



PSYCHOSYNTHESIS

QUARTERLY

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Coming Home with Cynthia Russell

Living Psychosynthesis with Shamai Currim

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AAP 2014 Mini-Conference

International Meetings at Casa Assagioli in Florence, Italy

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Elizabeth Goudge, and Richard Louv**

**New Book: The Rose and The Sword
by Judith Bach and Nanette Hucknall**

**Distance Study: Height Psychology
with Hedi Weiler and Carla Peterson**

And more . . .

Psychosynthesis Quarterly

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Send Announcements, Ideas, Reviews of Books and Events, Articles, Poetry, Art, Exercises, Photos, and Letters: Tell us what has helped your life and work, what can help others, and examples of psychosynthesis theory in action. Notice of **events** should be **1500** words or less, and **articles** should usually be **4500** words or less. We accept psychosynthesis-related advertising from members. Non-members who wish to run psychosynthesis-related advertising are requested to make a donation to AAP. Send submittals to: newsletter@aap-psychosynthesis.org

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to making *Psychosynthesis Quarterly* a success for its first two years!

In this issue are thoughts and reflections about several books, and the announcement of a new one. There are reflections on journeys taken, both inner and outer, that may invite you to do your own traveling, in the world or in spirit. Psychosynthesis is about change, about movement, about connection, and the reviews and articles in this issue invite you to find your own path to change. One way may be through a distance learning course with Hedi Weiler and Carla Peterson, another way may be to join Phyllis Clay and others next year at the Fourth International meeting at Casa Assagioli in Florence, Italy, or the AAP webinar-style mini-conference next June.

Another focus in this issue is on challenges along the path to change, discussed by Cynthia Russell in *Coming Home*, by Catherine Ann Lombard in her essay *In Search of Meaning*, and in my article on *Rogue Subpersonalities*.

Stephanie Sorrell shares inner light and beauty in two poems, and Judi White shares the amazing light of forgiveness. Many of the photos in this issue, including the cover and this page, were taken in Sri Lanka by Judi White.



Enjoy!

Jan Kuniholm

Adventure to Forgiveness

Judi White

I traveled to the other side of the world for two weeks, to Sri Lanka, on the invitation of a significant friend from yore, in response to his long-standing invitation. The purpose for this adventure was two-fold: I needed total discontinuity from my term on the Steering Committee of AAP, in order to achieve disidentification from the work into which I had poured my whole life for three years; and secondly, I needed to bring closure to a 50-year-old personal trauma.

Working on self-work (or Self-work) face-to-face seemed an impossible adventure.

Yet, there I was, face-to-face, with the life's experience I had come to let go of once and for all.



It did not happen automatically. A conversation or two to get the facts straight led us to accept what came to pass as whole and perfect, just as it happened. Between us, we pieced together an adequate scenario of the course of events, which included a realization of what motivated each of us to make the decisions we did, way back then.

Through this dialogue, forgiveness *began* its Soulful journey to the heart of the matter—an experience of actually BEING in the moment, present in the joy and privilege of sharing the same air with each other, right now, where we were.

Moving into the time and space experience of here and now was painful. It required letting go of other attachments of the past, breaking out of the prison of those experiences which were still holding us, even though they were already done and gone, never to be repeated.

I suppose it is possible to waste away in that prison of memories, content with all that has come to pass, grieving without ceasing. However, there is more to come, if fear can be set aside for the next grand adventure—even something as very simple as a new and loving friendship.

Trusting that no harm will come from enjoying the present moment's course of events became a psychic dance—into the past, into the present, speculating the future, into the past, into the present . . .

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I felt us both relax, slowly but surely. I felt joy, ecstasy, peace, and bliss, just being together. This was not a romantic experience at all. This was the forgiveness at the heart of the matter.

For a brief moment in time, in the here and now, we connected as two people who can appreciate and be grateful for our common history, and for each other's presence in our lives—no prisons to hide in, no unfinished business, no expectations.

The difference now is that we have shared the present moment, however briefly, at the same time, and have been blessed with its gift. Separately, yes, but changed by the ONENESS of all that is.

The forgiveness which happened between us was not a mental decision. It was and continues to be a decision to release, from deep within our hearts, what is restraining, and then entering life's dance floor once again, in grand anticipation.

While in Sri Lanka, my host was my guide into the wonders of this ancient place on earth. We traveled to the center of Sri Lanka to the waterfalls in the country's tea plantations. We traveled to the beautiful beaches located on the Southwest shores. We took pictures, had great conversations, shopped, and explored.



I remember one waterfall where I meditated for a short but meaningful period. The falls were split in two sections. One appeared to be floating into the air, gracefully floating on the wind's direction, letting it lead the dive into the rapids below. The other section seemed to be more of the steady and full-bodied, head-first plunge—a high energy, bombastic splash all the way down. I called this “the yin-yang falls,” and hold it in my heart as the essence of my new friendship with this small place on earth.

Oh my! Breathe in, with joy the promise held in the environment. Its beauty sustains the dance of life, supports change, nurtures growth. I asked myself with a deep sense of renewal to care for the earth, “Dare we not face the challenges to change what is destroying this earth today?”

Each day in Sri Lanka, I wrote in a diary. These were very short “check-ins” on where I was, and how I was feeling about things. Since I had chosen to experience every encounter as a blessing during this pilgrimage to paradise, each encounter was joyful, relaxing, and energized by the company I was keeping and the environment surrounding us.



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Upon reading the diary after returning home, I became aware of what is a natural part of living each moment: it is a carving of new experience into a continually changing paradigm. Sometimes the wounding is experienced at the time; sometimes it is experienced in reflection, as was the case with me in Sri Lanka.

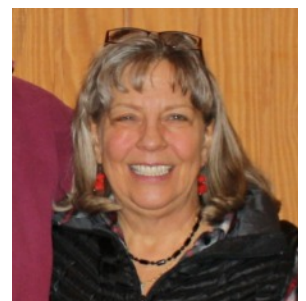
I considered the notion that this wounding might also be "shadow," present in every person and experience all the time. Using this image, the wounding became a shedding of light on what had been hidden from conscious awareness. It was worth leaving this in the diary, as an inference, at the time of writing. Once home alone, I was able to meditate on the source of this wounding, its real meaning, purpose, and value to this adventure "in paradise," from where I had just returned.



Every moment in Sri Lanka was a priceless contribution to my journey through life. I am grateful that there is not one complaint written there in the diary—only arrows pointing to further contemplation. I am grateful for the opportunity to disidentify from what had so consumed my life—for the past three years, and for the past fifty. Most important in this paradise place, I was being touched by the Divine which made me feel totally at home where I was. I love it all! The whole adventure! ☐

At one of the Buddhist temples we visited, we received a blessing. The monk tied a string around each of our wrists to leave there for a week. After the week, we were to tie it to a tree. This is my host's string, tied to the bodhi tree growing on his penthouse garden porch in Colombo.

Judi White was Cochair of the AAP Steering Committee from 2011 through 2013, and co-organizer of AAP's 2013 conference in Burlington, VT



The angel within

Stephanie Sorrell

Imagine that an angel lived inside you.
And that every now and then you allowed
Her to look through your eyes.
How different everything would seem.
You would find the rainbow through every grey day.
And, amidst each challenge, you would see
The golden opportunity within.

Imagine that sometimes you allowed this angel
To direct your feet.
She would lead you away from familiar well-worn paths
Into places you never imagined you would go.
Each step would be an adventure.
And if she took you towards the things you feared,
Then you would find the gifts that had been waiting for you all along.

Imagine that her angel heart
Lay shining within your own.
Every heartbeat would be a blessing and its song
Would be the sound of the Cosmic Drum.

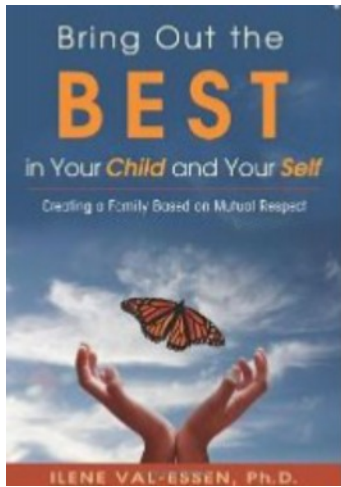
Imagine if this angel lived inside you.
How lovely it would be to hear her words
Sounding through your voice,
Bringing healing and guidance to all whom you met.
She would bathe in your tears and send them back
In endless bubbles of joy.

You would never feel alone again,
Afraid or lost.
And you would never have to go looking
For answers outside yourself – not ever.

Human brother and sister, the angel in me
Greets the bright shining angel in you!

Bring Out the Best in Your Child and Yourself Creating a Family Based on Mutual Respect by Ilene Val-Essen

Reviewed by Dr. Ann K. Schafer



In 1996, I was a newly licensed clinical psychologist fresh from just over 200 hours of psychosynthesis training with Dr. Edith Stauffer, and an excited and eager participant in the 1996 Psychosynthesis World Conference held in San Diego, California. Dr. Ilene Val-Essen was among the over 70 presenters at conference, and I had the fortunate opportunity at that time, as editor of the conference proceedings, to review her summary article titled, *Bring Out the Best—In Your Child and Yourself: Psychosynthesis Transforms Parent Education*. What a great honor some 20 years hence to be reviewing the finished and polished parenting book with essentially the same title, but with greatly expanded and detailed instructions that apply practical psychosynthesis techniques to the honorable job of skillful parenting.

Dr. Val-Essen's award-winning book is a self-guided tour through the remarkable gift of using psychosynthesis in a supportive manner while gently explaining why psychosynthesis navigates through stressful situations more respectfully and effectively than other approaches. The emphasis is on remaining "at choice" for both parent and child alike, so as to rise above our survival brain responses to a more consistently calm and centered place. Clearly outlined exercises to help identify the "lower self" and promote movement to the "centered self" are an invitation to a different and more positive parenting and childhood experience.

Colorful stories illustrate both parent and child subpersonality structures, complete with endearing drawings that provide clarity as only clever pictures can. The author credits Gary Collins for capturing the essence of such characters as "Donna-Do-It-All," "Dumb Dora," and "Frenzied Franny," not to mention "Bossy Betty," "Preachy Paul," and "Sarcastic Sam"—all parent subpersonalities. One of my favorite sections contrasts children's aggressive subpersonalities such as the "Know-It-All" or "Royal Highness" with non-assertive subpersonalities like the "Know Nothing" or "People Pleaser." Val-Essen provides a help chart describing movement from the ineffective communication of subpersonalities toward the more effective process that incorporates the best of psychosynthesis techniques and again uses the easily grasped character drawings.

The important area of setting limits and the allowing of natural consequences while expressing mutual respect is a do-not-miss part of this seminal work. Several practical tables show how to create the family you desire and make sure that all members of the family are not just listened to, but really heard. That each member has expectations and needs to be met during the process of making agreements is thoroughly covered. No parenting book would be complete without a glossary of words to express feelings, and Val-Essen does not disappoint. This "words for feelings" list is one I plan to hand out like candy whenever possible. Something about living in a state of mutual respect calls out the best in all of us, don't you think? ■

Paperback: 334 pages

Publisher: Quality Parenting (February 14, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0967537118

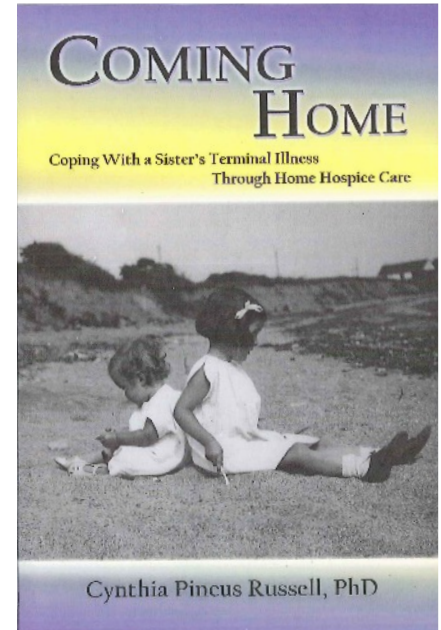
ISBN-13: 978-0967537115

Author Ilene Val-Essen is a long-time AAP member who presented her Quality Parenting program at several AAP conferences, including the 2008 gathering in Brattleboro, VT.

Reviewer Dr. Schafer is a practicing Licensed Clinical Psychologist in Northern California and currently serves as a member of the AAP Steering Committee

COMING HOME: A JOURNEY

Cynthia P. Russell, PhD



I have written other books and had no problem promoting them! This was a different story. It became so personal that I have had to push and prompt myself to put it out into the world. Friends and colleagues urged me to do book signings and parties, but I have needed to move very slowly. I know a large part of this is the tussle between my psychosynthesis guide and my writer subpersonality. Also, traditionally, a therapist does NOT tell all.

It was such a shock to get a call from my sister, Dee, saying, “I am dying,” and to feel she actually meant it, since she'd said it many times before—a hypochondriac all her life. On top of that, my aunt—my only living older relative in this half of the country—had been stricken with a hemorrhagic stroke the evening my sister had gotten her diagnosis. Obviously this had been too much for her to bear!

As a child, I'd been well trained in denial. When my father died I was sent to boarding school, where none of the faculty even mentioned his death. So I grew up numb, like others in my “family of origin.” I *had* to become a therapist! When Dee asked to come to stay with me, I was very frightened—she'd rejected me all her life. Her major subpersonalities were “Angry” and “Controlling,” although she had a great sense of humor, and was a sensitive and caring “animal person.” She had her dogs put down without telling me, which put me off to a worrisome and very sad start.

When I got her to Yale Medical Center, the news was terrible. Right away, we found that rituals soothed. Bringing her something—anything—conveyed that I was still there when she couldn't quite believe it. The cell phone, which she'd never experienced, was like an umbilical cord. Cleaning the house for her (a perfectionist as well) became a healing ritual for me; I felt as though I were in a film, and moved automatically into my Higher Self. When she returned to my home (originally our grandparents'), she said, “I feel I am returning to where I began.” She was happy, while I ran around hiding things that I knew she wouldn't like. (“Mothballs!—get rid of them, carcinogenic!”)

Dee started reading my books, doing visualizations, and asking for things like fabric to make curtains for her room. She dutifully walked, as she'd been told to do. Each day we traded jokes. As a caregiver, I set up “command central” (essential in a crisis) and kept a journal (which later became *Coming Home*, my recent book, 15 years later when I was finally able to write about it all).

