The Satir Institute of the Pacific is pleased to present an Annotated Bibliography of published writings by Virginia Satir and other authors related to the Satir Model in English since 1960 until March 2019.

The Satir Institute of the Pacific would be pleased to receive notification of any material already published which has been omitted and any new publications as they appear. Please send any information to admin@satirpacific.org

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**Satir Bibliography (updated March 2019)**

A detailed analysis of 16 key concepts and techniques used by Satir to make contact, challenge client’s limiting perceptions, and move people towards transformation. Divided into two parts, the first section is devoted to Satir’s therapeutic approach, with the second half offering a full transcript of a 73 minute session.

This article details the development and usage of Virginia Satir’s therapeutic techniques and their effectiveness in creating a context for change. These techniques include: focus on positive intention, equality, touch, and a present/future oriented focus.

A reprinted version of the above article.

Though not as renowned as some of her other books, this early collaborative work offers a glimpse into Satir’s thoughts and techniques during her formative years. While
rudimentary in comparison to her later more developed therapeutic system, the reader can still detect the groundwork of Satir’s humanism being laid.

The Satir Family Therapy Model is discussed in relation to its core theoretical orientation, goals, roles, and techniques. The author provides an overview of healthy and unhealthy family units, their patterns of change, and the transformational process towards healthy congruence.

A brief 3 page introduction covering the life and work of Virginia Satir. The entry contains both biographical information and notes the continued influence of Satir’s approaches and techniques in the world of psychology today.

The article focuses on the most salient aspects and techniques of the Satir model, including the iceberg metaphor, family genogram, and key therapeutic steps with the model itself. The author also notes the Satir model’s use and application in a brief transformational style which retains the original theoretical basis.

This text is a collection of articles and essays covering a range of components of the Satir growth model. Topics include: therapists’ use of self, family sculpting, issues of self-esteem, therapist congruence, and cross culture applications of the model.

In conjunction with several current theories, the author advocates that depression is symptomatic of the suppression of other feelings, often being used as a form of avoidance from other emotions. Utilizing several components of the Satir model, the author provides a clinical profile of a former patient to illustrate clinical guidelines for change and enhanced feelings of self-worth.

A compilation of Satir’s shorter works and papers, the text offers insight into the progressive development of her beliefs and techniques over the span of 20 years. The papers cover a broad spectrum of Satir’s thought, including: family systems, person-of-the-therapist issues, practical techniques, and humanistic approaches to therapy.

A thorough and comprehensive text which covers almost the full spectrum of Satir’s systemic approach to therapy, including: foundational assumptions, beliefs, theories, and practical techniques.

The author provides an overview of several pitfalls and errors in suicide assessment, intervention, and treatment as generally practiced by therapists. Additionally, the author outlines several myths concerning suicide itself. Finally, drawing on the Satir model of change the author outlines an interview method for treating suicidal clients.

This paper gives a short overview of the major developments in Virginia Satir’s theory and thought. The author highlights three major shifts: the early stages of Satir’s communication model, the Satir model itself (which emphasized congruence, survival stances, and the iceberg model), and finally transformational systemic therapy, which stresses becoming more fully human through connecting with one’s life force.

The author presents a succinct overview of the major personal and psychological developments in Satir’s life. The article also covers Satir’s essential beliefs about therapy, her key techniques, contributions, and lasting influences.

This article notes the rising interest of integrating the practice of forgiveness into the field of therapy and sheds light on some of the contradictory approaches to this practice. The author distinguishes forgiveness from reconciliation and outlines a five-step model with the client as an active agent within the process.

A collection of Satir’s essays and meditations on the interplay of the body, mind, and spirit, emphasising the acceptance of self and the enduring nature of the human soul as it strives towards life and wholeness.

This paper offers a comprehensive overview of the development of Virginia Satir’s therapeutic system and thought. The authors posit that therapists who employ Satir’s methodology must ensure the presence of five elements to create a context for transformational change, namely, they must ensure that methods are: enacted experientially, are positively directional and change focused, work within the clients’ intrapsychic and interpersonal systems, and draw from a therapist’s personal congruence.


This paper analyzes the efficacy and use of metaphor in clients connecting their cognitive and subconscious realms. The author emphasizes the importance of allowing clients to create their own metaphors due to the idiosyncratic nature of symbols and for the enhancement of client autonomy.


The author traces the evolution of Virginia Satir’s Family Reconstruction Process, drawing comparisons and noting differences between its original form and its current shorter form. The article then offers a case study of the reconstruction process for a three generational family model, emphasizing client’s inner resources and movement towards wellness.


This paper offers the anecdotal experience of the author’s personal journey of grief from the loss of her father. Drawing on the work of Satir, Kubler-Ross, and Worden, the author applies various techniques and insights to her personal growth and development through these experiences.


This dissertation provides an empirical study on the incorporation of various spiritualities (Jewish, Catholic, United Church, Buddhism, and Christian Science) into family therapy using the Satir model as its framework for application. The study specifically focuses on
‘the impact of spirituality on couple congruence’ primarily in relation to the couples universal yearnings.

An abridged version of the author’s thesis, this article specifically looks at Satir’s early spiritual and religious influences, as well as her later adoption of the I/Thou encounter. The author uses Satir’s concept of the couple’s Mandala as a framework for understanding change in relation to self, other, us, and context.

Drawing from his doctoral thesis, that author highlights Satir’s concept of ‘us-ness’ as a key component of couple congruence in relation to the dyads spirituality. The author further notes that Satir’s concept of ‘us-ness’ has been misunderstood by other leading advocates of spiritual integration in therapy, most notably Ken Wilbur.

This paper overviews the parallels and points of departure between the Integral theories of Ken Wilber and the Satir model. The author pays particular attention to the spiritual dimensions of theory and concludes that it is the Satir model which contains a more positivist view of human conditioning.

This paper is a continuation of a previous selected transcription from the last training retreat that Virginia Satir taught in 1987. In this transcription Satir speaks on topics which include: conformity, equality, human potential, interactive systems, and the essence of our life force.

The author traces the early influences of the Satir model and their current presence in the model today. Influences include: Mary Baker Eddy, R.W. Emerson, Martian Buber, and Gregory Bateson.

