

Chapter 9 from the book
“SENTICS: The Touch of Emotions
by Dr. Manfred Clynes

Sentic Cycles and Their Capacity to Transform

How remarkable it would be if one could experience and express the spectrum of emotions embodied in music originating from oneself—without the crutch of a composer’s intercession, without being driven by the composer; and to do so moreover whenever we wish, not when circumstance may call them forth. This, indeed, has become possible through the development of sentic cycles.

In the previous chapters, we observed various temporal properties of essentic forms. We have seen how the biologic time forms that communicate emotion are stored in music, keeping them timelessly fresh across centuries. In each vital experience of music, these forms are regenerated anew.

In music, essentic forms are enjoyed through ordered relationships between tones; but the tone of voice and touch are not so schematized. Can we make the source of essentic forms permanently available to the individual, using only his own fantasy, not a composer’s, independently of musical instruments and of sound itself? Can the touch that lies behind music be tapped?

That is, can we generate and newly experience sequences of sentic states, using the biologic temporal “deep structures”—the time lattice of meta-music that lies behind musical communication?

The discovery of the universality of essentic forms has in fact led to the development of a simple, direct method by which they can be repeatedly produced and experienced—creatively, meditatively, and freed from their customary sensory coding of sound or of visual form. This work has yielded a program making it feasible to experience sentic states at will—a programmed sequence which we call “sentic cycles.”

It was found that tapping this source directly could indeed help a person be more in touch with the vital sources of life. This process largely eliminates a distinction analogous to that between composer and performer: the subject becomes both (without learning to perform on a musical instrument).^{*} The power of sentic cycles and music to generate emotions shares a common source. However, doing sentic cycles requires no production of sound, no laboriously acquired skills divorced from sentic discrimination. Everyone can readily do them.

Sentic cycles is a simple means by which a person, in his own home, can generate in himself substantially the entire spectrum of emotions in a period of approximately thirty minutes. This method allows one to experience emotions from different points of view, meditatively and with active expression, and has led to a variety of therapeutic effects.

What Are Sentic Cycles?

The method of expressing and generating sentic states (as described in Chapter Four) can be employed to engender creative experiences of organized sequences of sentic states—something like a new art form of touch.

^{*} In the study of music, the practice and development of sentic discrimination is clearly different from the development of skills in mastering instrumental technique. The monolithic drive to develop technical skills frequently leads—except in those exceptionally “gifted”—to the neglect of practice of sentic discrimination and development. Finger exercises have been foisted on music students for generations, but no one until now has devised systematic “feeling exercises”—although it is certainly obvious how much they are needed. As we shall see, sentic training afforded by sentic cycles accomplished this also.

To do sentic cycles, all that is necessary is to have a sentic cycle cassette tape, a finger rest, and a means of playing the tape. (No measuring instruments are required.) A person sits on a simple chair without armrests, preferably with a cushion behind his back and one on the seat, with his feet firmly placed on the floor (shoes may be removed); legs should not be crossed. The finger rest is positioned on a coffee table, or on a second, hard-seat chair. The person starts the tape, puts the third finger on the finger rest, and closes his eyes.

Whenever he hears a click, he expresses with a single expressive action of pressure the quality of the state called for, as precisely as he can. States to be generated are announced by the tape: no emotion, anger, hate, grief, love, sex, joy, and reverence. Each state lasts several minutes and contains a sequence of timing clicks initiating expressive actions. The participant cannot predict when the next click will occur. The person is ready to express the quality called for and awaits the next click to carry out the expression. One expression for each click is to be done.

At the end of the cycle (or several such cycles) he sits quietly for a minute or two before getting up and resuming his activities. He may not want to talk for some minutes afterward.

The Discovery of Sentic Cycles

One day in 1968, having worked long hours in the laboratory, I made a strange discovery: I noticed myself feeling unduly well! I had often spent many hours expressing essentic forms to obtain precise measurements. But after seven or eight hours of being constrained and hooked up to several instruments, instead of feeling tired, I found myself fresh and exhilarated. At first I thought this to be just the result of having accomplished a good day's work. But the phenomenon kept recurring, and it soon became clear that something else was involved.† Results with other subjects confirmed this. So we decided to try to make the experience more compact, to concentrate the beneficial effects and study them systematically.

The order and selection of sentic states, and the duration of each, were refined step by step, and the biologically optimum durations for the mean intervals between action initiation and for the degree of randomness between actions were gradually discovered for each sentic state. These turned out to be quite different for different states.

As the design of the sequences of intervals was undertaken, every interval was sculptured in relationship to those before and after. Every change produced a change in the effect of the experience on the subject. To try to perfect the sequences was at times like training a dog to choose between an ellipse and a circle: as the differences are made smaller and smaller, the dog tends to go insane! It was necessary to sense the differences of each change, but also to compare the new effect with how it was before the change was made. In spite of the benefits of sentics, this seemed sometimes enough to drive one crazy. But, persevering over several years, programs and tapes were developed for initiating each action and for the sequence of sentic states that seemed close to optimal. The real payoff, remarkably, was that the subtleties of timing being nearly optimal for one individual were also nearly optimal for others. Considering sentic theory, this is perhaps really not so surprising. In fact if it were not so, music would not function either. Still, it was gratifying to observe this result.

The Therapeutic Effects of Sentic Cycles

It is found that sentic cycles have many possible therapeutic and preventive uses. The effects of their regular practice are far-ranging. Well-adjusted persons can use them to generate a "high," and like forms of meditation and physical exercise, they can be used on a regular basis to maintain a general sense of well-being and of being in "touch" with the self. Doing sentic cycles can increase self-assurance and expand one's sensitivity to a range of emotional

† I even started to look forward to coming to work—to spend hours doing this—and to get paid for it as well!

experience, affording insight into the nature of feeling, interpersonal relationships, and, in general, the nature of being. It is a form of emotional training.

Those suffering from unusual anxieties, phobias, severe stress, and a wide range of psychosomatic symptoms can use them (with supervision) to alleviate their symptoms and facilitate normal functioning. And sentic cycles used regularly over longer periods of time can gradually modify attitudes, patterns of behavior, emotional reactions, and improve relationships with other people. Couples, especially, can use them jointly to enlarge and improve their relationship. The insights that their continued experience provides can implement positive changes in character structure.

Sentic cycles have distinct effects on the mental state and on a number of physiologic processes. The experience of sentic cycles is unique and cannot be completely adequately described in words, but it is not at all difficult to experience for most subjects.

In over four years, 72 per cent of about three thousand subjects (ages twelve to eighty) were able to perform sentic cycles successfully at their first session, and to experience their effects. Of those subjects who completed three trials of sentic cycles, 83 per cent of the fantasy emotions called for were readily experienced (only 17 per cent causing any difficulty), according to subjects' reports. And 68 per cent of the subjects had no difficulty in expressing and fantasizing all the seven sentic states: anger, hate, grief, love, sex, joy, reverence. Reverence proved to cause difficulty most frequently, less frequently hate, and more rarely joy. After two additional trials, three quarters of those subjects reported no further difficulty with the particular emotion that they had previously been unable to express.

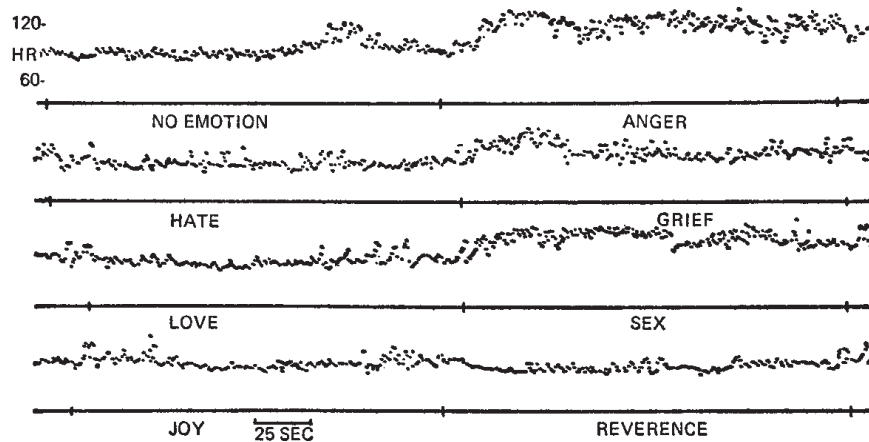


Figure 22. Variations of heart rate during a sentic cycle. Many subjects show marked increases in heart rate especially during anger and sex.

