

SHEN Therapy Now

Emotional Health, Recovery & Empowerment:
Living Fully Present in Body, Mind & Soul

SHEN: The Red Capsule ~ Approaching SHEN as Personal Daily Practice

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Now, after my more than thirty-year association with SHEN Therapy as recipient, student, practitioner and instructor, SHEN has become much more than a vocation or a chosen way of making a contribution to the world. As I continue growing in awareness, SHEN with all its implications has more and more become the filter through which I pass all other perceptions, experiences, articles, books, music, movies - you name it.

Since this article was originally written for the official newsletter of the International SHEN Therapy Association, I recognize I was probably 'preaching to the choir.' However, in case you have not yet seriously discovered this, let me simply say that as a refined technique and utterly profound treatment modality for emotional growth and reintegration, SHEN Therapy remains without equal. For many of us who have arrived at SHEN after years of experience in other treatment practices, SHEN Therapy continues to be 'the gold standard' against which all other modalities are compared and evaluated.

My path has led through Massage Therapy, Reiki, Polarity Therapy and several meditative techniques. Through the course of my forty-plus years of therapeutic practice and specifically the past thirty years of SHEN, it has become increasingly obvious that not everyone is equipped for, nor ready to deal with what SHEN Therapy has to offer. I clearly remember during one of my early training experiences with Richard Pavek - the developer of SHEN Therapy, he strongly cautioned, "SHEN is not for everyone." A person must be ready for this level of honest exploration.

Because of the emotional depth of this work and its potential for changing the perception, focus and direction of one's life, people must come to SHEN as an informed choice. Therein lies one of SHEN's deepest challenges: effectively informing and providing options to a world

where most standard modalities appear to *keep us from* our goal of emotional unfolding and full personal transformation.



So, here's the question: Is there such a thing as SHEN - The Daily Practice? Without getting into "ought-tos", "shoulds" or any recommended "what-to-dos," what can we do or recommend to support our own as well as our clients' inner progress after the table work? Is it ever appropriate to even suggest a particular course of action?

I believe the answer is an enthusiastic "Yes!" Interestingly though, for me the first and most important step is not a "do" at all, but rather, a "be." Simply put, become aware. I am reminded of Wayne Dyer's famous admonition, "Remember, we are Human Beings, not Human Doings." Learn how to be fully present, aware and observant of our being's inner process, and the "doing" will be a very natural outcome.

Eckhart Tolle gets even closer to basic SHEN daily practice with this: "Once you have understood the basic principle of being present as the watcher of what happens inside you - and you 'understand' it by experiencing it - you have at your disposal the most potent transformational tool." (from *The Power of Now*)

As you become more practiced in becoming the watcher of your own inner progress, you soon begin seeing, hearing and experiencing on a whole new level. Once you really start looking, you'll begin finding SHEN-related concepts and principles everywhere. For me, certain books, music, works of art, and even movies began taking on all new levels of significance. Allow me to share a personal example of how this worked two decades ago.



I thoroughly enjoy going to movies. Every once in a while one comes along that unexpectedly, but quite completely knocks me off my feet. Watching *'The Matrix'* was just such an experience. For those unfamiliar with *'The Matrix'* here is how the online encyclopedia Wikipedia briefly summarizes the movie:

"The film describes a future in which reality as perceived by humans is actually the Matrix: a simulated reality created by sentient machines in order to pacify and subdue the human population while their bodies' heat and electrical activity are used as an energy source.

Upon learning this, computer programmer "Neo" is drawn into a rebellion against the machines, involving other people who have been freed from the "dream world" and into reality."

Well, that's fairly close if you're a teenage action-film junkie, or if you have never had to come face to face with who you really are in the depths of your being. Specifically, for anyone seeing the film having gone through a life-redirecting intensive series of SHEN sessions, the above summary misses the point entirely.

I first saw 'The Matrix' shortly after its release in 1999, ten years into my SHEN experience. What I saw on the screen that night had nothing whatsoever to do with any future fight with "sentient machines," but, rather, it had everything to do with each human being's moment by moment struggle to come to grips with and make sense of their own life.