A selected transcription of the last training retreat that Virginia Satir taught in 1987, Satir speaks on a range of topics, including social theory, therapeutic techniques, coping stances, and core beliefs about humanity and self-esteem.


Berg, I.A. (1965). Comments on current books and the passing scene. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 12 (1)*, p. 107-110. A brief review of several texts and ideas circulating in the mid-60’s, including Satir’s *Conjoint Family Therapy*, which proposes that family interactions invariably play a role in the nature and manifestation of mental illness, thus, necessitating the inclusion of family therapy in the healing process.

Bermudez, D. (2008). Adapting Virginia Satir techniques of Hispanic families. *The Family Journal 16 (1)*, p. 51-57. DOI: 10.1177/1066480707309543 Utilizing a review of the current literature and clinical consultation, the author applies the Satir growth model to Hispanic families. The author concludes that adaptations to Satir’s techniques of the family map, restructuring, and defensive stances enable the model to be better suited to the Hispanic family culture and context then as it currently exists.


Bitter, J. R. (1988). Family mapping and family constellation: Satir in Adlerian context. *Individual Psychology: Journal of Adlerian Theory, Research & Practice, 44*, 106-111. A short article which compares and contrasts the approaches of Satir and Adler to family units. The author also briefly notes the ways in which the two approaches augment one another.

A comprehensive overview of family counseling, in which the author lists Satir’s human validation process as one of the major 20th century theories and practices of family therapy.

A very brief obituary for Virginia Satir which documents her career highlights and major publications.

This paper compares and contrasts the non-traditional psychoanalytic therapy of Heinz Kohut with that of Virginia Satir. The author pays particular attention to the philosophical similarities shared by Kohut and Satir, with focus being given to the existential and experiential nature of each therapist.

The author extrapolates on Satir’s ideas of identity, autonomy, and intimacy, and the interconnectedness of these human elements. The author notes the necessity to balance autonomy and connectedness in sharp contrast to the North American idea of individuality.

This article extrapolates on the Jungian concept of conscious and unconscious reconciliation of the psyche. The author notes that while is vital to the development of self, it fails to include an interpersonal component. The author integrates Satir’s approach to complete this process.

A short reflection of the interview conducted with Virginia Satir by Sheldon Starr. The author highlights Satir’s emphasis on understanding clients as humans to be related to, as opposed to objects which must be fixed. The author further emphasises the responsibility of the therapist to be fully human with clients.

The author discusses Virginia Satir’s stance of becoming fully human for clients, and specifically notes the necessity of self valuation. The author notes that the therapist is an integral part of the therapeutic system.

A compilation of reflections by various authors on Satir’s beliefs and techniques regarding communication, particularly within the family setting. The author proposes a thematic comparison throughout the text between Satir and the wisdom of Lao Tzu.

This chapter is an overview of the principles used by Virginia Satir in couples’ therapy. The author notes the goals of the various communication interventions used by Satir and highlights Satir’s underlying motives congruence and respect.

This paper is a compilation of excerpts from various other works the author has written concerning the Satir model. The author focuses on her life, work, and the breadth of application, paying particular attention to the therapist’s development and ‘use of self’.

This short introduction is comprised mainly of large excerpts of letters from Virginia Satir concerning the formation of the Avanta network and its’ goals. These goals are founded on Satir’s concept of human wholeness, in contrast to distinctions and labels of “good” or “bad”.

A compilation of various journal articles and volumes, this text focuses on person of the therapist issues and the therapists’ personal development. The text pays particular attention to issues involving: self-disclosure, therapist self-awareness, transference/countertransference, and the various roles of the therapist in session.

An exhaustive text on Satir’s foundational concepts, techniques, and therapeutic philosophy, with multiple contributions from various authors. The authors not only offer insight into how they themselves have developed Satir’s family systems therapy but also how they have adapted and practically implement these tenets and techniques into their own practices.

In her career, the “Mother of Family Therapy” Virginia Satir strove to make life work better: for the individual, for families, for the entire world. With a training objective of “becoming more fully human,” Virginia believed that the principles for peace with-in families could be extrapolated to peace within the “world family.” More than just a testament to Virginia’s legacy, Well-Being Writ Large is a window into her thinking—a “biography” of a deeper understanding of the nature of the human being and how that human being might live better in her or his world.


The author notes that the Satir transformational process lacks a fully formed theoretical structure and, thus, is in danger of losing its experiential component. Using EFT as a structural basis for the Satir growth model, the author proposes an integrative form of the two approaches, that firmly grounds the Satir model in a research based theory without the loss of its experiential nature.


A moving personal account from the author’s long-time friend and Holocaust survivor about the necessity and power of love in the face of dire circumstances.


This is a presentation on the teaching metaphor “Mandala” which was used by Virginia Satir. Satir used the diagram of a flower to illustrate the concept of Mandala and the different interconnected dimensions of the self including: Context, Spiritual, Emotional, Intellectual, Sensual, Nutritional, Interactional and Physical. Satir saw Mandala as a tool to grant us greater understanding of one another and the concept of universals.


This chapter is a commentary that overviews Satir’s use of building congruent communication between couples. Throughout the chapter the author highlights the use of personal congruence on the part of the therapist to facilitate and enhance communication between couples.

A composite book from several contributors about the process of developing healthy self-esteem. The editor draws directly from Satir’s theory of change, including the belief in peoples’ innate ability to change and necessity for therapists to create a context for change to occur within.


This paper focuses on Satir’s Parts Party method as a potential resource for the therapists’ personal development. The author asserts that therapists’ who avail themselves of this resource can enhance their sense of self and personal congruence in session with clients.


Using the Satir Model’s health oriented approach, the author applies the model to critical incident stress preparation, and debriefing to access client resiliency and reinforce coping skills. The author notes the model’s usefulness in engaging participants on a multi-level basis and the ease of the models accessibility to individuals of all backgrounds.


This paper analyzes the impact of heterosexist attitudes and beliefs on gays and lesbians in relation to self-identity. Using the Satir model, the author outlines the use of family maps, the iceberg metaphor, and sculpting, to rebuild self-esteem in clients whose identity has been negatively impacted by homophobic attitudes and beliefs. The author specifically emphasizes transforming client’s core beliefs, accessing resources, and reprocessing negative experiences.


