

A brief introduction to Sunflower Mind ®

Implicit in the image of the sunflower is the concept of orienting. The position of the sunflower reflects where it is in relation to the sun. The Sunflower Mind approach is about looking at our human experiences from a similar perspective: We are orienting to our circumstances, our environment, with our whole being. We grasp a situation as a whole, and we respond to it as a whole, consciously or unconsciously.

Here is a simple, concrete example: Imagine you're standing up, and you sense somebody coming behind you with possibly hostile intentions. Chances are you're going to raise your shoulders, bracing, in anticipation. You're sensing a threat, and responding to it, without necessarily thinking consciously about what you're doing. You may not even be aware of that movement. Or you may just experience it as some kind of a hunch, a felt sense, as opposed to a fully articulated understanding of the situation.

The concept of Sunflower Mind is related to my experience doing experiential psychotherapy that pays attention to 'bottom up' phenomena. In this practice, we observe, moment by moment, our bodily experience as an organic response to our interactions with others. We track bodily sensations. Little by little, a pattern emerges. We notice how we are orienting in response to our environment, just like the sunflower orients to the sun. We experience this orienting as an implicit, unfinished response that needs to be completed.

A process is by nature movement, even if the experience we have of it is that of feeling stuck. As we become aware of this embodied process as a process, we are 'carried forward' by it: Being aware of the way we are coiled, we allow the uncoiling to proceed organically. We are moved to complete the unfinished response. As we do so, not only do we move on, but we also get a conceptual grasp of what we had been dealing with, essentially because by then we have moved 'out of the box' we were stuck in: We can now see the box for what it is. Meaning emerges from the experience.

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See: <http://SunflowerMind.com>