The experience of other investigators who have used sentic cycles extensively has been similar. For example, Drs. Alfred French and J. Tupin report that there is no question that sentic cycles are indeed effective in generating fantasy emotions. The two scientists reported “clyning‡ is clearly a process wherein affect is experienced, expressed, and made accessible to the psyche.” The effects on the mental state are a sense of calmness, relatedness, and, at times, insights into the nature of the emotions themselves, and of the subject’s relationships with them. To be able to summon up various sentic states at will and express them without fear or embarrassment is a satisfaction in itself. In addition, the subject has confidence that he can and may act freely, spontaneously, without worry that it will have a punitive effect. Subjects

‡ “Clyning” is the term introduced by Dr. A. French to describe carrying out sentic states.

are often afraid to express emotions in real life for various reasons, but they are willing—and even glad—to experience similar emotions while doing sentic cycles. The fear of losing control which they experience in a real situation does not seem to play an inhibiting effect during sentic cycles.*

The state produced by sentic cycles is very different from hypnosis. One is very alert and in full control at all times. Physiologic responses include changes in heart rate and respiration. These vary systematically with each sentic state, as does oxygen consumption. (See Figures 22-25.) Huenergardt reported that heart rate increased on the average from 75 to 115 beats per minute during the experience of anger and joy, generated through the repeated expression of essentic form in response to images presented on a screen showing scenes suggestive of these states. Some 20 per cent of the subjects tested cry during the state of grief during the first time they do sentic cycles.

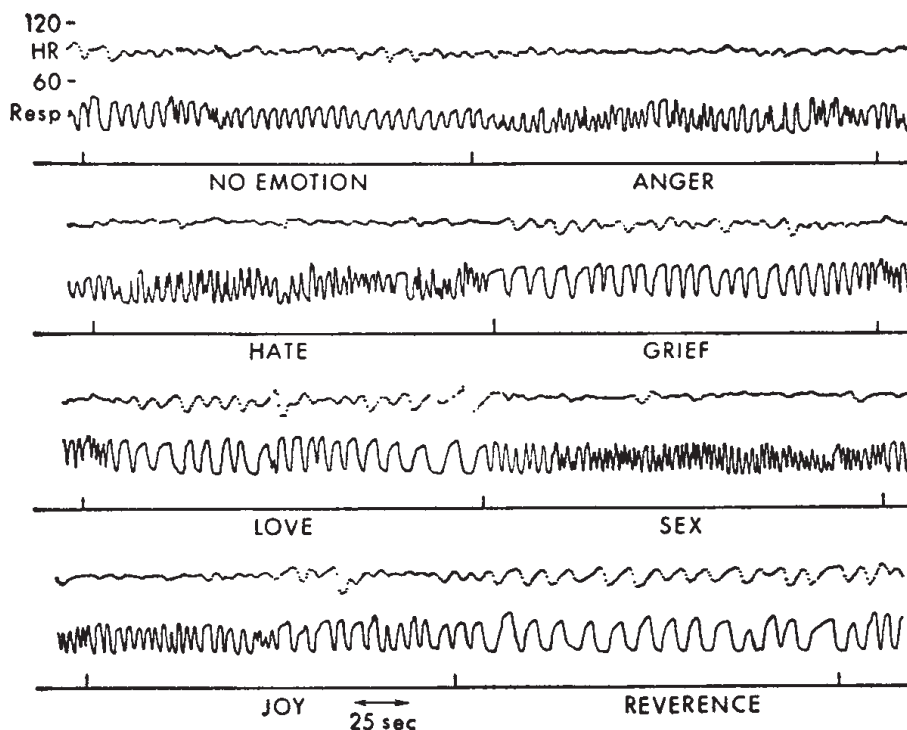


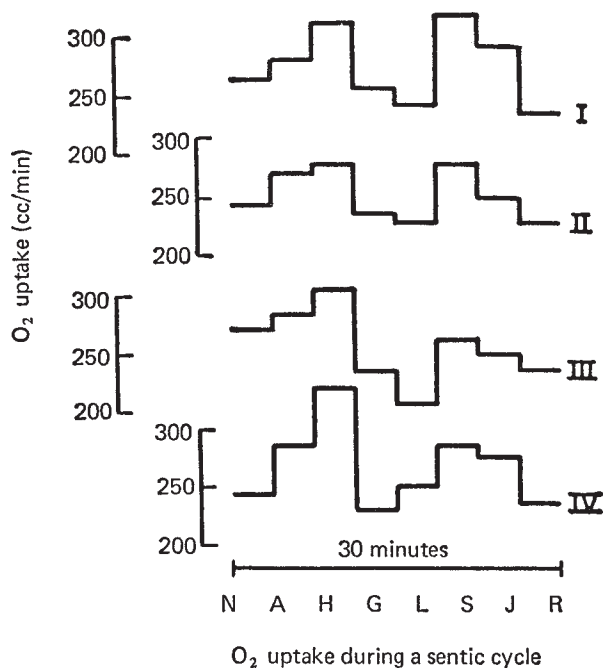
Figure 23. Changes in respiration and heart rate during a sentic cycle. Respiration accelerates during anger and hate. During grief the respiration has a gasping character with rest periods at the expiratory end of the cycle. Respiration slows during love, and speeds up markedly for sex. (Inspiration is downward in the figure.) During reverence there is a marked slowing down of respiration with resting phases at the inspiratory phases of the cycle (paralleling those at the expiration phases for grief). Heart rate cycles in the subjects are related to respiration. (This subject shows otherwise fewer deviations in heart rate than the subject in Figure 22.)

There is a marked difference in respiration during different phases of sentic cycles, as would be expected. Respiration slows during grief, love, and reverence and increases during anger, hate, and sex. Different phases of respiration tend to coincide with expressions of specific sentic states—for example, anger with expiration and joy with inspiration. Also, though both

* Even a musical performance does not have such freedom – an audience is more or less critical, and there also is self-criticism. But when one plays to oneself, perhaps a fantasy, without thought of success or failure, listening and “speaking” at the same time, one comes closest to some aspect of the experience that sentic cycles, without the need for hours and years of dulling practice, can give.

grief and love induce slowed respiration, they differ in that there is a marked pause after the expiratory phase for grief before the next inspiration.

Figure 24. In the upper left graph oxygen consumption for four sentic cycles of the same subject shows consistent change for the various sentic states. Changes in all four cycles are in the same direction for corresponding states, except for one step between grief and love in the fourth cycle. Passionate states tend to show greater oxygen consumption. Note the relation between oxygen consumption and respiration rates indicated in Figure 23. The lower left graph shows the average oxygen uptake for the four cycles.



N No emotion	L Love
A Anger	S Sex
H Hate	J Joy
G Grief	R Reverence

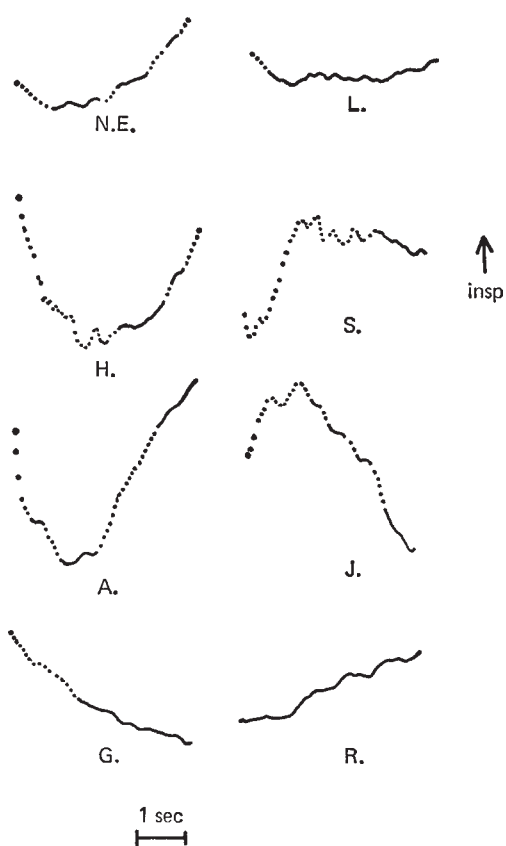
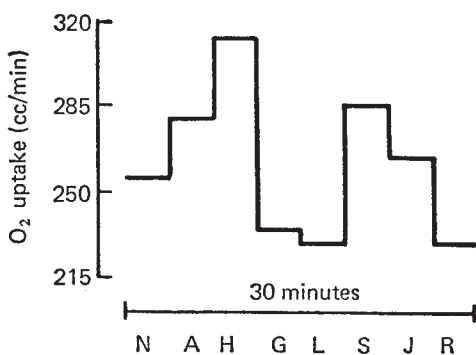


Figure 25. Typical transient respiration forms during E-actons for no emotion, love, hate, sex, anger, joy, grief, and reverence, respectively, based on an average of twenty actons. (Averaging began 0.5 sec. after click.)

