7

Somatic-Linguistic Practices (SLP)

In this final chapter, I present a selection of concrete practices for working with sensory templates in general and for realizing core space and learning to move into action without losing awareness of this space in particular. I have called these practices Somatic-Linguistic Practices, because they are based on developing somatic awareness and on attention to language. The practices can be used in conjunction with art-based methods and spiritual practices—or on their own.

These practices aim at effectuating a number of interrelated changes in the sensory templates the practitioner uses to understand phenomena, such as sensorimotor experiences, "inappropriate" emotions and impulses for acting, self, and taking action (see Table 7.1). This is not an exhaustive list, but merely a way of illustrating the breadth of the shifts in the system of our cognition, behavior, and environment these practices can effectuate. Changing *these* sensory templates will make it easier for managers to become aware of and change other sensory templates when necessary and thus make them more able to achieve efficiency in their work.

The practices in this chapter are divided into three main groups. The first group of practices aims at making managers aware of the sensory templates they are currently using to represent and engage with organizational

Table 7.1 Practices and their intended changes in terms of sensory templates

Practice	Phenomenon	Change in sensory template
Noticing which sensorimotor states are tools we think with	Sensorimotor experience	Sensorimotor states can be tools we use to think with, not only data we can think about
		Sensorimotor experience can be caused by our own acts of comprehension, not only by the situations we are in
Realizing how we are reaching for core space, which is always already present	"Inappropriate" emotions and impulses to act	Emotions and impulses for acting which seem inappropriate are not necessarily something we need to get rid of, repress, or control. They are often energies we can learn to use to become aware of core space
	Self	We are not like empty containers needing to be filled with something good and to avoid being filled with something bad. We are already core space, which is everything we are ultimately reaching for
Moving into action without losing awareness of core space	Taking action	Taking action is not a matter of acquiring the things we ultimately want, but of becoming aware of what we already are and of learning to deal with situations without forgetting what we are

reality. I have already mentioned some of these in Chap. 4, when I described the warm-up exercises I used in my doctoral research. These practices support managers in noticing the degree to which the sensations they experience when they engage with a particular situation are tools they (automatically and unconsciously) use to think with, rather than sensations caused in them by the situation itself. These practices can enable managers to solve seemingly unsolvable problems by evaluating and changing sensory templates as described in Chap. 4.

The second group of practices aims at making managers aware that all their impulses for actions and related emotions are *ultimately* motivated by a desire to reach a state of happiness, well-being, vitality, peace, satisfaction, and so on and that this state is in fact the ever-present core space. This is important because it means that what social discourse may

label as inappropriate impulses for action and inappropriate emotions are not something we need to get rid of, repress, or control, but are something we can learn to use to become aware of core space. Through these practices, we can also become aware of how we, through our own acts of reaching for happiness (and similar phenomena), lose sight of it. Finally, these practices will over time change the self-perception underlying our actions. Instead of acting from a place of lack, as if we were empty containers needing to be filled with something good, such as happiness, satisfaction, love, and so on, we will act from the felt experience that we already are core space, which is everything we are ultimately reaching for.

The third group of practices aims at integrating the realizations we have from the first two groups of practices so that more and more of our theories-in-use will be grounded in these. In other words, they are practices through which we can learn to move into action while maintaining awareness of core space. We can do so by grounding our understanding of any abstract concept (positive or negative) in various experiential aspects of core space so that when we use these concepts to move into action, we will maintain awareness of core space.

It is worth cautioning that the practices described here are not easy. They are best learned under the guidance of someone who knows them well. Furthermore, it is essential to have achieved a thorough proficiency in these practices for oneself before instructing others in their use. It is also important to know that some of these practices can bring up difficult psychological states and it is therefore good to have therapeutic training and work experience when using these practices as teacher/facilitator, so as to be equipped to handle such situations. Finally, if one finds oneself pushing through difficult psychological states to get results from the practices, one must stop and recognize that one is using the sensory template of pushing through a barrier to get something one feels separate from. Such reflection can help one recognize how the use of this sensory template is distracting one from noticing what is already present. This being said, engaging with these practices in the right environment is both profoundly transformative and fun.

7.1 Noticing Which Sensorimotor States Are Tools We Think With

As detailed in Chap. 3, we use sensorimotor states to represent all phenomena. We may, for example, represent the phenomenon of "power" through sensorimotor states such as "resisting being moved" or "moving heavy objects". We may represent the phenomenon of "decisiveness" through sensorimotor states of "moving swiftly" or "cutting through something". As we saw in Chap. 4, using different sensorimotor states to represent phenomena such as "people", "appreciation", "communication", "morale", "leadership", and "conflict" has a significant influence on managers' efficiency.

However, we are usually thoroughly unaware of which sensorimotor states we use to represent different phenomena. We are even unaware that many of the sensorimotor states we experience while engaged with a particular situation are produced by ourselves through our acts of comprehension, that is, they are tools we think with. Instead, we believe these sensorimotor states are caused by the situation we are dealing with.

Before we can work on increasing our efficiency by evaluating and changing our sensory templates, we will have to become keenly aware of the way we use sensorimotor states to think. In the following, I present four practices we can use to make this clear to ourselves.

You can engage in these four practices together with a partner or on your own. If practiced with a partner, one person can listen without commenting in either words or gestures while the other person is exploring a particular theme for a set period of time (e.g., 10, 15, or 20 minutes). After the exploration, neither the listening nor the speaking partner will comment further on the exploration, but simply relax and let it go. This is an important part of the practice.

When practicing in pairs, it is common that people in the listening role initially feel that it is rude not to comment either in words or gestures. They may feel they are unable to reassure the other that they are listening and are interested if they do not comment in some way. However, after having tried the listening role a few times, most people experience that being liberated from the demand to comment and to *actively*

demonstrate that they are paying attention enables them to be much more present to what the other person is saying and much more able to listen. Inversely, it is common that people in the speaking role initially feel strange about speaking to someone who does not comment in either words or gestures. They may read the lack of commenting as lack of interest or disapproval, or they may feel that it is pointless to talk to someone if they cannot elicit a reaction. However, after having tried the speaking role a few times, most people experience that it is a great gift to have someone listen to you without any interruption for an extended period. There are many important questions we do not have ready answers for. This exercise gives the speakers time to formulate their thoughts and discover what they have to say about a particular topic. Most conversations do not allow us time to discover what we have to say. Instead, we are used to reading other peoples' feedback while we speak and adjust our speech accordingly. If someone smiles and nods, we know they like what we are currently saying and we may feel inclined to talk more about this. If, on the other hand, they look puzzled or disapproving, we may begin to explain ourselves in an effort to convince the listener or to withdraw or adjust our statements in an effort to please the listener. If the listener looks bored, we may try to present what we are talking about in a more interesting manner, or we may simply change the subject to something we hope the other will find more interesting. Thus, the comments and gestures (including facial expressions) of the listening partner exert great influence on the course of the speaking partner's exploration. When the listening partner stops commenting, the speaking partner will have the rare opportunity of letting their exploration be guided solely by their own interest. This is a precious gift. This gift is deepened by the agreement that neither of the partners will comment on the exploration at any point after it has been carried out so that the self-directed discovery process of the speaking partner may continue in the days following the exercise.

The first practice described below is the practice of the listening partner. The three following practices are practices for the speaking partner. I describe the first practice as a personal practice and the three following as facilitated practices. However, when practiced with a partner as described above, the three last practices will be facilitated by the speaker him- or herself. When facilitated by a professional facilitator, it is important that

this facilitator uses the techniques lightly. Many times in my role as a facilitator, I have had a question ready in my mind only to discover that if I do not ask this question, the person I'm working with answers the question a little later on of their own accord—without me saying anything. When people arrive at questions by themselves, it is a stronger and more impactful process. Therefore, one of the most powerful tools of a facilitator is the first practice of being present in listening without following any impulse to comment—that is, to stay quiet.

7.1.1   Noticing Sensory Templates Without Following the Implied Actions

One of the main reasons we do not notice the sensory templates we use is that we too readily engage with the actions they imply and that doing so captures all of our awareness. Therefore, the first practice is simply to listen to someone else speaking while consciously and continuously relaxing one's body and noticing any impulses for action that emerge without acting on any of these impulses. If you notice the urge to make a comment on or disagree with or correct what is being said, you simply register this urge, notice what it feels like in the body, and then relax without acting. If you feel the impulse to agree with or support or build on a point made by the speaking person, you also register this impulse, feel it in the body, and relax without doing anything. If you feel bored, uncomfortable, or uneasy and wish to change the subject, you again notice this, feel it in the body, and let it be without doing anything to change the subject. If what is being said reminds you of a story from your own life, and you feel the urge to relate this story, you can simply notice the urge, what it feels like in the body, and relax. Every such urge or impulse can be felt in the body as an activation or tension—as if the body were getting in gear and ready for some physical, emotional, or mental movement. Instead of acting on these urges or impulses, you can observe the related bodily activations—and then allow these activations to relax and pass by without following them—like sitting at the bus stop and deliberately choosing to miss every bus by relaxing the impulse to get up and board the bus when each bus arrives.

Once you get good at this, you can also begin noticing more clearly what motivates the urges or impulses. Maybe you think that the other would benefit from your input. Maybe you feel something will go horribly wrong unless you take action. Maybe you believe that saying whatever it is you want to say will make you appear to others as brilliant, smart, interesting, caring, strong or something else that you would like others to see you as. Or maybe you simply want to make people laugh because you like laughter and don't like things to be too serious—or the reverse. Regardless of your motivation, you can allow yourself to waste one opportunity after another and be more interested in noticing what kind of opportunities you are pulled toward and how this pull feels in the body.

Two things are important to be aware of. First, the non-acting should not be achieved by tensing up in an effort to *block* yourself from acting. Such tensing up is in itself action. The non-acting is better achieved through an attitude of being too comfortable in yourself to act or of allowing yourself to deliberately waste opportunities to act. You see them, and you let them pass by without going for them. Second, while listening in this way, you may experience urges and impulses to improve the way you "listen without commenting". You may feel that you should relax more or that you should try harder to notice what impulses emerge. You may even get ideas about the practice which aren't part of the practice as it is described here. You may think that you should be able to remember your urges afterwards and write them down or that you should try to change the impulses that emerge when the other person is speaking so that you have more appropriate impulses. People get many such ideas when they are introduced to this practice. However, such urges can also be regarded as urges that you neither have to oppose nor follow. They are simply urges arising in relation to your own practice rather than in relation to what the other person is saying. But you can treat them in the exact same way.