I found taking care of her to be a huge commitment: unknown terrain, changing each day. A support system was important: my psychosynthesis community of over forty people, my family of nineteen (at the time), and my friends. I called my trainer, Judy Bach, who suggested the Buddhist ritual of numerous “acts of kindness” to help Dee on her way.

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I thanked the Lord that I was a trained person with a social work degree and a PhD in midlife crisis, followed by years as Bernie Siegel's health care professionals' trainer, which included teaching Conscious Dying. I had been in private practice, on the clinical faculty in psychiatry at Yale Medical School, and run the Psychosynthesis institute in Connecticut for years as well. Yet some things I learned along the way. Professionals in the hospice field are no help when your own loved one is dying. Most of them are burned out—I've had a number of them as clients. Our doctor was just right; he put his hand on my shoulder and told me, "You're doing a great job." He was totally there with us. Dee's attorney was the same sort of person.

You will witness many waves. One day after someone had visited her, Dee told me I had to buy wasp spray. I ran out every day to get what she desired. One night I was so exhausted I ate cold potatoes sitting on the edge of the bathtub. Then one night she put on her raincoat, weakly followed me downstairs, stood on a chair and sprayed the wasp's nest. This was the only time she was with me that we went downstairs together.

You will witness a chamber of horrors. Your loved one wasting away. Finally the chills you'd been warned were a sign of the end approaching.

Continuing to work, even a few hours, was my salvation. As Martin Buber taught us, you just walk right in and be there. We used meditation, prayer, and therapeutic touch. No one spoke during Dee's brief stay at hospice. We all found we had PTSD after it was over. At the end, Dee transformed into a Queen; loving and welcoming everyone as long as she could speak.

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with but a single step” — Lao Tse

I wrote the book to heal myself, and also for all the others who will experience this someday. I want to thank Walter Polt and Brad Roth for writing reviews, Jan Kuniholm for inviting me to give part of a workshop in June at the AAP Conference, and Bernie Siegel, MD, for having me on his radio program.

Some important references for the reader: all books by Bernie Siegel, MD, and Stephen Levine, PhD, are very helpful. Many more references are in the book, as is a section of “Patient as Teacher,” and my online program at Yale's *Humanities in Medicine* journal. ■



Cynthia Pincus Russell PhD runs the Psychosynthesis Institute in Stratford, CT. Her fourth book: Coming Home, published by Sunstone press, is available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). She discussed some the issues involved in caretaking in a seminar at the 2013 AAP Conference in Burlington, VT.



Tea Plantation in Sri Lanka
Photo by Judi White

psychosynthesis in action

Living Psychosynthesis **Shamai Currim, PhD**

At the AAP conference this year, I was struck by a quote offered in a workshop by Dirk Kelder: "If you think you understand quantum mechanics, you don't understand quantum mechanics." Usually attributed to Feynman, this is probably a paraphrase of the quote attributed to Niels Bohr: "Anyone who is not shocked by quantum theory has not understood it."

This led me back to my understanding of psychosynthesis as a lived experience. Over the years, I have heard that psychosynthesis is about its primary attributes of subpersonalities, the will, and the superconscious, and it is sometimes referred to as a "psychology of the soul" or "the psychology with soul."

When I think back to my early experiences and training in psychosynthesis, I think of the depth work, and the ability to change what other life models say are concrete and must be considered an accepted part of life. My experiences of meeting the parts of my self proved to me that change is not only viable, it is a necessary part of being alive.

As an energy worker, I remember learning to work with the 'breath of life,' and those words always stayed with me in my experiences of psychosynthesis. I was opening myself to the breath of the superconscious and flowing with its life direction. In a recent exercise done with the AAP Steering Committee, these words came forward: "Life has its own motion, and we only fulfill its prophecy."

I write as a reminder that psychosynthesis is more than its parts. You can study psychosynthesis at a center or with a group or online. You can read the many writings of those who teach the techniques that began with Roberto Assagioli, but until you have had the lived experience, psychosynthesis remains just a word. To paraphrase the quantum mechanics quote above, "If you can tell me what psychosynthesis is, then you don't know psychosynthesis."

I have often heard it said that we need to change the name. People know what photosynthesis is, but what is this weird practice called psychosynthesis? How many of those trained in psychosynthesis actually put it on their résumés, or talk about its intricacies, when going for a job interview? I dare you to try! Why has it been so difficult to get the word out there when the practice has been around as long as analysis, dream interpretation, and Gestalt?

I've heard talk about the shadow that surrounds the practice and attribute this to the past experiences of a few on this path. While I won't downplay what happened, I can say that the shadow exists in all of life, not just where a few have pulled power over others. In Jungian terms, the shadow is an archetype that consists of the sex and life instincts. The shadow exists as part of the unconscious mind and is composed of repressed ideas, weaknesses, desires, instincts and shortcomings. This archetype is often described as the darker side of the psyche, representing wildness, chaos and the unknown. Jung suggested that the shadow can appear in dreams or visions and may take a variety of forms. It might appear as a snake, a monster, a demon, a dragon or some other dark, wild, or exotic figure. These latent dispositions are present in all of us, Jung believed, although people sometimes deny this element of their own psyche and instead project it onto others. It's important to remember that the shadow is also the undeveloped talents and gifts that we come into the world with and that we unconsciously keep hidden by our fears of judgment by others.

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I invite us all to look at the shadow of the self as it appears in its energetic form. What form does your shadow take? And how does it influence your life, and the life of those around you? Are you aware of that which is not you, and yet plays through you? Are you clear about what is you? And what is not you?

Until we do our inner work, we are not yet ‘man.’ As spirit having a human experience, we do not find the meaning of our lives until we meet our true, authentic selves. Until then, we are but shadows of our true existence.

For years I yearned to be whole. I didn’t quite know what “whole” meant, only that I deeply yearned for the wholeness that would ground me in this existence, in this physical body, in this experience of life. Until I lived that wholeness, I could not know myself or my life purpose. I could live out my days in endless mind chatter, and never fulfill the purpose for which I came into this life.

For me, psychosynthesis is the tool that brings me to my self/Self. It gives me the breath of life that allows freedom and pure joy, as known by only the few who are willing to walk this path. I can’t really tell you what psychosynthesis is because it is different and unique for each adventurer on the path of life. I can tell you that without psychosynthesis, I would never have found the “I am,” the true sense of life. I believe Roberto Assagioli knew this when he offered a path that enables the growth that is waiting to come.

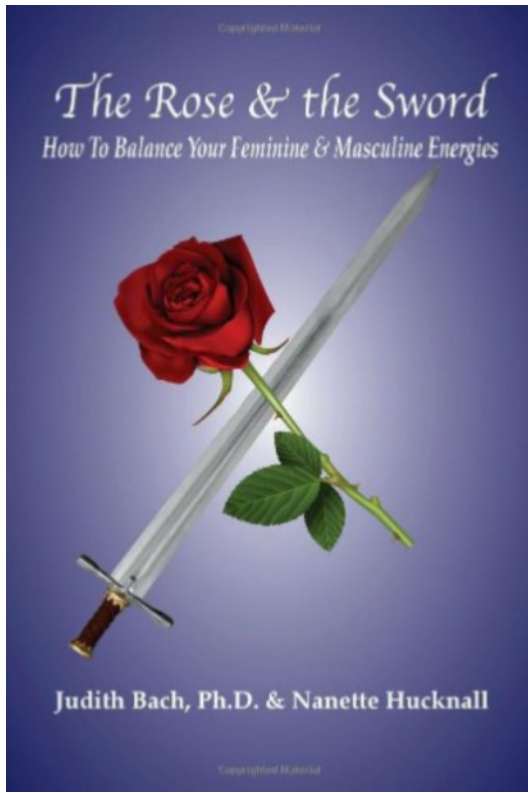
We are in a great time of change. I feel like I’m on the adventure of a lifetime. Letting go of my preconceived notions, letting go of my expectations, and living a life guided by my higher knowing helps me to live life to its fullest. Living psychosynthesis begins with reading about it, thinking and reflecting on it, coming to think that you know what it is, and then coming to the realization that psychosynthesis is so much more. It’s about really living in the moment, being in the moment, trusting that my life is guided by my Higher Self. It means doing the inner work that frees me from my misgivings, judgments, expectations, habits and past experiences. To me, that is what Living Psychosynthesis truly is. ■



Shamai Currim, PhD, received her psychosynthesis training at Psychosynthesis Pathways of Montreal, and credits much of her early work to its founder and trainer Olga Denisko. Shamai is a retired therapist, educator, and educational consultant and trainer as well as a mother, grandmother, and wife. She is author of the book Meaghan’s Story as well as numerous articles in professional journals, and has presented at many conferences, the last presentation being called The Essence of Time. Shamai is currently a co-chair of the Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis, along with Dirk Kelder. She is an initiate of Sant Mat/Shabd Yoga and a disciple of the current living master, Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj.



book announcement



The Rose and the Sword **How To Balance Your Feminine** **and Masculine Energies** by Judith Bach and Nanette Hucknall

A unique combination of fiction and self-development, this book invites the reader to enter a realm of modern stories and fantasy tales that stimulate both mind and feelings. Each tale addresses different aspects of the feminine and masculine energies that exist beyond gender and sexual identity in each one of us. At the end of each story is a psychological commentary that provides a deeper understanding of the chapter's subject and an exercise to begin the process of integrating the energies highlighted in the chapter.

Dr. Judith Bach (co-author of *How To Play Nice Together*) and Nanette Hucknall (author of *Karma, Destiny, and Your Career* and *Higher Self Yoga*) have done it again. Another great book—this one co-authored by the two of them, producing an unusual literary design of self-help hints and story-telling that makes for absorbing reading! The stories reflect the principles, not just as parables, but as compelling tales and enjoyable reading in themselves.

The popular ideal of finding one's "soul mate" in a partner stems from the relationship between the two basic energies that exist, beyond gender and sexual identity, in each of us. When these two energies are equally developed, the individual is richly endowed with inspiration and intuition, as well as the ability to express these riches in the world. This book shows the reader how to develop that mix. ■

Paperback: 268 pages

Publisher: MSI Press (September 30, 2013)

ISBN-10: 1933455365 **ISBN-13:** 978-1933455365

Dr. Judith Bach is a psychotherapist, writer, and artist. The co-founder of the Berkshire Center for Psychosynthesis in Massachusetts and the Psychosynthesis Institute of New York, she has provided therapy on the creative and spiritual dimension of an individual in private practice and through worldwide seminars. She is extensively published.

Nanette Hucknall, co-founder and president of the Center for Peace through Culture and founder and president of the Higher Self Yoga Association, has worked as a career therapist and psychotherapist for over 20 years, including facilitating think tanks for top scientists, artists, and philosophers. She has presented workshops worldwide and is extensively published.

**Co-Creating Relationship:
Breaking the Chains of the Past**
2013 AAP Conference –
Burlington, Vermont
Therese Caveney, MA MFT



It is such a pleasure to share with the larger psychosynthesis community some of the material I was privileged to share with those who attended my workshop at the 2013 AAP Conference in Burlington, Vermont.

I'd like to begin by sharing briefly about how I came to develop the model for couples therapy that I am presenting below. The model came out of my work in the 1980s with adults abused as children. Since healthy and mature partnerships are made up of two healthy and mature people, it soon became apparent how what I learned during this time could have a profound effect on the successful outcome of couple therapy. So I will begin by briefly describing what I learned in the 80s.

You may recall that it was very popular at that time to do inner child work. Often this meant carrying stuffed animals and baby bottles around and indulging the child with ice cream cones and so on. It was certainly a step in the right direction, but there was not much that resulted in permanent change. The same issues kept re-emerging.

Then one day I was working with a woman, Kathleen, who came to me quite depressed. I did the usual probing for the source of this depression and she found herself (in her imagination) talking to herself at 16 years old and was beginning to actually establish some rapport with this younger self. Then suddenly she sat up straight, wiped her tears and said, "Well, that's all over." I asked, "What do you mean?" and she said, "My mother is coming up the stairs." I asked, "So what does that mean?" She replied, "She has her own ideas about what I'm supposed to do with my life."

It turns out that Kathleen grew up in what had all the appearances of a happy, loving and supportive family. From the time she was very young she "knew" that she was destined for a religious vocation, which she followed as she came of age. Twenty years later, however, she "abandoned her calling," as she put it. She found herself floundering and lonely and unable to maintain a satisfactory relationship. She blamed herself for "turning her back on God" and "disappointing her mother."

Here is where my process changed. I understood that it was the relationship between Kathleen's internalized mother and 16-year-old Kathleen that was even now, at 40 years old, perpetuating her inability to freely choose her own goals and values, distinct from her mother's dreams and expectations. So, when Kathleen sat up straight, wiped her tears and said, "Well that's all over—Mother is coming up the stairs," I somehow was inspired to do something different. So I said, "See your mother's outer form beginning to fade and see her gradually appear at the age that she was—sometime in her own childhood or adolescence, when something happened or something failed to happen and she lost her capacity to be the Mom who could provide you with what you needed when you were sixteen."

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It turns out that Kathleen’s mother (Eileen) appeared at age 18 when she dashed her own devout Irish Catholic mother’s dreams of having a nun in the family by eloping to get married—resulting in estrangement between mother and daughter for some years to come.

- I instructed Kathleen to ask 18-year-old Eileen what she needed most essentially at that time.
- Surprise! Eileen needed to be seen and accepted for *who she was*—not what her mother expected her to be in order to make up for “disappointing *her* mother.”

Clearly, this was not a matter of reconciling an internalized mother and child. Kathleen needed to find the place *within her* that can see and accept her for who she is, with all her feelings and her own hopes and dreams.

So I said, “Now imagine a point of light way out in the distance that gradually becomes larger, brighter and more and more beautiful and from the center of that light there will appear someone with Great Love, Great Kindness and Great Wisdom—who knows all about what 18-year-old Eileen needs, and exactly how to provide it. When you have that image, describe it.”

The Loving, Kind, Wise Presence turned out to be the Virgin Mary. Mary embraced young Eileen and told her that she was neither right nor wrong for the choice that she made. It was simply a choice that was hers to make. She had not “sinned” in disappointing her mother.

Then I asked Kathleen to shift awareness back to 16-year-old Kathleen and to try on some words: “I’m sorry that I could not have been there for you at that time, but I couldn’t because I *was* you; and I’m sorry your mother could not have been there the way you needed her to be, but she couldn’t because she was emotionally young and very needy herself. The good news is I’ve grown up and you live within me now. As long as you are here, I am here.” This continued with reassurances that 16-year-old Kathleen is no longer dependent on her mother, that she is never alone with her feelings and that adult Kathleen makes the life choices now.