After sentic cycles, subjects' faces are slightly flushed, their eyes sparkle, and they comment often on "having had an experience" or having been "turned on." Even agitated patients are generally able to express their feelings with this method and at these times their over-all bodily agitation ceases.

Practice of sentic cycles teaches one discrimination in the expressive language of touch. As this language becomes known more precisely, communication with others through touch becomes more effective and powerful. It becomes easier to know what one is communicating through touch—as well as in voice inflection and other modes.

However, depending on the "point of view" as discussed earlier, the communication of touch forms may occur without a deeply felt origin or cause for the touch. The social danger of lightheaded touch communication and manipulation must be pointed out. As discussed earlier, in a form of touch there may be a full commitment of the entire individual or merely the production of a known form—one of human relationship, the other a manipulation or a quasi-artistic expression. On the other hand, in playful use of essentic form, pleasant feelings may be enhanced and the communication of unpleasant feelings can become modified through the pleasure of the purity of expression, as in music.

For persons who are in a sentic "rut," sentic cycles improve the fluidity of their mental state, abolishing sentic rigidity, a symptom of depression and anxiety. French and Tupin have reported, "Some subjects found immediate and dramatic relief of symptoms of depression, anxiety, and sleep disturbance after the first forty-five minute session following only a few minutes of instruction." However, one does not necessarily have to have been depressed to feel increasingly alive through the ability to control one's sentic state. We may perhaps say that the sentic cycle is a form of discipline in which a man is a disciple of his true or natural self.† It is also interesting that in practicing sentic cycles one often comes to enjoy most, and look forward to, the state of love as a favored state.

Sentic Cycles and the Satisfaction of Inner Drives

Perhaps the most important application and effect of sentic cycles lies in their ability to influence the urges and driving forces of the personality. The sense of calmness and satisfaction of being, as such, or the sensation of being emotionally drained, which occasionally replaces this, noticeably alters the dynamics of drives. One may observe the replacement of the neurotic anxious drive—the rigid drive toward self-imposed goals—by a creative drive coupled with joy in its exercise. This displacement of a drive whose satisfaction lies in a distant goal (which cannot be achieved in the present) by a creative drive whose exercise provides a continuous flow satisfaction coupled with joy) is a remarkable aspect of sentic cycles. It appears that needs for smoking and perhaps even drugs may be seriously altered through the use of sentic cycles.‡

In practice, the length and frequency of the sentic cycle dosage should be adjusted to individual need. Generally, the longer the total length of sentic cycles, the greater the attenuation of drives. Too prolonged or intense sentic cycle sessions can attenuate drives excessively and produce a "psyched-out" state of being overtranquilized. Events that probably should cause one displeasure and anxiety may be shrugged off under these conditions as insignificant. An appropriate degree of moderation is called for; not more than one hour per day, say, should be devoted to sentic cycles, except for special therapeutic reasons to relieve specific

† Sentic cycles share with meditation the remarkable property of self-refining. The forms of the emotions as practiced in sentic cycles lead to an increasing degree of refinement in their production and perception. This occurs as a natural process. A similar process takes place in meditation, as a mantra is inwardly refined and takes on more subtle qualities.

Sentic cycles also share with meditation the filling of the sentic domain—which normally partakes of random-like perturbations—with an entity, a focus of unchanging quality about which the world of change and permanence is viewed

‡ No one has ever asked to smoke during sentic cycles. Heavy smokers do not desire to smoke then. This is significant, since a heavy smoker frequently asks for a cigarette particularly during periods of mental concentration.

psychosomatic problems. For the person in daily business activity, twenty to thirty minutes of sentic cycles a day may well be best, or one hour every other day.

Modifying Aggression

One characteristic effect of sentic cycles is frequently observed—a special form of contentment. After completion of sentic cycles, one's face may portray a characteristic "contented smile" that persists for some time. Immediately afterward one often wishes not to talk but to allow the experience to "sink in." Yet at those times one does not feel isolated; on the contrary, there is a sense of sharing an inner existence one feels is common to men. This feeling communicates itself, even in the absence of verbal expression.*

Removal of anxiety or anger is not invariably desirable, in fact. A subject may feel that the experience can, so to speak, cheat him out of his maintained rightful anger. A person may not wish to give up the emotional set deriving from a specific individual situation. In preventing this, a person can always exercise his choice to use sentic cycles judiciously. The absence of anxiety and anger may require some reorganization of one's life habits, which is sometimes an uncomfortable phase.

Another effect of sentic cycles is often to lower the threshold of emotional experience, and to enable subjects to produce shortlasting outbursts in daily life. Again, this is generally a favorable effect, although one should avoid excess. What constitutes excess in this respect is difficult to know, however, at this stage of our knowledge.

Taken all together, the evidence of the remarkable power of sentic cycles to modify levels of aggression clearly has social significance—in the life of the family, in the prevention of crime and suicide, and in releasing the creativity of the individual.

Personal Experiences of Sentic Cycles

These various points may be made clearer by the following examples of individual sentic cycle experiences. These are a typical cross section of sentic cycle experience describing in the subjects' own words the effects of several sessions on some subjects, and first sessions only on others.

I should like to let these comments speak for themselves. As the subjects describe the experience in their own words, we also gradually get a fuller and more comprehensive view of the nature of the effects of sentic cycles. The newness of the experience (and perhaps the effect of sentic cycles to some extent) seems to spur some subjects at times to description of almost literary quality and authenticity, and to reveal unsuspected powers of self-expression.

T.C. (Female) Age 26†

First Session (2/22/72) Two Cycles

Upon completion of first session I found deep sense of calmness or "peace." Condition before starting was depressed, bitchy, irritable. Anger and hate sequences seemed very long. Senses very aware of changes in heat, sounds in house, etc. During sex sequence very aware of dimple in button which was not noticeable in other emotions. Joy and love called forth spon-

* The teacher or therapist, too, is often moved to a spontaneous flow of love toward the subject at these times. (This kind of experience has also been reported by Dr. French.) Frequently, the condition of the subject immediately after sentic cycle is so free from hostility and aggression, and yet full of such a special vitality, that it seems as if a natural flow of love, which is present in the teacher or therapist but has been previously inhibited by the sentic messages of the people around him, is allowed to flow toward the subject without hindrance.

Such an empathic experience is furthered by the knowledge that the subject has just experienced all the emotions of the cycles. Like a shared musical experience of the late works of Beethoven, a bond appears between therapist and subject, even if the therapist or teacher has not participated in the cycle himself. The two individuals are no longer strangers, but have "shared" a particular, rather beautiful intimacy, like a sunset witnessed together.

† Initials and names have been altered here to preserve the privacy of the subjects.

taneous humming, also aware of pleasant smell. These sequences seemed very short. Anger seemed to call forth red image. Reverence seemed to be more difficult to express. Sense of greenness accompanied sex.

Later (five hours) held lover in different way (according to him), noticed increase in lubrication for intercourse, length of climax extended.