Through this practice, you develop the ability to maintain a double awareness of a stimulus (e.g., another person speaking) and your own automatic responses to this stimulus as they arise. Sometimes what the other person is saying will be so interesting that you forget to pay attention to yourself. You will get sucked into their story. At other times, you may become so preoccupied with relaxing and noticing internal impulses that

you forget to pay attention to what the other is saying. Neither is a problem. Every time you notice that you have lost awareness of either self or other you simply return to the double awareness.

This practice is excellent preparation for starting to notice sensory templates, as these are much easier to notice when we do not follow the actions they imply. It is also good preparation for meditation since in meditation you can listen to your own thoughts and emotions in much the same way that you are listening to the other person in this practice. Finally, over time the inner awareness of impulses arising and falling away becomes an awareness of core space, and you will have learned to listen to someone without losing awareness of core space. This is a great step toward learning to act without losing awareness of the inner bliss that is always here.

7.1.2   Noticing and Describing Sensory Templates

The second practice is to simply notice and describe as precisely as possible the sensorimotor states which are activated when contemplating various questions about social situations or abstract phenomena. This is the practice I used with the second group of managers in the research described in Chap. 4. For example, to explore the phenomenon of "power" one can contemplate questions such as: What inner atmosphere arises when you think about "power"? What does "power" feel like at a physical level? Or one can speak about social situations related to power for some time and then notice and describe what one feels like in the body after having spoken about "power". Or one can take pictures of physical objects that give one a sense of "power" or that have a powerful feel to them and then notice what sensorimotor qualities these objects have in common. The description of "power" can, of course, be made in other media than language and photography, such as sculpture, movement, drawing, collage, and so on.

Simply thinking or speaking about an abstract phenomenon will activate the sensory templates one uses to represent this phenomenon. Therefore, all one has to do to find out which sensory templates one uses to represent a given phenomenon is to speak or think about this phenomenon for some time and notice the internal sensorimotor states that arise.

When, for example, the managers who participated in the research described in Chap. 4 spoke or thought about their problems and then described the internal sensorimotor states that were activated in them, they were in effect describing the sensory templates they used to represent and structure their experience of the problematic situation. When Ira spoke about the meetings she couldn't control, she began to feel something explosive and sharp, something flickering, diffuse, and unclear, and something tense and stiff. These were the sensations in terms of which she represented and structured her experience of the situation. When Anna spoke about the lack of commitment to common decisions she experienced in the management team, she felt things moving in opposite directions or moving out of sync. These were the sensations in terms of which she represented and structured her experience of the situation.

One can explain this practice through an image. You can imagine that the phenomenon you wish to explore is like a pebble and you are like a pond. When you ask yourself about the phenomenon, it is like throwing the pebble into the pond. When the pebble hits the water, it creates ripples. The exploration is simply the act of receiving these ripples without focusing one's awareness on any single ripple in particular—that is, paying attention to and describing the states of thought, emotion, and bodily sensation that arise in you when you contemplate the question.

As mentioned in Chap. 5, in the discussion on how to elicit responses about aesthetic experience, certain distinctions can be useful for this practice. I will now briefly expand on these distinctions.

The first distinction is between abstract and concrete descriptions of one's inner states. When asking managers to notice and describe the inner states that are activated when they speak about a particular phenomenon, they may describe this through concrete sensory words, such as "warm/cold", "fast/slow", "moving up/down/outward/inward/forward/etc.", "rough/smooth textures", and so on. Such descriptions are good because they stay close to the sensorimotor states—they do not add much to the states they describe. However, sometimes managers will describe their inner states by using more abstract words, such as "interesting", "repulsive", "friendly", "creative", "complex", "chaotic", or simply "good" or "bad". Such words do not directly reveal what sensorimotor experience

they refer to. They are not close enough to the sensorimotor states under investigation. Therefore, whenever a manager describes his inner experiences in terms of such abstract concepts, one can ask what these concepts feel like at a purely sensory level. Doing this, one may discover the sensorimotor states the abstract words refer to. The word "chaotic" may refer to the sensation of many parts moving fast in different directions or to the feeling of spinning uncontrollably. The word "interesting" may refer to the sensation of a warm glow or of grabbing something and pulling it close, and the word "repulsive" may refer to the sensation of vomiting or of pushing something away. Clarifying what sensorimotor states abstract words are grounded in is important, as they may refer to different sensorimotor states for different people.

The second distinction is between neutral and value-laden words. More abstract concepts are not only problematic because they do not reveal directly which sensorimotor states they refer to, but also because they add value judgments to the description. Consider, for example, the above-mentioned abstract words. "Interesting", "friendly", and "creative" are generally seen as positive, whereas "repulsive" and "chaotic" are generally seen as negative. Since value judgments are also represented through sensory templates, such descriptions will muddle the picture by adding to the sensorimotor states that are currently active in the manager (more on this in the following section). Therefore, it is good to use *neutral* descriptions. It is worth mentioning that even though sensorimotor words are less likely to include value judgments, they sometimes do. For example, the word "vomiting" *does* refer to a concrete sensorimotor experience, but it is far from neutral. The word "vomiting" generally has strong negative connotations of sickness and nausea. A more neutral description could be "something moving up and out of the body". Describing it in this way, one may become aware of the relief of vomiting. Similarly, the word "cold" can be a neutral description of temperature, but it can also have negative connotations, such as "unfriendly" or "harsh". To determine whether a manager is providing a neutral or value-laden description, one can pay attention to the manager's tone of voice, bodily gestures, and facial expressions.

A third distinction is between emotions and sensations. A manager may describe the inner states activated by thinking of or speaking about

a particular phenomenon as "sad", "happy", "frustrating", "frightened", or "enthusiastic". These words also do not directly reveal the sensorimotor states they refer to. In fact, these words only tell us that the phenomenon in question is represented through the same sensory template as the emotion mentioned, but they do not directly reveal what that sensory template is. Therefore, when managers use emotional words to describe the sensations triggered by talking about a phenomenon, we can point the manager's awareness in the direction of the sensory template by asking what the actual sensation of the emotion is. If a manager says the phenomenon triggers a sensation of happiness, the facilitator can ask: What does this particular kind of happiness feel like in terms of physical sensations? If a manager says that thinking about the phenomenon makes her feel frightened, the facilitator can say: Good, what does this being frightened feel like in terms of physical sensations? If a manager says that thinking about the phenomenon makes him feel enthusiastic, the facilitator can ask: What are the sensations you feel that you recognize as "enthusiasm"? Or the facilitator can ask: What is the actual sensory experience that you call "enthusiasm"? If one is dealing with strong negative emotions, one needs to be skilled in reminding the manager that they are exploring how they represent this emotion and help them keep the description neutral. Otherwise, the facilitator risks talking the manager into experiencing strong negative emotions which will shut down the capacity for exploration (and will be generally unpleasant and unnecessary). I will return to the question of strong emotions below. If what arises in the manager is not an emotional state but an episodic memory or a similar thought state, one can treat these in the same way: Let the manager describe the memory and then direct the manager's awareness to the sensory states embedded in this memory.

A fourth distinction is between actual physical properties of a phenomenon and the sensations the manager uses to represent the phenomenon. These may or may not be the same. For example, if we ask a manager to describe the sensations triggered by thinking about a particular conflict, he may start to describe what the room he was in looked like or the temperature in the room. In such cases, it can be beneficial to direct the manager's attention to internal sensations. Managers may also begin to describe a headache or a sore back. In these cases, it is up to the

skill of the facilitator to know when these sensations are states the manager uses to represent the situation under investigation and when they are merely a matter of the manager having had a bad night's sleep, having been sitting still for too long, or other purely physical circumstances unrelated to the manager's acts of comprehension through sensory templates.

As we saw in Chap. 4, the practice of becoming aware of which sensory templates are used to represent various phenomena is valuable for managers because it opens up the possibility of evaluating whether a given sensory template enables and supports efficient managerial actions, and it brings the possibility to change the sensory templates if the one the manager currently uses does not enable and support efficient action. Furthermore, as we saw in Chap. 6, knowing that the sensations experienced originate from our own acts of comprehension rather than from the situation itself can prevent managers from acting from vices such as greed or hatred and allow them to act from virtues such as patience and kindness.

7.1.3   Placing Sensory Templates on a Timeline

The third practice is to distinguish the sensorimotor states used to represent a particular phenomenon from sensorimotor states used to represent reactions to and ideas about this phenomenon. One can imagine placing the sensorimotor states which emerges when contemplating a phenomenon on a timeline, and sorting these states by seeing some as reactions to others. As a rule of thumb, it is more interesting to become aware of earlier sensorimotor states, insofar as later sensorimotor states are mere consequences of the earlier ones.

When we begin the practice of noticing and describing the sensorimotor states we feel while thinking and speaking about a particular phenomenon, we may not only sense the sensorimotor states we use to represent the phenomenon itself, but also the sensorimotor states we use to represent our reactions to and ideas about this phenomenon. To notice the sensorimotor states we use to represent a phenomenon itself, it is therefore useful to imagine what the phenomenon would feel like if we didn't have to react to it at all. When facilitating this process, it is useful

to notice what the individual managers' reactions to the phenomenon under investigation are and to ask them what the phenomenon would feel like if they did not have to react to it in these ways.

We may, for example, try to find out what sensory template a particular manager uses to represent the phenomenon "power". If the manager thinks "power" is something dangerous that needs to be controlled, then thinking and speaking about "power" will most likely bring a sense of inner tension. This tension is not the sensorimotor state through which the manager represents "power" in itself, but rather a sensorimotor state through which he represents the idea that "power is something he needs to control". The tension represents "control", not "power", but if the manager thinks power always necessitates control, the manager will feel this tension he uses to represent "control" whenever he thinks about "power". To point this particular manager's awareness to the sensory template he uses to represent "power" in itself, one can ask: What would "power" feel like if it were absolutely safe? Or the facilitator may first set a frame by stating that the danger of "power" lies in how people *use* power and then ask: So, what does "power" feel like if you feel it while sitting still, without using it for anything? Or what would "power" feel like if you knew it would never be used? Such questions may at first be baffling to the manager, but given time, the state he uses to represent "power" in itself is likely to emerge into his consciousness. And becoming aware of the state representing "power" separate from the tension used to represent "control" may offer a completely new experience of what power is.