For me, 'The Matrix' was and remains a near-perfect allegory on the need for, and the effects of SHEN at its most profound level. Leaving the theater and realizing I had just had one of those all-too-rare electrifying peak experiences, I returned home and immediately sat down to put to paper the most poignant of the SHEN-related observations I had gotten from the film. Now, more than twenty years later, I think it still holds water. In fact, I believe it says quite a bit about how a SHEN 'daily practice' might actually work. So, from one seeker to another, I would like to share with you word-for-word what I wrote that night. Please read it slowly enough to see yourself between the lines.



May 5, 1999

MATRIX Observations:

This intense, profound movie makes several core observations about our experience of reality. As with most everything else in life, the observations and concepts one picks up and absorbs from a movie like this are particular to the individual viewer. Here's what I got:

1. What we experience as life is a product of our familial and cultural entrainment. And it's different for everyone.
2. This 'education' was meant to and has blinded us as to who and what we are, and, therefore, to who and what we are capable of becoming, or rather, Designed to Be.

3. The vast majority of all people have no idea of the limitations under which they are living. Most will fight in every way possible to defend and extend this dream-state they perceive as truth and reality.
4. There are 'Agents' whose job it is to keep us unaware of the realities and potentials to which we could have access. These agents work through, indeed look like, become, i.e., are most everyone around us, most particularly our family, friends, teachers, co-workers, clerics, and government leaders.
5. These agents, most always ignorant of their role, constantly 'shoot' at us to keep us in line with the 'program.' The internalized bullets most often become our thoughts, judgments, and emotional qi patterns, usually in the form of pictures, symbols and word constructs designed to keep us in tune with our entrainment, our "living past."
6. Actually, the "past" is not only not living, it never really existed at all. Our past only exists as we created it through our painful, yet ill-informed responses to what we thought [felt] was happening around us during our first decade or two of life. These responses kept us justified, seemingly self-defined, and therefore, apparently safe.
7. For the vast majority of all humans, however, how we define ourselves and what we consider to be our 'personality' is nothing more than a well-rehearsed, constantly repeated set of survival techniques that have long outlived their usefulness. Our personalities generally serve to foster and pass on the grand illusion. Most humans are, in fact "the blind leading the blind."
8. To challenge our personal past is to challenge all our basic assumptions of life, self, relationships, society and culture. It is neither permitted, nor even possible to challenge this delicate 'state' without becoming a threat to that 'state.' At all costs, the illusion must be preserved.
9. Most all of us are blind to who and what we are, and ignorant of our actual capacities for growth and transformation. As humans, we are completely unaware that the energy of our very beings is consumed

by, and thus sustains this illusory reality most humans accept as "life." Most of us continuously opt for the "blue capsule" of comfortable ignorance, and are thus constantly fed the "traditions of our fathers" so that we can, in turn, properly feed, sustain and pass on the matrix of human illusion.

10. It is, however, possible to opt out of the illusion. Far from easy, the consequences of choosing the "red capsule" will challenge every aspect of who and what you think you are. You must be willing to accept the possibility that you are much different and much more than you have been 'trained' to believe you are. We must be willing to fully experience the actual reality beyond that which we have unwittingly allowed to keep us as willing slaves, pimps, prostitutes and nursemaids to the matrix.

11. Even though we are each ultimately the only ones who can decide which capsule to choose, there actually are unseen and unrecognized "others" who, having previously opted out, are attempting to make contact, working for our best, self-directed interests.



Re-reading this now after twenty years, I find that these observations and the movie that inspired them fairly overflow - no, gush with SHEN implications. For me, *'The Matrix'* clearly and quite forcibly begins to answer the deceptively simple question, "Why SHEN?"

Shakespeare's Hamlet pondered, "To be, or not to be?" As a SHEN recipient, therapist and instructor, I feel that is the **only** question. If answered in the affirmative - if one chooses the red capsule, then life really gets interesting! Welcome to your own personal 'daily practice.'

So, until full awareness and "beingness" become our natural state, I suggest taking time each day to simply be still, be aware, be present, to simply be. More on this in another essay, if you wish.

But, for now, go out and rent *'The Matrix'* and let me know what you think. You can always reach me at: shentherapynow@gmail.com.



Note: Because of the tremendous response to the article above, a second article was written and appeared in the next issue of The SHEN Touch newsletter. Also found in the list of articles, it is 'Off the Wheels: Revisiting the Past Again, and Again, and. . .' Enjoy the ride.