Second Session (2/27/72)

Repetition of impression of red during anger. Hate like a black curtain rising, falling, flowing, flickering. Angle of finger on finger rest changed with different emotion. (This was noticed in first session also, along with changes in position of other fingers.) Not as much of a feeling of extra length of hate and anger this time. First cycle of reverence interminable—second cycle had vision of holy person and eyes of person which seemed to communicate the feeling; the cycle seemed very brief. Feel it best to have time alone after a session before discussing experience. Marked feeling of lightness accompanied joy. The pressure exerted during anger and hate even between “clicks” much heavier than other emotions. Physical side effects: Headache disappeared. Increase of lubricatory discharge, lessening of menstrual cramps. Hunger disappeared. The first tape seemed more even in emotion generation. Three hours after session noticed faster calming down of upset condition. Hands more sensitive.

Third Session (3/28/72) Two Cycles

After a month of heavy smoking (one or two packs a day) and some drinking I was able to undergo a complete session with a new tape. The reaction was extremely positive. There was a marked sense of calmness which included a feeling of unity of self. In the modern vernacular I “got it all together.” There was no desire for cigarettes (which I quit smoking the day before) and a release of tension. I also had a slight headache and heavy menstrual cramps at the beginning of the session which were relieved. The calm feeling extended to enable me to endure very heavy emotional harassment that evening

Fourth Session (3/29/72) One Cycle

Calming effect still in evidence. Went through one cycle. Felt restless during cycle but got benefit after. Very aware of increased tactile awareness. Experienced many of same reactions related to color and music as noted before—more confidence in self and awareness of others.

The next morning, following two restless nights, felt very exuberant and energetic. (This is an unusual reaction for me. I think I need a lot of sleep and am usually tired and depressed from lack of it . . . this seems to be common among many women of my acquaintance.) Perhaps clyning reduces need for sleep.

My increased tactile awareness exemplified by impression of taste and texture of blackberries. The fruit felt smooth, hairy, plump, bittersweet in an almost excruciatingly sensual way.

During the day felt “stretched” time sense as though I was able to complete tasks in a very deliberate, complete manner which I would normally rush through, but this deliberateness did not extend the time of the task at hand. I felt able to accomplish more, better, in the same amount of time.

In a very real way I believe the continued clyning experience seems to give a feeling of having that insulating layer which we defensively construct against ourselves, the natural world, our awareness of and relationships with others, and our senses stripped away, enabling a more clear, beautiful, and true view of life as a man.

Fifth Session (3/31/72) One Cycle

Had difficulty concentrating today. I felt frustrated at the lack of a comfortable place, but afterward experienced sense of calmness and heightened awareness usually associated with the process . . . can feel air, ground, self, smells, etc. much more keenly. During sex sequence felt nipple tissue become erect. After clyning feel desire to be “quiet,” i.e., not to communicate orally (if I do talk notice marked change in rate of speech [slower] and pitch of voice [lower]). Feel that mind is very active, though. It’s not a desire to be uncommunicative; quite the contrary, one would like to share the feeling Perhaps it’s a need to absorb the experience.

J.C. (Female) Age 42

First Experience (12/15/ 72)

Upon hearing “no emotion,” I was not yet relaxed or comfortable with what was happening. It was helpful to have the suggestion of imagining my finger on a typewriter key and feeling the relative detachment of that. The pressure of my finger was light and did not last long. After a while images began to form of what I was typing, though. One was a letter to my mother. I felt ambivalent emotions rising in me and reminded myself that I was to feel no emotion. The ambivalence ebbed and flowed on its own nonetheless. But the pressure of my finger did not seem to change a great deal. X think I was consciously trying to express no emotion.

Upon hearing “anger,” I immediately plunged into another milieu. I could hardly wait for that first click to sound. My finger responded autonomously and angrily pushed at the button, a thrusting, away-from-me motion. As the clicks continued, I had the impression of shoving someone I was angry with. A number of people appeared to me whom I had been irritated with recently—Barry and his narcissism, Charles and his pomposities, my mother and her paranoia, but most of all myself and my own confusion. I had several distinct impressions of shoving myself off balance. Gradually, more peripheral people began to appear—students who make inconsiderate demands, acquaintances who seem insensitive. I took some pleasure in flicking them away, but they’d circle and come back, and my irritation would increase. Finally, though, my anger seemed to definitely dissipate. I couldn’t even summon up much anger toward myself any more. I felt a little bored toward the end and wondered what was next. |

Upon hearing “hate,” my finger began to feel very warm, as if mobilizing itself to hate. My heart began to pound fast again. I tried to express hate as an emotion and could not find anything to direct it to. I conjured up people I thought I really felt negative about but could not find an appropriate feeling. All the time I was pressing the button very hard as the click sounded. There was warmth going to it, but not feeling. Perhaps I should say heat, not warmth. After a while, as I realized that feelings were not going to accompany, I concentrated on the effort. I pressed down passionately, and abstract thoughts began to form. Revulsion of the Vietnam conflict, friends who had been severely injured, injustices in general. Whatever hatred I could summon was injury to my beliefs. By now my finger was pressing very hard, so hard that I found a severe cramp was forming in the first knuckle, and I wondered if the finger was breaking or broken. I kept on pressing as the clicks sounded, but my feeling wasn’t with it, really, and I thought it would never end.

On “grief,” an entirely new world happened. Sadness enveloped me quickly. Perhaps because of my overwhelming feeling for injured friends. I sank down into that. My finger motion must have been gentler, more caressing, more toward myself but at the same time reaching out toward the other person first. For a while I had been hearing faint voices calling and hadn’t thought much about it: it must have been down the street. Voices began calling my

name. I was not sure it was Peter calling my name from some hospital. But at the same time I saw the vision I'd had of him since then, standing in a corner of our kitchen, looking as he did before he went away, smiling, coming forward, calling my name. Seemingly simultaneously, I had been hearing my father's voice, calling my name in a very familiar way; it made me laugh, or at least smile. Then I felt the grief at his death. Then a hallucination I'd had of him at home, lying in his coffin in the fireplace as he was at the mortuary, but he turned to me and said, "Death is O.K.," just turning his head a little. I then projected myself into my mother's death and felt enormous pain and guilt. Then visited the funerals of both Charles's parents and felt similar emotions, but more concerned with what Charles was feeling. As the clicks continued, I tried to enter myself into grief, it was not difficult for me to do. I can feel sad. Each situation was fairly easy to get into.

Upon hearing "love," a whole myriad of voices started coming. My finger became gentle. The voice of a friend of mine came first; David said, "The reason you're feeling angry with Barry and Charles is because they have been so kind to you lately and you don't feel deserving of such extreme kindness, and you react by releasing anger." I sit stiller and try to express love with the button. It goes out warm and clear, with a steady pressure. I also feel it coming in, like when Charles touches the back of my neck as he passes me, and when Barry consciously sends loving feelings to me in a warm glow. My reaction to that is a back-and-forth motion of my finger on the finger rest as I am sending and receiving, but not always on equal frequency. The loving feeling begins to expand to a more general feeling toward mankind and then compresses back to the personal. (I feel this must have been expressed in the pressing, but maybe not significantly.) Then I begin to see a whole bunch of people, some of whom surprise me to come up in the context of love, as I don't feel that close to them. Laura I barely know, yet feel warmly toward; still, she has "come up" earlier as an angry woman, and now as trying to be loving. A young man I've felt estranged with comes riding up the street from the West End on a bicycle and turns into the driveway; I am standing in the shadows of the garage, but he sees me and pedals in an oval around me; hands me a gift and leans down and kisses me; I feel dazzled by this light kiss. The scene begins to fade as there is a steady presence of Charles in the form of my feelings about love.

Upon hearing "sex," Charles leaps right into the limelight. My finger begins to have back-and-forth caressing motions on the button. I begin to feel mild orgasms. I sort of glide with that for quite a few clicks. I feel Charles turning toward me, touching me, sometimes in the night, sometimes as we are around each other anywhere. Warmth coming up in me, my finger motion seems to warm and intensify. I experience sexual feelings coming from and going toward other people, but they are more undifferentiated; sometimes faces fade by, but they seem unrelated to the body. It is more my own feelings I am feeling, and everyone is contributing to that. Again many of my sexual experiences with Charles are primary; they seem to represent what is important. A significant part of it is the pleasure I can give him, not just what I am receiving. The orgasms become quite intense, and this segment seems quite short.