The author presents an interview with Dr. Bunny Duhl, a contemporary and early follower of Satir. The interview offers a broad overview of Satir’s personal and professional development, providing insight into the maturation of, what would become, the key elements in Satir’s thought and practice.


An extensive interview with Jane Gerber, a long time friend and associate of Virginia Satir. Gerber offers insight into both Satir’s methodological development and her personal life as a growing individual in her own right.

A revised version of the author’s previous article, entitled “Wheel of Resources: Assistance for Hurricane Katrina Workers”. The revised article highlights the application of the wheel of resources to first responders in crisis intervention, noting the intervention’s strengths of being accessible, growth oriented, and engaging on a sensory, emotive, and cognitive level.


The author presents an adaptation of Satir’s parts party for individual usage. The author notes the broad potential applications of this method including: personal growth, education, and training. The author further identifies several strengths of the solo parts party intervention, including: the development of one’s identity, resource recognition and access, increased assimilation and integration, and transformation of perceived negative parts.


This article is a compilation of four short stories and reflections on the life of Steven Bentheim, in honor of his passing. The authors note Bentheim as an innovative thinker and practitioner, whose life was demarcated by milestone contributions to the Satir model.


An interview between Jesse Carlock, Ph.D. and John Banmen. The interview focuses on Banmen’s personal relationship with Satir during her lifetime, his ongoing interest in her approach to therapy, and his desire to understand how her techniques brought healing to the emotional wounds of clients. In the interview, they discuss the origin of the book *The Satir Model* and the origin of the concept of the “Iceberg.” Banmen also talks about how the Satir Model relates to Chinese culture.


This paper offers a qualitative study of 60 African-American primary family caregivers who utilized self-directed skills based on the Satir model, for the purposes of increasing self-esteem and reducing burnout. These results were then developed into an intervention protocol for training nurses who provide in-home care for the elderly.
The paper offers a constructive critique of the Satir model as taught in Hong Kong. The article focuses on the model’s application to Chinese social structures, family hierarchies, and concepts of self and self-esteem.

This article offers an empirically grounded study on the Satir process of change as utilized by John Banmen, and specifically targets clients of Chinese/Taiwanese decent who retain unmet expectations. The authors present the findings of their data and suggest a post-analysis refined model for clinical practice.

This paper addresses the cultural components of teaching the Satir model in a diverse populations setting, offering particular emphasis on personal congruence. This article is particularly relevant for those teaching the model in Pacific Rim and east Asian cultures, and notes the disparity between the Satir model’s emphasis on individuality and many other cultures collective mindsets.

Drawing on data collected from a two day personal growth workshop, the author examines ethnic Chinese participants’ assertion of individual needs within a collectivist framework. The author further uses elements of the I Tao as a framework for explaining the participants’ personal growth and family reconstruction.

This paper blends the Satir model with social construction theory in as much as both approaches espouse a reality that is co-created through language, narrative, and individual participation in a larger embedded system. The author ultimately concludes that both approaches are highly compatible and advocates a synthesis of the models.

This article compares the Satir Model of therapy to the field of social work, which is a relatively new profession in China. The article emphasizes the idea that both fields strive to help people help themselves. The author stresses the importance of helping clients, but also helping them develop self-reliance. She uses the idea of sculpting to embody this philosophy, and as a learning tool that can grant people deeper intellectual knowledge which will help them help themselves.


The author provides an observational analysis study of the Satir models application to women exiting abuse spousal relationships. The study offers a cultural analysis of patriarchy in Singapore as a contributing factor to spousal abuse and affirms the Satir model’s effectiveness in increasing participants’ autonomy and sense of self-esteem.


This paper discusses the specific technique and application of Satir’s use of the family map in therapy. The author emphasizes the techniques goals and clinical application in transforming the family system.


The author provides a practical application of the Satir Model to the current problem of climate change through a workshop on climate change. She applies Satir’s methods to the changes that are taking place in the world because of climate change based on the ideas of Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone’s (2012) book, *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We’re in Without Going Crazy.* The author addresses the fact that people have psychological responses to the problem of climate change. She encourages people to respond to the crisis of climate change with action rather than ignoring it or remaining passive.


This paper offers the results of four personal growth workshops done in Hong Kong based on the Satir Growth Model. There were 94 Chinese participants, half of whom were in an experimental group and half of whom were in a control group. The study analyses the scale development and outcome evaluation of participants in the workshops.

The authors discuss Satir’s use of self in therapy as both an avenue for creating therapeutic relationships and a model for those she trained to follow. The authors identify the specific elements of the self that Satir used in therapy and note Satir’s emphasis on the therapeutic role of the self in therapy over and above clinical techniques.


This article examines the author’s personal experience with practicing sand-tray therapy and the integration of Satir based concepts and interventions. The author highlights her development of these interventions by drawing on three case studies.


Dodson offers her insight into the state of the world in the 21st century based on the ideas of Virginia Satir and Carl Jung. It examines how the current state of the world has been personified through its leaders and emphasizes the need for the transformation of Energy so that people can integrate the new Energy of the 21st Energy into themselves.


A short memorial originally given in 1988 that summarizes the impact and legacy of Virginia Satir.


While the techniques in the book were originally designed to help with substance abuse prevention and recovery, the authors also apply the system to altering a myriad of self-destructive patterns and the recovery of healthy self-esteem.


This paper offers the self-reports of adolescent participants, grades 5-8, who role-played various situations using the Say It Straight substance resistance techniques. The participants reported high levels of respect for those individuals who set and maintained healthy boundaries.
This is a brief summary of Virginia Satir’s work based on information found in the literature from 1988-2016 and interviews with ten Satir experts. It focuses on the influence Satir had on the history of family systems therapy as well as its current practice. The results of the study reveal that Satir approaches used in contemporary practice remain true to Satir’s theoretical and philosophical ideas, but the Satir Model is also diverse in its practical application. The diversity of the model allows practitioners to adapt their practice to better serve a specific population.