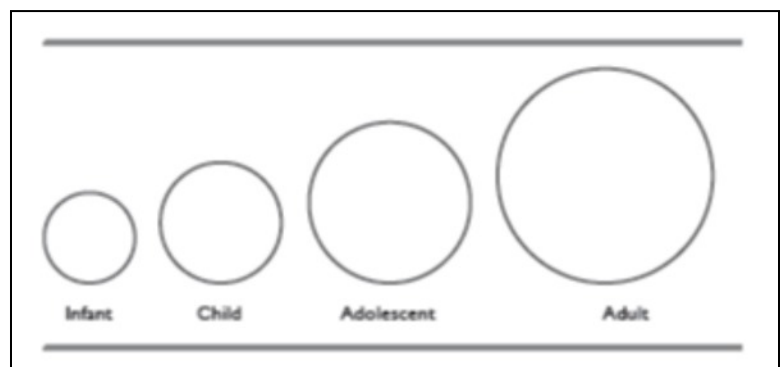
To make a long story short, from then on she had no problem meeting the needs of her 16-year-old and went on to live the life of her choosing. Adult Kathleen had provided the empathic connection, which allowed 16-year-old Kathleen to be and express *who she is*. This process worked so well that I’ve been doing it ever since.

The primal wound and the survival contract

I didn’t have the language or the graphics then, but basically I was dealing with what I have come to know as the *survival contract*.

About a year after my experience with Kathleen, the theoretical background for this was provided by John Firman and Ann Gila in their book *The Primal Wound*. When they first published their material on this, I was thrilled to finally have a way to articulate and illustrate what I had been doing and why it worked.

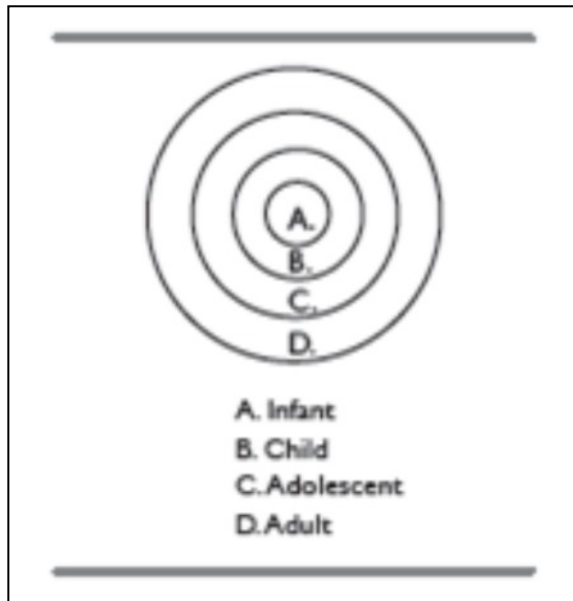
When we were growing up, it was not like this...



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but like this:



The infant, child and adolescent are not in our distant past, but rather at the very center of our being. If the significant caregivers in our lives are able to provide the recognition and acceptance that we need at each of these stages—that is, if they are able to see us for *who we are* and not as objects of their own compulsions or an extension of their own unfulfilled goals and dreams—then we unfold very naturally with all our potential, all our gifts intact.

Ideally the empathic “gaze” of significant caregivers imparts to the child the experience of always being connected to that which unites all: the Source of all Love, Truth, Wisdom, Being. To the extent that this occurs, then at each stage of development, an inner representation (or inner model) would form an *internal unifying center*. These internal unifying centers would be capable of serving many of the same functions that would be (ideally) fulfilled by the external unifying centers (significant caregivers) reflecting (mirroring) for the developing child the ultimate holding environment in which the child finds *continuity of being*—always connected to a deeper source of being beyond the conscious personality.

In this ideal situation, the child would develop with the experience of always being connected to the Greater Whole, to the Source of that which unites us, without any need to limit who he/she could be or express in this world. To the extent that this does not happen...well, what is the sound of one hand clapping? From the child’s perspective, “If you don’t see/validate who I am, it’s as though I am invisible to you—as though I don’t exist. I must limit my experience of *who I am* to what will be seen/validated, so that at least I know I exist.” This is the *primal wound*—and so the survival contract is formed.

If there are “blind spots” within the caregiver because of the caregiver’s own wounding, we are unable to get the experience of always being connected. Parts of us then (certain feelings, behaviors, desires, etc.) are suppressed, go into hiding—are cut off from our awareness. We experience that to survive emotionally or otherwise in this environment, we can be only what will be seen/validated by those we depend upon for our survival needs—hence, the *survival contract*. Of course, being “what will be seen” may result in compliance with what is expected, but it can also result in acting out or rebellion.

To use a computer analogy, when entering into the survival contract, we have essentially *downloaded* our caregivers—the whole nine yards—feelings, beliefs and behaviors. In the case of Eileen, this resulted in

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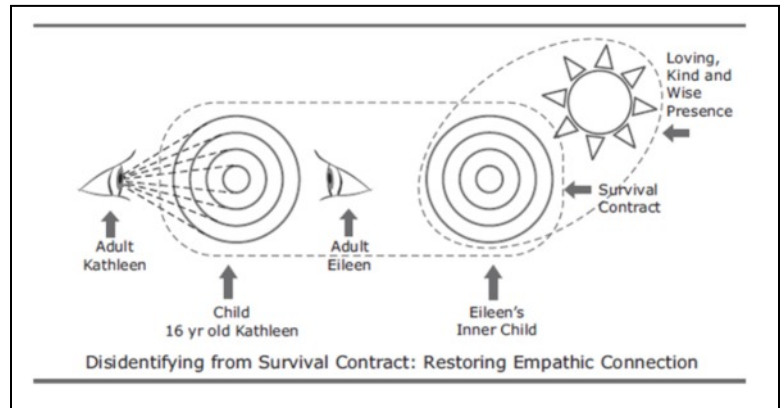
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rebellion. In the case of Kathleen it was compliance: “I will be what you will see/validate. I’ll enter the convent, become a nun and make you proud.”

The survival contract actually works *for* us in our growing-up years. It gets us through those years when we *are* actually dependent upon our caregivers for our survival needs. As we mature, however—as we differentiate out of the family system and move toward becoming our own independent selves—that contract needs to be broken. Clearly, it never was Kathleen’s responsibility to take care of her mother’s emotional needs. So here is where a little imagination turned out to be quite helpful.

Disidentifying from the Survival Contract

Evoking the image of Mary provided a way that Kathleen could symbolically provide healing empathic connection to her internalized mother (internal unifying center). Turning her awareness back to her 16-year-old, Kathleen was then able to provide the empathic connection that her mother could not, because of her own primal wounding. Kathleen became *dis-identified* from the survival contract with her mother. She became *identified* with a deeper and clearer inner perspective —*distinct from, yet empathically connected* to 16-year-old Kathleen.

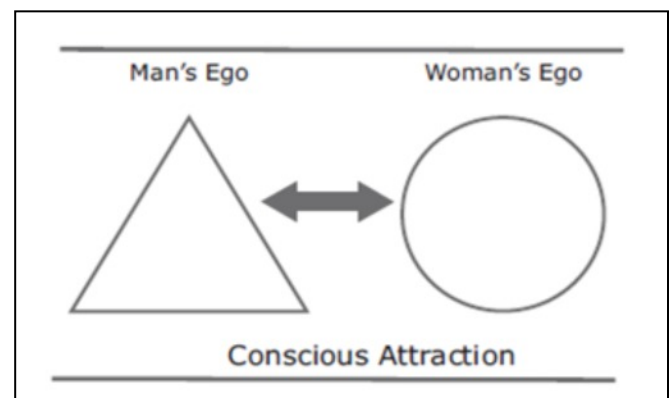


What Does This Have to Do with Couples Therapy?

Primal wounding occurred as a result of a failure in relationship—a failure in empathic connection. We seek out (mostly unconsciously) relationships that offer an opportunity to become conscious of and heal this wounding. Breaking free from our survival contracts is the cornerstone of successful couples therapy. Only then can there be mature partnership that honors both our individuality and our need for relationship. Without this, there is no true intimacy or commitment—only relationship that is based on co-dependency.

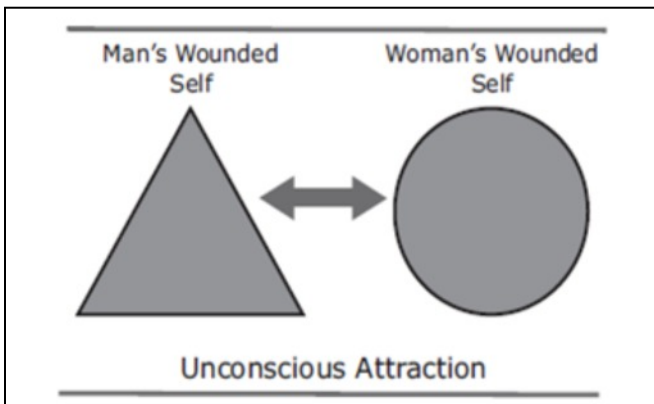
The following model for the journey from romantic love to authentic love and mature partnership is admittedly over-simplified and stereotyped; however, I find that it works well regardless of sexual preferences. In the following diagrams, the triangle represents the partner that is predominantly identified with masculine qualities and the circle represents the partner predominantly identified with feminine qualities. In the interest of brevity, the examples used here are also over-simplified and stereotyped. Diagrams are adapted from the work of John Sanford in his book *Invisible Partners*.

In the initial stage of relationship there is, of course, the *conscious attraction*: physical attraction, positive qualities, common interests, goals and so on. Partners experience something like, “When I am with you, I feel whole.” Something just feels more complete—like coming home to one’s self.



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sented here by the shaded circle and triangle. These *invisible partners* probably account for what is often referred to as “chemistry” in a relationship. This attraction is all the more powerful because it is unconscious. It is a quite natural occurrence between two children since, as children, they cannot meet their own needs nor those of each other. It is not sustainable, however, and inhibits mature partnership.

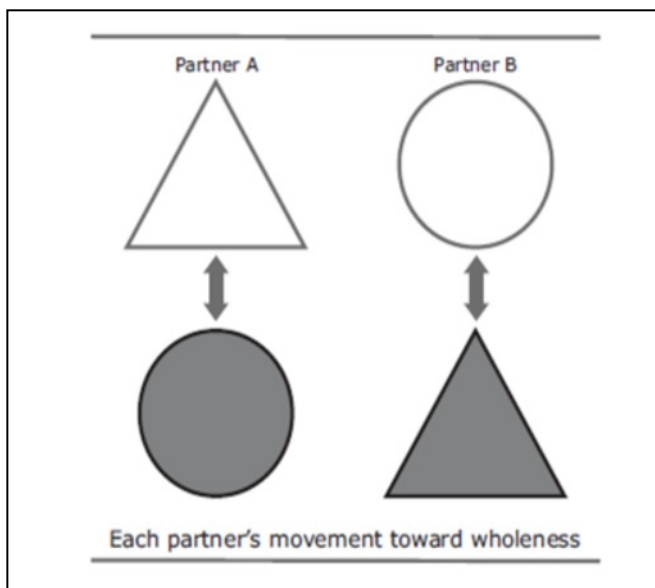
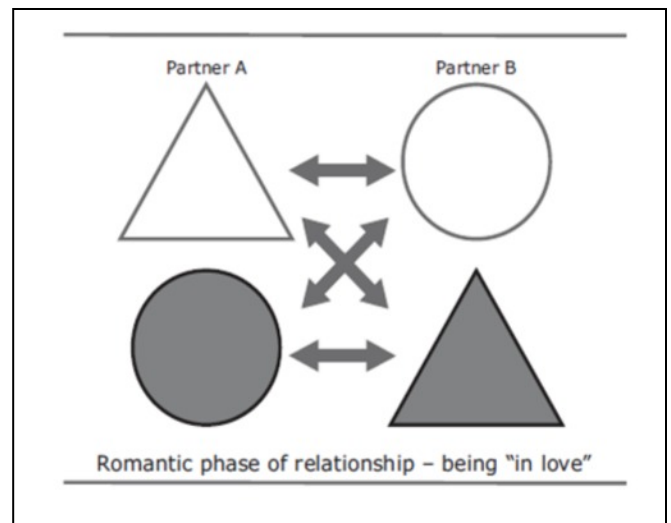
It should be noted that not all couples experience the initial stage of relationship as described above. For example, with some partners, the attraction has more to do with connecting with what is familiar. They experience some kind of safety in that, even though the relationship may be filled with chaos and conflict. The model can still be useful.

The unconscious attraction combined with the conscious attraction results in a very tight bonding. This is the *romantic phase* of relationship that is known as “being in love.”

Relationships founded exclusively on this “being in love” state, (instead of truly loving each other) can never

This experience of wholeness happens because, below the surface of conscious awareness, there are parts of each partner (feelings, thoughts, hopes or dreams—suppressed or hidden during formative years) that somehow feel recognized, accepted or comforted by the other partner.

This is the *unconscious attraction*. This powerful attraction, though mostly unspoken (“*He is my strength.*” “*She is my comfort.*”)—one wounded inner child/adolescent recognizing and sympathizing with the wounded inner child/adolescent of the partner—is represented here by the shaded circle and triangle.



last, because this is the *illusion* of wholeness, the result of projection of both positive and negative traits. As Patricia Sun (popular motivational speaker) says, “*We fall in love not just because we have matching goals and dreams, but because we have matching junk! It’s God’s carrot!*” But there is good news! Read on.

Something else is happening as well. Each partner is moving toward their own wholeness. As time goes on, each partner may begin to feel constrained by the expectation (conscious or unconscious) that it’s up to them to fulfill the needs of their partner’s inner child. As this happens, the honeymoon wanes and the love boat rocks. Typically, the couple attempts to make the

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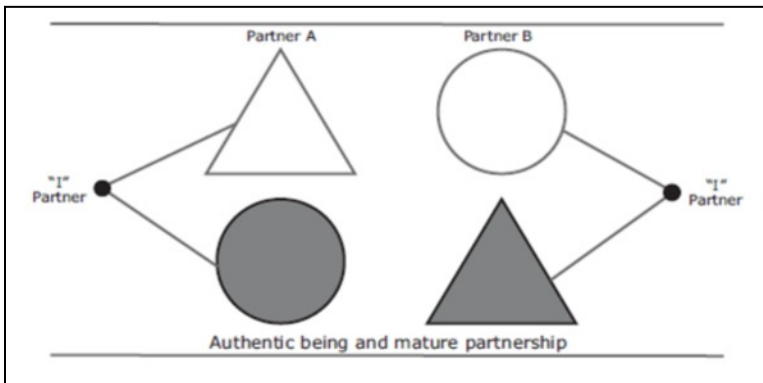
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relationship go back to the way it was during the romantic phase; however, these efforts are doomed to failure because of a more fundamental force within them to reunite with suppressed or repressed parts of themselves, to reclaim their capacity to be and express their own authentic being, to live out their hopes and dreams.

