



The Extended Self Program

Strategies for Life's 'Second Half'

Somatic Interfaces

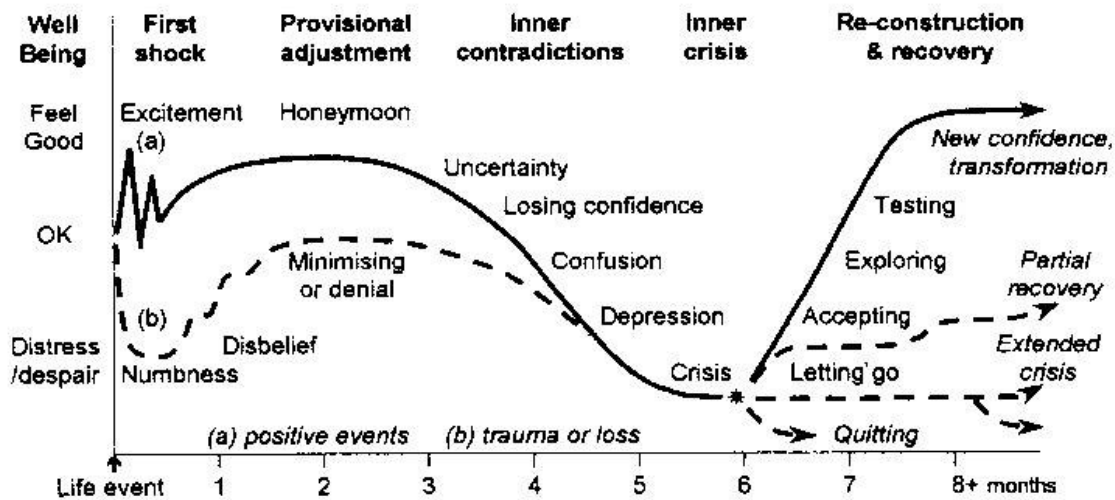
A living system, which includes a human being, possesses six basic relationships with their environment. I call them *somatic interfaces* for our purposes. They are intrinsic to the way a soma functions and develops. Rather than describe their design here, I'll share what they are attuned to help us perceive. The most essential somatic interface is the 1st one. It allows us to perceive the whole from a standpoint of the status quo. This is where we develop a sense of coherence (SOC) which has been associated with a capacity to experience a high degree of well-being. Stillness is most closely linked to it.

The other five somatic interfaces operate to challenge that status quo to elevate its coherence. The 2nd **somatic interface** deals with sudden changes – **shocks** to the system. The 3rd **somatic interface** is where our **coping mechanisms** are operating. The 4th **somatic interface** neutralizes **inner contradictions** through the formation of habits. The 5th **somatic interface** is where we expand our perceptions through relationships which help us to withstand **crisis**. Finally, the 6th **somatic interface** is where we reconstruct the whole in a new form and experience a **recovery** of the status quo, now transformed. When all 6 somatic interfaces are received in the moment, an *integral* experience is achieved.

That basic design allows the system to develop self-awareness and alter its somatic terrain. The number of somatic interfaces isn't as vital as the connection between the *status quo*, a sense of coherence and somatic integration. Let's see how the *somatic interfaces* match up with the elements of the Somatic Terrain. Here's the diagram we use to illustrate what I call *The Spectrum of Positive Gains*. As we become more somatically integrated, we become more aware of these six nonverbal cues and how they impact our perceptions, experience and identity.



The unwritten 'code' to learn is that we can shift our worldspace by simply focusing on one or more of these elements. For example, to access the 1st **somatic interface** just focus on your breathing as you converse, with yourself, others and with the 'extrapersonal' space you're in. See if you can sustain that awareness as you bring the other elements into play. This is the dance of the soma in all its cosmological and interactive splendor. See if you can notice what *somatic interface* the people in your life communicate from predominantly. Often this is a key insight to instilling salutogenesis or self-organized well-being in them *and* in your unfolding relationship.



The Cycle of Transition

from

Life events and career change: transition psychology in practice

<http://www.eoslifework.co.uk/transprac.htm>

Hans Selye, the father of stress medicine, pioneered a generation of research on how people develop diseases of *adaptation*, which was a revolutionary statement at the time. Recently, the field of transition psychology has shifted the focus from *survival and adaptation* to *evolution and transformation*. This reveals the widespread variation in how people *use* peak events to change.

If you scan the cycle above, you can probably circle five or six areas that you're sensing now. Some are positive, some negative. What I need to show you is that no matter where perceive you are in this cycle, you're also in the areas you don't perceive. Once you open that awareness, the cycle gets smoother for you. As you begin now, yeah, it'll be rough through some aspects of it. Think of it like your just dressing a crying child. At first, it's a battle. Then a game. And then it becomes a labor of love. Being able to literally step out of time and do this in the moment is key.

Life Transition research has focused on the process of how individuals respond to change, either in their own lives or environment. Typically, they are associated with significant life events, often traumatic. The time it takes to move from a pre-transition status quo to post-transition recovery ranges from 6-12 months, but there are many exceptions to that general rule that can compress or expand that interval. The Cycle of Transition operates along more of a biological rhythm and offers us six somatic interfaces to perceive Life Transitions from both a chronological and *atemporal* view. In the Cycle of Transition, the 'change' occurs when the individual resolves the challenges to their identity and well-being through an *integral* experience of their wholeness. This occurs when they can perceive novelty and enter a higher level of organization. In the most basic terms, they evolve rather than simply adapt in the face of the unknown. We can use the slow, predictable Life Transitions as fuel for entering into the intense world of somatic integration, which fosters faster and faster cycles of transition within us.

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