The authors present an analysis of a videotaped family therapy session with Satir from the 1970’s. The authors make specific note of Satir’s interventions, systemic approach, and her creation of a context to facilitate the family’s movement from a problem saturated context to a context of resourcefulness.

This paper analyzes the integration of Virginia Satir’s Parts Party with DeDomenico’s Sandtray-Worldplay Therapy and the effects of this therapy in helping clients resolve intrapsychic issues. The author notes a number of parallels between the two methods and highlights specific points of compatibility, placing particular emphasis on congruence, creativity, and the acknowledgement of client’s emotional resources for change.

The authors apply Satir’s concept of an integrated authentic self to the personal growth of therapists. The authors also make use of both the “wounded healer” and “person-practice” models as potential avenues of application for increasing therapists’ self awareness in training.

The text offers a research-based perspective on Satir’s attention to gender issues in therapy. The model emphasizes therapeutic attentiveness to social context, gender-based power structures, and the transformation of socially imposed gender roles. Some divergences between Satir and feminist theory are also briefly considered.

Drawing on qualitative and quantitative data, the author explores therapists’ views and practices regarding the issue of gender in relation to the Satir growth model. Noting major themes that emerge from the research, the author lists several recommendations for therapists’ wishing to integrate gender issues into their practice.

Freeman, M. (2006). Peace within, peace between, peace among. In R.M. MacNair’s (Ed.) Working for peace: A handbook for practical psychology and other tools (p. 63-72). Atascadero, CA, US: Impact Publishers. This article focuses specifically on Satir’s view of her work as effecting change within a global social system by working with individuals to help them become more fully human. This change process entails the development of one’s self-worth, congruent communication, reliance on one’s inner resources, and the achievement of one’s own potential.


The author describes Satir’s ‘Ingredients of an Interaction’ and its integration into public and professional workshops. The paper then integrates Satir’s concept of the internal process with the author’s own view of self-esteem, and provides a self-test for responses to threat.


A detailed account of the various personal and professional humanist influences on the work of Virginia Satir. The article offers a case study of young abused children to demonstrate the Satir model’s use of self in promoting a holistic and integrative approach to therapy.


Founded in 1976, Virginia Satir began the Satir Family Camp. Originally designed as a camp for therapists and their families, Satir’s intent was to have families experience her teachings and techniques and grow along with therapists. Though the camp no longer maintains its exclusive focus on therapists’ families per se, the SFC still maintains its core emphasis of personal growth through congruence.


The author explores the concept of Stance-Dance, a therapeutic practice with roots in Siberian Dance, dynamic yoga and systemic family therapy. She addresses a number of problems for which Stance-Dance can have beneficial results, the theoretical underpinnings of Stance-Dance, 5 Stance-Dances, and the steps involved in the practice of Stance-Dance


This article applies the Satir Model to the business and coaching worlds, and specifically to the professions of executive coaching, business coaching, and life coaching. The article outlines a systematic coaching model based on the Satir Model. The model combines cognitive coaching and somatic work based on the idea of ENRICH (Explore, Nourish, Respond, Imagine, Communicate, Hug) and five Stance-Dances.

A short review of Satir’s work, *Helping Families to Change*, the author provides a balanced, though not uncritical, review of Satir’s work based on his personal experience at her seminars and the text itself. The review provides an interesting look into how Satir was being received by various groups during her life.


Innes, M. (2002). Satir's therapeutically oriented educational process: A critical appreciation. *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal, 24* (1), p.35-56. DOI: 10.1023/A:1014369504991 This article offers an introductory overview of the basic rubrics of Satir’s transformational therapy, foundational concepts and core presuppositions. The author further offers general insights as to why he believes that Satir, though highly influential, has not been fully accepted within the family therapy movement.

Innes, M. (2009). How do you view your clients in couple therapy? *The Satir Journal, 3* (1), p. 20-25. Building on an earlier study which analyzed the presence of gender bias in couple therapy, this short paper offers several self-supervision questions for therapists to enhance self-awareness, with the overarching goal being the avoidance of negative stereotypes.

Jackson, D., Riskin, J., Satir, V. (1961). A method of analysis of a family interview. *Achieves of General Psychiatry, 5*, p. 321-339. DOI: 10.1001/archpsyc.1961.01710160001001 This paper is an analysis of a family therapy session in which the authors examined the interactional dynamics, communication patterns, and power structure of a family. The authors then make recommendations for restructuring the family system on the basis of their observations.

This paper provides a broad overview for the use of the Satir model to working with at-risk youth, specifically as applied in the preparation and practice of outdoor adventure-based therapy. The author places particular focus on interpersonal connections, survival stances, the iceberg metaphor, and family-of-origin maps.

The author offers a meta-analysis of 509 references in published literature to the Satir model. The author subdivides these references into empirical studies or rational studies. Importantly, the author notes that, with only minor exceptions, these references are overwhelmingly positive and in support of the model, and specifically emphasizes that the literature finds no client harming elements within the model.

The author emphasises that therapist’s own personhood is a decisive factor in productive couples counseling. The author notes such salient aspects of personhood as: self-disclosure and non-pathologizing as important aspects promoted by Satir.

This article briefly references Satir’s understanding of marriage as something that begins “when two people first lay eyes on each other”.

This is an interview with James Bitter, an Adlerian Family Therapist who reflects on how master therapists such as Virginia Satir and Michael White influenced his approach to therapy. He also reflects on the past, present and future of family therapy.

The author explores Satir’s concept of our life force as the “I AM.” She links Satir’s ideas to her personal life story by connecting her own spiritual experiences to the “life force.” The author defines the I AM and explains how to access it for oneself, how to connect to others’ life force of love through the I AM, and how accessing the it allows one to become more fully human.


Lee, B.K. (2002). Development of a congruence scale based on the Satir model. *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal, 24* (1), p.217-239. DOI: 10.1023/A:1014390009534 The author expounds on the development of an index scale constructed to quantify congruence as defined within the Satir model. As such, the scale is designed to track personal growth in the areas of the intrapsychic/interpersonal, spiritual, creative, and communal.


