

War, Terror and Emotional Freedom - it's time for a ceasefire.

By Catherine Sinclair

In a world where war, terror and mayhem are part of our daily experience, it's easy to forget that our most pervasive and constant terrorists are inside.

Emotions. They drive us and block us, they can be scary, violent, abysmal, pleasant, hurtful. Emotions cause reasonable people to commit the most heinous crimes, they motivate wars, massacres, genocides; they split families and wreck lives. On in five people in Australia suffer from a mental illness. More people die as a result of emotions than for any other reason alone.

As a psychologist specialising in personal and transpersonal growth, I see many clients who struggle with their emotions. Lots of these people find their emotions overwhelming. They say their emotions are controlling them, but they want to gain control of their emotions.

Cherie (name and identifying details changed) is a 38 year old public relations officer for a small and successful company. She had struggled since as far back as she could remember with bouts of depression - a deep despair and emptiness, a sense of deep loss. She also told me that she has great trouble forming relationships and even with friends or lovers she felt a sense of distance and loneliness. She had tried to overcome her problem through visits to various counsellors and natural therapists and although she had raised her awareness of how these patterns functioned in her life and learned to manage them somewhat, the emotions continued to plague her.

"I don't know why I'm like this," said Cherie "I'm sick of this pattern running my life"

Inside us we constantly fight our own emotions. We try to manage them, push them away, beat them, we take pills to dull them, and we find things to do to distract us from them.

But what if emotions could lead us to our true nature?

On the surface of our consciousness, emotions play like waves on the surface of an ocean. What many of us don't realise is that we are more than just the surface of our consciousness that we experience as our ordinary mind.

This perspective comes from traditions of people who have undergone long-term meditation to cleanse their mind and get closer to their own source.

While meditation may seem rather passive, even boring to those observing, it is actually anything but. When people sit down to meditate, especially when it is over days, weeks or months they dive into the contents of their consciousness. They may experience things like chains of thoughts, waves of emotions, desires, memories, states of vastness, stillness, inner peace, joy, awakening, visions, experiences of inner light, spaces of consciousness, entire non-physical worlds, and spiritual beings.

Meditation shows us that emotions are just symptoms of something else happening in our depths, they are like the surface of the ocean.

In my private practice I work with methods that take clients inside their own consciousness to discover and resolve the source or the core of emotions. One of the main processes I use with clients is called Inner Space Interactive Sourcing (ISIS). It's taught by the Clairvision School of meditation to help students find and resolve the causes of conditioned emotions, thoughts, behaviours and attitudes that block them reaching deeper states of meditation and spirituality. ISIS is also practised around the world by therapists like myself to help clients resolve personal issues.

A key to this powerful method is that it gives clients the ability to see and know themselves beyond the surface perceptions of emotions and issues. It does this by combining psychological work on emotions, beliefs, attitudes and aspects of personality held in the mind with a metaphysical dimension accessed through meditation techniques.

To show how ISIS does this I will return to Cherie's story:

I ask her to lie down on a mattress and guide her through a meditation. The meditation takes Cherie into her inner space - a simple yet powerful state of consciousness that will help her to see and feel things from a deeper perspective than her ordinary consciousness. I press an area in the centre of Cherie's chest. After a time, she reports feelings that are very similar to the depression she feels at times in her life. But she is 'seeing' them a little differently to her normal experience. The following is a transcript of part of our sessions together. The questions are mine and answers hers.

How does your chest feel? It feels very dark and empty and despairing - waves of despair. There's a hole in it.
Can you go inside that hole? It's deep. There's pain at the bottom.
What's in the pain? Sadness. *Tears form in the corner of Cherie's eyes.* Like a huge well ...and so much despair. Like my whole lifetime of despair all at once. Whenever I usually feel that well I move away from it. *Cherie lets herself sink into the feeling.* There

are memories coming up. Of my father when I was young. *Cherie stops sobbing and then seems to be blocking her experience.*

Are they happy memories or sad ones? They are....happy. *Cherie starts to sob again.* But it hurts too much.

It hurts to feel happy. Yes. My father left when I was young and I said to myself that I would never ever let myself feel the happy memories again.

Because it hurt so much? Yes. *Sobbing. Her appearance and voice is very much like a young child. Cherie's body then goes stiff and her jaw locks determinedly.* I hate him. He went away and left us.

What are you feeling now? Anger. He's a bastard. He left us and didn't think about how we felt.

What's underneath the anger? I can't feel it hurts too much. It feels like I'll lose everything - again. *Cherie allows herself to sink deeper and then seems to let go. A piteous child's voice escapes her mouth. "Daddy, dad, dad....."*

You loved your dad a lot. *Cherie nods, crying.*

What was it like to be with him? *Cherie continues to cry.* Really nice. He was like a big sun...warm...special.

Can you feel that in your body? Yes. Warmth going up my body and in my heart.

Do you want to just stay with that feeling? Yes. *Cherie lies still, basking in the feelings.*

When looking beyond the superficial crust of our ordinary consciousness emotional issues take on different shapes. They can be seen and felt like forms or waves in our consciousness. When the core of them is experienced most often they reveal some trauma buried in the psyche, like a package of visuals, sensory information and emotions that have imprinted themselves in our mind when something traumatic or intense has happened.

Sanskrit texts give these imprints the name 'samskara'. Samskaras generate emotions. Like deep conditioning, when our samskaras are triggered we react with conditioned emotions, thoughts and behaviours. The Upanishads, sacred texts of Vedanta say, "when the last samskara is eradicated, knowledge of Self will be revealed." This makes 'samskara' a very important word for those wanting to know themselves at deep levels.

As Cherie's experience shows, when going to the source of emotions, the samskaras of the mind, something even more core to us is also revealed, something beyond emotions. Here is another excerpt from our sessions.

What is your heart like as a little girl when you're with your Dad?

It feels....different. Happy...and fuller, bigger, more confident too.

Can you go inside that feeling? There's light. A bright light.

What's that light feel like? It feels like me. It feels like my heart. I

haven't felt that in so long I'd forgotten about it. *Sobbing.*
What does it want? It wants me to feel it.

As Cherie allows herself to feel her long abandoned heart, a stillness and sense of presence fills the room. We enjoy this in silence.

Over a few 'ISIS' sessions and integrating her new experiences into her daily life, Cherie's heart became part of her daily reality. She no longer feels emptiness and despair but instead a fullness and happiness that had been missing in her life since her Dad left when she was a child. Her depression is gone and she experiences her relationships with people as warmer and richer.

On the surface Cherie's problem showed as depression. When traced to a source inside the problem took on a different and very individual nature. From a mundane emotional 'problem' to a beautiful inner quality.

Our emotions are precious because they act like hooks into deeper aspects of our nature. But there is much more to us than our emotions. When the source of an emotion is re-experienced with the accompanying images, emotional release and sensory perceptions it also puts us in touch with qualities inside ourselves that have been closed off, lost or suppressed. It is this opening to deeper aspects of ourselves that heals; emotional scars are washed away like sandcastles by the sea.

The inner light that Cherie felt through re-experiencing her childhood loss changed her life but it also reconnected her with something very important - aspects of her self that are beyond emotions.

No matter what techniques you use to see beyond the ordinary mind, remember that emotions are not to be feared, but rather when felt and embraced, they can be the keys to finding out who you really are.

Catherine Sinclair is a psychologist who has a private practice in Canberra and runs classes for the Clairvision School of meditation. She is running a retreat teaching the 'ISIS' technique in October in country NSW. For more information call Catherine on 0425 213 542 or email: catherine.sinclair@clairvision.org or visit the Clairvision School's website: www.clairvision.org