

Review of the DVD's "Understanding and Releasing Anger" and "Understanding and Releasing Fear"

Susan Aaron is based in Toronto, Canada and has developed a therapeutic practice with a blend of psychodrama and bodywork. Following the success of her practice, she has constructed a training programme to help practitioners utilize these methods in their work.

This is deep work, releasing core emotions. The work has to be seen to be understood - that's why the DVDs are available. They serve as an introduction to potential clients and to anyone considering the training.

The DVDs provide an appreciation of the dynamics of anger and fear. After watching them, I was left with a strong desire to work on my own emotional baggage.

Let's look at a few highlights of the DVDs:

In 'Anger', we see a scene showing the dynamics between 4 roles: the boss - her employee - the employee's child - the child's grandmother

We see how anger is inappropriately directed towards the 'wrong person' ie towards the child and then towards the grandmother

In 'Fear', we hear an explanation of the mechanism in which the mind gets separated from the body. This is a common phenomenon in psychotherapy, and Susan's words look behind the phenomenon as follows:

'When there is a scary experience that is so terrifying that we cannot stay in our bodies, we cleverly cut off or dissociate as a natural survival strategy. This is done unconsciously and we all have this ability.'

'The scary memory and unexpressed fear are hard to live with. The body has no choice but to hold the fear and the memory. The mind however has another option. It can slowly disconnect from both the memory and the held fear. Much of this happens unconsciously. We don't realise that we might be splitting off from them in order to survive. We might be very confused by body pain or body symptoms, having no conscious memory as to their source.

Within the narrative, we learn the effects of holding these emotions in the body:

- how anger is often misdirected towards innocent bystanders
- how suppressing anger is harmful for us
- how fear often goes unrecognized
- that unexpressed fear frightens others around us

- that anger & fear are carried with us from the unfinished business of the past

We also learn the signs which portray emotions suppressed in the body. For example, fear may be indicated by any of the following:

- yawning, crying
- trembling, feeling cold
- agitated movement of the foot or fingers

My favourite section was called "unconscious doubling." A scene was acted out with a group of students waiting nervously to take an exam. We saw how the well-prepared student came to find himself feeling nervous whilst standing close to another who was afraid of failing. This seemed so natural and reminded me of many similar situations.

The DVDs show examples of "holding spots" - places in the body where people may be brought back from dissociating - and emphasizes that there is much that we can do to heal our anger and fear.

One thing that DVDs can't portray is the atmosphere created in Susan's training workshops. She uses a team of auxiliaries and to successfully generate a sense of trust and safety - so reassuring when one is angry or afraid. Susan's workshops create a strong framework where our emotional releases will be safely contained.

Reviewed by Richard Oliver