Joy was a funny feeling. My finger was hesitant for a while, then began tentative, leaping motions away from me, very light; yet aware. Dancing motions, visions of lovers and forests. Myself in a filmy nightgown running through the forest, dancing very gracefully, feeling sunlight filter onto me, yet coolness envelop me refreshingly. I see someone at the end of a meadow and cry out with pleasure, begin to dance toward him, and when I get closer, he is running to meet me; air is rushing around; it is all so intense and happy; we collide in a burst of laughter and stimulation, and fall to the earth in a tumbling, chuckling embrace. Of course, it is Charles.

Upon hearing "reverence," I feel more solemn. My whole body relaxes, my finger slows to a more quiet caress. I feel a misty, pale sunlight start to come. Maybe it is moonlight. Tears

form in my eyes. I close my eyes as my finger continues its gentle motion, mostly toward myself. A force gathers in the atmosphere around me and reassures me, lifts me. I know I can fly if I want to. I know I can also sink. I feel I should stay here and somehow cope. I feel myself lifting and permit myself the ecstasy of letting myself go upward. I feel cradled by some great but gentle force, then placed gently back down where I belong for now.

I.K. (Female) Age 35

First Session (1/9/73)

I found that I had to make up scenes to experience anger. I had to be angry at a specific person. Then, I got involved with whether the anger was justified. It was hard to sustain any one scene or the feeling. I had to keep working at it. Hate was even more difficult. Hate, to me, is a very big emotion, bigger than people, and so I had to think of impersonal forces, e.g., Nazism, injustice, the bomb at Hiroshima—and then I felt impotent, because what could I do about these bigger-than-life evils?

For grief I needed to conjure up pictures too—being in the funeral parlor, after my father or my brother had died—being in the hospital room, when my brother was dying. Also, I remembered taking my little dog to the hospital, and the doctor calling soon after, to tell me he had died. Then, in the midst of true situations, I saw myself standing alone as a very small child, in the middle of nowhere, and totally bereft. I recognized myself as the child, but I have no real memory of such an incident.

During love, I saw the faces of my husband and children, individually, and I had the feeling of love being a circular force that flowed around through me and whoever I was seeing. How their eyes looked was very important. I saw my dog that way too.

Joy was nice, I had to imagine skiing in a fresh snowfall, and then I got involved with WHO was skiing with me, and I realized that in each joyful fantasy, my happiness was contingent upon someone else.

Sex was very easy. We had just seen the movie *Deep Throat*. I recalled scenes from that. They were very vivid, and I really felt sexy — but then to my surprise, I found that I was thinking about clothes or what to have for dinner; in none of the other categories had my attention left the emotion so entirely, although it was the one I had initially been the most engrossed in.

When I came to reverence, I experienced great relief. It was the only category in which I didn't have to fantasize—I really felt reverence. I saw blue sky and just felt great. I thought, that's why being stoned is referred to as "high." I felt way up, as if I were above all problems in some heady atmosphere. It was certainly the emotion that I enjoyed the most. As I thought about it later, it seemed to me like being in Alpha or meditating, in a way it seemed like a cop-out. That is, in experiencing all the other emotions I had "to get involved" with other people, or deal with my feelings of impotence to change the world, or myself. The feeling of being outside these involvements, and at the same time one with some larger benign force, was wonderfully inviting. But upon realizing this, I was later depressed, because I saw it as a sign of my shortcomings—because isn't it precisely in those "involvements" that we find "where it is at"?

Later in the day I went about my business as usual, although I did feel as though I had had some sort of revelation. I planned to review it and work on it later.

Today I felt quite energetic early in the day, but now it is mid-afternoon and I have run downhill. I feel the sentics revealed an aspect of myself that I was not aware of, but I am puzzled as to where to go from here.

Second Session (1/11/ 73)

In the anger phase, the fantasizing episodes were briefer than the last time. I was not really frowning or scowling, but separate muscles all over my face seemed to be contracting and relaxing at different rates. Towards the end of the anger, I began to feel there was no real justification for my anger in the imagined situations, and it all felt contrived. I had even more trouble than the first time stirring up hate. I just could not really feel it since I could not conjure up any situation that would really warrant hate. But as in the anger, my facial muscles seemed to be very busy. It also suddenly occurred to me that as a result of the first sentic session where I found I was hating the feeling of impotence about “doing something” about our downstairs playroom—I had in the interim actually refinished the floor and straightened up the room!

My feelings in the other three emotion sections were not notably different from the first sentic session, except possibly less intense.

I do feel, however, that the two sentic sessions have in some inexplicable way helped me to “unhook myself” from some emotional hang-ups that have been bothering me for a long time. I couldn’t say just how, because I did NOT think about the problems while doing the sentics, but I feel able to flow along more freely now. I look forward to doing sentics some more.

P.V. (Male) Age 25

First Session (7/2/72)

A mind-boggling experience. Feel very calm; a peaceful state of mind—not depressed although not really happy. Feel exhausted but tenseness in stomach is gone. Feel more alert. The following night slept very well and felt I didn’t need as much sleep. Awoke feeling very alert. Still feel the reaction from yesterday’s experience. After the sentic cycles was a little disoriented in speech two or three hours later. At the same time I appreciated Balboa Park more—noticed more details like flowers, grass, etc. Also didn’t feel much like talking — wanted to be alone.

In the first part of the cycle had some difficulty with expressing hate and anger. Grief came through very well— started to sob toward the end of the grief phase. Joy came through very well. I felt myself smiling. Reverence was probably the most difficult—my head was slightly bowed.

During the second cycle everything was more intense, especially anger and hate. With anger I was almost jumping up and down in the chair, breathing heavily. Joy was all “tingly.” Joy lingered more than any other emotion. During the second cycle I didn’t have to think of specific scenes or examples generally, as opposed to the first time. Just a general thought would bring on the emotions. Emotions were exaggerated, more exaggerated than in real life—all emotions more intense: for example, anger. Afterward felt a comfortable tiredness and wanted to lie down for ten to fifteen minutes.

Second Session (7/3/ 72)

Thinking emotions came without any problem. Strongest was love and joy. Reverence became stronger. I felt awe. For hate I was thinking of Hitler and the Nazis. I was not tired today as I was yesterday.‡ Not that I was bored the previous day, but today’s seemed shorter. I cried slightly during grief. Sex was enjoyable but had been stronger the previous day. I had no difficulty at all in switching from one emotion to another nor did I yesterday either.

‡ The subject estimated that he spent about fifteen to twenty minutes in the sentic session whereas actually the tape was an hour long.

D.E., Ph.D. (Psychoanalyst, Female) Age 29

First Session (1/9/73) Two Cycles

No EMOTION—Some tension, feeling expectant, impatient, then awareness of tension and relaxation, awareness of breathing.

ANGER—Every time start to feel the anger also experience a gleeful feeling of the liberation involved in feeling the anger—makes me want to laugh or smile, then get into the anger itself, lips tighten up, feeling increased tension and almost strain, and then feel very tired and drained, too tiring to sustain the feeling.

HATE—Find myself sneering with each click, involuntarily. Seems diabolical and almost amusing to sit there and voluntarily feel hate—get into it though and tension builds up, finger hurts from the amount of pressure, whole thing becomes too tiring to sustain. Remember some wild aggressive fantasies I have had and the weird relief they offered at times I felt in an impotent rage though I never acted on them; just the satisfaction involved in conjuring them up in all their gory detail.

GRIEF—Limpness, heaviness, head down, no energy, depression, image of myself at the funeral of someone I cared very deeply about, wondering if one ever fully recovers from such a loss, image of myself talking about these feelings in analysis and crying as I talked about them then—not crying now.

LOVE—Warm glow in chest, smile, feeling tender, thinking of those I love, feeling much warmth but also it is intense, feeling emotionally “turned on” rather than relaxed, feels warm and nice, and sort of full.

SEX—Feeling vaginal contractions every time I respond to click. Feels good, makes me smile. Also feels a little funny in room full of people like this. Very localized. Then think of feeling love and sex together, it’s much more complete—now feeling contractions plus the warm glow and it’s really nice. Makes me think of the difference between a simply sexual experience and one where you are feeling much love too and how different orgasms are under the two conditions. Combination produced a total body shudder, like having the chills, that was surprising and pleasant.

