This DVD presentation aims to provide the viewer with the basic philosophical foundations and structured techniques that Virginia Satir used in her healing work with clients. The DVD gives the viewer a glimpse into some of Satir’s actual therapy sessions and is well narrated to practically guide the viewer in discovering some of the principles that enabled Satir to repeatedly obtain good results in her work with clients.

1. **Philosophical foundations highlighted in DVD presentation:**
   
   - Congruency of therapists is essential and can be obtained by allowing techniques used in therapy to reflect their own basic assumptions as well as being honest about their own thoughts and feelings in a session.
   
   - Therapists need to be whole and integrated themselves in order to use their energy effectively in facilitating healing for their clients.
   
   - Each and every client has the potential for growth and healing, regardless of how challenging the dynamics at play in their lives may be.
   
   - Therapists need to collaborate with their clients in an equal distribution of power and respect in order to create a climate of trust and acceptance, without which healing is not possible.
   
   - Satir believed that there are four layers of experience which the therapist needs to keep in mind when working with clients: At the foundation of each human being lies the yearning for connection and appreciation; this experience is covered with a history of met and unmet expectations which underlies the next layer, namely the meanings that are attributed to specific
experiences. Covering these layers are the feelings which are aroused by experiences. Satir emphasised the importance for therapists to focus on the often neglected feelings that clients have about their feelings. This helps them connect with their self-worth, which was one of the ultimate goals that she had for her clients.

- Satir modelled congruency to her clients by guiding them through what she named the five freedoms: The freedom to see and hear what is there; the freedom to say what is felt and thought; the freedom to feel the feelings; the freedom to take risks; and the freedom to ask for what is wanted.

2. **Pragmatic techniques used by Satir as illustrated in this DVD presentation:**

- Use of non-verbal behaviour, including touch, the tone of her voice and her own movement allowing energy to move towards her clients.
- Focussing on the client’s strengths and capacity for healing and making use of positive re-framing and validation.
- The use of communication stances to explicitly increase the clients’ awareness about their reactions when feeling threatened.
- Levelling-out clients by facilitating direct eye-contact to increase their sense of worth and coping abilities.
- Power sharing: Satir suggested to her clients what they may want to say to each other by being their voice.
- Satir made sure that she constantly checked with her clients whether she understood them correctly as a way of building trusting relationships.
- Teaching clients to listen to their bodies and guiding them to understand the importance and necessity of healing holistically.

Virginia Satir’s genuineness and congruency, her validating style and her incurable sense of hope for her clients is evident in this DVD presentation and is certain to impact on viewers. Satir got people in touch with their own strengths and coping abilities, empowering them to heal themselves and their families. This DVD is ideally suited for those who have not been exposed to this great therapist.

Experiencing Virginia Satir through watching a DVD presentation certainly has a much more powerful effect than merely reading about her work and provides the viewer with deeper insight into how to effectively use the self in therapy.
**Title:** Virginia Satir: The use of self in therapy  
**By:** Michele Baldwin  
**Publisher:** By Altschul Group Corporation, distributed by Richard Stewart Enterprise (rse@global.co.za)  
**Running Time:** 30 minutes

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES**

**Sasja van der Merwe** is a final year Master’s Clinical Psychology student at Unisa. She has special interest in psychotherapy training and healing and integration of the trainee’s own self for effective use in conducting of therapy.

**Niel Victor** is currently studying towards his MA in Clinical Psychology at Unisa. He has been a research psychologist for nearly 20 years with extensive experience in organisational and consumer research.