

I Feel, Therefore I Am¹

Madlen Algafari

Abstract

This is an excerpt taken from the foreword of my book *I Feel, Therefore I Am*. I express in it my gratitude to S. Keleman for giving me the courage and the arguments to defend my thesis that the emotional intelligence is more important in our days than the rational intelligence.

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Thank you, Stanley Keleman, for explaining the connection between what is visible in the human being and what is not. Thank you for your visible evidence for the significance of the invisible. Thank you for inspiring all these thoughts and emotions through your books so that I can share them with my readers.

If we did not possess feelings and emotions, we would simply observe life, we would claim life, we would control life, we would register life, we would analyze life, we would plan life, we would navigate life, we would interpret life, we would judge life, we would understand life, we would manipulate life, but we would not LIVE our life.

23 years ago, I wrote an essay for the student newspaper *Westdeutsche akademie* during my studies in body psychotherapy in Switzerland. Its title was I feel, therefore I am! I was arguing with Descartes that it was time we put an end to dualism, that it was time for, “I think, therefore I exist”, to be substituted with, “I feel, therefore I am”.

Stanley Keleman’s book *Emotional Anatomy* gave me the courage to argue with Descartes. It was one of the titles that gave a reason for my intuition to celebrate after searching far and wide for the therapeutic point of view that put together medicine and psychology, the visible and the invisible, without opposing them. Thank you for your support, teacher whom I never met!

I needed to read about emotions, to understand my own emotions, to tell everyone around me that it was not through thinking but through experiencing when we truly ARE. Rocks exist, too, but they cannot be alive without emotions. I read *Emotional Anatomy* and through me rang, “Computers think – that goes without question today. But how do they think? Their thoughts lack moral hues. They exist, too, but they are not. They think but they are not alive! What distinguishes us from the smart machines is our ability to feel. It is time it did. It is about time. Otherwise, thinking is about to obliterate us. It is about to efface us. And maybe even erase us from the face of the Earth. It might even raze the Earth itself. There is a Bulgarian saying, ‘While a man is alive, he constantly piles up his mind but, in the end, he still dies mindless’. That will be true until we learn to think with our hearts and feel with our brains”.

¹ Algafari, M. 2016. *I Feel, Therefore I Am*. Algafari Ltd. Sofia, Bulgaria.

This is an excerpt taken from the foreword of the book *I Feel, Therefore I Am*. It is an essayistic thesaurus of emotions and feeling, aiming to promote emotional intelligence among readers.

Descartes, I apologize once more, but “I think” might be the way to “I do NOT exist”, if we continue thinking so mindlessly, detached from our hearts. Today, “I feel” is the better way. I feel, therefore I am. We can be quite similar to each other in knowing the same things. But there are no two people who have the same experience in the same situation. What we feel makes us individuals, makes us Selves.

23 years ago, I wrote that essay. Since then, I have asked my clients the same question, “What do you feel?” thousands of times, and, as odd as it is, I very rarely receive an answer that really gives a name to a feeling, an answer of the “I am sad” or “I am joyful” type. More often than not I hear, “I don’t know”, or “I’m not well”, or “I’m fine”, or the general, “I am uncomfortable” or “I’m okay!”. Lost in our ever increasing in numbers or depth brain gyri, contemporary human beings lose contact with their experience. And the inability to connect with one’s own body and to define what one feels, leaves a person helpless or utterly unaware of how to express what happens in their body while feeling. Maybe people today are the most rationally intelligent creatures on the face of the earth but the same cannot be applied to their emotional intelligence. Our pets are more emotionally intelligent than we are! Our main tool of communication as living beings is expressing our emotions. Contemporary humans prefer word statements. But more often than not, these statements are devoid of the emotional lining of the experience. Words are not enough. If they were, our eyes would have lost the ability to cry.

Thank you, Stanley Keleman! Your books have given me the strength and courage to defy Descartes. They also manage to convince many of my clients, who are not always able to see the link between body, emotions, and mind: your books give the complete, scientifically supported arguments for overcoming the “body-soul” dualism. They not only show the chemistry and physics of emotional processes but the alchemy and the metaphysics of our emotional life, as well.

Our whole body is a tube which pulsates with the waves of expansion and contraction while breathing. If that tube does not have a wide spectrum of motor agility, we would be restricted in the actions and goals we aim for, as well as in the emotions we feel. They are influenced by our cognitive capacity and our imagination... this way the tube pulsation and the breathing are more than mere anatomical processes – they are states of the consciousness and the mind. (*Emotional Anatomy*, translation by students at the Bulgarian Institute of Neo-Reichian Analytical Psychotherapy based on Keleman, S. 1989. *Emotional Anatomy*. Center Press, U.S.)

Physically, the heart is a muscle-pump, but its metaphysical nature is as a home-symbol of love. It takes in the impure and pumps out the purified blood. We are generators and purification plants for love. We should be pumping and spreading love towards the micro and macro universes within and without us. Although medicine’s highly praised accomplishment, coronary bypasses, which unplug the heart when necessary, are painful. It is not rare that following such surgery patients become depressed, but they also become more sensitive, sentimental and expressive of their experiences. I saw this when my father underwent a triple coronary bypass surgery. My father is a chemist. He finds it difficult to believe a daughter who does not observe molecules and atoms under a microscope, but deals with invisible matters. After reading an excerpt of Keleman’s book, he too, gave the benefit of the doubt to the metaphysical bypasses, which are nothing more than our personal decision to unplug the heart.

Thank you, Stanley Keleman, for making my own father consider that on the chemical level, impure blood becomes oxygenated but on the alchemical level, this is the transformation

of anger into love – the symbolical transformation of lead into gold. And this is what matters. This is the meaning of being.

All three of our brain centers, the cortical-volitional, the thalamic-emotional and the brain stem, regulate breathing automatically. No breathing – no oxygen, no oxygenation – no fire, no fire – no energy, no energy – no life, no life – no spirit. This is why heart, brain and breathing are so closely connected.

Keleman, 1989. Translated from Bulgarian

Thank you, Stanley Keleman, for illustrating this link – between not only spirit and body, but between the organism and mother Earth – grounding – as well.

The word *religion's* etymological meaning (*re-ligio*, lat.) is reconnecting with our origin. When we connect feeling and thoughts in one body, we connect with God, whom we are all part of. We, ourselves, become God when we feel love. Our mind carries the theory, but it is through emotions that the living experience builds our system of moral values which are the stairway to God.

You cannot reach God with a material ladder.

BIOGRAPHY

Madlen Algafari is a Neo-Reichian Analytical Psychotherapist, President of the Board of Directors of the Bulgarian Institute of Neo-Reichian Analytical Psychotherapy, author of eleven books. She is the new Editor in Chief of the International Body Psychotherapy Journal. Email: madlenalgafari@yahoo.com, Website: www.madlenalgafari.com

