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The Self: Reflections on its Nature and Structure According to the Satir Model

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Abstract

This paper is written by Stuart Pidcocke, retired professor of anthropology and long-time associate of John Banmen. It thus provides a perspective of the Satir model that may differ from those of therapeutic practitioners.

It begins by noting three ideas of “self” that are evident in the Satir Model, and by comparing them to descriptions posited by William James and others. It then attempts to define self-esteem (with special reference to Satir's work with the California Task Force to Promote Self-esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility). In a deeper exploration of the concept, the author examines his own experience of self-esteem.

The author compares Satir's “hierarchical model” with her “growth model”, noting that self-esteem mirrors the actualization of the self. The paper also explores implications of the “Iceberg metaphor” (especially the idea of yearnings) and the “Self Mandala”, proposing the “I” as an observer (the “watcher”) and as an actor (the “doer-decider”). Satir's “five parts of the self” are described and correlated with the eight concerns of the Self Mandala. An exploration of Satir's idea of spirituality follows, emphasizing the social or interactional nature of the self. The author classes the Satir model among self-actualization psychologies, and emphasizes the practicality of its normative ethical teachings as achieved through therapy and personal transformation.

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