Lee, K. (2016). From “Saving Satir” to “Evolving Satir.” *Social Work. 61* (4) p. 372-374. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/sw/sww056. This is a commentary on Christopher J. Wretman’s 2016 article “Saving Satir: Contemporary Perspectives on the Change Process Model.” The author argues that Virginia Satir’s work has been underrepresented because it is seen as not being empirically valid in an academic world that values evidence-based work. According to the author, key constructs belong to Satir and he argues for the systematization of the Satir Model. The author suggests that rather than “save Satir” it is better to “evolve Satir” by subjecting her work to empirical research so that it is considered empirically valid.

A short book review that highlights the works parallels with Satir’s own outlook on the world and our potentiality as a human race.


This article is written to guide therapists in counselling their clients through an energetically focused lens. It examines how Virginia Satir applied the concept of energy to her practice and emphasizes the importance of therapists’ paying attention to intuitive and spiritual messages during therapy. Satir’s techniques therapeutic techniques include: centering, the use of meditation, of metaphors, of sculpting, a sense of presence and the importance of congruence, all of which work together to open the healing potential within a client.


DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-018-9477-7

The authors examine the influence of the Satir Model on the field of family therapy and the creation of Satir Transformational Systemic Therapy (STST). The article also covers a two-phase study of a Chinese cohort in Hong Kong. The study is designed to validate the Perceived Self-Transformation Scale (PSTS-17), a 17-item scale that measure the self-transformation proposed by the Satir Model. The PSTS evaluates the therapeutic approaches of self-connectedness, self-doubt, others-oriented and openness to share and concludes, based on the study, that the scale is a reliable measure for self-transformation.


This paper analyzes 20 counselling sessions in Beijing from the perspective of the Satir systemic model. The authors note how effective the Satir model is within the context of mainland China, and highlight therapeutic outcomes such as increased self-esteem, personal responsibility, and personal congruence.


This study provides a broad view of the socio-political milieu of post-Soviet Lithuania, paying particular attention to the sharp increase in alcoholism, family violence, and
severe behavioral difficulties in children which often resulted in institutionalization. The author notes how the application of the Satir model, and particularly the principles of self-autonomy, respect for self and other, and inherent individual dignity, created a family and social context for change.

This paper overviews the parallels between EFT and the Satir model. The author uses first hand communications from various therapists and former students of Satir’s to support her assertion that the two models are complementary and provide enrichment to one another in the therapy practice.

This practically oriented text/workbook combination offers a broad-based theoretical component with step-by-step tools for application. Specific techniques include family reconstructions, client centred therapy praxis, use of the Satir Iceberg, and use of the self by the therapist.

A spiritually oriented text that emphasises connection with one’s own self worth through practical everyday actions, including: journaling, mediation, art, and nature. The overarching concept is that through connecting with one’s own self-worth, one is better able to connect with the inner humanity of others in relationship.

This text is designed to impart practical skills for therapists. The book emphasises therapists’ necessity to move beyond technique and incorporate the Satir approach as a component of an overall outlook and life-style, including a general stance of openness, acceptance, and congruence.

This paper discusses the Enriching Program, a program based on the therapeutic stance and skills of Virginia Satir, as applied to the general population. The paper emphasises the growing empirical support being found for the program and for Satir’s work.

The article looks specifically at the application of the Satir model to personal issues of the therapist for the purpose of confronting unresolved issues and enhancing congruence. The article advocates the development of creative ways of self expression for client and therapist as a means of externalizing the internal process. Specific techniques borrowed from the Satir model include family of origin discussions, parts parties, and family reconstruction.

Employing a phenomenological approach, this paper analyzes the personal experience of nine therapists, using the Satir iceberg metaphor as a template. The study notes the emergence of five major themes, including: self-awareness, integration, increased acceptance, the facilitation of change, and increased spiritual development.

This article is about the concept “zero infinity,” a new outlook on the Satir Model based on the author’s research on the Personal Iceberg Metaphor. Zero Infinity is a systematic approach designed to make sense of the multidimensional aspects of being human. The article outlines five therapeutic techniques necessary that are for transformational change in an individual.

The article directly applies the techniques of the Satir growth model to suicide intervention with youth. Particular emphasis is given to approaching suicide intervention from a positive humanist standpoint, fostering desire to live, and becoming actively involved in previously unengaged areas of life.

This short review of *Personal Alchemy* highlights the books strong emphasis on therapists not simply adopting Satir’s techniques in family therapy, but needing to appropriate Satir’s beliefs and attitudes towards therapy itself.

The authors describe and contrast the Satir experiential model with the symbolic-experiential model of family therapy, noting both the shared and divergent components of the two models techniques, interventions, philosophy, and therapist/client roles. The authors make particular note of Satir’s emphasis on self-worth, self-esteem, and the individual’s innate capacity for growth.


Using the Satir model’s emphasis on congruent communication as a starting point, this chapter focuses on the family therapy model developed by McLendon, which is one of the most current developments of therapy based on Satir’s work. Like Satir, the McLendon model emphasizes the identification of the couples’ defensive stances, family of origin issues, and the development of congruent communication.


An introductory note containing the author’s personal thoughts and comments about the life and work of Virginia Satir in the field of psychology. The author highlights Satir’s personal impact upon those she taught and the relational qualities of authenticity and congruence that she exemplified.

Middelburg, C., Gross, S. Families’ affective rules and their relationship to the families’ adjustment. The American Journal of Family Therapy, 7 (2), 37-45. DOI: 10.1080/01926187908250314

An empirical dual hypothesis study of the rules around family affect regulation which draws on the theories of Virginia Satir. The study concludes that there are common rules that families operate under when regulating affect.


The authors provide a rudimentary understanding of Satir’s concepts of congruence in interpersonal communication, noting that appropriate responses on one level of communication may constitute inappropriate responses to deeper levels of communication. The authors provide examples of incongruence from romantic fiction.

Applies the Satir transformational model to female adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse and illustrates the process through a step by step case study. The article places particular emphasis on the transformation of one’s core self towards inner congruence.

This paper is a quantitative research paper, using 659 subjects, to validate a congruence scale based on the Satir model. Drawing from the Satir model, the scale measures individual congruence in relation to elements of intrapsychic, interpersonal, and spiritual dimensions.