Similarly, another manager may believe that "power" is something she has to struggle to acquire and to hold on to. This manager will most likely feel sensorimotor states of physical struggling and of physically grasping whenever she thinks about "power". This may lead her to believe that the sense of struggle or grasping *is* what the phenomenon of "power" feels like and she may therefore not notice the subtler sensorimotor states she uses to represent the phenomenon of "power" *in itself*. To point *this* manager's awareness to the sensorimotor states she uses to represent "power", one can ask: What does "power" feel like if you didn't have to do anything to have it? Or what does "power" feel like if you have it and you—for some unknown reason—know with certainty that you can never lose it no matter what you or others do? Again, such questions are likely to bring awareness to the sensorimotor states the manager uses to represent

"power" and experiencing the sense of "power" separate from the sense of "struggle" may give her a very new understanding of what power is and new ways of engaging with power—and possibly a new way of understanding herself as unconditionally powerful.

Ira's case, described in Chap. 4, illustrates well the use of ordering sensorimotor states along a timeline and paying special attention to the earliest of these. When Ira was asked to notice and describe the inner sensorimotor states she felt whenever she was thinking and speaking of the staff meetings which got hijacked by certain problematic employees, she described several sensorimotor states. Ira felt something explosive and sharp, something flickering, diffuse, and unclear, and something tense and stiff. Each of these sensorimotor states can be seen as Ira's reaction to the previous state. The tense and stiff sensation was an attempt to distance herself from the discomfort of the two others states. The flickering, diffuse, and unclear sensation was an attempt to cover over and dampen the explosive and sharp state—hiding it from her employees. The sense of explosiveness was in itself composed by two sensations where one was a reaction to the other—the sharp energy and confinement of this energy. Confinement was a reaction to the energy because Ira saw this energy as dangerous and as something she needed to control and hide. Initially, Ira saw "anger" and "frustration" as the combined experience of all these sensorimotor states. However, when Ira distinguished between the different sensorimotor states and allowed herself to feel the first sharp energy without any of the reactions, this initial sharpness no longer felt like "anger" or "frustration", but rather like "clarity" and "leadership". This example suggests that *hidden within the experience of anger and frustration lies the experience we would call "clear leadership",* and the way to realize this is to experience the energy without any of one's habitual reactions to this energy—in particular without one's attempts at controlling it or acting it out.

Thus, a useful tool for the practice of distinguishing the sensorimotor state used to represent a phenomenon from the states used to represent reactions to and ideas about this phenomenon is to organize the sensorimotor states which emerge when thinking of the phenomenon on a timeline. Moving toward earlier sensorimotor states is a way of uncovering the state one is using to represent the more unelaborated or

uninterpreted phenomenon, that is, the phenomenon in itself before we begin reacting to it. It is a way of focusing one's exploration on the sensory template that creates the mess and not getting lost in all the sensations which are just natural consequences of using this initial sensory template. In Ira's case, we could have talked at length about her rigidity or her sense of confusion, but these were just inevitable consequences of seeing the sharp energy as something bad she needed to control and hide. Even her lack of ability to control the meetings was a mere consequence of this negative value judgment on the initial spontaneous emergence of the sharp energy. Giving too much attention to such inevitable consequences would be a waste of time. Anything that comes after the value judgment is bound to be flawed because it builds on the flawed premise that the sharp energy is bad and needs to be controlled and hidden. To help managers become aware of what lies at the start of the timeline, one can begin from any sensation and ask questions such as: What is this sensation a reaction to? What would you experience if this sensation were not there? What are you trying to do with this sensation? Asking such questions is a way of becoming aware of the state through which one initially represents the phenomenon before having any further opinions or ideas about it.

In practice, people will often categorize phenomena as either good or bad. If an individual thinks a phenomenon is good, he may feel he needs to grasp it, move toward it, or clear away obstacles that prevent him from getting to it. If an individual thinks a phenomenon is bad, she may feel she needs to push it away, move away from it, or block it from coming toward her. Thus, the simple act of judging a phenomenon as good or bad already adds sensorimotor states to the representation of this phenomenon. This is why neutral descriptions are so useful. Neutral descriptions direct our attention to the experience before any value judgments.

Practicing distinguishing between the sensorimotor states used to represent a phenomenon and the sensorimotor states used to represent reactions to or ideas about the phenomenon is a way of deepening one's awareness of how the process of using sensorimotor states as sensory templates operates in one's own system. It allows us to see how the phenomena we deal with (e.g., frustration or anger) are not self-existing entities but are brought into existence through a process of compiling sensorimotor

states together in a particular order. Seeing this clearly has a profoundly liberating effect on us and supports us in correcting the mistaken onto-logical assumption that phenomena are permanent and self-existing and thus in becoming more efficient and virtuous.

7.1.4   Sensory Templates and the Individual's Personal History

The fourth practice is to notice how our reactions to aspects of our every-day sensorimotor experiences are shaped by what these sensorimotor experiences have come to represent due to our personal history with them.

One particularly interesting area where managers can use this practice is situations where managers (or their colleagues or employees) are unable to give up particular attitudes, even though they *know* these attitudes to be unwarranted and not beneficial. For example, a manager may experi-ence herself becoming overly controlling in relationship to a team of employees, even though she rationally knows that the team is highly skilled and responsible and work best without her interference. However, even though she rationally knows that there is no need for being control-ling, she simply cannot help it. Another manager may feel himself inad-equate in situations where his education and years of experience make him *more* than adequate. He may know this, yet this knowledge does not dispel the sense of inadequacy.

Such situations may seem strange to both the managers themselves and to their colleagues. It may be attributed to character flaws in the manag-ers. She is just like that. That is just his personality.

However, if we ask these managers to first describe in detail the senso-rimotor states related to "control" or "inadequacy" and then ask them what or whom these sensorimotor states remind them of, the mystery may well be solved. The woman may notice that the sense of control feels tense and anxiously alert and that she knows this state from her mother, who was often tense, anxious, and controlling. Thus, just as this manager when she was a child would turn to her mother when she felt the need for reas-surance, she now turns to that inner state of control when she wants to feel reassured because she unconsciously uses this sensorimotor state to *represent* her mother. In other words, the reason the woman cannot let

go of being controlling is not that she is just like that, rather it is because being controlling brings about a sensorimotor state that to her unconscious represents her mother. Therefore, she turns to being controlling to get the same kind of reassurance a child can get from turning to her mother. Similarly, the man in the examples above may notice that inadequacy feels collapsed and fragile and that this reminds him of his father. As a child, he would develop the habit of turning toward the thing in the room that felt collapsed and fragile, namely his father, whenever he wanted support. Continuing this habit in his adult life, he recreates the energetic feeling of his father internally whenever he feels the need for support. These connections between concepts such as "reassurance" and "support" and the sensory qualities of our primary caretakers are formed like the primary metaphors discussed in Chap. 3, where, for example, the sensation of warmth from the closeness of our caretakers' bodies becomes a sensorimotor state representing "affection"—a metaphor that is visible in expressions such as "a warm smile", "a warm person", and inversely "a cold shoulder".

It is very useful for managers to know that humans sometimes call forth inner states, such as confusion, fear, collapse, anger, doubt, and so on, not because the situation they are in is confusing, scary, overwhelming, offensive, or ambiguous to them, but because they use these states to metaphorically represent a parent to whom they as children learned to turn to find, for example, "comfort", "support", "guidance", "security", "connection", and so on. Reacting to these inner states by trying to clear up the confusion, calm the fear, give a pep talk, deal with whatever seems to be the cause of the anger, or make things less ambiguous will *in these cases* not work, because the state is a symbol used to represent something important. Thus, managers need to react to what the symbol represents—not try to remove the symbol. In fact, trying to remove the state will to the individual's unconscious feel like trying to remove their parent and this will make them hold on to the state for dear life.

This dynamic can be understood by looking at the case of Einar (described in Chap. 4) who tried to deal with a dissatisfied employee by solving whatever this employee was dissatisfied with. But every time he solved one thing, the employee found new things to be dissatisfied with, or he found flaws in Einar's solutions. In this case, it is possible that the employee is turning to dissatisfaction in the hopes of finding something there that he found in a parent who had a perpetually dissatisfied disposition

but who also was a source of human connection and of appreciative attention to the employee as a child. Thus, instead of trying to deal with the things the employee claimed to be dissatisfied with, Einar could have heard the dissatisfaction as a way saying: "I would like to feel human connection and appreciative attention". If this is so, Einer would do better taking five minutes to engage in friendly conversation with the employee—instead of running off and trying to solve the alleged problems the employee mentioned, thus creating a disconnect and giving no appreciative attention to the employee. Talking directly to what the state of dissatisfaction *represents* will work much better than taking the dissatisfaction at face value. It is analogous to learning that a word (the dissatisfaction) means something other than we thought it meant. Knowing the true meaning, the manager can react appropriately. That being said, of course sometimes employees are simply dissatisfied, confused, fearful, collapsed, angry, or in doubt due to the situations they are in, and as a manager one *does* have to take this at face value. The better one knows these kind of dynamics in oneself, the better one becomes at distinguishing between the two types of situation.

Of course, a manager should neither become a psychologist nor a substitute parent for their employees. But managers can benefit from practicing recognizing this type of mechanism in themselves. Over time, this will teach managers to recognize this type of mechanism in others. This practice has the particular advantage that it teaches the practitioner to listen more deeply and with more compassionate understanding to the seemingly irrational tendencies in humans. As we begin to understand how seemingly problematic attitudes are used as representations for something extremely valuable, we gain trust in and love for humanity and ourselves. Such human insightfulness will greatly increase the manager's efficiency.

7.2   Realizing How We Are Reaching for Core Space, Which Is Always Already Present

The second group of practices aims at making managers aware that all their actions, desires, and even their so-called negative emotions are *ultimately* reaching for the ever-present core space, that is, for happiness,

love, vitality, satisfaction, and so on. Through these practices, we can begin to experience this space directly and to become aware of how the very ways in which we reach for it make us lose awareness of it.

I will present three practices in this group: (1) Noticing what states we are ultimately reaching for and becoming aware that these are already present to us. (2) Becoming intimately familiar with the inner states we are avoiding and noticing that they are the same states we in other contexts are reaching for. (3) Being present with the sensorimotor experience of difficult emotions.