As suppressed elements are erupting into consciousness, however, they do not necessarily come in all “clean and shiny.” One partner’s emerging personal power, for example, may surface initially as irritability or aggressiveness. Another partner’s sensitive or nurturing qualities may present initially as moodiness or smothering over-care. The bad news is the relationship will not ever go back to the way it was. The good news is that something much better can happen.

Now here is the good news!

To the degree that partners successfully identify and establish an empathic connection to their own wounded inner child or adolescent, they are able to freely choose an adult-to-adult way of relating to each other instead of dependency-oriented relationship. What emerges is a deeper, more expanded way of truly loving each other in a way that honors both the individuality and belonging needs of each partner: “I can be who I am and still be in a satisfying relationship.” “I can be in a satisfying relationship and still be who I am.”



As each partner becomes responsible for his/her own wounding and coping style, thereby responding to the needs of their own wounded selves, then they can relate “I” to “I,” “Partner to Partner,” instead of (for example) parent-to-child or child-to-parent. From this place, partners can assess whether they have a common vision—“Is it purposeful for us to continue on this journey together?” or “Have we learned what we need to learn from each other, and it’s time to move on?”

“I” refers here to our true or essential self, which is often deeply buried as a result of childhood wounding and corresponding survival contracts or roles we assumed that are made up of predominant feelings, images thoughts/beliefs, sometimes referred to as *subpersonalities*.

To the extent that we move closer to the experience of “I”—our essential self as distinct, yet empathically connected to our wounded selves—we experience greater authenticity, freedom and wholeness in our lives.

Who I perceive that I am...leads to what I think...
leads to what I feel...leads to what I do...
leads to what I receive in life.

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At this point, something “magical” happens! Gradually partners find that they are no longer overpowered by the intensity of emotions from current problems between them which, formerly, were amplified by their unresolved survival issues from past experience. Instead, they are now able to approach their current problems from a clearer perspective. They can express their desires as preferences instead of “gotta have it!” (survival contract) and they can empathically *respond* to each other, instead of *react* to each other.

Authentic love begins only when partners come to know and accept each other for who they really are as human beings, take back their projections, and support each other in becoming whole. Mature relationship only happens to the degree that there are two independent selves.

The work ahead involves a four- step process:

1. Identify the conscious attraction and the invisible partners
2. Identify the survival contract between the child and the source of the wounding.
3. Disidentify from the survival contract
4. From an adult perspective, provide empathic connection to the wounded child, allowing the emergence of authentic being.

To accomplish this task there are three exercises which have proven to be helpful in identifying the invisible partners and their respective survival contracts and also for clarifying the vision of the ideal relationship. The exercises referred to here can be found on my website www.LivingYourVision.net.

1. Four Basic Questions
2. The Partner Profile
3. Influences from the Past

The initial couple interview

“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”

“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.

“I don't much care where--” said Alice.

“Then it doesn't matter which way you go,” said the Cat.

—Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

Everyone knows that a good starting point in any endeavor is to know where you are now (Point A). Then, of course, you need to get clear on where you want to be or what you want to achieve (Point B). You need to both know your starting point and choose your destination before any map to get there can be created. The next step, of course, is to assess the various means of getting from Point A to Point B. If there are no obstacles in the way, you're good to go! Of course, if there are obstacles (obvious or hidden), you will need to identify those obstacles and find a way of getting past them or transmuting them into something that works for you—of turning those obstacles into stepping stones.

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So the goal of the initial interview—or interviews—is to come up with a plan to identify

- What’s happening in the relationship **now**. What’s working? What’s not working?
- The vision—what would be more ideal—what do they want to be moving toward?
- What needs to happen to bridge the gap between where they are and where they want to be?
- What within each partner (the invisible partners and their survival contracts) is in the way of bridging that gap?

Identifying the wounded inner child/adolescent of each partner and the relationship with their caregivers (the survival contract, as explained above) allows movement towards a clearer perspective from which to approach couples therapy. It is a way to quickly identify underlying core issues within each partner so that these can be brought into the light of consciousness. This not only facilitates an understanding of the conflicts that brought the couple into therapy, but it also helps each partner to recognize how they create and perpetuate their part of the problem between them.

The challenge at this point is to

- Identify the source of the “matching junk”—the primal wounding and resulting survival contract
- Disidentify from the survival contract
- Identify with a clearer inner perspective capable of relating “I to I” or “partner to partner”

Often partners who have been together for an extended time develop *partner introjects*; that is, they internalize their partner’s wounded child. This is partly because of the “matching junk” that was part of the initial attraction. Whatever the origin, in this case the client feels compelled to assume the role of responding (or reacting) to the needs of the partner’s inner child. A process, similar to what was described above, can be helpful in “un-hooking” from that role. (See exercise *Identifying Internalized Partners* at www.LivingYourVision.net.)

Your best guide to doing this work will be your own experience. An exercise (transcript and audio) can be found on the above website, which will illustrate for you personally the process of identifying someone or something within you that is in need of some attention or healing.

Manifesting the vision – follow up sessions

Clarifying the vision helps to provide a positive focus on the work and avoids overemphasis on problem solving and revisiting old wounds, which is like driving a car with your eyes in the rear view mirror. As emphasized in the “Law of Attraction,” what we give our energy, attention and focus to will grow—whether that is something that we want or something that we don’t want. A powerful tool for letting go of limiting beliefs and affirming beliefs that better serve us is EFT—the Emotional Freedom Technique (See www.eftuniverse.com for more information on this.) Of course, there are many ways to assist with this; for example, creating a “vision board” or a “mind movie” (affirmations with music and movement). Some coaching in effective and respectful communication is also very valuable.

Additionally, I suggest that partners create what I call an “Appreciation/Surprise List.” Everyone wants to be recognized, to feel valued, and appreciated. It feels great to receive spontaneous gestures or expressions of affection, appreciation, gratitude and recognition. It does not feel great when one has to ask or beg for them. So I suggest to couples that each compose their own appreciation list: “This is what makes me feel valued,

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appreciated and important.” The list can include very simple things like, “Take my hand when we are walking;” “I love it when you nuzzle my neck or spontaneously give me a hug and a kiss.” It can also include an invitation to lunch or a weekend way. The point is it doesn’t have to cost money or take a lot of time. The next step is to exchange these lists. Each partner then chooses something from the list (or ideas of their own) to surprise the other with when the moment feels right; but, no score keeping is allowed!

Optimal results will occur to the extent that each partner faithfully pursues their own growth and development. Whatever decisions are made about the relationship, what matters most is *who* is making that decision—a frightened, abandoned child, a rebellious or guilt-ridden teenager? Obviously, the choices will be quite different. Most likely, they are not choices at all, but pre-programmed reactions arising from survival contracts.

To this end, in my opinion, it is best that each partner does their own individual work in addition to couples therapy. There is some controversy about how this should be approached. Some believe that each partner should have their own therapist and seek out a third therapist for their work together as a couple. My personal opinion is that this is expensive, time consuming, and there is no one holding the big picture—no unifying center.

So long as the chosen therapist is one who is capable of working in the best interest of each partner (that is, without aligning with one or the other), I believe the latter choice is far more efficient, effective and desirable. If I have seen one partner for initial sessions and then the other partner wants to join in therapy, I ask to see the other partner individually before seeing them together as a couple to ensure that there is an alliance with each partner before engaging in couples therapy.

As the sources of core issues, predominant limiting beliefs, feelings and unmet needs are revealed, partners experience a clearer perspective from which they can engage in respectful and empathic communication and problem solving, co-creating healthier and more mature ways of relating to each other. Relationship is a pathway to wholeness. ■

Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all of the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.

~ Rumi, 13th century Sufi Mystic



Therese Caveney, MA, MFT, licensed since 1979, has conducted professional trainings (U.S. and Italy) in her innovative process for healing the wounds of adults abused as children. Publications include a booklet Breaking the Chains of the Past and her book, Co-Creating Relationship ~ Breaking the Chains of the Past (2012). She is in private practice in Campbell, CA.

***The Gospel Within Us* by Jan Kuniholm**

Reviewed by Catherine Ann Lombard

This book is a valuable handbook for bible study leaders. I meet with international students from all over the world. Our last meeting was attended by students from Ethiopia, Suriname, Namibia, Nigeria, and China. *The Gospel Within Us* has provided me with a thorough and enlightened way to introduce psychosynthesis concepts into our discussions, in particular, when we are reading the Gospel of Mark. I would recommend this book to any chaplain or pastor who is guiding people through the Bible texts and wants to also explore these Scriptures in a more personal and profound way.

The book's structure is easy to follow, the writing is clear, and there are numerous questions and reflections to help you read Mark's Gospel in a new and more conscious way. This book has helped me and the students reflect more on the inner meaning of these Holy Words. Thank you Jan Kuniholm, for writing such a thorough and meaningful book as well as sharing your own personal journey along the way. ■

***The Scent of Water* by Elizabeth Goudge**

Reviewed by Penney Oedel

If you decide to read a book by Elizabeth Goudge, chances are that the copy you get from the library will be a well-used, well-loved book that is a half-century old. Opening the age-softened cover of *The Scent of Water*, you expect a gentle, old-fashioned narrative appropriate for children. If so, prepare to be surprised.

Yes, this is old-fashioned story-telling, and yes, the author's voice is gentle. The world you enter is definitely idealized but, surprisingly, not sentimentalized. The plot revolves around Mary, a woman in her fifties who has just inherited a crumbling old house from a mysterious cousin. Mary was just five years old when she had her sole encounter with this relative, but the experience made an unaccountably deep impression on her. Now a sophisticated urban dweller, who lives alone and takes pride in her independence, Mary impulsively decides to relocate to the cousin's house, which is located in a small village.

The author does not shy away from hard topics--conflict, grief, adultery, emotional pain, even mental illness. But these problems are examined from a perspective of hope and love. Institutionalized religion is more often rejected than endorsed, but profound spiritual truths emerge for the open-minded reader. ■

In Search of Meaning

Catherine Ann Lombard

*We seek the meaning of life, wondering if any meaning can be left.
But that is something each one of us must settle with himself and with God.*
—Etty Hillesum (1996, p. 29)

Psychosynthesis is one of the few psychologies today that contains the “notion of a Higher Self or soul” (Hardy, 1987, p. 47). Roberto Assagioli, the founder of psychosynthesis, assumed in his writings that “many people, at sometime in their lives, will search for the transpersonal” and “for meaning through himself or herself in the context of the soul” (Hardy, p. 47). We search for meaning, according to Firman and Vargiu (1977), in our personal existence and in life itself. They call these two orientations the “personal dimension” and the “transpersonal dimension” of growth respectively. Most people “tend to be more in touch with one dimension [or the other], experiencing it as more real, more important” (p. 129), but each of us needs to integrate the two orientations:

In order to realize more and more of our essential humanness, we need to include both the personal and transpersonal dimensions...Therefore, self-realization, the realization of our Transpersonal Self, involves the progressive unification, at higher and higher levels, of the two dimensions of growth (p. 131).

By equating self-realization with the “realization of the Transpersonal Self,” Firman and Vargiu infer, in a psychosynthesis context, that the experience of the Self (which is an unchanging, enduring reality, a stable center of life) occurs when the ‘I’, the center of personal will and consciousness, can identify with it and is temporarily absorbed into it.

Assagioli (2000, p. 21) states that there are actually two ways that personal consciousness can expand into the Self. The first is ascent by the personal ‘I’ into the Self— “a magnificent endeavor, certainly a long and arduous one, and not everybody is ready for it.” The second way is via descent by the Transpersonal Self when it spontaneously and suddenly descends upon the personal self, often providing an illumination which is felt by the ‘I’ as a “pull or call” (Assagioli, 2002, p. 113).

Most of us have experienced a call from our Transpersonal Self, for example, the feeling of wonder and oneness as we watch a stunning sunset. Such instances are referred to as “peak experiences” by Maslow (1968, pp. 74-83). Throughout our busy lives “spiritual wake-up calls” usually go unheeded. There can come, however, a time when we feel the need to answer the call of the Self to discover true meaning in our lives. Usually these times are marked by crisis. In the personal dimension, the crisis can be existential—“the crisis that challenges the meaning of one’s very existence” (Firman and Vargiu, p. 134); on the transpersonal level, the crisis can be one of duality—“awareness of ...an unbridgeable gulf between oneself and the transcendent goal” (p. 146).

In this brief essay, I describe Assagioli’s four critical stages of spiritual development as described in his seminal article “Self Realization and Psychological Disturbances.” While exploring each of the four phases of spiritual growth, I also reflect on their relevance in today’s world. Interwoven with this exploration is the examination of Firman and Vargiu’s concepts about the two dimensions of growth. I then examine how this context of spiritual development might relate to our world, in general, and to us, in particular. Finally, I draw my conclusions.

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Stage 1: Crisis Preceding the Spiritual Awakening

Assagioli writes that the first stage of spiritual development is the “crisis preceding the spiritual awakening” (2000, p. 36). Most people are living their lives as they unfold, without questioning or reflecting on its apparent meaning. Their “operational belief is that the only reality is that of the physical world which [they] can see and touch” (p. 37). This way of living corresponds to Firman and Vargiu’s personal dimension of growth. Each accomplishment in the physical world throughout our lives helps us to “experience our lives as having greater significance and value” (Firman and Vargiu, p. 129). Hence we continue to pursue such worldly goals through which we enable ourselves in the material world to manifest and integrate our talents, creativity, and unique human essence. A person who continues to grow along the personal dimension is what Maslow referred to as a “self-actualizer” (Maslow, 1968, pp. 25-27).