The author adapts Satir’s concept of the family sculpting to a form more compatible for family members whom are unable to participate in the sculpting process. The adapted model allows for restructuring of family dynamics and systems according to a visual representation.

The author examines the connection between Satir’s methods of therapy and the creative arts, which is an area of Satir’s work that she sees as having been largely undocumented. The author describes a workshop designed to explore musical interventions used in a family-based music therapy model based on Satir’s STST model and influenced by Juliette Alvin’s free improvisation music therapy model. The results of the workshop showed that adding music to family therapy promoted harmony and growth within families.

This article explores, what the author contends, is the central component of Virginia Satir’s contribution to family therapy. The author surveys the goals, stages, techniques, and context required for therapeutic family reconstruction.

Drawing from several different written sources, the author compiles and combines three major meditations of Satir. The author has specifically targeted the enhancement of relaxation, connection with the body, and self autonomy as the meditative goals.
This reflection comprises a second set of two integrated meditations by Satir. The author emphasizes tapping into one’s self-essence, the mind-body connection, and recognition of one’s inner resources.

This reflection blends together three different meditations of Virginia Satir, focusing on relaxation, mind-body connection, and the use of metaphor to enhance self-esteem.

This meditation specifically focuses on the techniques which encourage the production of GABA for the purposes of inhibiting adrenaline production, with the overall goal being a mindset of calm and peace. The meditation also highlights this frame of mind as contrary to reactionary states of anger and fear.

The author provides a retrospective look at the pioneers of family therapy who have been lost since its inception, giving a short memoriam of their lives, impacts, and the key contributions of each figure.

The author analyzes the methods of Virginia Satir in connecting prejudicial beliefs to imbalanced hierarchies and power structures. Drawing from a recorded session, the author shows how Satir connects these prejudices to low self-esteem, vulnerability, and feelings of powerlessness.

This paper emphasises the importance of the therapists self in counseling, noting that for the use of self to be an effective intervention the therapist must maintain congruence. The author outlines several steps in creating a context for change and uses a personal case study to demonstrate the use of self.

The author modifies Satir’s ‘Parts Party’ technique to be applied specifically for work in
couples therapy. The paper provides additional components and interventions to the
technique, and offers two case studies for review.

Pan, P. J. D. (2000). The effectiveness of structured and semistructured Satir model groups on
family relationships with college students in Taiwan. *Journal for Specialists in Group
This paper reports the data from a study to discover the effects of group counseling based
on the Satir model. Two groups of 42 participants were involved and showed greater
overall improvements in their family relationships as a result.

Pei, Y. (2008). From caterpillar to butterfly: Action research study of a Satir-based women’s
Noting that progressive modernization, and its concomitant emphasis on individuality
and autonomy, has resulted in a dramatic shift in identity for many Taiwanese women,
the author studies the experience of 24 women in an educational group based on the Satir
model. The paper draws on the women’s journal entries and self-reports to track the
groups learning process, personal reflective capacities, and self-growth.

Piddocke, S. (2010). The self: Reflections on its nature and structure according to the Satir
This paper analyzes concepts of the self implicit within the Satir model and compares
these conceptions with alternative theories of self. The author pays particular attention to
Satir model’s use of the self Mandala, the iceberg metaphor, and the development of
individual self-esteem in relation to spirituality.

Salonia, G. (1990). Falling in love as a therapeutic moment- therapy as a moment of falling in
This article only briefly references Satir’s concept of love in relationships, and
particularly notes how partners will reinterpret strengths as deceptions when under
relational distress.

Satir, V. (1967). Family systems and the approach to family therapy. *Journal of Fort Logan
Mental Health Center, 4* (2), p. 81-93.
An early work of Virginia Satir’s in which she elucidates her formative views on family
therapy with particular attention being given to communication within the family system.
The paper notes the discrepancy between what parents intend to communicate and the
messages that children receive.

This article notes the erosion of the contemporary family and, consequently, the need for preventative measures through family education. Satir further emphasises the essential qualities of a family educator and the goals of family education as the discovery of ‘humanness’ and the strengthening of self-esteem.

Satir, V. (1983). *Conjoint family therapy*. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behaviour Books, Inc. Despite being one of Satir’s earlier texts, the book nevertheless offers valuable insights and approaches to family therapy. Written in a highly accessible style, the text focuses on family systems theory, communication, and these techniques’ practical application in the therapeutic setting.

Satir, V. (1985). Forward. In E. McCann’s *The Two-step: The dance toward intimacy*. New York, N.Y: Grove Press. A very brief introductory note given by Satir on the changing nature of relationships and the dynamics of power and intimacy that are being altered. Satir characteristically highlights the acceptance of emotional needs, both in ourselves and others, as well as admonishing us towards having the courage to act upon these needs.


Satir, V. (1988). *The new people making*. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behaviour Books, Inc. One of Satir’s seminal works that displays some of her most mature and evolved thoughts on family therapy. The text characteristically places heavy emphasis on personal congruence, relationships within the family system, and the innate drive within every human being to strive towards growth and wholeness.

Satir Bibliography

A short collections of Satir’s poetic meditations on life, relationships, the self, and personal growth.

A reprint of her earlier work, this small text consists of Satir’s thoughts on self-worth and personal perception and is noted for its balance of poignancy and simplicity.

This chapter is an edited transcript of Virginia Satir’s work in couples therapy. The editor notes Satir’s emphasis on the process of creating connection between the couple and her unfailing respect for each individual within the couple-system.

The author focuses on clients develop their perceptions of reality, explanations of difficulty, and how they make meaning to elucidate a non-confrontational and validating approach to resistance and change.

This article is a transcription of lecture given by Satir in 1981 during a 30 day seminar. In it, Satir discusses her understanding of human wholeness and the impediments to wholeness. These impediments are understood, not as pathologizes, but as symptoms that are blocking a person’s growth into wholeness.

A short introductory note to a now renowned book, Satir emphasizes rebuilding our sense of self based upon our internal resources, and reconnecting with our inner worth as a starting point to healing and recovery.