JOY—Light feeling, headiness, smile; image of a new baby. Feeling of things floating up—almost expansion of inner space in head. Think of feeling close after sex; and of people I love. Main feeling though that strikes me is the actual physical sensations of lightness and how particular they are and how they are different from love, and sex. The uniqueness of each emotion.

REVERENCE—Think of my grandfather, of a teacher I revere, image of the temple at Miyajima in Japan, built on the water. Very serious quality to this feeling and somehow more intellectual than the others, not quite as kinesthetic. Not as expansive—almost constraining.

Aware of posture and breathing throughout. By second cycle, tired and resenting having to do it over. Throughout seemed arbitrary to start a feeling and have to hold it back between clicks.

Second Session (1/15/73)

Finger wanting to persist once an emotion started—seems unnatural to stop and start, finger getting tired and stiff, much tension, mouth very expressive.

Started exhausted and with severe headache, after felt very relaxed and pleasantly tired. No desire to do second cycle though. Enjoyed getting into the awareness of posture and breathing and the quietness of sitting in dark room and getting into self in this way. Kind of feeling I often get from writing. Feeling of getting into self and exploring inner space.

D.M. (Male) Age 22

First Session (2 /25/72) Two Cycles

Found clyning to be very relaxing both physically and mentally. Surprised that it relaxes my mind as well as my body so much. Conscious of physically tensing-relaxing, tensing-relaxing. Changed mood, more mellow after. Had feeling that brain had been working.

During second cycle felt flow of emotion from one to next, on first cycle some overlap of emotions. Anger seemed longer than others, and hate and reverence were also long. Felt grief most because of recent personal experience. Felt mental picture of each emotion, and felt apprehension and tenseness drain from body. Voice appeared softer and speech slower than before session. Found experience totally absorbing. Every businessman should dyne every day to prevent ulcers. Felt build-up of body heat through face and chest.

K.L. (Female) Age 28

First Session (3/26/72) Two Cycles

Definitely experienced all of the emotions called for. Feel drained, it was fascinating, an experience. Even a piece of music does not always have all those emotions. During reverence, I was in Chartres Cathedral or listening to music. Felt reverence for creativity. Enjoyed love, sex, joy, and reverence most. Feel like I have gone through a complete experience, unique and intriguing. On another level, I feel absolutely exhausted emotionally. Next morning still felt rather exhausted.

D.G. (Polio Paralysis Victim, Male) Age 38

First Session (12/28/72) Two Cycles

I was impressed by the phenomenon of triggering emotional programming in the absence of events external to one's conscious awareness. The love phase and the sex phase evoked very strong images of past relationships. Except for the no emotion cycle, all of the cycles were pleasant—even the negative emotions.

The over-all effect experienced afterward was a mild high with lightness of the upper body, warmth in the back of the head and back of the neck, and heightened feelings of serenity and “enoughness.” This lasted from late afternoon until bedtime.

L.D., M.D. (Psychoanalyst and Psychiatrist, Female) Age 49

First Session (1/9/73) Two Cycles

Experienced emotions as “paired” and opposite, e.g., grief and joy seemed opposed and very intense. More so than other emotions. Felt good for twenty-four to thirty-six hours. Sex was paired with some grief in second cycle.

Second Session (1/15/73) One Cycle

Cycle was unexpectedly interrupted and left me with some tension. I returned to it and released tension. Cried when I got to grief and felt rage very intensely. Had two significant dreams after this experience which I could analyze for myself quite well because of focus and clarity.

Third Session (2/22/73) One Cycle

A feeling of boredom at first. Partly due to being tired at night. Then a peaceful and “into it” feeling with timelessness in which I seemed to play with all the emotions quite calmly and to enjoy it. Slept well. No dreams. Woke feeling well. This day had been one which started with a lot of anger and irritation. So can rate this experience as an excellent one.

M.J. (Psychiatrist and Psychoanalyst, Male) Age 50

First Session (2/15/73) Two Cycles

Noted particularly with emotions of hate and anger there was a repeated need to swallow and, especially with hate, a very severe burning sensation in the throat. The second time around with hate, there was an opening up in my throat and in my breathing for a period of time and an awareness of a passageway of air that I had never really experienced before except once or twice with Al Lowen. The first time around of anger-hate, love-sex, joy, and reverence I felt the strongest feeling, at first with anger. I noticed my lips quivering, something that I've never been aware of before. It also happened with hate, though hate seemed to be a more profound feeling and somewhat colder. The first time around I felt fear with anger and hate. With hate in particular I noticed that what I would do is begin to, at certain points, put myself down for not being as good as other people and that would cut off the feeling and I could see from the experience how putting myself down is really just the reverse of feeling and expressing anger and hatred, particularly hatred. I also noticed that anger was a feeling that I was blocking somehow by not feeling in my arms and my fingers and that I was cutting off and detaching my feelings. Once I became aware of this, I could allow more of the feeling to go into my arms. The flow of energy is something I was quite aware of throughout the whole experience.

Grief seemed to be centered down in my lower abdomen, and it was the hardest of all the emotions to reach. Somehow I got the feeling that it was the one deepest buried in me. I grieve, but I'm afraid to allow myself to feel the grief because then I will feel the hurt and allow myself to be exposed to hurt again, which is, of course, what I need to do in order to fulfill my life.

The experiences I least had confidence in feeling were joy and love. The one that I experienced least the first time around was sex, simply being some pretty girl in the room, but very strongly the second time around with tremendous heat throughout the whole lower part of my body. Then when love came up (I don't remember which came first, now) it was something that was experienced more in the upper part of my body, my shoulders, my chest, and into my heart, and I realized that there was a split, a cutoff between those feelings in my pelvis, the grief in my abdomen, and the love in my chest, and suddenly they all seemed to flow together.

Somehow reverence was the easiest for me; it was just a very quiet meaningful experience in which I was in touch with something which I could not name. Occasionally there were images of the country, where I live, possibly of animals, but primarily it was a contact with something very deep inside me and if it went in any direction, it was upward. I'm also more aware of an attempt to control my feelings, order them, to grasp onto ideas and to force feelings out and to let them flow. I have a real need to be in control of these feelings, rather than to let them control me, or to, at least, let me live them.

One of the physical experiences, the tension of my jaw, at the present time I feel remarkably relaxed, as much as at any time in my life, though there is the sense of the grief inside and the question as to what I can do about it, about reversing everything that I understand that makes for this grief. I think I feel calmer than I've ever felt before in my life.

D.F. (Female) Age 27

Fourth Session (12/2/73)

No EMOTION—Mechanical.

ANGER—Pressed finger rest very hard. Fantasy of throwing globs of paint at a canvas. Anger phase seemed long.

HATE—Again pressed finger rest hard but had no particular thoughts of hatred. Seemed very, very long and just concentrated on pressing finger rest. Started to look forward to love and joy.

GRIEF—Same motion as before, pushing down and across—sometimes stroking. Felt sad but peaceful. Tried to think of a way of depicting grief. Started to really get into that but phase was over.

LOVE—Felt good, caressing finger rest. Thought about children, swinging, laughing. Gentle swaying.

Joy—Also felt good. Finger hopped, light motion. Thought about running, playing, sunshine, and happiness. I am beginning to feel more joy.

SEX—Again, the same rubbing motion. Thought about my body as a whole, sensual object. Thought of paintings of nudes without feelings of disgust but of a natural thing.

REVERENCE—I am really enjoying reverence more. My finger moved lightly across button, almost a combination of love and joy. Thought about nature—snowing, still and quiet—watching each snowflake fall.

I did the sentic cycles very early in the morning before everyone else was up. At first I didn't feel much except a calmness but I didn't feel tired or drained. Later I felt very happy, peaceful, and sat for a long time looking out the living room window into the back yard. The yard seemed especially beautiful. The only fear I had was that this feeling would go away. I thought about doing the sentic cycles and what the real purpose was for doing them. I felt for the first time I had a glimpse of what was really happening. I felt like my soul had been "tapped" and wondered how incredible it was to have this feeling. Also wished I could feel like this always. I had visions of people walking across my yard and me going out to greet them with warmth and love. I particularly enjoyed the morning—playing with the children, listening to music, reading to them, which was unusual because most of the time I feel annoyed by them.