However, there may come a time when such pursuits are no longer satisfying in and of themselves and we become “disturbed by a change—sudden or slow—in [our] inner lives” (Assagioli, p. 37). Sometimes this inner disturbance comes as a shock, such as the death of a loved one, loss of career, or severe illness. “But sometimes it occurs...in the full enjoyment of health and prosperity,” bringing with it a feeling that something in life is missing (p. 37). “Paradoxically, the greater the success, the more one is faced with the experience of finding that what was expected to be highly satisfying turns out to be uninteresting and empty” (Firman and Vargui, p. 134). This “crisis preceding the spiritual awakening” or “existential crisis” is beautifully illustrated by Leo Tolstoy in *Confession*, his autobiographical tale of spiritual midlife crisis (Tolstoy, 1983, pp. 27-58).

For an individual who is growing exclusively along the transpersonal dimension, this lack of meaning may be felt as an “unbridgeable gulf between oneself and the transcendent goal” and is referred to as a “crisis of duality” (Firman and Vargiu, p. 146). Such individuals might find it increasingly difficult to experience unity with the transcendent or their higher experiences may stop altogether. Without a balance of growth along the personal dimension and engagement with the world at large, those experiencing a “crisis of duality” are confronted with the fact that the goal of reaching and maintaining transcendent unity by oneself is either impossible or without meaning. The reality is that we all need others to reflect who we really are and provide us with the opportunity to act as our true human selves and to our full potential.

Stage 2: Crisis Caused by the Spiritual Awakening

Assagioli (1993, p. 141) defines spiritual awakening as:

...that first blinding flash of new spiritual consciousness which transforms and regenerates the whole being...[It] is an event of fundamental importance and has an incomparable value in the inner life of man.

The first and most frequent characteristic of the soul awakening is “an extraordinary dazzling sense of light” (p. 145). Other manifestations include the experience that everything seems suffused with an aura of glory, new truths are evident, powerful new feelings emerge, and the universe is seen as a living Whole (pp. 146-148). Firman and Vargiu (p. 137) state that, more often, spiritual awakening occurs gradually and involves our conscious and purposeful participation.

This opening between the ‘I’ and the Self can often produce a wonderful release from the inner strife preceding the awakening. But more frequently, “the personality is unable to rightly assimilate the inflow of light and energy” (Assagioli, 2000, p. 39). This can cause a crisis and result in a wrong interpretation of the experience. The individual whose ‘I’ container is not adequately developed will typically blur the distinction between the Self and the ‘I’ and fall victim to the illusion that the qualities and powers of the Transpersonal Self belong to their personal

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self. There are also cases where the influx of new energies causes individuals to express themselves in uncontrolled behaviors like shouting or crying. For others, spiritual awakening can also initiate parapsychological perceptions which, without clear judgment and discernment in their interpretation, can further exalt the personality of the individual (pp. 39-41).

Similarly, Firman and Vargiu (p. 137) emphasize the need for newly awakened souls to use discrimination and to examine their motives as they reorient their growth to include the transpersonal dimension. In pursuing one's spiritual path, one needs to practice discrimination in interpreting inner messages, selecting spiritual directors, and heeding the advice from family and friends. And one's motives need to be genuinely spiritual as opposed to selfish or self-centered.

Those individuals who are shifting their orientation from the transpersonal to the personal dimension also typically face a number of difficulties. "Expressing a transpersonal vision requires considerable skill and experience, as well as a well-integrated personality" (pp. 147-8). Often these individuals want to express their vision to the world by themselves and by next week. When others do not immediately follow their wise approach, they can become more zealous and even belligerent to the point of fanatic.

Stage 3: Reactions Following the Spiritual Awakening

Assagioli (2000, pp. 41-44) describes various reactions that can follow an individual's spiritual awakening:

- 1) The individual achieves a state of exalted joy that brings with it insight into the meaning and purpose of life, which infuses and permanently transforms the personality. This outcome is relatively rare.
- 2) Only some of the regressive tendencies and patterns in the personality are fully transformed while most are temporarily neutralized. The individual is, however, left with an ideal model and sense of direction to take towards complete transformation.
- 3) No transformation of the personality takes place, but the individual does become aware of the hidden blocks and patterns that he or she needs to overcome for transformation to occur.
- 4) A combination in various proportions of the previous three reactions.

In addition, Assagioli points out that, in some cases, strong reactions by the personality can cause the individual to deny the experience and suppress it, producing a state of depression and even suicidal tendencies. This reaction is referred to as "repression of the sublime" by Frank Haronian (1972) and is part of our psychological defense mechanism against change. "We fear growth because it means abandoning the familiar for the unknown, and that always involves risks" (Haronian, p. 122).

Stage 4: The Process of Transmutation

The process of transmutation begins at the point when the individual recognizes and decides to accept the emerging energies of the Transpersonal Self and actively transform the personality. It is a "rewarding period, full of changes, of alternations between light and darkness, between joy and suffering" (Assagioli, 2000, p. 45). During this transitional period, the individual seeks to remove any behavior obstructing the inflow of Transpersonal energies, develop higher functions in the personality, and to continue to be receptive to guidance from the Higher Self.

Finally the work of self-realization really begins and this is the most complicated and longest part of the journey. Firman and Vargiu (1977, pp. 153-156) emphasize the need for us to continually "establish the right conditions, the right orientation in our personality" towards the Transpersonal Self and to *trust* that the Self will release the

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necessary and desired energies for self-realization to occur. The dazzling light of the Self also illuminates the shadows of the personality, which can leave the individual feeling acutely aware of his or her inadequacies. Firman and Vargui (p. 140) actually find these dark, arid, and uncertain periods valuable and necessary: “They are brought about by the Transpersonal Self in order to facilitate the eventual fusion between our personal and transpersonal natures.”

Assagioli calls on us to consciously cooperate with the sufferings and hardships that might arise. He even encourages us to face such crises with acceptance and love. “The Spirit itself imposes this work in a tough, inescapable fashion [and] the soul is obliged to enter that ‘dark night’ experienced and described by St. Teresa of Avila [and] St. John of the Cross” (1991, p.113-114).

Relevance of Self-realization in the World Today

What do these four stages of self-realization mean for us and for the world at large? In today’s world, Assagioli’s concepts are critical on three different levels—for individuals, communities, and globally. For individuals such as ourselves, the stages of self-realization are a context in which we can understand the meaning of our suffering, take responsibility for redeeming it, and, ultimately, achieve our highest human potential. As the Dutch mystic Etty Hillesum (1996, p. 56) wrote: “The only measure you have is yourself. And the only responsibility you can shoulder in life is responsibility for yourself.” And as Dorothy Sayers (1949, p. 19) writes in her introduction to Dante’s *Inferno*:

For most of us it may be easier to understand Hell as the picture of a corrupt society than as a corrupt self. Whichever we start with, it is likely to lead to the other.

In our communities, understanding these stages of self-realization can help us, as well as others, better serve humanity in our various roles of parent, teacher, counselor, religious leader, and social and medical personnel. Once we understand, accept, and endeavor to engage with the stages of self-realization, we automatically replace “ignorance, prejudice, and active opposition” with a more enlightened view of the human journey (Assagioli, 2000, p. 51). An excellent example of this is the eloquent study by Susan Holliday (2007) of women who have suffered what is generally known as “post-natal depression.” Using psychosynthesis concepts, she aptly renames the condition as “post-natal disturbance,” inferring that these new mothers are experiencing reactions to a deep and powerful spiritual awakening.

On the global level, familiarity with these stages of soul-development can become a template in our attempt to assess and resolve the crises facing us today. As stated by Donald Keys (1975, p. 8) “the stages of this process are essentially the same for individuals and for nations.” Jung also saw “very clearly the relationship of the personal journey to the process of the human race as a whole” (Hardy, p. 206). Globally, we are experiencing an existential crisis. Nearly all of our world problems—hunger and homelessness, disease and war, and the destruction of the environment—lead back to greed and consumerism. Never have we had so much food or material goods in the history of humankind, and never have our lives been so empty, confused, exhausting and fraught with desperation. We know no limits in our outer world and yet remain largely ignorant of how our inner unconscious and luminous Higher Self function—never mind who we really are. As Assagioli (2002, pp. 4-6) wrote already in 1972:

The wide gulf between man’s external and inner powers is one of the most important and profound causes of the individual and collective evils which afflict our civilization and gravely menace its future...

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Only the development of his inner powers can offset the dangers inherent in man's losing control of the tremendous natural forces at his disposal and becoming the victim of his own achievements.

Understanding and employing Assagioli's stages of self-realization individually and collectively is one of the first steps towards overcoming evil as it is manifested in the world today.

Conclusion

The four stages of spiritual development towards self-realization described in this brief essay only briefly outline the journey we must all make as individuals in search of the Self. The actual human process is a lifetime endeavor as rich as Dante's poetic voyage through the fires and ice of Hell, the purification of Purgatory, and the light and beauty of Paradise. The point is that "Self-realization is a natural process, and it occurs spontaneously. We can learn to better understand the process and thereby cooperate with it and facilitate it" (Firman and Vargiu, p. 131). Our progress depends on our willingness to allow these processes to take place within us and to accept the call or will of the Higher Self. To live a spiritual life and seek the Divine in all things is not easy, but in the words of Assagioli (1993, p. 213)

It is also a clear duty, because when spiritual light is focused on the most complex of individual or collective problems it produces solutions...and spares us much suffering...The spiritual view of life...is extremely revolutionary, dynamic and creative.

We only must dare to heed the call and begin our journey. ■



Catherine Ann Lombard, M.A. has been counseling clients since 2008 and is a published writer, poet and artist. Catherine has also offered numerous workshops based on her psychosynthesis training, including "Know What You Want" and "Communicating Across Cultures."

She and her husband, Dr. Kees den Biesen, will be leading a two-day workshop at the EPSS this summer 2014 called "Crossing Thresholds: Traveling the Portals of Change with Dante." For more information about Catherine, see catherineannlombard.com.

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Dawn

Day's sweetest moments are at dawn;
Refreshed by his long sleep, the Light
Kisses the languid lips of Night,
Ere she can rise and hasten on.
All glowing from his dreamless rest
He holds her closely to his breast,
Warm lip to lip and limb to limb,
Until she dies for love of him.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox



"Mollala Dawn" by Yonti Kelly

Center for Awakening Online and Telephone Distance Study: An Assagioli-Adventure into “Height Psychology”

The Center for Awakening invites you to sign up for a three-session distance study of two of Assagioli’s monographs on higher psychology: “Transpersonal Inspiration,” and “Symbols of Transpersonal Experience.”¹ **Hedi Weiler and Carla Peterson are the group facilitator/guides.**

- The **first session on March 7, 2014** will introduce the group study process, practices to engage, questions for self-reflection, and resources for contemporary researches and writings on “higher” psychology.
- The **second session on March 21, 2014** will offer participants the opportunity to discuss their insights, questions, and/or experiences with their reading of “Transpersonal Inspiration,” their engagement with practices of self-reflection, and explorations of contemporary ways of talking about inspiration and transpersonal experiences.
- The **third session on April 4, 2014** will consist of discussion of “Symbols of Transpersonal Experience,” self-reflections by the participants and the further explorations by the group into contemporary descriptions and insights into transpersonal experiences. We will offer concluding thoughts and information about future opportunities for distance learning.

Roberto Assagioli focused on the “higher reaches” of psychology and the human experience in addition to the depths of human experience. Assagioli intended to write a book on “Height Psychology” or “Higher Psychology,” made notes for the book, but did not live long enough to complete the work. It remains for us to engage the work, do our own explorations and search out contemporary resources that provide insights, methods and ways of achieving the “higher” psychological states Assagioli felt would lead to “the advent of a new civilization.”

“Another result of this experience (of contemplation/non-duality) takes the form of inspired *action*. A powerful impulse is felt to give liberal expression to the treasures discovered and won, to radiate them and make others participants in them; then to collaborate with all men of goodwill, with all who have enjoyed similar experiences, in dispersing the darkness of ignorance which envelops humanity, in eliminating the conflicts which harass it, in preparing the advent of a new civilization in which men, happy and like-minded, actualize the wonderful latent potentialities with which they are gifted.” —Assagioli, “Psychological Mountain-Climbing”

Putting into action the insights, illuminations, and intuitions which come to us from “the heights,” is clearly one of the chief challenges of our time. Watch for another three-session distance learning opportunity focused on “Inspired Action.

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There will be no cost for these distance-learning sessions, but contributions to the Center for Awakening will be gladly accepted! Contributions can be made online at CFA's website www.centerforawakening.org or to Treasurer, at the address listed on the website.

Please register for "Assagioli's Height Psychology" by February 15, 2014 by emailing Carla Peterson at carla@centerforawakening.org ☐

¹ "Transpersonal Inspiration" can be found at: http://aap-psychoanalysis.org/wp-content/uploads/transpersonal_inspiration.pdf and "Symbols of Transpersonal Experience" at: http://aap-psychoanalysis.org/wp-content/uploads/symbols_of_transpersonal.pdf



Falls near Nuwara Iliya, Sri Lanka
photo by Judi White

Reminiscing: Third International Meeting at Casa Assagioli Florence, Italy – September, 2013 *Phyllis L. Clay, Ph.D.*

Prior to helping facilitate the time in Assagioli's archives, I guided three of us on a six-day *Journey to Self* through the magnificence and beauty of Florentine art. One of the days we visited the Opera del Duomo (the "works" of art associated with the mighty cathedral in Florence). Because most of the museum was being restored at the time, only a small portion of the "inhabitants" of the museum was available to visitors. So I spent more time than usual visiting a favorite work of art .

In the unfinished monument intended for his own tomb, Michelangelo had carved a pieta. Unlike many pietas (e.g., the beautiful one in St. Peter's in Rome), this pieta incorporated more than Mary holding the lifeless body of Jesus. This pieta also includes a young boy and the old Nicodemus. Though I had spent time with the statue previously, I had never been captured by the hand of Nicodemus touching Mary's shoulder, gently supporting her as together they eased the body to the ground.

I was struck by his simple act of service and wondered to myself, "What is my act of service?" I imagined that it must be some extended task, perhaps difficult, or at least unpleasant and laborious. And it felt important for me to discover what it was so that I could "get on with it."

The following week, one of the tasks of those of us helping to facilitate the meeting at Casa Assagioli was to be ready to exchange a little box of Assagioli's writings for another box, as the participants worked with the catalogued topics. In Assagioli's studio where the boxes were, as I climbed the little antique chair that turned itself inside out to make a ladder, I kept noticing this huge smile that spread over my face. What joy it was to be with others who were delighting in the jewels they were finding in these boxes! What pleasure (after spending a month each year for five or six years alone in an office with a box, and exchanging one box for another one throughout the month) to experience others' joy in spending time with the words in the boxes!