Now in its third edition, Satir offers some of her most in-depth insights into what constitutes a ‘self”, how we navigate our social roles, learn and unlearn our personal scripts, and come to our deepest beliefs of identity. At its heart, the text conveys Satir’s core concepts of self-acceptance and personal worth, and how we can go about reclaiming these in our own lives.
A short 77 page reprint compilation of thoughts and reflections, the text displays Satir’s characteristic accessibility and depth, and moves the reader to make contact with one’s self and others through openness, acceptance, and congruence.

This article is a transcribed and edited response given by Satir at an intensive workshop. The response is specifically focused on dealing with rage and anger in family reconstructions and the connection of these emotions to feelings of helplessness and fear.

A edited transcription from a family therapy conference in which Satir gives a lecture concerning the need for therapists to move beyond what clients present as problematic and into what clients yearn for in their attempts to make connection.

A succinct 10 page contribution by Satir showing the essential necessity of a therapist’s own humanity to the healing process. In this chapter Satir offers her insight, not only into the power of the self in therapy, but practical techniques for bringing one’s self into the client’s healing process in a positive way.

An annotated transcript of a family therapy process conducted by Virginia Satir, the text provides insights into her thoughts, perspectives, choice of interventions, and maintenance of her personal congruence while in session.

Written in conjunction with several authors, this text is one of Satir’s most celebrated and popular works, offering some of the most systematic explanations of Satir’s fundamental approach to therapy. Key elements in the text include: primary triads, survival stances, the iceberg metaphor, congruence, and family reconstruction.

This article is a transcript of a demonstration preformed by Satir and Brody in which Satir enacts an object lesson in how people become entangled and stuck in life. Satir emphasises what she denotes as “five freedoms” for growth, including: the ability to see and hear, to move, to grow, to own what we say is going on, and to ask for what we want.

A description of Satir’s family reconstruction process within a group setting. Included in the paper is the use of family maps and an emphasis on therapist congruence.

An extended treatise on helping to create change in family systems. The text specifically emphasizes moving beyond rudimentary verbal communication techniques, placing importance on the non-verbal bodily cues, attitudes, and modes of being which effect family’s interpersonal relationships. Several meditation exercises are also provided.

Explores the process of transformational change in the Satir Growth Model, with an explicit emphasis on promoting client self-esteem, accountability, and congruence. The author ultimately identifies the experiential growth process as one in which the client both accepts and fulfills their universal needs for love and acceptance.

A compilation of short theoretical summaries paired with diagrams explaining Satir’s techniques and approaches to client centred therapy. A useful tool for psychoeducation with clients.

A manual for leaders of experiential workshops on personal communication step-by-step. The book provides instructions for setting up and conducting workshops of about 24 hours in various formats, and includes exercises developed by Satir and her colleagues. Special attention is paid to factors that affect communication. The manual emphasises therapeutic congruence and presence over and above specific techniques, although it also provides practical steps for connection.

Sekera, O. (2017). Outcome of psychotherapeutic training MOVISA (Model of Virginia Satir). *Satir International Journal, 5,* (1), p. 67-75. The author gives an account of the results of psychotherapeutic training MOVISA in the Czech Republic with a particular emphasis on how psychotherapists trained in Satir Transformational Systemic Therapy can help clients improve their self-esteem and congruence. Information is based on data collected from 32 participants with psychotherapeutic training MOVISA IV.

Shud, M., Dodson, L., Gomori, M. (2001). *Virginia Satir: Her life and circle of influence.* Toronto, ON: Hushion House. An extensive text that is subdivided into two major parts, a biographical section, followed by various essays from nine of Satir’s colleagues, describing her life, theory, and influence. This text is presented as the first volume in a two part series, the second of which will detail the impact that Satir has had throughout various countries and disciplines.

Smith, J.W. (2010). Dead kids talking: Youth suicide prevention using the Satir Transformational Systemic Therapy. *The Satir Journal, 4* (1), p. 84-108. Based on a 1983 study by the Province of British Colombia, the author notes that approximately 50% of teen suicides were not predicted by family members of healthcare professionals. Consequently, the author asserts that at-risk youth must be assessed differently than they currently are. Using the Satir model the author makes several recommendations in regards to detection, assessment, and intervention for at-risk youth.


The article outlines the social and community work done in Castell-Platja d’Aro, a town on the north east of Catalonia, on the Mediterranean shore. The work was done using a Satir-based mode, valuing human values above other interests, working from within a relational context to promote change and doing inclusion-based projects. The facilitators used the following methodology: prevention of negative behaviors, working in networks, guidance and social community pedagogy. The work helped citizens of Castell-Platja d’Aro grow personally and socially and improve their quality of life.

This paper examines an experiential family-based intervention which utilizes Satir’s metaphor of the “self-esteem pot”. This intervention enables families and couples to become more aware of each members self-esteem, emotional process, and place in the relational system.

This paper offers a medical report on an alcohol-dependent and depressed client. The author draws heavily on the Satir model for treatment, and employs the Iceberg metaphor, the concept of coping stances, and the family genogram to explore the client’s inner world. The reported results included the client’s increased sense of self and greater connectedness to the client’s internal world, as well as increased acceptance of self and self-esteem.

A short transcription from a 1985 interview in which Virginia discusses some of her basic views and approaches to training and therapy.

Starr, S. (2013). “All good therapy has the same ingredients”: An interview with Virginia Satir. In B.J. Brothers (Ed.) *Couples therapy, multiple perspectives: In search of universal threads* (p.7-14). New York: Routledge. DOI: 10.1300/J036v03n02_03
This chapter is a transcription of an interview with Virginia Satir. The author focuses on current landscape of family therapy from Satir’s perspective, the use of systemic approaches, and the personal incongruence of professional’s in therapy.

The author outlines several areas of difficulty in treating children with ADHD, with particular emphasis being given to differences in brain activity. The author documents a
Satir Bibliography

12-week pilot program for boys, ages 9–11, based on the Satir Growth model, and contrasts this new program with a purely behavioral model.

The author applies Satir’s technique of family reconstruction to the corporate structure. The author makes use of Satir’s concepts of mapping, sculpting, alteration of the status quo, and integration. The paper concludes with the author’s insights into the process as a whole.

A reprinted and slightly modified version of the author’s previous article “Reconstructing a company.” The article applies the Satir model in order to map a company’s business history and corporate characteristics.