Several hours after doing the cycles, I still feel good but not as I felt earlier. It is hard to describe how I feel now—almost fearful that I won't feel the same again and a little fearful that I felt so good and peaceful.

In a way, I feel a little silly about my feelings. Also, I am trying to judge them—whether they were good or bad, right or wrong, and whether or not they are appropriate feelings for someone like me (at my age). I started to get the feeling of the tremendous responsibility of these feelings—normally I don't feel responsible for my feelings or I am not aware of my responsibility.

Sixth Session (12/8/73)

ANGER—Not much at first but then started to get angry at helpless feelings and anxiety.

HATE—Both in anger and hate I was caught up with my feelings of inadequacy, helplessness, and how I hated to feel that way.

GRIEF—Can't remember much about grief except the general feeling of grief. Felt very sad and almost like crying but I couldn't

LOVE—I don't remember at all what I felt other than feeling frustrated during this cycle. I try to concentrate just on the feeling of love and I can generally get it when I think of the children. I feel rather empty during this cycle—not that I feel unloved, but I feel like my own

love for others is thwarted. I realize more and more the difficulty I have in showing, feeling, and expressing my love, but I know it is there. Sometimes I do feel love but it is rare—I wish it could be spontaneous again.

SEX—This phase is getting better all the time! I am getting more and more sexual feelings. Very nice—I enjoy it.

JoY—Thought of warm sun shining on my face—felt good, comfortable. A song was going through my mind. This cycle is also getting a little better, but I keep thinking I should feel more joy like I used to.

REVERENCE—I started to think about a blade of grass— so simple yet so beautifully created. I started to pray but very differently than before. I seemed to move out of the focus of attention in not asking just for help for myself but asking God to help me understand and see the needs of the people I care for and to help me show my love for them; just to actually look at other people and not only at myself and my problems. It felt so good.

Before I did the cycles I felt nervous and uptight. I noticed my hand was shaking when I started but stopped. Afterwards I felt peaceful and felt that way for the rest of the day. The day was a pleasure—really enjoyable

G.R. (Female) Age 29

First Session (9/22/72) One Cycle

Have lots of questions. Couldn't stop my mind from working. Weird experience.

Very peaceful—dazed. I'm sort of like in a state of—the Reverence thing got to me. My first image was church and how high the ceilings are, and being a kid, and how it was a sacred place. Then a lot of space above me—enveloped me— almost like drowning, but it was beautiful, comfortable.

No EMOTION—I was just being mechanical getting a little bit anxious, but it wasn't controlling me.

ANGER—After a while was getting a tingling sensation in my finger. I was very very scared, also very angry. But it gets into a hate thing when it got connected up with a person.

The only time I felt the time was too long was in joy. I wanted to give up, wanted to stop and cry. I couldn't conjure up any joy. I didn't want to.

It wasn't difficult to express anger. Didn't have any specific person's face there. When hate came in I thought about my mother, but anger itself (was not associated with) imagery. Just came out.

It's dangerous to express anger. I'll be hit. I was hyperventilating.

HATE—My first feeling hate was one of every part of me going into some middle part of me, and seething. Almost as though image I had was of looking at someone. I hate, and every part of me is feeling the hate, but not expressing it. Almost like an absence of feeling for person. That's what true hate is. Then anger came in. To me it connected up with a person—my mother. It was just anger afterward.

GRIEF—Right before grief I started feeling very—like the anger was spent. It started waning and I started to feel very sad. When grief came on I wanted to fight the feeling of grief and fought it the whole way. I could feel myself trying and I didn't want to try.

LOVE—During love . . . I just got feeling about people I like, have feelings of love for, one after another, different people. D., he was just holding me and stroking me, just being cradled, and I rocked back and forth. The image of the sun—a lot of warmth—being bathed in warmth. It went in the direction of abandoning myself to the sun, to a person, letting it come in. More receiving than giving.

SEX—I was questioning that love was connected with sex. I resisted. Got in a block. My

image was of a man kissing my breasts and caressing me. Then I got the image of a penis coming into me, and I resisted, and then there was a whole image of being forced against my will in a sexual situation of a man trying to make love to me. I think I was trying to get away from my own sexual feeling. I might really get turned on by rape fantasy. Resisted it. Then I started feeling very sad.

When I heard the word joy, I thought, My God, there is no joy. I started thinking of ice cream. Picture of me and my mother I'm holding on to ice cream cone. Made me very sad that no joy connected with sex. Felt very barren.

I was starting to cry. At one point I tried to get joy through crying, but wasn't feeling it particularly.

REVERENCE—My first image was of a church and God and altar. Gothic image of everything being much much bigger than I was.

Then of infinite space—coming down and enveloping me. How peaceful death must be. Then image of drowning in water and very warm liquid, just as though death was going to rescue me.

Then I felt very very calm.

Second Cycle (Done separately, on same day)

Feel really good. It was a different experience, this time, totally. Much more loving and warm. It was just a transition of feelings that carried along. Last time I tried to compartmentalize. This time I just stayed and went along, and experienced an organic kind of transition from one feeling state to another.

No EMOTION—Just thought of something like “Star Trek.” Someplace way in future where I was sitting in a big chair and looking all around me passively. My fantasy was that I had been programmed not to feel any emotion and I was playing that part.

ANGER—I thought of it as my mother trying to slap me or hurt me in some way. It got to be a real struggle. At one point I felt I couldn't get away from being hurt, but I tried to assert myself. Click, she was trying to hurt me and I reacted against that.

My anger was to stave off an attack, to scare person away with my anger. That session seemed very long to me.

HATE—I didn't want to hate. I pictured my mother and I pictured R. I didn't want to hate them because I felt it was a loss on my part, in some way I was the loser. I went into the imagery of when I was with R. the last time and I had been aggressive sexually and he had not responded. I felt I had made a total fool of myself.

Extreme anger and hatred for being made a fool of.

Tremendous effort, in the beginning, to feel hate. Element of my hatred not having an effect, a feeling of helplessness.

GRIEF—Not active at all. Very passive grief. I felt helpless, abandoned, very drained. I felt so helpless that I couldn't even feel grief. Left, like a desolate, empty space. Nobody going to care. Nobody going to come. No point to expressing feeling because no one would come. Effort to push finger rest.

LOVE—I experienced again this image of being rocked, of being cuddled and rocked and stroked, and swaying back and forth. Images of the group I work with coming over. Mostly connected with the group, that was the first place I really allowed myself to feel love.

I could have just swayed on the finger rest button.

SEX—This time it was different. I was resisting feeling sexual. It was almost like an innocent sexual thing. My fantasy was that D. was stroking me in an innocent way. Then it turned into a sexual thing. But my feeling was it was O.K., he wouldn't hurt me. I wouldn't have to give anything in return.

Concentrated on feeling sensations in my vagina. Felt safe down there. Didn't feel it was being violated, felt it was being loved, a very gentle, quiet sex. Not much feeling in my breasts. It was really an evolution of the love segment.

JoY—Was continuation of the sex. Like I got an image of myself looking up into a loving man's face and just feeling good and safe and unthreatened. Started getting images of rolling around on a bed with this man, in slow motion. A very loving, tumbling image. Like it never stopped moving. Very free-flowing, like a free fall. Nothing got in the way. No sharp objects. Warm air cushioning everything. Very loving, protective, receiving.

REVERENCE—I got an image of being—it was very early in the morning. Sun wasn't up yet, but it was light. Big meadow with trees around. Very still, except for the sound of birds. I felt I could have stood there for a very long time, just being part of this quiet scene. There was nothing to fight. I could just have laid down and looked at the sky—at one with my surroundings.

There was a house somewhere, and the man would still be there. It was O.K. to be alone, because there was love.

Many of these reports are of the very first sentic cycle session ever done by the subject, following only a few minutes' instruction. The depth of experience and satisfactions made possible by the simple, yet profoundly affecting meditative rite of sentic cycles continues to astonish users well after their initial experience. With their finger rests and sentic cycle tape they can do sentic cycles at home, whenever they feel the need, whenever they wish to affirm their sense of belonging. For many it is an opening of a new and better world, a door to security for which they have received the key.

