then Karla has used Satir's models and ideas in her work as a family therapist, a children's counselor, a supervisor in children's mental health and in her everyday life and interactions. She has experienced that the true magic of healing connection comes from the place of I AM. Email: karla@livingtheloveinlife.com

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