7.2.1 Noticing that the Happiness We Are Ultimately Reaching for Is Already Present

One of the most pleasant and easy ways of realizing that what we ultimately want is to feel core space and that this is always already present to us is to explore the deepest positive intention behind our wishes to change things in our lives. It could be impulses to obtain something we do not yet have which appears good, such as winning a competition, outperforming colleagues, passing one's targets, getting a higher managerial position or a higher salary, getting public praise or awards, or making others conform to one's personal moral ideologies. It could also be impulses to avoid something which appears bad, such as losing a competition, being demoted, failing in reaching one's targets, making mistakes, public blame/criticism, or disrespect.

Connirae Andreas developed a process she called Core Transformation process (Andreas and Andreas 1994). This process focuses on revealing very deep positive intentions behind any wish to change something in our lives. In short, the process is facilitated by first repeatedly asking about the positive intention behind a certain impulse or wish until a so-called core state is reached, and then repeatedly asking how feeling this core state transforms the various aspects of experience touched upon through the first part of the process. In Core Transformation, the starting point is generally something the individual finds problematic about himself, such as an impulse to procrastinate, shyness, or a tendency toward explosive outbursts of anger. However, the process can start from any strongly felt impulse to change something internal or external to the person.

For example, a manager may be unhappy about his current position and have a strong feeling that he would be happier if he got promoted. After some initial preparation, the facilitator would ask this manager to imagine that he has gotten the promotion he wanted and to notice if there is any experience he would like to get through having this promotion which is even more important. The manager may notice that what he finds attractive about getting the promotion is that he feels this would give him a sense of being more respected by others in the organization. The facilitator would then again ask the manager to imagine that he has exactly the kind of respect he wishes for—fully and completely—and to notice if there is any experience he would like to get through having this respect which is even more important. The manager may notice that he relaxes deeply when imagining that he has this respect. Thus, this relaxation is what he wants to gain through getting the respect from others that he believes he would gain from being promoted. The facilitator would then ask the manager to imagine that he has this relaxation completely and fully and to notice what experience he would get through that which is even more important. In answering this question, the manager may become aware of dissolving in a profound state of peace. This is what Andreas calls a core state. Feeling this state is what the manager ultimately wants. Andreas describes five core states that she has experienced with clients: (1) being/wholeness, (2) inner peace, (3) love, (4) OKness, and (5) oneness (Andreas and Andreas 1994, 19). Note that these core states are different ways in which core space can appear to us.

When the core state is felt, the facilitator shifts the line of inquiry and starts asking how feeling the core state changes the manager's experience of the various elements he mentioned in the first part of the process. For example, the facilitator will ask how feeling the deep sense of peace would enrich the manager's sense of relaxation, transform his relationship to wanting respect, transform his activity relating to being promoted, and finally transform his experience of being in his current position. In answering such questions, the manager may notice that when he already feels the core state of peace, his relaxation is deep and effortless and he no longer cares about respect or even about the promotion, because what motivated him to try to change his state was that he thought this was necessary to feel peace.

Once he feels peace, he realizes that he does not need to go through the long chain of events he (unconsciously) thought he had to go through to get to the peace. He may, of course, still want to be promoted, but he would approach this in a completely different way, as he would no longer be motivated by a thirst for peace.

Going through this process shows the manager that what is ultimately driving his attempt to be promoted is his longing for peace. However, the reason he does not feel peace is not that he is separate from it and needs to do a lot of things to get it. The reason he does not feel the peace is that trying to do all of these things keeps him so busy that he does not notice that the peace is always already there. In other words, the process can change the manager's theory-in-use of how to find peace. As long as the manager sees the desired phenomenon of peace as a self-existing entity he is separate from, he will formulate ideas about what conditions to fulfill to obtain this phenomenon. This leads to the formation of long chains of conditions because the condition for achieving one phenomenon becomes yet another phenomenon one has to acquire: (1) to attain "peace" one has to relax, (2) to attain "relaxation" one has to be respected, and (3) to attain respect one has to have a high position in the organization. However, feeling the peace strongly without having fulfilled any of the conditions in this chain offers experiential evidence that one is *not* separate from the deep sense of peace and that one does not have to fulfill any of the conditions in order to feel it. This opens up the possibility of seeing the state of deep peace as something that is always already present, from which one is, in fact, inseparable, and seeing that it is because one is too occupied with the activities one thinks will bring peace that one loses sight of peace.

Over time, this practice can lead to the experienced knowledge that all that we long for in terms of peace, love, power, support, vitality, connection, joy, appreciation, satisfaction, passion, belonging, and so on is always already present in every moment. These states are not contingent upon any action. The only reason we do not feel these states is that we are busily engaged in the activities we believe are necessary to attain them and that we have not learned to sense them on their own and to move into action without losing awareness of them.

Sometimes people ask whether we would not become passive if we felt we have all of these things before any action. The fact is the opposite. The more we feel we have all of these things, the less time and energy we lose in fruitless search for them. Instead, we become like happy children, who are probably the most energetic people in the world. We still want to do things in the world, but our actions will be motivated by what our activities *can* bring us. We work to write a book so the book will be written and read by others. We develop new products to fulfill certain functions. We sell those products so that we earn money. We do not do these things in order to receive love or peace or satisfaction or any other such core state. Managers who learn this will be much more focused, rooted, and stable in their work since they do not unconsciously feel that they are fighting to attain or preserve love, peace, power, support, vitality, and so on through their work.

7.2.2   Becoming Intimate with and Surrendering to States We Normally Avoid

Another way of realizing that what we ultimately want is to feel core space which is always already present to us is to surrender to the states we try to avoid or get rid of. This practice is more demanding and should be facilitated by a competent teacher and with sensitivity to timing. I describe the practice here because it illustrates important points about how to work with sensory templates.

This process is in a sense the inverse of the process described in the previous section. Instead of exploring the result of *succeeding* in either achieving something desirable or avoiding something undesirable, in *this* process one explores the result of surrendering oneself to the consequences of utterly *failing* to either achieve something desirable or avoid something undesirable. Instead of asking what obtaining something that appears attractive would enable one to experience, in this process one would ask about the experience resulting from completely giving up the idea of ever obtaining it. Instead of asking what avoiding something that appears unpleasant would enable one to experience, in this process one would ask into the experience resulting from completely giving up

any effort to avoid it. People who have had a history of feeling under pressure to perform positivity often like this practice more than the previous one as they feel relief in acknowledging and speaking openly about their negative experiences.

To illustrate this process, one can think of a manager who feels that she does not receive sufficient appreciation from her colleagues for her work. She may be trying hard to receive appreciation in various ways, but feels that she is failing at eliciting the appreciation she longs for. In the previous process, the facilitator would ask the manager to imagine that she *did* receive the appreciation she wants and to notice what experience she would like to obtain through having the appreciation, which is even more important to her. In this process, however, the facilitator would ask the opposite question: What would it feel like if you never received any appreciation for the rest of your life? What experience would you have if you completely gave up any hope of being appreciated and relieved yourself from any efforts at eliciting it? At first, this line of questioning leads to experiences which appear bleak. The manager may say that she would experience hopelessness or emptiness or profound disconnection. However, as we have discussed in Chap. 4, such negative descriptions of a particular phenomenon add a sense of pushing them away, which may add feelings such as anger and resentment or collapse and self-loathing depending on whether the blame for feeling negative states is directed outwards or inwards. Therefore, the facilitator would continue by guiding the manager to notice what these phenomena feel like *in themselves*, separate from the judgments and reactions to the phenomena. The facilitator can do this by asking questions such as: What does the absence of hope feel like if there is no need for hope? What does emptiness feel like if it is not a problem? What happens if you willingly try to feel more disconnection? It is important to word these questions in ways that spark a sense of safety and curiosity in moving closer to the dreaded experience. This is the practice described above of distinguishing between the sensorimotor state representing the phenomenon one is avoiding and the sensorimotor states representing one's avoidance of this phenomenon. What is initially surprising to many people is that through this practice one will reach the *same* core states as in the previous practice. The manager in our example may notice that when there is no hope there is also no effort, and

that being freed from having to engage in any effort leaves her feeling very settled and grounded. Similarly, she might notice that emptiness feels like a relief and contains a sense of wholeness and freedom, and that being completely disconnected is a profoundly peaceful state.

Another manager may complain that he feels stuck in a particular situation, and he wants to do something about this—but nothing he does seems to work. The facilitator could ask this manager what it would be like if he remained stuck forever and relieved himself of the demand to get unstuck. (Notice how the question is worded to make the efforts to get unstuck seem like a demand or a burden and the letting go of these efforts as being relieved of this demand or burden.) This question may at first seem ludicrous. The thought of being stuck forever may appear as a scene out of Dante's *Inferno* and not an option worth considering. However, if the manager goes with it, he might notice that the stuckness *on its own*, when he no longer judges it as a bad thing, simply feels solid and immovable. In allowing himself to feel this state of solidity and immovability, he may discover that it is profoundly grounding. He may feel settled in himself and from this place of solidity, grounding, and settledness, he may deal much more efficiently with the situation in which he thought he was stuck.

Some of the stories from the research described in Chap. 4 also illustrate this practice well. When Ira stopped avoiding frustration and anger, it initially appeared as a monstrous and hideous state. But when she stopped judging it as something bad, she discovered that the central part of the experience of frustration and anger was a core state of clarity and aliveness. Similarly, once one stops avoiding being stuck, surrenders oneself to being stuck, or becomes intimately acquainted and friendly with the sense of being stuck, one might feel that the core state hidden in the experience of being stuck is a sense of profound stability. The core of sadness is a sense of exquisite freshness and tenderness. The core of our hate is a sense of profound stillness, peace, and power. The core of our insatiable desires is a sense of profound bubbling joy and spontaneous creativity. I will return to this in a section below.

The first time someone experiences this process it seems very surprising. It seems as if the most dreaded phenomenon for some inexplicable reason transforms into something wonderful. However, the underlying

mechanism is the same as in the previous practice. When we stop our actions, in particular our acts of comprehension, we start noticing that that which is there before any action is the very happiness and fulfillment we were searching for through our actions—and we may see that it was being busy with our actions that made us lose sight of it.

This practice has several pitfalls. I will mention two here.