A short two page discussion of the initiatives currently underway by the Satir Global network.

This book review analyzes the book as a practical tool for psychotherapists who are seeking to understand the Satir Model of therapy and how it applies to working with children who have endured trauma. The review gives an overview of the therapeutic techniques used in the book such as using the Personal Iceberg metaphor and the sand tray.

Proposes a natural link between spiritual direction/development and the transformational family therapy of Virginia Satir. The article asserts that spiritual direction necessarily incorporates psychological components and appropriates various components of the Satir model to facilitate spiritual growth and direction.

The author provides an broad integrative perspective which amalgamates Christian spiritual direction with elements of the Satir model. The book specifically targets individuals in Southwest Asia and promotes ecumenical dialogue and psychological awareness within Christian spirituality.
Provides a practical and comprehensive step-by-step understanding of the Satir family reconstruction model and its possibilities for transformative change. A case study is included to highlight the models essential concepts and principles, as well as the reflections of the participating family.

Tougas, J. (2006). *Yes, Santa Claus... There is a Virginia; based on the Teachings of Virginia Satir.* Winnipeg, Manitoba: Noel Productions.
A workbook containing numerous games, activities, and illustrations, as well as two DVD’s, directed to all ages from children to adults. The book specifically attempts to have readers and participants undergo the experiential process of Satir’s approach to “people-making”.

This paper emphasizes the essential nature of the use of the self in therapy for social workers. The author notes several beliefs and techniques within the Satir model that highlight and promote practitioners addressing personal issues to enhance their effectiveness.

A short one page review of Satir’s collected essays. The article provides more of a description than an analysis of the text and offers only cursory insights.

An extensive overview of family therapy approaches and techniques that gives only a brief discursive of the work and theory of Virginia Satir.

This is an interview between Jesse Cook (Ph.D.) (JC) and Eva Wieprecht, a Satir Model expert. Wieprecht’s therapeutic methods include an application of Satir’s ideas to a body focused approach to therapy that Wieprecht practices. The author incorporates understanding of other cultures and her extensive knowledge of dance, NLP and the
hyposystematic approach into her therapeutic techniques.


The author reflects on her personal experience with her father and with client sculpting as a platform for discussing family of origin issues and their impact on therapy. The author ultimately concludes the necessity for acknowledging clients’ efforts to transform and accepting them as they are.


DOI: 10.1080/01926188408250192

This paper discusses the foundational assumptions of Satir’s approach and highlights the key techniques used in the Satir growth model. The authors make particular note of Satir’s beliefs in honorable motives to all actions, the self’s ability to heal, the mind-body connection, and the central therapeutic role of self-esteem.


The authors take an extensive look at the introduction and development of family therapy in Hong Kong over the past 30 years, noting the specific and shifting cultural challenges and needs. The authors emphasize the work and influence of Satir and its continuation under John Banmen.


The author compares the practices of Family Medicine and Family Therapy and uses the metaphor of dance to describe how the two distinct disciplines can work together in harmony with one another. The article is based on the Satir Model, which encourages collaboration between family medicine and family therapy. The article includes a case study of a girl with anorexia whose treatment included family therapy as well as a series of medical treatments.


This short article examines the work of Mindful Heart Foundation in Hong Kong. The foundation, established in 1999, is dedicated to the Satir principles of healing. Its mission is two-fold: to encourage people to develop their life energy and to serve as a platform for new therapists to establish themselves.
This article gives a broad overview of Satir’s essential therapeutic methods for working with clients and the empirical evidence which supports these methodologies. The author concludes there is currently a dearth of empirical support for Satir’s work and encourages practitioners to engage in this research.

A reply by the current author to Bonnie K. Lee and Martin Rovers’ response to the author’s article “Saving Satir: Contemporary Perspectives on the Change Process Model.” The author acknowledges that Lee and Rovers offer a different perspective than his on the importance of evidence-based practice in social work. The author states that he remains concerned by the lack of empirical research related to her Satir’s model which he believes leaves Satir’s legacy in jeopardy.

This article explores the connections between the Satir Model of therapy and Chinese culture. The Satir Model emphasizes the harmony within the self and between oneself and nature, which is also a part of Chinese culture. The article highlights the parallels between the Satir Model and the Chinese traditions Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taiji. It also applies the Satir Model to the mental health of Chinese university students.

This paper highlights the negative impact of certain cultural messages within Chinese culture, including emotional incongruence, self-invalidication, and high expectations of the individual. The author then emphasizes the compatibility of the Satir model with Chinese culture, using 16 case studies as examples of its effectiveness.

A dissertation the looks specifically at the role spirituality plays in the reconstruction of family dynamics and communication. The author emphasises the influence that meditation and spirituality has in Satir’s family therapy and its’ contribution to the building of a healthy congruent self.


The author compares and contrasts the Satir model with the Korean worldview, known as “Han”, emphasizing the multiple continuities between the two. The author further notes the model’s dissimilarity with Confucianism, and the patriarchal value system of the latter in contrast with Satir’s belief in the equality of all persons.


This article examines the Human Kaleidoscope Model of Behavior, an innovation on the Satir Model that focuses on an individual’s internal processes. The article focuses on Satir’s emphasis on spirituality as a way of connecting to the deeper aspects of oneself and with the core essence of another. It outlines the parts of an individual as consisting of I AM (the Spirituality part), Longings, Yearnings, the Gossamer Veil, Expectations, Perceptions, Feeling, Feeling About Feeling, Coping, Style of Communication, Rules For Commenting and Placating.


A collection of lectures from a conference on family therapy, in which Satir is given only brief mention.


Utilizing Satir’s concept of change, the author analyzes the disruptive emotional state of a couple wrongfully accused of child abuse. The author frames the couple’s experience in the stages of prior status quo, introduction of a foreign element, chaos, integration, and new status quo.


Drawing heavily on the work of Satir, the author uses a strength-based approach to enable clients who are currently in situations involving domestic violence, to validate their experiences, confront imbalances of power in existing family hierarchies, and emotionally thrive. The author makes particular use of Satir’s approach of using family crises as an opportunity for creating a new status quo within the relational system.
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