



# My Healthy Self

Intimate and Vulnerable

# Hello and Welcome

My name is Maria Green I've been a student of IoPT for 8 years and facilitator for 5 years. I trained with Vivian Broughton and Franz Ruppert in London and Munich. I live in the UK, in the countryside south of London, with my husband and our 14 year old daughter and 12 year old son.

I offer online workshops and individual sessions in English.

What I especially appreciate about IoPT, is the human contact between client and facilitator,

I feel that warmth and contact is more productive than “professional distance”, which may leave the client feeling unseen and unheard once again. Some clients have never experienced being listened to with care and attention, or given space in which they matter.

In my practise I try to bring: empathy, non-judgement, just holding and allowing - never pushing or directing, respecting the client, wherever they are on their journey.



# My Healthy Self: Intimate and Vulnerable

A topic that is close to my heart right now is intimacy and vulnerability.

Which is about fearless contact with myself and others.

There is the time after birth when we are utterly defenceless and totally vulnerable.

We naturally need and expect tender contact with our mother.

Unfortunately, traumatised mothers and modern birth practices are usually insensitive to newborn babies.

The birth environment and events are often unnatural and the essential attachment needs of the newborn are ignored.

This abandonment and betrayal of our most basic human needs limits who we can become and how we relate to others.

In many cases these traumatising early experiences, lead us to avoid intimacy and vulnerability, OR physical and emotional contact is experienced as re-traumatising. We become too afraid to risk uncertainty.



# My Healthy Self: Intimate and Vulnerable

Few people realise that their difficulties with intimacy and vulnerability, can be traced to their extreme vulnerability following birth.

This includes me.

Through the IoPT method and theory, I learned just how vulnerable and unsafe I was during my birth and after.

I firstly understood that I had been in the hospital nursery, in a plastic box for 10 days alone while my mother recovered from her caesarean-section.

Although I knew cognitively about this, the feelings were missing.

Because I had sacrificed this part of myself, the tiny baby that needs a mother.

Once this cellular memory came into my awareness, I experienced a strong physical trauma release. I cried and shook for 10 minutes while my husband held me.

I knew and felt the desperation, pain and fear of my baby self, crying for my mother, for contact. Because no one came, I had no choice but to split off my needs and give up on people completely.



# My Healthy Self: Intimate and Vulnerable

Secondly, I “felt” my wish to be born naturally and hearing the doctors talking about an emergency caesarean, which I knew would annihilate me. I had my own birth plans but nobody in the hospital setting cared about my autonomy.

The fact that I was born by emergency caesarean was regarded as life saving and not recognised as threatening to the survival of my SELF, my identity.

So, I survived an unnatural surgical birth but my mother who should have met me, was under general anaesthetic and I was utterly alone in a plastic box, no contact, trying to survive.

In my life I have tried to manage everything alone. I found it difficult to ask for support or believe that anyone would want to support me.

What enabled me to release the embodied trauma was that in my deep distress I reached out to my husband for support instead of withdrawing into lonely desperation.



# My Healthy Self: Intimate and Vulnerable

So, my mother and I were both traumatised by this violent birth experience. My mother did not have the ability or the opportunity to process her trauma, and she dealt with it by seeing me as a perpetrator and herself as a victim. The parameters she set for our relationship are: that I am wrong and guilty for everything and she is justified in blaming me and hating me.

These two birth traumas together, resulted in my TOTAL distrust of people. Over a number of sessions I was confronted with the contract I have with myself, NEVER to be vulnerable. Which has also meant avoiding real intimacy. This helped me to see that my relationship with life was always cautious. My relationship to people, quite distant. Now, having felt the depth of my vulnerability, my connection to life and to myself has become profoundly intimate.



# My Healthy Self: Intimate and Vulnerable

My relationship with my children has developed beyond what I could have imagined. I came to mothering with a lot of intellectual ideas about bonding and attachment and being a loving mother.

But I didn't know myself. I had no real identity as a woman or mother.

I was high functioning but inside I was a child, with no mother, lost and bewildered.

I was incapable of healthy love.

Now the more vulnerable I am, the more available I am to my children.

Looking back it was the intimacy of being with my children that was unbearable.

And children demand intimacy.

Now when I feel burdened by them, I know they are not the reason.

As I soften towards myself I'm more collaborative in my parenting, I'm less afraid to be wrong and I'm allowing myself to learn from my children what they need and want.



# My Healthy Self: Intimate and Vulnerable

My relationship with my husband has also transformed.

A year ago I was feeling that perhaps we had no future together.

His symbiotic needs kept on colliding with my pseudo-autonomy.

Now, I can dare to want and need him and admit my emotional attachment to him.

I can allow myself the exquisite pleasure of being loved and being in love with him.

This was always the potential in our relationship, but we were both afraid of intimate

contact with our pain. And for me feeling the pain of my deepest vulnerability and helplessness helped me to open to the joy and intensity of intimacy.

These defenceless states of the psyche are essential for healthy relationships throughout life.

Feeling our helplessness, admitting our vulnerability, asking for support, risking rejection and being willing to trust, are essential functions of our healthy self.

Otherwise, I remain at a "safe" or Survival distance from others and from myself.

Healthy relationships depend on emotional vulnerability and deep intimacy.



# My Healthy Self: Intimate and Vulnerable

Some clients say: I want an intimate relationship. And I ask them:

- Have you *met* yourself?
- Are you intimate with your pain?
- Do you want to be alone in a room with yourself?
- How do *you* relate to *yourself*?

I had a client yesterday who said: ***I'm 41, I don't have children or a partner, time is running out, I am useless.***

Then she set her intention: *I want to feel my deepest trauma so that I can resolve my dilemma with my career.*

It turned out that as a young child she was pushed into the swimming pool by the teacher so that she could learn to swim by drowning. Now she doesn't trust herself or others. She is trying to achieve her life goals by pushing herself into "the swimming pool", in other words by hurting or harming herself. By avoiding intimacy with herself, nobody else can get near her. She has to realise that she was a victim, not a perpetrator.