Once individuals have experienced how being present with a state they initially perceived as very uncomfortable and as something to avoid can transform this state into something very precious, they may begin to use this practice with the *intention* of getting rid of the uncomfortable states. Such attempts are likely to fail because the individual is not actually letting go of either their avoidance of the uncomfortable state or their judgment of this state. Instead, they are tolerating the state while waiting for it to change. This can lead to people doing something that can best be described as holding the uncomfortable aspects of their present moment experience as if they were holding something disgusting with two fingers at arm's length—waiting for the supposed reward of this practice. However, as long as one sees the experienced state as something one wants to get rid of, this very act of comprehension will prevent one from realizing what the state feels like on its own—without the value judgement. This pitfall can be avoided by (1) consciously relaxing the body while meeting the experience; (2) assuming a friendly and welcoming attitude toward the experience; (3) imagining that one is physically bringing the experience closer, rather than pushing it away, or moving toward it, rather than away from it; (4) taking care to describe the experience in *neutral, sensory* terms; or (5) actively trying to get more of the unpleasant experience, *as if* it were a good thing. In short, one should not merely be with whatever one is experiencing, but be with it in a friendly and relaxed manner.

Another pitfall related to this practice is that the discomfort one feels about the experience one wishes to avoid can become so strong that it shuts down one's capacity to sense. In short, the practice can be too overwhelming for the individual. This too will impede the realization of the core state beyond one's judgments and avoidance of the experience.

This is why this process has to be facilitated in a gentle way and with sensitivity to timing. In the therapeutic practice called Somatic Experiencing, developed by Peter Levine (1997), facilitators use a technique called titration, where they shift the individual's attention back and forth between a pleasant state and the uncomfortable state they are trying to become intimate and friendly with. Even though Somatic Experiencing was originally developed to work with trauma, titration can also be used in combination with the practice discussed here. If the individual has had conscious experiences of any core states, these are particularly powerful resource states that can be used in titration.

The practice of becoming intimate with or surrendering to what we avoid has the advantage that it makes the individual more courageous, curious, relaxed, and grounded. When one has repeatedly experienced that laying down one's defenses against experiences which at first glance appeared as something to avoid at all cost results in experiences of exquisite core states, one becomes less intent on avoiding such experiences in general. Over time one may even become excited about diving into seemingly unpleasant experiences. As managers learn to recognize the core states underneath the kind of experiences they under normal circumstances try to avoid, they expand the inner territory they can comfortably inhabit. There will be fewer situations they shy away from since fewer situations will produce in them emotions or states they are unwilling to feel. Situations can only control one's behavior insofar as one is unwilling to feel or afraid of feeling the inner states one feels in these situations.

7.2.3 Being Present with the Sensorimotor Experience of Difficult Emotions

From time to time, all managers experience intense and difficult emotions, such as anger, hatred, sadness, desire, shame, fear, boredom, and stuckness. Working with these emotions offers yet another potent practice through which managers can become aware that what *ultimately* motivates their actions and related emotions is the wish to feel the core space and that this core space is always already present to them.

When difficult emotions arise, managers (like all humans) will usually try to get rid of them either by repressing them or by discharging them through various forms of expressive actions. Managers may repress emotions of anger, hatred, sadness, and desire simply by denying that they have such emotions. One manager may, for example, feel angry about a situation, but pretend that she is unaffected and calm. Another manager may feel sad, but pretend that he is happy. Managers may also repress difficult emotions by minimizing their effect on them. One manager may, for example, feel anger, but pretend that this has no bearing on his actions as a manager—that he is above this emotion. Another manager may feel sad, but claim that due to her professionalism, this does not affect her—that she can shake off this emotion and pull through. However, emotions do not disappear or lose their influence over us simply because we deny that they are there or we deny that they have an impact. Managers may also try to get rid of difficult emotions by discharging them in various ways. Sometimes this happens in overt ways, such as when a manager explodes with anger and shouts at employees or other colleagues. Other times it happens in more controlled, socially acceptable, or "civilized" ways, such as when a manager expresses anger through cynical, sarcastic, or degrading remarks or by withdrawing emotionally. Often the more controlled ways of discharging difficult emotions will break down into more overt and raw ways of discharging them in situations where the manager feels under pressure. Thus, "managing emotions" is often merely a temporary solution. Furthermore, keeping strong emotions under control creates inner tension and takes a lot of energy. Thus, it is very problematic to try to get rid of difficult emotions either by repressing them or by discharging them. The very idea that difficult emotion is something to get rid of comes out of using the sensory template of seeing such emotions as analogous to harmful substances one must avoid.

A third option is to practice being present with the sensorimotor experience of the difficult emotion. To give it full permission to unfold internally (not repressing it) *without* discharging it through any actions. When we become present with our emotions and feel them without repressing or discharging them, we can become aware of the sensorimotor states of the emotion beyond any social and moral discourse veiling the emotion. Then it becomes apparent that the experience of any emotion (including the so-called

negative emotions) contain the experience of aspects of core space, such as vitality, peace, love, happiness, and satisfaction, and that all emotions are forces that, if we do not interfere with them, will bring our awareness to particular aspects of this core space. When we see emotions as forces directing our awareness to the core space, it no longer makes sense to try to get rid of them. Instead, it makes sense to yield to them. And let them take our awareness to the preciousness that is always already here.

Due to limited space, I cannot deal with this practice in the detail it deserves. However, for the purpose of the present book, it will suffice to mention a few illustrative remarks on how managers generally relate to emotions of anger, hatred, sadness, and desire and how one's experience of these emotions can be transformed by being present with them at a sensorimotor level.

From anger to strength, courage, and leadership: As we saw in some of the cases described in Chap. 4, managers are often aware of their own anger but find it highly problematic. They may see anger as something that creates and escalates conflicts, as a sign of weakness, having lost control, or failing as a leader, as something unsympathetic, or as a form of emotional betrayal of their employees. Consequently, they may try to manage, limit, get rid of, or hide their anger. However, the energy of anger will find ways to push through any boundaries we may place around it, and what we usually associate with anger are the forms it takes when it has to force its way through the boundaries we place around it. These can be overt outbursts of anger or more covert (and socially acceptable) forms of anger, such as blaming, trash talking, judging, emotional distancing, or rigidity. However, such expressions of anger do not show what anger really is. To get to know what a formidable force anger really is and what it is capable of doing for us, we have to be present with it, rather than seeking to control or discharge it.

Catharine felt justified in being angry and expressed it through the socially acceptable form of blaming. Frank and Gary both saw anger as unpleasant and harmful and tried to control it. However, both expressed anger by avoiding or withdrawing from the person they were angry with and judging that person as problematic. Helena felt that anger was inappropriate for a manager and that it would only demoralize her employees if she expressed it in any way. For Helena, anger was expressed through rigidity

and an overly correct and perfectionist attitude. Ira saw her own anger as something that would make her less likable, and she tried to hide it, even for herself, through confusion. She expressed her anger by relating to her employees both through purely rational considerations and arguments—what she called "small pieces of theory"—and through looking down upon their concerns.

However, by describing the emotion of anger through neutral sensorimotor words, these managers became present with the sensorimotor experience of anger, and this transformed their experience of their anger. Instead of experiencing it as something problematic, they began to experience it as inner warmth and expansion, as a sense of relaxed inner strength, as personal presence, and as something that enabled them to be direct in their communication and to take leadership.

To become present with the sensorimotor experience of anger you can begin by considering questions such as: What is your relationship to anger? How do you avoid it? Are you afraid of it? Do you get angry quickly? How do you discharge anger? Do you use anger to avoid feelings of hurt, vulnerability, sadness, or dependency? Do you allow yourself to feel anger in some situations but not in others? Do you allow the feeling but not the expression of anger? How do you express anger? Do you shout or do you become rigid, distant, or overly focused on rules? Do you camouflage anger as humor? What do you think would happen if you did not deny, hide, limit, or control your anger? The goal of contemplating these questions is not to determine when and how it is good to express anger. It is not to find the right way of managing anger since anger in its essence is not something that needs management. Instead, contemplating these questions will make you more aware of when and how anger is present in your everyday experience. This gives you an opportunity to become present with the sensorimotor experience of anger.

When you are more aware of the concrete situations in which you feel anger and of how you deny, hide, limit, or control it, then you can think about such situations and imagine what it would be like to allow the energy of the anger to flow freely through your body without any of the moderation or control you normally use and without discharging the anger through any particular actions. In the beginning, you may imagine all the horrible things your anger would make you do if no law or morals or fears

of the consequences were holding you back. When you let yourself imagine this without judgment, you will feel the surge of energy through your body. Once you feel this energy of the anger strongly, you can forget about the concrete situations and just pay close attention to the felt sense of the energy itself. Then you may notice that the energy hidden within anger enlivens you and makes you feel expanded, warm, alive, adventurous, excited, engaged, strong, and courageous. It will make you feel you have a surplus of energy to meet the world and any challenge. It will separate you from dependencies and feelings of smallness. When you do not repress or discharge anger, it shows itself as true strength, which is one form in which you can experience the ever-present core space. When you allow this energy to liberate and enliven you, you become able to imagine much better ways of dealing with the situations in which you got angry—just like Ira, who came up with the idea to use color codes to manage the meeting agenda. These ways of dealing with the situation will often not feel angry, but will feel alive, direct, and relaxed.

The problematic expressions of anger come not from the emotion itself, but from the ways in which cultural discourses around anger have taught us to interfere with it and place limiting boundaries around it without recognizing that this means putting limits around the flow of our own life force.

From hate to power and peace: Managers sometimes use the words "hate" and "anger" interchangeably. However, hate and anger are two very different emotions. Hate is a cold, controlled, and calculated wish to hurt, get revenge on, kill, or obliterate something or someone, whereas anger is the hot and impulsive move to assert oneself. For many, hate is a far more frightening emotion to feel than even the most violent outburst of anger, because hate can feel inhuman. Therefore, the emotion of hate is often more hidden than anger. Fewer managers are consciously aware of their hate than of their anger. Similarly, expressions of hate will for most managers be more subtle, controlled, covert, and difficult to become aware of than their expressions of anger.

In spite of this, it is possible to become aware of hate in ourselves by learning to recognize the particular ways we as individuals express it and the related sensorimotor experiences in our bodies. Hatred is expressed in calculated, strategic, intelligent, precise, *and seemingly rational* ways, but it involves a severing of the connection to empathy and love.