As I became more aware of my smile, I realized that, at least for the moment, this was my act of service: simply receiving one box, putting it away, and handing another box to the one eagerly awaiting it. The joy of service!

The fourth international meeting in Casa Assagioli will be in September 2015. Watch for the dates and the invitation elsewhere in this newsletter. There will also be a *Journey to Self* in Florence just preceding the meeting. For more information about the Journey, contact me at synthesisintl@aol.com. In the meantime, enjoy the discovery of your simple acts of service! ■



A Meditative Reflection on Journey to Self and Casa Assagioli, Florence, Italy, September 2013

Rosemary Wentworth

I traveled over 6,000 miles to Florence, the home of the Renaissance, the birthing of ideas in all branches of the humanities and creative endeavors. I was eager to explore Florentine design of manmade space with the natural landscape. The Renaissance gardens reflected the Roman concept of “otium” finding places to rest and reflect within the natural landscape, reconnecting the human with the sacred. Assagioli spoke of the importance of understanding what is our relationship with the way we perceive reality, and that this spiritual reality gives our lives its meaning. I was keen to begin my quest.



Assagioli's Garden

my second day in Florence. As I walked along the emerald green and seemingly still Arno River, many emotions filled my body and mind. I had worked too hard and long hours to arrange for this trip and this was not the choice of my beginning to my Journey to Self. This was to be my time for myself.

As the sun played on the greenness of the river, I became still. I could hear the delight and joy of others on the nearby ancient Ponte Vecchio. Listening still deeper, I could hear the whispers from the past, of others who searched for beauty and truth. I was not alone; many have walked this same path and have experienced the dread of loss of identity and assets. Disbelief, denial, anger, the entire gamut of emotions swirled inside of me and I allowed them to be. I was experiencing the universe within me as Assagioli once described. This was a part of my adventure, introducing me to the struggles of humanity that I

The plan was to spend seven days in a workshop called “A Journey to Self: through the Beauty and Magnificence of Florentine Art,” facilitated by Dr. Phyllis Clay and then attend the “Third International Meeting at Casa Assagioli: an Inspirational Laboratory at the Wellsprings of Psychosynthesis.” The conference was held at the Istituto di Psicointesi in the former home of Roberto Assagioli, the founder of Psychosynthesis, and hosted by the Gruppo Alle Fonti. I eagerly anticipated the time with colleagues and exploring the archives of Roberto Assagioli.

However the process of stripping bare and going deeper into my process occurred sooner than I anticipated.... my wallet was stolen at the Uffizi Gallery on



Casa Assagioli

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would witness in Florence's magnificent art. Assagioli spoke of three main life arts that are important to cultivate in order to be a sane and complete human being. Namely, they are the art of resting, the art of contemplation and the art of laughing and smiling.

The Way was before me, I only had to let myself look up and around me, to see the struggle and the genuine benevolence of being present in the stillness of the moment. The humor in the situation eluded me at that instant. In retrospect I can smile when I recall Assagioli's hand-written note in the archives, "There is no certainty, only adventure." I found his intuitive insight comforting and forge ahead with this spirit of exploration.



Ponte Vecchio



On the Road to Casa Assagioli

On my daily walk from Villa la Stella to Casa Assagioli, insights would unfold from the previous day's work in Assagioli's Archives. I share one of my reflections about the grey, thick, almost impenetrable stone walls which held a rich green thick moss, velvety to the touch. I saw the greening of life growing from the hardness wherever it is planted. A deep luscious, sculpted growth caressed the strength of the rock.

For me, I can allow difficulties to become my foundations and explore the world around me with tenacity. I was remembering that there is in each person a sensitivity to their experience of daily heroic living. I hear Assagioli's words, "To will, to insist, to persist."

I was ready for my time with Roberto Assagioli. He shared his process with me through his notes and reflective writings, which included probing questions and his books.



Assagioli's Study



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It was like having intimate conversations with a long lost friend. I came away from this dialogue with my Mentor with a mandate to “Write, Innovate, and Teach.”

I am deeply grateful for the abundance I experienced in this gathering and the love and hard work of the Gruppo Alle Fonte which created this opportunity for us and who are the stewards of Casa Assagioli and all the treasures held within. I return from my adventures hungry to continue to live out of the joy of the pure connections, the blessed gifts I received from being with my Psychosynthesis colleagues. ☐



Viveca Adler and Lena Larsson with Assagioli's Set of Evocative Stamps



Archive Staff with Gifts of Handmade Journals

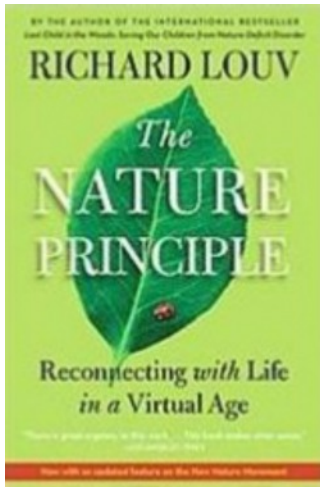
Conference Participants
(Left to right)

Laura Ullana, Viveca Adler, Phyllis Clay (behind her is Elizabeth Gronn), Paola Marinelli, Keith Hackwood, Lenna Larsson, Rosemary Wentworth, Ewa Bialek

With deepest Gratitude,

Rosemary Wentworth, MA, CGS, CAGS, CCDP-D, LCDC.





The Nature Principle: Reconnecting with Life in a Virtual Age

by Richard Louv

Review by Rosemary Wentworth

“The future will belong to the nature-smart—those individuals, families, businesses, and political leaders who develop a deeper understanding of the transformative power of the natural world and who balance the virtual with the real. The more high-tech we become, the more nature we need.”

—Richard Louv

Louv asks the reader to consider a poignant question: What would the quality and character of our life and urban culture be like if we gave as much attention to nature as to our technological accoutrements?

Louv offers empirical research as well as theoretical and anecdotal information that speak to the restorative strength of the natural world. He eloquently speaks to the necessary synthesis of reconnecting our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well being by regular interaction with all the living processes that surround us. It is important to balance virtual and real worlds and develop a “hybrid mind” that enriches reverence, creativity and optimism. Louv sees that nurturing our deep instinctual bond with the natural world will offer us the insights to develop communities that reflect these vital principles of interconnection and interdependence. This can enhance clarity, focus and ease as we move out of desperation for survival to living with fulfilling joy and growing our spirit. By placing our willing intention to develop human/nature capital as a driving economic force new designs that catalyze human potential can emerge that are ecologically beneficial.

Louv describes ways families can experience nature. Conservation groups are creating a sense of community that reconnects people with the natural landscape. Outdoor classrooms are becoming main stream. Pediatricians and health care professionals are more often prescribing more often “green exercising” for growth and well being. Grass roots governmental agencies are encouraging biodiversity, promoting the greening of the city landscape with community gardens, urban farms and green beltways. The mind/body/nature connection (Vitamin N) is a remarkable restorative to well being. It is also free! ■

The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of the Nature Deficit Disorder by Richard Louv (2011): Algonquin Books, Chapel Hill, North Carolina
ISBN 978-1-56512-581-0

(This book was previously published under the title, **The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of the Nature Deficit Disorder**)

THE ESSENCE OF TIME

Shamai Currim, PhD

From a presentation at the AAP Conference
Burlington, VT, June 2013

Time is relative. How do we make the most use of it?

Einstein's theory of relativity may hold the answers to more than we are aware of. Not just a theory of gravitation, relativity also speaks to our daily lives in the form of the essence of time. What does that really mean? And how can we use these skills in daily life?

When I began the research and gathering of materials for this presentation, I truly wanted to understand what time was, from the minds of different theorists, as well as understanding the lived experience of time. I began with a historical background, and gathered this material:

- John Archibald Weaver: "Time is nature's way of keeping everything from happening at once and space is what prevents everything from happening to me."¹
- Newton: "Absolute, true and mathematical time of itself, and by its own nature, flows uniformly on, without regard to anything external."²
- Einstein: "The distinction between past, present and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion."³
- Deepak Chopra: "Our internal dialogue influences how we experience time, and the way time is metabolized influences our biological clock."⁴
- David Allen: "Time is the concept we wrap around the experience of motion and change. It doesn't exist when we are purely engaged in the flow of that motion and that change--those moments when we say that 'time disappeared.' But when we need to get into synch with things that appear to be moving around us, time is a handy paradigm--especially when everyone and everything seems to agree with our reality. Time management is a foolish idea--you don't manage time. Have you ever mismanaged five minutes and come up with six? Or four and a half? Time just is. Our actions are what we manage, during time."⁵

And I also looked at the idea of what causes time:

- Aristotle speculated that time may be related to motion; however, he added that motion could be slower or faster but not time.
- Einstein introduced the concept of slowing of time with motion and in gravity—past, present, and future all coexist together laid out as a dimension on a time line.
- Hubble showed that the universe is expanding, and the presence of motion, forces and curved space-time happens in the expanding space. ⁶

We know that time is an aspect of change of state, like a clock which can be used to count down the number of cycles between two events, or the temporal ordering we receive in the womb as we listen to the heartbeat of our mother. If motion exists, then time exists. Every mammal on the planet has a sense of time based on events that actually occurred. ⁷

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So, how do we measure time? The present cannot be measured on a time-line as it has no duration, although it gives us the real feeling of time. The present is the most real perception of time, however almost all of what we perceive as the present is already past. To understand this, it is important to look at the way theorists look at time.

Presentism states that only the present is real while past and future do not exist and passage of time is just an illusion.

Block Universe Theory states that time is laid out as a time-scape. There is no free will. All times in past and future already exist.

Neither of these two views on time can explain what time really is and what the cause of time is, so I turned to different disciplines to see how they interpreted what time is:

Luke Jones, psychologist: “Human consciousness resists clock time. The speed of our internal clocks can be manipulated.”⁸

Ronald Mallett, theoretical physicist: “Time is a way of separating events from each other; things change, seasons change, people change. Change is an intrinsic feature of the physical world, and time is independent of whether or not we have a name for it.”⁹

Alexander Rose, futurist: “The only time that matters is the time that each of us experience as individuals. Time is as variable as the human range of experience.”¹⁰

Max Tegmark, cosmologist: “Time is the fourth dimension. The passage of time is an illusion.”¹¹

Joan Halifax Roshi, Zen Buddhist teacher: “Time is the experience of being present right now, in this very moment.”¹²

Craig Callender, philosopher: “Time is a name we give to one set of directions within space.”¹³

Ken Blanchard, time management expert: “Everyone has the same amount of time—24 hours in a day—and what you do with it and what priorities you set determine what you get done.”¹⁴

Michael West, gerontologist: “All species of life on the planet are perpetual-motion machines. The cells in our body are programmed to age. The cells are programmed to last just long enough for us to rear children, and no longer.”¹⁵

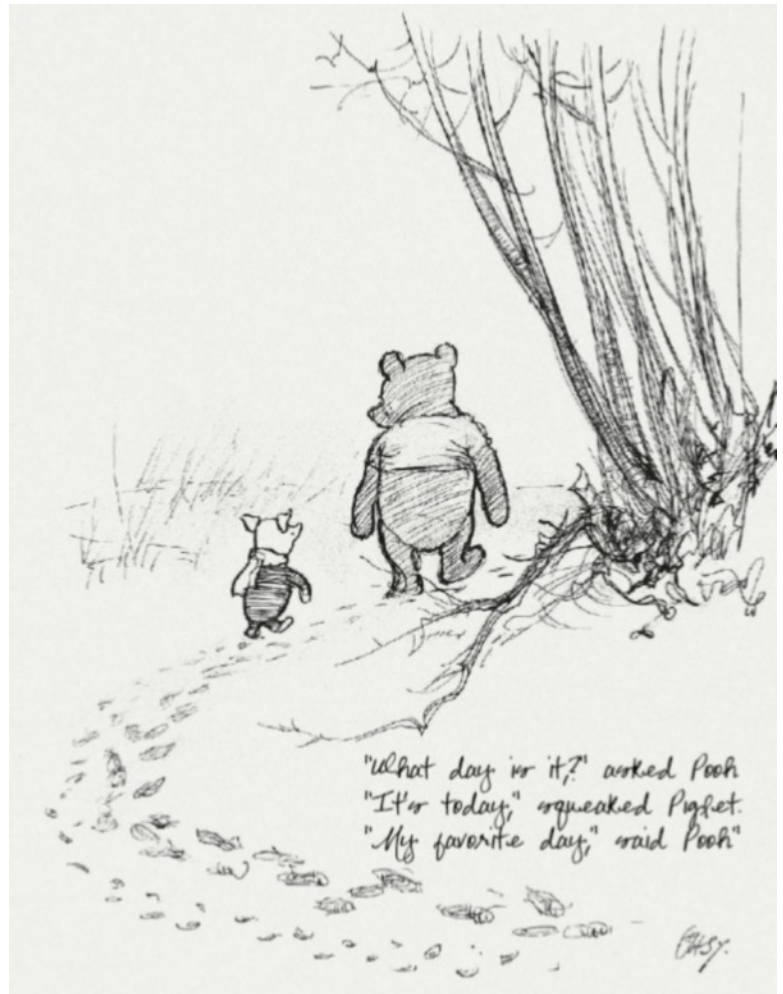
This gave me more of a picture of the disciplines than an understanding of time, so I turned to the wisest of all philosophers, my youngest son, who reminded me that how we look at time depends on where we are in our life cycle. When we are young we have so much ahead of us, so much to look forward to, never enough time to do all the things we want to do, and yet time feels like it goes on forever. At the mid-stage in our lives we are so busy, we rarely get to sleep. As we move into our elder years we never have enough things to do and yet time seems to move so quickly and we are reaching our end with not much to look forward to.

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Deepak Chopra actually described this, saying, “People who feel that they are ‘running out of time’ have speeded up their biological clocks. They have faster heart rates and jittery platelets with high levels of adrenaline. When they drop dead from a premature heart attack, they have literally ‘run out of time.’”¹⁶

So I turned to the experts:



from “Winnie the Pooh” by A.A. Milne

Robert Lanza, founder of the theory of Biocentrism (theory of everything), asserts that current theories of the physical world do not work, and can never be made to work, until they fully account for life and consciousness,¹⁷ so he proposes the following big questions with responses:

Who Are We?

We’re taught that the universe can be fundamentally divided into two entities: ourselves and that which is outside of us. But you’re not an object—if you divorce one side of the equation from the other you cease to exist.

Why Do We Exist?

