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Integrating
Intuition Medicine[®]
and Psychotherapy for
Emotional Healing

Overall, my experience of integrating Intuition Medicine® and psychotherapy techniques has been a journey towards seeing us all as holistic beings. It has been important for me to have tools to address the multiple causes of our suffering, whether it is mental, physical, emotional or spiritual, because one always impacts the other.

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When I was going through my initial training in Intuition Medicine® over 22 years ago, I was at a major turning point in my life. I had left a successful career in theater and music production after feeling burned out from 80-hour work weeks during the height of the AIDS epidemic. I had lost over 50 colleagues and friends to the disease in the prior decade, and I was exhausted, lost and grief stricken. The only thing I knew for sure was that I wanted to experience and learn about healing, both so that I could heal myself, as well as be a healing presence among my remaining friends and community.

I remember after one evening class at the Academy of Intuition Medicine® in Sausalito, CA, my compassionate teacher Francesca McCartney approached and handed me the business card of a therapist she knew. At that point I had been silently crying through all of the meditations in class for a few months, and she could tell I needed support. Prior to

that moment, having been raised to just pick myself up “by the bootstraps” and keep going no matter what, I had not even considered therapy or talking about feelings as an option. But I trusted Francesca and knew I felt like a mess, so I began to see the therapist she recommended while also continuing with my studies at the Academy. Thus began my journey of personal healing through a combination of Intuition Medicine® and traditional psychotherapy, which eventually led to professional practices of both, after I obtained my Master of Intuition Medicine® Certificate, along with my psychotherapist license.

It was at the Academy of Intuition Medicine® that I was introduced to Elaine Aron’s work on the Highly Sensitive Person (HSP), and realized that I am an HSP. Apparently many HSP’s find their way to Francesca’s classes, and Intuition Medicine® has numerous ways to support people who are sensitive to energy. It is a comprehensive energy healing modality which includes teachings about energy anatomy systems in



the body, and how to access information about these using one's intuition. Some of the anatomy systems are similar to those found in other teachings, such as the chakras and aura. Others are unique to Intuition Medicine® and focus on the overall health of the brain and depth of connection between the spirit, body and mind. A fundamental tenet of Intuition Medicine® is that healing occurs when our spirit is deeply grounded in our physical/emotional body. As an energy healing modality and spiritual practice, it promotes connection to our higher self, and offers our analytical mind and emotions the opportunity to rest, as we trust in our inner spiritual wisdom to guide us through the healing process.

Then there is psychotherapy, which many people are aware focuses on emotional and mental health. In contrast to the very specific path to health taught in Intuition Medicine®, psychotherapy has a wide range of approaches. For just a quick sample: some therapists focus on cognitive techniques, problem solving and the development of a coherent narrative of one's life, while others focus on building emotional coping skills, or using art, story-telling, music or role play for expression of feelings and meaning making. There are body-oriented practices such as Somatic Experiencing, which focus on healing trauma through the breath, movement and somatic awareness, practices which examine our unconscious and shadow selves such as Jungian therapy, and even energy psychology, which combine techniques such as EFT/tapping with talk therapy. This is by no means a complete list, and it's safe to say that there is something out there for everyone depending on what feels like a good fit for you. I was fortunate to study a number of these as a practitioner, and found that I resonated most with approaches that combined somatic techniques, emotional coping skills, attachment theory, inner child work and inner family systems work. Using these tools on myself, I gradually recovered from my acute grief, as well as

from other aspects of my life I hadn't even realized needed processing or healing.

Professionally for a number of years, I worked as a therapist with a specialty in early childhood mental health, with children ages 0-21, and their parents. Initially I did so separately from my Intuition Medicine® practice, though each type of work informed the other. When one is doing therapy with young people, including babies, a key focus is to ensure that they are able to develop as normally as possible in light of whatever circumstances brought them to therapy. Many factors may interfere with normal development, including trauma, medical problems, family separation and loss. Family history of mental illness or parental conflict also impacts the child. In the case of Highly Sensitive Children (who gradually became my primary clients), if there are factors such as these, they may be even more dramatically impacted by them than a child who may not be highly sensitive. If there are not factors such as these, the highly sensitive child may still show distress because they are so attuned to aspects of their relationships and environment that others may not even notice. This can be attunement to sensory, emotional and energetic input that is not necessarily obvious to other people. One example of this is a highly sensitive child who is anxious all the time for no obvious reason, but who is picking up on a family member's anxiety even if no one is talking about it. Another example is a child who has trouble paying attention at school, because their senses are overstimulated by too much activity, noise and emotional content in their classroom.

Over time I realized that psychotherapy alone may fall short for highly sensitive people, especially children for this reason: often HSP's are having emotional or behavioral challenges because we are responding to and/or absorbing energy that is not our own. It is therefore critical for HSP's to learn to discern what



is ours vs. what belongs to others, and to have tools to manage the subtle and varied input we receive throughout the day. Many highly sensitive people have the experience of feeling painful emotions while also feeling it's important to pretend everything is ok—since no one else senses what they sense or feels what they feel, they aren't getting any validation of their internal experience. It is easy for a person in that situation to feel like they are the problem, even that they are crazy and everyone else is just fine. Many highly sensitive people are told we're over-reacting, taking things too seriously or even that we're making things up, and we should stop being so sensitive and let go of whatever is bothering us. Highly sensitive children, teens and adults are therefore often not seen for who they are, but rather for the problems they may be appearing to cause in their environment or family with their "over-reactions".

Intuition Medicine® addresses the subtle perceptions of the HSP, and therefore it can often get to the root of an issue that therapy alone may not be able to figure out. Using the above examples, an Intuition Medicine® reading would be able to assess what the anxious or distracted child was responding to, which aspects of their energy anatomy may be too open and vulnerable to their environment, and then provide energy healing tools to strengthen their energetic boundaries. Many highly sensitive children and parents I have worked with have benefitted from learning these tools, reporting that the problems they thought they had (i.e., mood swings, aggression, tantrums or other emotional concerns), weren't actually the core issue. Rather, they were a symptom of being energetically unprotected and ungrounded. Once that core issue was addressed, the undesired behaviors and dysregulated emotions dramatically reduced.

Overall, my experience of integrating Intuition Medicine® and psychotherapy techniques, for both myself and for my clients, has been a journey

towards seeing us all as holistic beings. It has been important for me to have tools to address the multiple causes of our suffering, whether it is mental, physical, emotional or spiritual, because one always impacts the other. When there are significant mental health issues and relationship challenges, therapy may provide us with tools to learn to regulate our emotions, understand ourselves and feel more competent in our relationships and in the world. When there are unexplained emotions or behavior patterns, or when many healing modalities have been tried and not produced the desired result, energy healing may be the answer.

Many of us who are highly sensitive benefit from multiple approaches, in order to really get clear on causes and solutions. For me, if I had only focused on psychotherapy, I may have missed the deep connection I now have to my spirit and higher self. I also may have missed the opportunity to find greater meaning and purpose in my life. If I had only focused on Intuition Medicine®, I may not have understood the power of owning my personal story, learning from my emotions and expressing my truth and needs in relationships. It is the integration of the two that empowers me as an HSP, and helps me support others who are seeking improved emotional and relational health, as well as a connection to their own inner wisdom. €



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