It can be directed toward hurting others or toward hurting oneself. When hate is directed toward others, one may smile at them, pretend to be their friend, and gain their trust, and exactly at the moment they are at their weakest and most vulnerable and dependent on our support we may turn on them. When we feel hate, we may often deceive even ourselves. We do not see the betrayal of our friend for what it is. Instead, we are likely to feel we have the best of reasons for turning on our friend at that precise moment. We can often defend our behavior with all the force of eloquent rationality and justify it by pointing to something they did or didn't do or to other circumstances. What we point to may be true, but will often be a very selective truth. Hate can also be expressed through casual and seemingly innocent remarks that are deeply hurtful but where it is not possible to reproach the perpetrator for their remark. In such circumstances, one may also deceive oneself and be unaware of the underlying cold wish to hurt that motivated the remark. We may justify ourselves by stating that it was just an innocent remark with no bad intentions. We may even believe that we said what we said in an attempt at being helpful to the other. For example, a colleague may be overjoyed by a recent promotion and you tell this colleague that the last person to hold that position had a breakdown after only half a year. You may believe that you are only trying to warn your friend about a possible danger. However, such a remark may also be motivated by hate seeking to eliminate your colleague's joy. When hate is directed toward oneself, it can result in self-sabotage. For example, when managers in the pursuit of personal and organizational goals neglect to take care of their own health, do not allow themselves sufficient rest, or do not prioritize their family and friends and thus over time cut themselves off from the nourishing relationships, emotional connection, and support of friends and family. Again, it is possible to deceive oneself and believe that one's behavior is rational and necessary and that it does not have great consequences. Only when one suffers a breakdown does one notice how hateful one's actions were toward oneself. Hate can also be expressed through a profound inability to see the underlying positive intentions in both one's own and others' emotions and actions. Indeed seeing some of one's own emotions as something to get rid of is an expression of self-hate.

To be present with the sensorimotor experience of hate, you must first detect the situation in which you feel hate and then welcome it without judging it or discharging it. Since hate often involves a great deal of self-deception, this is no easy task. You can begin by contemplating how hate manifests in relation to different people, such as superiors, employees, management colleagues, customers, competitors, politicians, your own family, your partner, strangers, teachers, and yourself. When do you engage in some of the behavior mentioned above? When do actions you believed to be innocent, friendly, and rational bring harmful consequences to others or to yourself? When do you feel powerful and calm, but unloving? When do you feel you want to destroy or annihilate something or someone in a strategic and calm manner? When do you seek revenge? Because hate is discharged through highly destructive actions, it is easy to believe that hate is something that needs to be fought and eradicated. Furthermore, trying to get rid of hate may be tempting since this emotion for most managers is severely at odds with their self-image. However, it is important not to try to get rid of this hate. Trying to get rid of hate would in itself be an act of hate because it would be an attempt at cutting off something that is, like it or not, a part of you.

Instead, you can give hate full permission to speak. You can notice what you would like to do when you feel hate if no laws or moral imperatives or fear of the consequences were holding you back—however, without actually doing this. Often you will find that hate holds a wish to completely obliterate something or someone. You can then imagine that you yield to this wish and that you successfully carry out this obliteration. As you do this, you can notice what inner state that brings you to, which is even more important. Once everything has been obliterated—including yourself—you may notice a state of inner darkness and stillness. At this point, you can forget about the specific situations in which you felt hate and focus your attention on the sensorimotor experience of this stillness. You may then notice that this stillness simultaneously feels like profound peace and ultimate power. When everything is wiped out, there is nothing left but profound peace. At the same time, the ability to calmly obliterate every image in your mind, to cut through all inner turmoil of thoughts and emotions to this black stillness, is the ultimate power. When you do not repress or discharge hate, it shows itself as both peace and power, which is one form in which you can experience the core space.

When you practice becoming present with the sensorimotor experience of difficult emotions, it is, as mentioned, important to feel the emotions without discharging them. This is particularly important with hate since the way in which we discharge hate can be very subtle and very destructive, and because it contains a stronger component of self-deception than other difficult emotions. Therefore, it is particularly important to work with a skilled teacher when working with hate.

From sadness to loving-kindness and compassion: Another emotion that may be difficult for managers to feel is sadness (and related emotions, such as vulnerability). Many managers will judge sadness (and vulnerability) as weak, defeatist, non-functional, a sign of collapse, as the emotions of victims and not of winners, or simply as useless or even an obstacle to the pursuit of organizational and personal goals. Such judgments lead managers to see sadness as a sign that something is wrong and they therefore avoid it. However, sadness is something much more profound than what we usually give it credit for. It is not a sign that something is wrong. It is a function of our system, the profundity of which we do not grasp. To get to know what sadness really is, we have to be present with it and allow it to show us its true nature.

To be present with the sensorimotor experience of sadness in itself, you can begin by contemplating what your relationship to sadness is. Do you allow yourself to feel sad? Or is sadness something you simply do not feel? Do you limit sadness? Do you only allow it for a limited amount of time? Do you allow the feeling but not expressions, such as crying? Do you allow sadness even if you do not understand its causes or do you only allow sadness when you feel it has a 'legitimate' cause? Do you only allow the crying when you are alone? Do you use sadness to avoid other emotions, such as anger? Is your way of relating to sadness similar to your mother's or father's way of relating to sadness? You can also contemplate how you avoid, block, hide, resist, restrict, or control sadness. Do you cheer yourself up whenever you feel sad? Do you use food, chocolate, movies, or work to distract yourself from sadness? Do you get angry or despondent as a way to cover sadness? What do you think would happen if you allowed yourself to feel sad? Do you fear you would be perceived as weak? Do you fear that you would become non-functional? The purpose of contemplating these questions is not to fix

or change anything about the way you relate to sadness or to feel more sadness or to determine when and how it is appropriate to feel sad. The purpose of contemplating such questions is to acknowledge and feel sadness and vulnerability when these emotions are there and to clearly see and disengage from the ways in which you interfere with these emotions. In this way, you can become more present with the sensorimotor experience of sadness.

When you begin to allow sadness and vulnerability without interfering with these emotions, you can pay attention to the sensorimotor experience of sadness and vulnerability in themselves—separate from the sensorimotor experience of our reactions to and ideas about these emotions. In doing this you may notice how sadness and vulnerability can feel as if your skin is thinner, and if you do not perceive this as a danger, you can enjoy the lightness and permeability of this. It can feel very tender, like fresh new leaves that have just unfolded and are still a bit moist. You may notice how after crying, you can feel unburdened, lighter, and you can feel a sense of inner moistness and freshness—like inner springtime. Sometimes sadness feels like an inner balm that calms and soothes the agitation of emotional pain.

When one starts to know sadness in this way, one develops a willingness to be present with sadness, rather than seeing it as something wrong one needs to fix or get away from. When we are not in a hurry to fix or get away from sadness, we develop ease about dealing with emotionally painful things—both in ourselves and in others. This willingness to be present with sadness without doing anything about it is real compassion. Being present with sadness and the pain that causes it brings the possibility of healing. If we are unwilling to be with sadness, because we see it as something wrong that needs to be fixed, we can only offer pity to others and self-pity to ourselves. This pity is a kind of sympathy plus emotional distance. Because of the emotional distance in pity, it does not bring the possibility of healing that compassion brings. Willingness to be with sadness enables us to come out of emotional dramas, which in essence is avoidance of pain, and it brings capacities for compassion, loving-kindness, trust, a sense of humanness and human connectedness, and the possibility for emotional growth. Thus, there is great dignity, beauty,

growth, power, and intelligence in sadness. When you do not repress or discharge sadness, it shows itself as loving-kindness, compassion, and depth of humanity, which is one form in which one can experience the core space.

From wanting to joy: Yet another emotion managers may shy away from acknowledging in themselves is wanting. Wanting is the emotion of strongly longing to acquire or possess something. It can be experienced as an intense wish, desire, urge, or craving for something. This emotion may be less stigmatized among managers than anger, hate, and sadness since it can be seen as the driving force behind ambition or self-interest or the impulse to go for what one wants. However, managers may still hold themselves back from acknowledging the depth of their wanting. Thus, like the other emotions, they may perceive it as an emotion they need to avoid, control, limit, or hide. Some managers may hold back from feeling their wanting because they see it as greedy, egocentric, or childish. They will only allow their wanting insofar as it coincides with what is for the good of the organization or other people. Other managers may allow themselves to feel their wanting, but only insofar as it is directed toward certain socially accepted objectives. They may, for example, feel it is okay to want promotions to more prestigious positions, responsibility for larger budgets, a bigger office, or more influence on strategic decisions. However, they may not feel it is okay to want to work less, to be admired, to have unilateral control, to break the rules, to put their own agenda over that of the organization, to wear shorts and flip-flops, and to do and say other things that are taboo in the organizational culture. The wanting is kept within the limits of what is socially accepted in the organization, in management culture, and in the broader society in which the organization operates. Yet other managers may deny part of their wanting to avoid disappointment in case they fail to get what they want or in case they get what they want only to discover that it wasn't what they hoped it would be. Thus, there are many reasons to avoid feeling what one wants. However, our wanting, like our anger, hate, and sadness, is not quite what we think it is. To know what it is, we have to become present with the sensorimotor experience of it beyond the social discourse around it.

To become present with the sensorimotor experience of the wanting in itself, you can begin by acknowledging the depth and breadth of your wanting and refrain from limiting it to what is acceptable or realistic. You can contemplate questions such as: What would you want if there were no limits? What are your particular reasons for keeping yourself unaware of what you want? How do you manage, control, avoid, or hide your wants? What are your secret wishes and wants? Once the energy of wanting starts to flow more freely in you as you acknowledge one want after another, you can pay close attention to the sensorimotor experience of the wanting itself. Then you may feel how your wishes and wants start bubbling forth like an inner fountain and how this feels carefree, light, and joyful. Furthermore, you may notice that this inner joyful bubbling is what you want most of all and that when you feel it, you care more about feeling the energy of wanting than about getting the particular things you want. When you do not repress or discharge your wanting, it shows itself as bubbling joy, which is one form in which you can experience the core space.