What sustains us in and above the void of nothingness? We can’t see the laws that uphold the world, and if they were removed, would the universe collapse into nothing?

What Are We?

New experiments suggest part of us exists outside of the physical world. We assume there’s a universe “out there” separate from what we are, and that we play no role in its appearance. Yet experiments show just the opposite.¹⁸

It is important to remember that we are not separate from each other. In 2002, scientists carried out an amazing experiment that showed that within pairs of particles, each particle anticipated what its twin would do in the future. Somehow, the particles “knew” what the researcher would do before it happened, as if there were no space or time between them.

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In a 2007 study, scientists shot particles into an apparatus and showed that they could retroactively change whether the particles behaved as photons or waves. The particles had to “decide” what to do when they passed a fork in the apparatus. Later on, the experimenter could flip a switch. It turns out what the observer decided at that point determined how the particle had behaved at the fork in the past. Thus the knowledge in our mind can determine how particles behave.¹⁹

In her book *The Field: The Quest for the Secret Force of the Universe*, Lynne McTaggart tells us that “we are not a chemical reaction, but an energetic charge. Human beings and all living things are a coalescence of energy in a field of energy connected to every other thing in the world....There is no ‘me’ and ‘not-me’ duality to our bodies in relation to the universe, but one underlying energy field. This field is responsible for our mind’s highest functions, the information source guiding the growth of our bodies. It’s our brain, our heart, our memory-indeed, a blueprint of the world for all time.”

“The field,” as Einstein once succinctly put it, “is the only reality.”²⁰

It is important to remember that duality is a myth. Dirk Kelder, in the March 2013 issue of *Psychosynthesis Quarterly*, reminds us of the quantum conundrum (both exist at the same time...there is no time, there is time). If we can learn to hold both truths, then we have more chance of being in our authentic presence. We need to remember that everything in the future already exists in the realm of pure potential. In seeing into the future or the past we are helping to shape it through the act of observation. The Masters tell us that meditation will take you beyond space and time. Space and time are only in the physical. When you go inside there is a whole other world waiting to greet you.

Two birds,
Inseparable companions,
Perch on the same tree.
One eats the fruit,
The other looks on.
The first bird is our individual self,
Feeding on the pleasures and pains of this world;
The other is the universal Self,
Silently witnessing all



—from *The Upanishads*



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Notes:

¹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDAJinQL2c0&feature=related>

² <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDAJinQL2c0&feature=related>

³ <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/315/5814/966.short>

⁴ http://www.forbes.com/2008/02/28/what-is-time-oped-time08-cx_ee_0229thought.html

⁵ http://www.forbes.com/2008/02/28/what-is-time-oped-time08-cx_ee_0229thought_slide_4.html?thisSpeed=undefined

⁶ <http://www.timephysics.com/what-is-time.html>

⁷ <http://www.wrongplanet.net/postt93069.html>

⁸ http://www.forbes.com/2008/02/28/what-is-time-oped-time08-cx_ee_0229thought_slide_5.html?thisSpeed=undefined

⁹ http://www.forbes.com/2008/02/28/what-is-time-oped-time08-cx_ee_0229thought_slide_6.html?thisSpeed=undefined

¹⁰ http://www.forbes.com/2008/02/28/what-is-time-oped-time08-cx_ee_0229thought_slide_7.html?thisSpeed=undefined

¹¹ http://www.forbes.com/2008/02/28/what-is-time-oped-time08-cx_ee_0229thought_slide_8.html?thisSpeed=undefined

¹² http://www.forbes.com/2008/02/28/what-is-time-oped-time08-cx_ee_0229thought_slide_9.html?thisSpeed=undefined

¹³ http://www.forbes.com/2008/02/28/what-is-time-oped-time08-cx_ee_0229thought_slide_10.html?thisSpeed=undefined

¹⁴ http://www.forbes.com/2008/02/28/what-is-time-oped-time08-cx_ee_0229thought_slide_11.html?thisSpeed=undefined

¹⁵ http://www.forbes.com/2008/02/28/what-is-time-oped-time08-cx_ee_0229thought_slide_12.html?thisSpeed=undefined

¹⁶ http://www.forbes.com/2008/02/28/what-is-time-oped-time08-cx_ee_0229thought_slide_2.html?thisspeed=20000

¹⁷ <http://www.robertlanzabiocentrism.com/>

¹⁸ <http://www.robertlanzabiocentrism.com/is-death-the-end/>

¹⁹ <http://pra.aps.org/abstract/PRA/v65/i3/e033818>

²⁰ (M. Capek, *The Philosophical Impact of Contemporary Physics* (Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand, 1961) 319, as quoted in F. Capra, *The Tao of Physics* (London: Flamingo, 1992)



Shamai Currim, PhD, received her psychosynthesis training at Psychosynthesis Pathways of Montreal, and credits much of her early work to its founder and trainer Olga Denisko. Shamai is a retired therapist, educator, and educational consultant and trainer as well as a mother, grandmother, and wife. She is author of the book Meaghan's Story as well as numerous articles in professional journals, and has presented at many conferences, the last presentation being called The Essence of Time. Shamai is currently a co-chair of the Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis, along with Dirk Kelder. She is an initiate of Sant Mat/Shabd Yoga and a disciple of the current living master, Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj.

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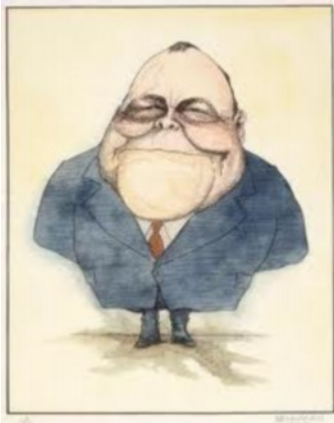
ROGUE SUBPERSONALITIES

Jan Kuniholm

What is happening when seemingly nice, caring people unexpectedly come out with hurtful words or behaviors—actions that don't seem to be consistent with what we know of their character? And what if all attempts to deal with these people are met with blank stares of non-recognition or outright denial of the words or behaviors? What is going on when a business organization known for integrity and honest business is suspected of “rigging the game,” “dirty tricks,” or some other unethical practice?

It is more common these days to expect this kind of situation in the political arena, where the “rules of engagement” are becoming less stringent, ethics seems to be something observed in the breach, and duplicity appears to be the accepted strategy where winning “is the only thing.” But I also see this kind of behavior more often in private life these days.

I have been looking at more everyday situations in which people or organizations exhibit some puzzling, apparently contradictory behavior that may seem baffling or frustrating, often evoking confused or hostile responses from others. The situations have been sometimes difficult to understand, but subpersonality theory offers a way to see into the dynamics of both individual and organizational behavior without resorting to polarizing responses.



“The Secretary”

To illustrate the kind of situation I am focusing on, I'd like to hearken back to a TV series of my youth, called *Mission Impossible*. The MI team was always assigned some covert activity, modeled loosely on the alleged activities of the American CIA. The show would always begin with the MI team leader acquiring a taped message, outlining the situation, the political objective, and the specific goal to be accomplished, and containing the implication that the MI team would operate in secret—outside normal ethical norms, in response to the needs of a fictional government department headed by a “Secretary.” And the tape would invariably end with words such as “if you are caught or captured, the Secretary will disavow all knowledge of your activities.”

The word “rogue” has long been used to describe dishonest, mischievous people. It has also been applied to animals (such as male elephants) who exhibit dangerously unpredictable behavior—that of a herd animal who has broken away from the herd, who can no longer be relied upon to be a “normal” member of the herd, who individually stakes out a position that may be antithetical to the stability of the herd. In modern times the term “rogue” has begun to be used to describe people or organizations whose behavior goes outside accepted norms of diplomacy or behavior and that threatens the accepted order of people, business or social relations—or of nation-states. When an entire organization or nation becomes violent, like a bull elephant charging through the jungle in a seemingly berserk rage, all others in the area are alerted to beware, and the normal responses to the rogue are congruent with any threatening situation. Others in the area will probably fight, run, freeze, or try to accommodate. The elephant, like an invading army, makes no secret of its feelings.

The Mission Impossible team, on the other hand, was a secret arm of an organization that purported to be benevolent and honest. The secret accomplice or assassin is the one I call a “rogue” for this article. It turns out that rogues get employment in many places these days, and it may be helpful to see some peoples' subpersonalities in this light as well.

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In our modern world, some of the most significant activities in society are carried out by employees of corporations, and we may see that the profit motivation that drives most modern corporations creates a space for “rogue” behavior. What happens when a corporation is accused of being responsible for some tragedy or problem? A corporation’s first loyalty (at least in modern America) is to its financial health, because a business corporation exists for two purposes: to provide an income for its stockholders, and to protect the stockholders from liability in case of loss. Limited liability is *the* rationale for the very existence of corporations, for in other business enterprises, the owner or partners are fully responsible for all of the company’s actions and also fully liable for any losses that the company or partnership incurs.



“The Rogue”

So what happens when a corporation is accused of an action that may incur a liability? The corporation’s first response is a defense: usually denial, and a requirement that any accusation that may incur liability be *proven*, often in court. This is the reason that corporations keep lawyers on retainer. The corporation’s law team will assess whether they have a chance to win the case, and if so they will fight the case vigorously. And of course they will announce that this is their intention whether or not they privately believe that the case can be won. If the case (either in or out of court) appears to be something the corporation cannot win, the team will then move to settle the case without an admission of guilt—that is, without incurring the possibility of continuing liability. After all, the *raison d’être* of a corporation is to shield stockholders from liability. The corporation is a practical entity, and good corporate managers have learned to be nimble and flexible, accepting necessary losses in the present, doing what they need to do, and then focusing on the future and moving on.

Business executives have employed the insights and talents of armies of psychologists, coaches, and strategists to help them at their work—including quite a few consultants who have been trained in psychosynthesis. A good business person, like a good psychosynthesis therapist, is often eclectic in the selection of methods: whatever works best at the moment, in the current situation, is the tool of choice.

Now I would like to look at what happens when “rogue” behavior shows up in a corporation. There are of course many reasons why the ethics of a corporation deteriorate: greed and ego, entrenched corporate politics, failure to assess reality, and so on. A spectacular example of “rogue” corporate behavior occurred not long ago when a major bank incurred billions of dollars in losses almost overnight, as the result of the risky financial transactions executed by *a single trader*. The actions over a short time by one person had nearly wiped out one of the largest banks in the world! The bank professed its innocence and fired the trader, promising to reform its practices, and so on. And the bank wanted the public to know that it would never have knowingly done such a thing. Then the bank moved to cut its losses, repair the damage, and move on. While moving on, the bank (and all other major banks and financial institutions) also vigorously resisted all attempts by government to introduce new regulations to prevent such meltdowns from happening again. The government’s case for new regulations rested on the premise that a bank invests the public’s money, and that therefore the public has a right to know and control the practices of the bank. The financial industry’s resistance to regulation rests (partly, at least) on their need to be totally flexible to meet the rapidly changing and volatile business and financial climate of the modern world, and the premise that regulation disrupts the free market. Regulation also enforces transparency, which prevents certain kinds of “flexibility.” What I am looking at is the denial of any intention to do wrong, coupled with an insistence on maintaining conditions that allow wrongdoing to flourish—that almost encourage it.

This kind of behavior is not limited to organizations. Some of the paradoxical behavior of individuals can be looked at in a similar light. For example, I once had to disengage from a long-standing personal relationship due to some intractable issues—interpersonal conflicts that over time seemed to grow more entrenched and resistant to solution.

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I reflected on the significance of this process, and concluded that the subpersonality theory of psychosynthesis offered a window of understanding.

The person with whom I had the relationship (I will call him John) was a married man, a successful executive who retired as vice president and head of the regional office of a small corporation. To all appearances he had lived a good life: his children were grown and married with families and successful careers of their own, his wife was a professional who was devoted to her career as well as her family. John always appeared to be reasonably happy and got along with most people. He was well-read and informed of events, he had a spiritual practice of long standing, and a wide circle of friendly acquaintances but (as far as I know) few close friends.

I had found myself wanting a relationship with John when our paths crossed, and my wife and I had hoped to develop a close couple relationship with John and his wife. But over the years some “incidents” occurred that disturbed both my wife and me. We found ourselves trying to understand the meaning of these incidents, and trying to adjust our responses to John in order to resolve our discomfort. The incidents never seemed large enough for us to back off from the relationship until some years into the relationship, when my wife concluded that, beneath the friendly and polite exterior, John actually disliked her, and that she no longer wanted to have any connection with him. I decided to persevere in the relationship, now with John alone and not as part of a couple or a foursome, in the hope that I could understand what was happening and hopefully retrieve the relationship before it was lost. But ultimately I had to give it up.

My decision to disengage involved some pain, some anger, a lot of disappointment—and finally, a resolve to look at what was happening with fresh eyes, if possible, to try to salvage a benefit from the wreckage. I had never made any connection between John’s position as a businessman and executive and my personal difficulties with him, but now I am taking a fresh look. Once I include the business environment into my equation, a startling perception comes to mind: the difficulties I had with John seem to reflect a wider social and political reality that is particularly evident in the behavior of some businesses and government.

His scrupulous attention to “good form,” to good manners, and to ethical behavior made him a “good man.” He hardly ever vented anger at people, and was nearly always positive in demeanor. My wife and I began to be disturbed because phrases would leak out in his conversation that seemed slightly—arrogant, we thought, but somehow we could not be sure. Over years a tone of voice, and a small action here and there indicated a concealed attitude that we were not happy with. Then on one occasion he came out with a sentence that was outright nasty, and demeaning to my wife. When I called this to his attention by objecting to both what he said and how he said it, he did a subtle double-take, and said something like, “What? I meant no harm. I have nothing but good intentions. You misunderstood me.” A year or two would go by, and then this scenario would repeat. His words and actions did not change appreciably, but we began to see a veiled attitude of self-superiority, of an insistence on his own rightness and lack responsibility or liability for what we were experiencing, and of a dogged framing of events according to his own ideas, principles and perceptions. We began to sense that the uncomfortable experiences were somehow connected with John’s desire to arrange events or attitudes according to his own preferences. But we found it so difficult to identify precisely what was happening! It was baffling, and we struggled with this for some years.

For a while I looked at this situation as a matter of difference of approach between people of goodwill, of polarities that needed to be brought into awareness, and if possible, synthesized. Walter Polt has written eloquently¹ about attitudes and practices that could contribute to the resolution of conflicts between people, and I would highly recommend his work for students of conflict resolution. But while Walter focuses, I think, on bringing conscious awareness to bear in a conflict situation (in such a way that even if resolution with the opposing party is not achieved a person can benefit as an individual from diverse ideas), it seems to me that I have encountered an all-too-common type of dissociation that makes many attempts at conflict resolution difficult if not impossible.