Sentic Cycles and Psychosomatic Stress

Each sentic state is accompanied by specific somatic experience.* For example, a person who experiences anger may have a sensation of limbs tending to be torn apart and of certain abdominal tension. But the nature of repressive processes makes it possible to repress some aspects of the sentic state, while experiencing parts of the somatic experience (or "virtual body image"). A person may remain aware of only part of this total phenomenon while no longer knowing that it is part of his anger, nor what specific situation may have given rise to it. Such partial, incomplete virtual body images may also appear from time to time in a person's awareness, as a truncated form of his original experience.

Another way in which a suppressed sentic state continues to function, without the individual's being aware of its cognitive connection, is by a specific physiologic shunting that concentrates on selected aspects of the virtual body image. (Selected portions of the virtual body image may be transformed into specific physiologic consequences—e.g., specific body tension such as stomach cramps, tics, and the like.) Virtual body images are quite specific and differ even for the various shades of the sentic states, and so particular psychosomatic symptoms in effect may be seen as somatic traces of the specific character of the sentic state from which they arise. Chronic set posture and facial expression also may be considered often to result from similar dynamics.

Longer-Range Effects of Doing Sentic Cycles

The expression of these sentic states during sentic cycles tends to free the individual from these unaware, accumulated somatic memories. Although each sentic state experience has a temporary effect, alleviation through sentic cycles is cumulative over a period of time. The associated fantasy processes appear gradually to be effective in reorganizing the dynamics, so

* We consider some aspects of this characteristic experience a "virtual body image" and describe the phenomenon in the following chapter.

that a new integration can take place. These processes include elements of catharsis, of abreaction, of desensitization, and of forming new associations. This makes it possible for sentic cycles to be helpful in cases of phobias, in addition to the alleviation of non-specific anxiety.

Long-term results of sentic cycle experience show facilitation rather than habituation of the effects. Instead of requiring greater and greater doses for a given effect, the effectiveness of sentic cycles persists, and may even increase. Thus, Mrs. D.S., a thirty-eight-year-old nurse who learned to do sentic cycles at the NYU Nursing School, writes after two years that her tape broke, and asks for a replacement. She adds, parenthetically almost:

My usual pattern is to play the cycle on two consecutive days each week. This is what I have been doing irregularly for the past year. Obviously there have been some positive results for me while doing sentic cycles. I pay particular attention to my posture before starting the tape. The most persistent personal change not altered by intermittent use of the tape has been my ability to experience the emotions without fantasizing. The over-all feeling I experience after each cycle is relaxation sufficient to fall asleep accompanied by an awareness that I have energy to do any tasks that I may want to.

The general effect on me personally is an ability to experience the emotions more fully, or quickly, as they are triggered in day-to-day living. I feel more at ease with people and less tense in stress-producing situations. I have more arguments, but also more orgasms. These effects diminish when I discontinue the cycles.

A particularly interesting case involves a paralyzed subject who has been doing sentic cycles every day for over two years. Because of the theoretical interest of this case, we shall describe it in some detail.

Mrs. C.N., who lives in Denver, contacted me in May 1972 expressing her desire to experience sentic cycles. It was not she, however, who wrote, but her nurse: Mrs. C.N. had been paralyzed from the neck down for many years, suffering from multiple sclerosis. The letter posed a problem we had not yet encountered. With her arms and legs paralyzed, how could she possibly do sentic cycles?

If the sentic theories are correct, then it should not matter which part of the body is used to express the essentic forms, as long as the movement has sufficient degrees of freedom (the number of dimensions in which movement is free to occur). So I designed a chin rest for Mrs. C.N. (she could move her chin and neck) to be used instead of the finger rest! During a trip to California, I stopped in Denver to give her this chin rest and to instruct her in its use.

Mrs. C.N. was in such an advanced state of the disease that in addition to her bodily paralysis her two eyes rolled independently of one another. One eye had to be covered by a patch to avoid double vision, and even then her uncovered eye moved largely uncontrollably. Now in her late forties, Mrs. C.N. has been suffering from multiple sclerosis for over twenty years. She is totally unable to move her body below the neck, and has to be positioned and carried from place to place. At night her husband must turn her over every one and a half hours, which he has dutifully done for many years. At the time of my visit, the emotional state of Mrs. C.N. was poor, not surprisingly. She had previously attempted suicide through an overdose of pills. A tracheotomy had been performed to allow her to breathe during the drug overdose coma, and as a result, she had lost a good deal of her voice. Her paralyzed condition left Mrs. C.N. with little opportunity to express her grief, frustration, and anger in the way other people can.

In less than an hour Mrs. C.N. learned to express essentic form with her chin on the chin rest and found it quite natural. Her first experience of sentic cycles was a truly spine-chilling experience for me. When she expressed anger and grief there was such concentrated, powerful intensity in her expression that I could hardly continue. But when it came time to express

joy she said, “I cannot do joy, there is nothing that gives me joy.” For some moments, I did not know what to answer, but then I said, “Imagine you are perfectly well and you are playing outside in the sunshine, and express that!” Mrs. C.N. tried, and found that it worked: she could do this. The next problem was with reverence. The patient said, “The only thing I can feel reverence for is my husband, he has been so good to me all these years. As far as any outside force is concerned—God or nature— I can only feel intense anger and resentment at the injustice of my affliction.” With some reluctance, I agreed that she might think of her husband in terms of reverence and Mrs. C.N. finished her first cycle. She had cried during grief and said that this was the first time in many years she had been able to experience some of these emotions. Thereafter, Mrs. C.N. has kept a regular schedule of doing one sentic cycle at ten-thirty every morning. Her nurse puts on the tape for her and positions her with the chin rest, and she has been doing this every day for over two years.

Even within the first two or three weeks a change occurred in her personality. She became less resentful, more calm and cheerful and outgoing. After three months a transformation had taken place in her relationships with her family and others. She became more interested in them, and smiled and was talkative when her husband came home at night from work, instead of complaining and being resentful. She looked forward to her half hour of “sentic” every day and would not allow any disturbance to interrupt her routine. I saw her altogether only three times during the first year. On one visit I was told by the new nurse (who didn’t know who I was) that Mrs. C.N. was doing her sentics and could not be disturbed. As the year progressed the improvement continued and became more pervasive, so much so that it came to be a real pleasure to be in Mrs. C.N.’s company; a radiance seemed to issue from her that affected others who came in contact with her. She now could enjoy music, and although her paralysis had not diminished, she slept better, suffered less from pain, and could tolerate it more easily when it occurred. She also required considerably less supportive medicine. Near the end of the first year she had a serious accident. She had been positioned improperly and toppled from her chair, smashing part of her upper jaw, tearing her lip and breaking some teeth. Doing sentics during this time allowed her to get over the psychological effects of the accident with little emotional trauma.

Six months later, she was asked whether she was not getting tired of doing the same set of emotions every day. Would she not like additional ones, such as envy or hope, or substitute them for some of the others. She said, “I am satisfied with doing these. I already have hope through doing the others so I don’t need to do hope.” A year later she still feels the same way.

One of the benefits Mrs. C.N. says she is getting from her sentic cycle experience is that it lets her cry in a gentle way during the grief phase, without the violent spasms that used to wrack her without giving her any real emotional release. She is able to cry in this fashion every day and enjoys the experience. Interestingly, she changed her manner of expressing love within the first few months. Initially, she had been asked to express love, as she would the other emotions, with an opening movement of her jaw. But she discovered that she preferred expressing love with a turning to and fro of her neck, moving the jaw sideways over the chin rest in a caressing manner. Of course, there was no reason to object to this; it was a mode of action she also chose for expressing reverence. In these ways we were learning from her.

The experience of Mrs. C.N. demonstrates the continued long-term effect of sentic cycles and the ability of the incapacitated to benefit from their experience. In changing her own expression and personality, Mrs. C.N. also changed the family atmosphere dramatically and brought an increased enjoyment of life to all around her. To quite an extent, Mrs. C.N. became aware that although her body was not functioning, her mind and her person were sound; her disease could not really touch that part of her that was most herself.†

† In some ways it may have helped her to discover these aspects of her person more than if she had been healthy. She had the advantage of being able to stick to a schedule that allowed for a daily sentic cycle experience. Healthy individuals seldom would be willing to submit themselves to such a stringent schedule.