Being present with the sensorimotor experience of difficult emotions can teach managers to recognize the preciousness of such emotions and see that they are far more than what we give them credit for when we perceive them as something problematic we need to avoid, control, limit, or hide. Similar to the examples above, our perception of other difficult emotions can be transformed when we are present with the sensorimotor experience of them. For example, fear can bring us to wakefulness, shame to humility, boredom to ease, stuckness to groundedness, and so on.

The practice of being present with the sensorimotor experience of difficult emotions can be seen as a combination of noticing what these emotions are ultimately reaching for (first practice) and surrendering to something we would normally avoid (second practice).

The advantage of working with emotions is that they contain energy. When we become present with them, they both show us the direction in which we need to move our awareness to notice core space, and they provide the energy we need for our awareness to penetrate to the core space. Furthermore, learning to be present with emotions we would otherwise reject brings an ever-increasing sense of wholeness and love, because we are rejecting fewer aspects of ourselves—and others.

7.3   Moving into Action Without Losing Sight of Core Space

The third group of practices aims at learning to move into action (including acts of comprehension) without losing awareness of the core space. This can be done (1) by grounding more and more of our concepts (both positive and negative) in the experience of core states; (2) by contemplating how one would act if it were true that all we search for is always already present to us, and that the parts of us we perceive as problematic are in fact merely misguided attempts at reaching the core space; (3) by remembering core space before we act; and (4) by observing our language and detecting concrete situations where we revert to using old sensory templates which make us lose awareness of the core space. Once we have detected such situations, we can contemplate how we can understand what we experience in those situations from the viewpoint of the new sensory templates we are trying to adopt.

7.3.1   Grounding Concepts in Aspects of Core Space

One practice that can be used both to develop the capacity to perceive various aspects of the core space and to develop the capacity to move into action without losing awareness of core space is to compare the sensorimotor states we use to represent clusters of phenomena.

In the previous practice, we saw how being present with the sensorimotor experience of difficult emotions changed the way we experience these emotions from something we should avoid, control, hide, or get rid of to an expression of and a direct route to various aspects of the core space. Learning to recognize core space within the composite experience of a difficult emotion plus the social and moral discourses surrounding this emotion is analogous to the musician learning to hear a single instrument playing within the symphonic orchestra. When we learn to do this, engaging with these emotions (and the social and moral discourses surrounding them) will no longer make us lose awareness of the core state—at least

not entirely. In the same way, we can learn to recognize core states within a long range of composite experiences, by comparing clusters of phenomena (including emotions) which on the surface appear to be very different, but at their heart share the same aspect of the core state.

To explore this, I have often engaged managers (and students with other professions) in a particular game. I may begin by asking them to spend five minutes imagining that they are feeling heat, energy, and expansion in every part of their body. I then ask them to assume that this sensorimotor state of heat, energy, and expansion is something positive and tell me what kind of phenomenon it feels like. People will typically answer: vitality, strength, taking leadership, courage, adventurousness, life force, excitement, enthusiasm, autonomy, fearlessness, and so on. Then I tell them to assume that *the very same sensorimotor state* is, in fact, something bad and tell me what kind of phenomenon it now feels like. They will then typically answer: anger, frustration, being out of control, ruthlessness, recklessness, abuse, bullying, and so on.

This simple game shows that the same core state of heat, energy, and expansion is used to represent such diverse phenomena as taking leadership, strength, courage, anger, frustration, and ruthlessness. Certainly, these phenomena feel different, but the game shows that at their heart they contain the same core state.

The game described above can be played using other core states. Doing so leads to the formulation of different clusters of concepts. In Table 7.2, I have listed positive and negative concepts people typically link to seven different core states. The categorization of core states used here is loosely adapted from the work of A. H. Almaas, Karen Johnson, and Faisal Muqaddam (Almaas 2002, 258–331).

Once we ground concepts in terms of various aspects of core space, we can better engage with these concepts without losing awareness of the core space. Once we are able to recognize the core state of dynamic warmth and aliveness in phenomena, such as courage, strength, aggression, and anger, we can better engage with these phenomena without losing awareness of core space. When we learn to recognize the core

Table 7.2 Groups of positive and negative concepts grounded in similar senso-rimotor states

Core states	+ Good	+ Bad
Red, warmth, energy, expansion	Strength, taking leadership, courage, adventurousness, life force, vitality, excitement, autonomy, fearlessness	Anger, frustration, being out of control, ruthlessness, recklessness, abuse, bullying
Black, stillness, darkness, slowness	Peace, power, mystery, intimacy, safety	Hate, loneliness, death, emptiness, doubt
Green, flowing like water, soft tenderness	Compassion, kindness, humanness, flow, growth, newness, emotional tenderness	Sadness, vulnerability, weakness, defeat, non-functional, collapse, being defenceless, giving in, yielding, surrender
Yellow, lightness (both in weight and hue), bubbles, upward motion	Joy, happiness, carefreeness, wishing, delight, childlike, unburdened, unattached, light-hearted, curious, visionary	Wanting, foolishness, insubstantiality, superficiality, carelessness, naïve, childish, uncommitted, flaky, insincere, disloyal, stupid, silly
White, solidity, stability, unmoving, heavy	Supportive, confident, patient, committed, steadfast, persevering, determined, grounded, neutral, impartial, in control	Boredom, unresponsive, superior, lack of aliveness, imprisonment, restrictive, rigid, stubborn, headstrong, being stuck, impersonal, cold, controlling
Pink, fluffy softness	Appreciation, being welcomed, things being perfect as they are, loving and lovable	Weakness, wearing rose-colored glasses

state of stillness within phenomena, such as peace, power, hate, and loneliness, it will profoundly transform our perception of and engagement with these phenomena - so that instead of separating us from core space, these perceptions and actions will highlight our inseparability from core space. When we can detect the lightness of core space within

phenomena such as happiness, our wanting, carefreeness, carelessness, curiosity, and superficiality, our engagement with these phenomena will no longer lead us to lose awareness of core space.

Everyday usage of the positive concepts in the table above will sometimes be grounded in sensorimotor aspects of core space and sometimes in other sensorimotor states. It is important to realize this because only when concepts are grounded in aspects of the sensorimotor experience of core space will they support us moving into action without generating a feeling of being separate from core space that in turn lead us to lose awareness of core space. For example, everyday usage of the concept "patience" is often grounded in the sensorimotor experience of resisting the forces in us that urge us to move a project forward faster or to give up on a tedious task. When "patience" is grounded in such sensorimotor experiences of holding back certain impulses, trying to act patiently will lead us to become so occupied with trying to deal with the inherent conflicts that we lose awareness of core space. However, we can also ground the concept "patience" in the core state of ever-present ease and stability beyond the world of phenomena. When "patience" is grounded in this sensorimotor experience, acting with patience will connect us deeper with and reaffirm our inseparability from core space. Everyday usage of the concept "power" is often grounded in the sensorimotor experience of forcing other people to do something against their will. When "power" is grounded in such sensorimotor experiences, trying to act with power will lead us to become so occupied with the ensuing moral and practical problems that we lose awareness of core space. We can, however, also ground the concept "power" in the sensorimotor experience of how the stillness of core space cuts through and dissolves all phenomena. When "power" is grounded in this sensorimotor experience, acting with power will connect us to the primordial stillness of core space. Everyday usage of the concept "courage" is often grounded in the sensorimotor experience of forcing oneself to do frightening things in spite of the force of fear. Trying to act courageously, when "courage" is grounded in such sensorimotor experiences, will once again create conflicts that take our awareness away from core space. We can, however, also ground "courage" in the sensorimotor experience of the dynamic aspect of core space. When "courage" is grounded in this sensorimotor experience, acts of courage simply reaffirm how life is always surging through core space regardless of the content of our mind.

Everyday usage of the *negative* concepts in the table above will usually be grounded in the sensory template of something we need to push away—an obstacle to something we want. However, we can also understand them as expressions of our desire to feel core space combined with the misguided idea that core space is something we need to grasp. This latter view enables us to act in ways that preserve awareness of core space. For example, "joy" is a name for the lightness of core space. If we believe that this lightness is a thing we can grasp, we may try to grasp it by pushing away everything we represent through the sensorimotor experience of heaviness, such as problems or difficulties or responsibilities. Engaging in such actions makes us careless, superficial, and irresponsible. If we view the impulses to be careless, superficial, and irresponsible as something to get rid of, our awareness will get absorbed in this fight, and we lose awareness of core space. If we recognize the impulses to be careless, superficial, and irresponsible as nothing other than expressions of our desire to feel the lightness of core space plus misguided ideas about how to achieve this, we can direct our awareness to the ever-present lightness of core space we wish to feel. When we become aware of the lightness, the "negative" impulses dissolve on their own since we now feel what we wanted to feel. Similarly, "confidence" is a name for the immovability of the core space. If we believe that this immovability is a thing we can grasp, we may try to grasp it by pushing away anything we represent through the sensorimotor experience of movement, such as our own or others' vitality and spontaneous impulses. Engaging in such actions makes us controlling, rigid, and lacking in aliveness and spontaneity. Again, any impulse to be rigid, controlling, and to limit our aliveness and spontaneity are merely misguided attempts to find the feeling of the immobility of core space. Fighting these impulses, we lose ourselves in the battle. Seeing them as an indication that we have lost awareness of the immobility of core space, we can disengage from our acts of comprehension through which we lost this awareness, and when we regain awareness of the immobility of core space, the "negative" impulses dissolve without a fight.

In short, acting from the perspective that seemingly negative impulses and personality traits are attempts to become aware of core space connects us to core space. Acting from the perspective that such impulses and traits are obstacles we need to overcome will distract us even further from core space.

Thus, grounding concepts in various aspects of core space supports us moving into action while remaining aware of core space.

7.3.2   Using New Sensorimotor States as Sensory Templates in Concrete Situations

The simplest way of actualizing a new sensory template is to contemplate the question: If the situation or the phenomenon were analogous to the new sensorimotor state, then how would you interact with it? For example, one can contemplate how one would act if it is true that happiness, peace, love, support, freedom, vitality, and so on is analogous to core space, which is always already present—not analogous to objects one can acquire or lose.

The cases in Chap. 4 show how changes in sensory templates change managers' behavior. When Anna began to see the situation in her management team as analogous to the sensorimotor state of bringing things together, rather than changing the trajectory of moving objects, she stopped trying to convince the others to behave in certain ways and began to deal with the management team by building stronger relationships with the other members in both formal and informal ways. When Becky began to see the situation with the customer service employees who did not feel appreciated as analogous to riding a bicycle with the brakes on, rather than Sisyphus work, she stopped trying to make the employees feel appreciated and began looking for the friction in the system. She found that the friction was the department manager's insistence that all decisions had to be approved by him personally and she solved the problem by telling him to change his management style. When Catharine began to see the overly autonomous employees in the business unit as analogous to a big, viscous, sticky mass, rather than water which can be poured easily from one glass to another, she stopped blaming them for their behavior and began to patiently work on them from many sides, by strategically presenting her data analyses to relevant people in the organization. When Dorothy began to see her challenge of generating more sales for the children's theater as analogous to weaving a net, rather than pulling a cart, she stopped trying to pull the weight on her own and began searching for and involving a large number of individuals, both inside and outside the organization, in the search for a solution. When Einar began to see the employees in the

dissatisfied operations team as five individual voices, rather than one united wall, he stopped collectively encouraging them to complain less and began to encourage the quiet ones to speak their mind more. When Frank began to see his colleagues as analogous to a different art-based medium than himself, rather than a force that was pushing him, he stopped pushing back and began to take a real interest in his colleagues' viewpoint—which had a disarming effect on them and solved the problem. When Gary began to see communication as a conduit for appreciation, rather than merely for information, he began to speak *more* with his problematic employee, rather than leaving him alone in an attempt not to bother him.

In all of these cases, the actualization of the new sensory template came about by simply noticing which actions came to mind when seeing the problematic situation as analogous to the new sensorimotor state. The process of noticing which actions a new sensory template affords can begin by sensing the sensorimotor state while vividly imagining a situation in which one wishes to use it. However, in the research, many of the new actions emerged back at the workplace. The new actions became apparent when the managers encountered their situations after having found the new sensory template in the workshop. It was in this meeting that the ideas for new courses of action emerged—often spontaneously and to the surprise and delight of the managers themselves.

The second half of the core transformation process described above is an example of this process of actualizing a new sensory template. Before the core transformation process, the individual's actions are based on the sensory template of the individual being *separate* from a particular core state. When the individual, after the first half of the process, feels strongly *connected* to the core state, it is possible to look at the initial situations and notice how one wishes to engage with this situation when one's actions are based on the sensory template of being inseparably *connected* with this core state.

7.3.3   Letting Ideas for Action Emerge from Core States

A third practice for learning to move into action without losing awareness of core space is to simply pause and pay sustained attention to core states every time we notice them. In other words: spending *time* sensing them. By

spending time sensing core states without trying to do anything beyond that, one will start to become more conscious of and more familiar with them. Furthermore, spending time sensing core states will provide the experience of feeling these states without having done anything. Over time, such experience will dissolve our ideas about what we need to do in order to feel happy, joyful, stable, patient, strong, alive, peaceful, powerful, loved, loving, free, and so on. We begin to notice that these are words describing the state we are in before any action—the core space. This dissolves compulsory behavior aimed at attaining these phenomena through manipulating our present circumstances. The more you feel that you are able to feel the core states without doing anything, the freer you are to use your time and resources to do what is important—instead of wasting your time chasing these states through actions that will not bring them anyway.

A common objection to this practice is that if one can feel all of these things before any action, one no longer has any incentive to act and would thus remain passive and uninterested in any activity. However, in practice, this does not seem to happen. On the contrary, when one no longer wastes energy searching for these states, moving from one disappointment to another, one becomes more productive and does more work of value to others.

Another common objection is that feeling core states without doing anything to attain them is self-deception. People often object to feeling power without having any influence; feeling loved without having anyone expressing this emotion toward them; feeling happy without having anything to be happy about. However, this objection is formulated on the premise that core states are produced by certain circumstances. Thus, the objection presupposes its conclusion and thus is not a real objection. In fact, the perception that we are separate from core space is the real self-deception.

The practice of paying sustained attention to core states means merely to pause every time one becomes aware of one of these states and take time with it. It doesn't matter whether the state comes about by engaging in one of the practices mentioned above, by listening to someone who feel and describe the state, or the state merely arises spontaneously. When you become aware of it, pay attention to it.

Management educators often speak about different leadership styles, such as strong leadership, visionary leadership, appreciative leadership,

supportive or servant leadership, and so on. Sometimes we are presented with recipes for how to be a strong, visionary, appreciative, or supportive leader. While the inspiration for concrete actions can be useful, following these recipes does not guarantee that we come across as strong, visionary, appreciative, or supportive—or that we feel ourselves to be so. Just like sticking to a code of conduct does not guarantee virtue. Instead, it is possible that these leadership styles can be understood as a simple matter of acting while being aware of various aspects of core space. In other words, it is not a matter of the actions, but of the state from which we act. If we are aware of the dynamic, energetic, and expansive aspect of core space, we will act as strong leaders. If we are aware of the immovable aspect of core space, we will act as supportive leaders. If we are aware of the soft and tender aspect of core space, we will act as appreciative and servant leaders. If we are aware of the stillness of core space, we will act as powerful leaders. If we are aware of the lightness of core space, we will act as inspiring leaders.

7.3.4 Working with Language Patterns

A fourth practice for learning to move into action without losing awareness of core space is by noticing when one automatically reverts to the old sensory template of feeling separate from core space. This is a way of identifying the areas in which the new sensory template of being inseparable from core space has not yet taken hold and thus identifying the areas where further contemplation can be fruitful. In practice, this can be done by first writing freely about the phenomenon or situation for which one wishes to adopt the new sensory template and then analyzing one's own text.

   To understand how this practice works, we can consider the process of adopting any new sensory template. For example, after the workshop, Anna (case described in Chap. 4) wanted to adopt the sensory template of seeing the collaboration issues in the management team in terms of the sensorimotor experience of bringing things into contact instead of in terms of coordinating movement. To support the process of adopting this new sensory template, Anna could have taken time to write freely about the issues in the management team and then analyze her own text by underlining every time she used expressions based on the old sensory template of coordinating movement, such as "we need to walk to a common beat" or

"we are heading in different directions" or "in the meetings, we agree on where to go". Once she had found these expressions, she could contemplate how to talk about the same themes, using the new sensory template. Doing so would help her experience the situation from the new sensory template and gain insights from doing so. For example, contemplating the themes pointed to in the above statements might bring insights like "we need to build relationships with each other", "we do not have relationships with each other", and "due to our lack of relationship, we end up having very different understandings of what we agree on during the meetings".

For this practice to work, it is important that the student engages in the writing without self-censorship. From the theories of threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge (described in Chap. 2), we know that it is possible for individuals to learn to speak superficially from a new viewpoint while continuing to think and act from an old viewpoint. However, we also know that this incomplete adoption of the new viewpoint is revealed when the individual speaks in a more engaged and detailed way about the subject to which the view is applied. For the writing exercise to work, the text has to reveal the places where thought patterns are still based on the old sensory template. One can get students to produce such texts by letting them write before they do any work on finding new sensory templates. One can also give students the instruction of writing without stopping for five minutes—a technique sometimes called non-stop writing. Finally, one can get students emotionally engaged in expressing their view and then ask them to start writing.

As we know from the work done on assimilation vs. accommodation (described in Chap. 2), changing the deeper layers of how we organize our experience is difficult because we use these deeper structures in many different areas. Thus, changing certain sensory templates is a matter of considerable restructuring of one's conceptual system. The writing exercise can help identify all the areas where we revert to using the old sensory template.

7.4   Skillful Acts of Comprehension

This book began by asking the question of how to deal with seemingly unsolvable managerial problems. The starting point for answering this question was the work of Chris Argyris and Donald Schön on how to

increase managers' efficiency through double-loop learning, that is, by making managers aware of the assumptions they are basing their actions on (their theories-in-use) and of how these often differ from the assumptions they *believe* they are basing their actions on (their espoused theories). Argyris and Schön found that engaging managers in double-loop learning is difficult (Argyris 1990). To deepen our understanding of why engaging in double-loop learning is difficult, we looked at several mechanisms described in various psychological theories. Based on new research and theoretical developments in cognitive science which show that cognition is metaphorical and embodied in nature and on nine real-life cases, I then demonstrated that a particularly important class of assumptions managers base their actions on are sensory templates. Sensory templates are assumptions about which concrete sensorimotor experiences more abstract phenomena, such as power, motivation, commitment, success, negotiation, communication, value, and so on, are analogous to. Sensory templates are important because using different sensory templates can make a situation appear either as an unsolvable managerial problem or as something the manager can efficiently deal with. Working at the level of sensory templates is a way of engaging in double-loop learning, which bypasses many of the mechanisms that make this learning difficult. In the following chapters, we saw how art-based methods are useful for making managers aware of which sensory templates they use, and we saw how cultivation of virtue can be usefully understood as a matter of changing sensory templates in such a way that virtuous actions follow spontaneously and effortlessly. Finally, I proposed a series of practices for working with sensory templates and suggested that the work with sensory templates is underpinned by certain interrelated sensory templates we use to understand phenomena such as sensorimotor experiences, "inappropriate" emotions and impulses to act, self, and taking action.

The adoption of particular sensory templates is a personal commitment. The consequences of making such a commitment will be revealed as the lived experience of one's life. It is one of the most important commitments one makes, since all one's choices, actions, and experiences are shaped by this commitment. Michael Polanyi writes eloquently about such commitments to the ways in which we participate in our acts of comprehension:

> Comprehension is neither an arbitrary act nor a passive experience, but a responsible act claiming universal validity. Such knowing is indeed *objective*

in the sense of establishing contact with a hidden reality; a contact that is defined as the condition for anticipating an indeterminate range of yet unknown (and perhaps yet inconceivable) true implications. It seems reasonable to describe this fusion of the personal and the objective as Personal Knowledge. Personal knowledge is an intellectual commitment, and as such inherently hazardous. (Polanyi 1974, vii–viii)

Most of the sensory templates we use in our acts of comprehension we have unconsciously adopted from parents and society. We have never chosen them for ourselves. This book argues for consciously choosing to adopt particular sensory templates which have been passed down through generations in various wisdom traditions and which new developments in cognitive science support. Some of the implications of committing to these particular sensory templates are described in this book. In particular, I have argued how adopting these sensory templates increases managers' efficiency and virtue and that this will benefit the individual manager, the organization, and the organization's environment. However, more implications will be found by future generations who choose to make the experiment of living their lives committed to these particular sensory templates.

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