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When I first trained in psychosynthesis I was surprised in the course of some “co-guiding” to encounter something that startled me profoundly. In response to a question from me, the person I was with seemed suddenly to become someone else: a changed manner, appearance, tone of voice and speed of talking, and a decidedly different point of view. This was my first knowing experience of subpersonalities in action. It turns out that many people are unconsciously as eclectic in their approach to daily life as a psychosynthesis therapist is in the approach to a client or a businessman is in his approach to commerce. A person will move into the subpersonality that seems to “work” best in the current situation.

James Vargiu, in his classic article *Subpersonalities*² wrote that recognition and acceptance are necessary prerequisites for the coordination and integration of subpersonalities. In a therapeutic environment it is the therapist’s task to assist a client in the process of recognition and acceptance that allows a personal coordination and integration of the client’s subpersonalities. But what of subpersonalities in public life? And what if we encounter a subpersonality that behaves like a member of the *Mission Impossible* team?



Genial, positive,
open-minded . . .

My friend John seemed to have an *MI* subpersonality—or perhaps because this subpersonality seemed to engage in highly disruptive activities, even destructive ones, we might call it a *rogue* subpersonality. While his “main” subpersonality (“the Secretary”) was a genial, positive, open-minded person so long as his life was not disrupted, he seems to have had a terrorist lurking behind the cover of his respectable persona. The terrorist acted seemingly without the knowledge or consent of the Secretary, and yet furthered the aims of the Secretary subpersonality who required order, dominance, clarity of purpose, and success on his own terms. If someone appeared to be disrupting the Secretary’s agenda, the terrorist darted out and verbally fired a few shots or threw an emotional bomb, or acted in some other way to intimidate the other person, and then quickly disappeared. The other person wouldn’t quite know what had happened, but the Secretary’s needs were met, and he was totally innocent—and unaware—of the process by which another person had become compliant. He could honestly proclaim his own good intentions and his good will. He was also unaware of why another person might become very angry. But like a corporation whose purpose is to limit liability, if he was challenged he would take all available action to deny responsibility for what had happened.

People who maintain this inner structure may also maintain a corporation-style damage-control process. For with truly remarkable flexibility, the Secretary subpersonality may be willing to acknowledge that something injurious has occurred. And he may be willing even to apologize for this “something,” but only in a way that limits his liability: “If you have been hurt by something I may have said or done, then I am sorry and I apologize.” And then he wants to bring attention to the present, to “let go of the past,” and move on to the future. The present, for him, does not include his own tendency to unleash a rogue subpersonality whenever he encounters something that interferes with his purpose or his style of behavior or his ability to control his situation. It also does not include any *specific* acknowledgement of what has occurred, and no admission of any specific liability for its occurrence. This is very much like a corporate legal settlement: the corporation needs to move on with business, and an uproar interferes with this. So a corporation is willing to part with some cash to quiet the matter so it can “get on with things.” Likewise, my friend John’s Secretary subpersonality is quite willing to make an abstract acknowledgement and even an apology for “whatever I might have done,” if this will allow him to get on with things. And this subpersonality



. . .so long as his life
was not disrupted

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has developed a very sophisticated repertoire of behaviors that make it nearly impossible to *prove* that his behavior was directly responsible for anything negative.

There is a specific effort *not* to recognize or accept the specific reality of what has occurred, and an active resistance to all attempts to bring things to light. Anyone attempting to shed light on the situation then has to deal with an army of “lawyer” subpersonalities who will marshal a host of strategies to win the case and to protect the Secretary from liability, just as the corporate lawyers will work to win or settle a case—anything to protect the corporation and its stockholders from “exposure” and liability. Not surprisingly, one of a corporation’s (and the Secretary subpersonality’s) strategies when accused is to demand proof in order to establish liability.



I found myself falling
into behaviors that
I regretted . . .

I found myself stymied in my efforts to open up my relationship with John, and also found myself falling into behaviors that I regretted: mounting frustration, over-the-top anger, sarcasm, and other responses that were simply unproductive or harmful, as John’s behavior triggered a troubled subpersonality of my own. John was able to nail me as being “judgmental,” unreasonable, and so on. I had considered whether resorting to a mediator might be effective, and yet at the time this did not seem to be possible for a variety of reasons, among which was John’s unwillingness to bring someone else into a situation that “we should be able to resolve just between ourselves.” A witness would bring a level of awareness which was totally unwelcome to him, just as regulation might bring unwelcome transparency to a corporation.

So as an alternative, John presented a variety of suggestions to take steps to move our “postures” into positions that would enable us to “accept each other for who we are,” but my experience suggested that in his scenario all the movement would have to be made by me, and the acceptance he had in mind was my acceptance of him, and only went far enough to satisfy his need to control whatever situation he was in. John behaved like a person in power who needed to stay in power: in this case, in complete control of his relationships with others. And he had chosen to follow a spiritual practice that seemed to emphasize his own inner integration and growth and that seemed to de-emphasize responsiveness to others.

Reflecting on this situation, I find myself in a new sympathy with the “Occupy” movement and with various revolutionaries over the course of history, who have found that people wielding the established political or economic power in a society tend to resist all change that involves sharing power or giving up control of their situations. Like the soldier in Vietnam who felt that he needed to destroy a village in order to save it, and like the medieval inquisitor who believed he had to burn a sinner in order to save him, a person in an entrenched power structure will sometimes engage in the most destructive actions in the name of safety, of “order” and peace. Most recently an example was cited in Smithsonian magazine³ of the situation in modern Egypt, in which the people in power gathered some of the most disenfranchised people in the country and put them into an unofficial adjunct to the “Security Services,” where they were secretly employed in brutally putting down all actions of protest by the population, kidnapping dissidents and other similar activities. At the same time the higher officials in the government could honestly say that they disavowed all acts of violence and had no knowledge of what these people were doing.



On the streets in Egypt: the unofficial adjunct to the “Security Services”

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This kind of power relationship can be found in a marriage relationship as well as in the culture at large. Men have wielded power over women, by and large, in most cultures for most of humanity's history. Here too, the efforts to introduce *recognition* and *acceptance* of subpersonality dynamics to the dominant partner are often met with a variety of strategies ranging from denial to a kind of "theoretical agreement in principle" such as my friend John used to avoid specific liability; all too often the response may include some form of intimidation or even violence, but in such a way that the public *persona* of the perpetrator is not besmirched: a rogue subpersonality does the dirty work, in private, without witnesses. The Smithsonian article cited above also gives a peek at how the full range of social mechanisms in Egypt that protect entrenched power are also directed at maintaining the power imbalance between men and women. This reality is, of course, not limited to Egypt: there is evidence that it is common in nearly every country in the world. The relationship between men and women in the culture is of course mirrored in private relationships—it is worth noting that the troubles in my relationship with John seemed to originate in his attitudes and behavior toward my wife. His behavior toward me, as another *man*, remained exemplary and cordial, as one would expect between one "Secretary" and another. It was quite shocking to him, I think, that I was unwilling to cooperate with his unspoken assumption that the men should "stick together."



His unspoken assumption:
the men should
"stick together"

I think it is essential that we recognize the role of subpersonalities in interpersonal and public life—specifically the way in which "rogue" (that is, unacknowledged and unsafe) subpersonalities are secretly authorized to act as enforcers to maintain power imbalances. In some cases, such as in abusive marriages, the final resolution of the conflict may occur in divorce because the mutual recognition and acceptance needed for inner as well as interpersonal integration never occurs. In the case of my friendship with John, I had to disengage from the relationship after finding that the divide was too great to cross. But divorce or disengagement is not an option for society at large, and revolutions are often the result when repeated attempts at constructive engagement are not successful. The problem, of course, is that violence and revolution do not produce constructive engagement—the vast majority of revolutions in history have resulted in a continuation of old problems in a new guise.

Walter Polt has emphasized the usefulness of polarities—of important and *valuable* differences between people that come to light in disagreements when people are willing to dig to discover elements of truth on both sides. But what do we do when recognition is not achieved—or even desired—when denial is part of the equation, wielded by the one with the most power? I am attracted to a variety of approaches that foster social psychosynthesis, including Rosenberg's Non-Violent Communication, but so far I have not found one that addresses the issue of "rogue" subpersonalities that operate under the radar of recognition but that exert powerful influences, and of dominant subpersonalities (and corporations, and governments) that create secret subpersonalities that operate in the context of "deniability."

In my early psychosynthesis training I learned to try to form an alliance with the dominant subpersonality—either in myself or in a client—because this subpersonality "controls the gates," so to speak, and one is unlikely to get past it to work directly with another aspect of the person unless this dominant part cooperates or is disabled for some reason. When the dominant subpersonality in a person behaves like the fictional "Secretary" who will do virtually anything—including the employment of literal or figurative rogues and terrorists—to get his own way, one is unlikely to make much progress. Perhaps this is why so many people report psychological or spiritual breakthroughs during or after personal crises, for at such a time the dominant subpersonality's agenda is clearly seen to have led to disaster and the person is willing to entertain the possibility of change. This was certainly the case in my life: In my 20's I had been an insufferable, arrogant egotist with an agenda that never went much beyond my own short-term needs and desires—until a serious encounter with cancer brought me to death's door. The opening was dramatic, and the direction of my life turned 180 degrees in a half hour, beginning a journey that continues to this day.

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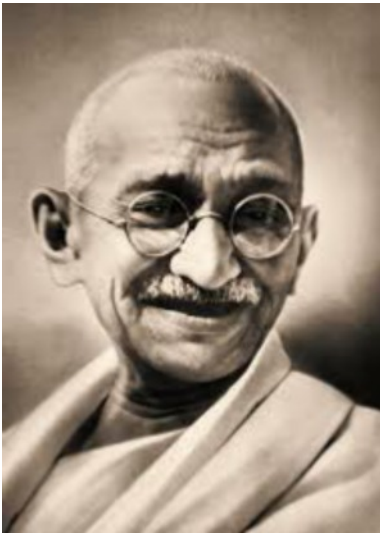
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Threats from outside seldom have any positive effect on an entrenched “Secretary”-type dominant subpersonality. They are more likely to provoke defense or attack, often undertaken by the rogue subpersonality. And what is perceived as an attack from within (say, by a rival subpersonality) also seldom proves effective in initiating change.

It seems that one of the best means of getting some progress can be the introduction of a spiritual element in the person’s life that draws the dominant subpersonality into practices that allow the recognition and acceptance of reality to occur. This was the case for me, as the spiritual encounter I experienced in the hospital when I was 29 included a panoramic view of my entire life. It was at once clear in showing me my own participation in the creation of my calamity and at the same time so deeply loving and accepting of me that I was able to move in a new direction without inner conflict.

What of my own rogue subpersonality? In my case, the rogue was more of the “elephant variety,” charging and thrashing about in plain sight: I had been quite aggressive, clearly selfish and self-serving, so one could say that the rogue sat on the throne with my other dominant subpersonality, whom I dubbed “the world foremost authority:” a would-be philosopher who was mostly interested in his own answers rather than in deep truth. After my change of direction, the “rogue” in me was out of regular work and lurked in the background, looking for something constructive to do in my life. Perhaps this part of me was triggered by John’s stonewalling, but his response was not constructive! Clearly I had work to do with this part of myself.

But I am not so clear about what is the best way to approach, in a social context, a person whose dominant subpersonality behaves like some executives of multinational corporations—or, for that matter, how to approach those real executives whose lives mirror the power relationships that are all too common in private lives.



Gandhi

Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., forged what is probably the most effective approach for dis-empowered people to deal with dominant people in power, when the power relationship is destructive to the disempowered and when the dominant one(s) will not negotiate on equal terms: non-violent resistance. This approach embodies the two elements mentioned by Vargiu in work to integrate subpersonalities, namely recognition and acceptance, and combines them with a principled non-cooperation with the agenda of the one(s) in power.

Many modern protest movements have brought recognition, but not acceptance, to their work, preferring to view their opponents as “the enemy” rather than as a potential partner. I think this approach provides an explanation for the failure of the American labor movement and numerous protest movements, because “the enemy” was simply too strong. And the protesters were in essence mirroring the self-centered, exclusive concerns of the ones they opposed, rather than viewing them as

brothers and sisters in a common family that needed balance and integration. This can explain our failures on an individual level also, for it is a delicate task to combine acceptance with non-cooperation and remain sincere and transparent. Often our own wounds and subsequent anger make acceptance of the “other” who wields power difficult, sometimes seemingly impossible. And the rogue subpersonalities of the powerful often find their vocation in stoking enmity when opposition serves those in the dominant power position.



Martin Luther King, Jr.

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It is a great challenge to accept those who do not accept you. The way of non-violent resistance often brings the need for difficult sacrifice: many in the civil rights movement—including Dr. King—did not live to see the ultimate success of Dr. King’s work, which still needs to go on today. Many in Gandhi’s India did not live to see real harmony take the place of domination in India, which underwent a terrible civil war after Gandhi’s call for inclusion of all was silenced when he was assassinated.

How do we practice acceptance with non-cooperation in a smaller, personal context? Even here, dominant subpersonalities and their social counterparts often find the means to retain their positions of power, and of not entering into serious partnership with others. Like corporations, individuals can fire inner “workers” and hire new ones. A government can subvert or imprison or discredit its opponents. A husband can refuse to recognize the essential humanity of his wife. A friend can persist in behavior that treats others unequally. The rogue subpersonality or its social counterparts may dart out and disrupt the process or sow enmity.

I think the strategy we use must, of course, be tailored to the situation. Harmony is the goal, but often cannot be found along the path except within oneself, where it is essential if we are going to change a situation of power imbalance. Sometimes, perhaps, the only effective strategy that is available is to step back, build the harmony and goodwill within oneself, and wait for the opportunity to act out the best of intentions, in the world.

They too serve who only stand and wait.”⁴

But I trust that the time to act will arrive, and the waiting will be justified. ■

Notes:

¹ <http://aap-psychoanalysis.org/wp-content/uploads/2011Spring.pdf>

² <http://aap-psychoanalysis.org/wp-content/uploads/subpersonalities.pdf>

³ “The Next Revolution: The Egyptian-American activist speaks out on the dangers women still face in a changing Mideast,” page 29 of *Smithsonian* magazine, May 2013.

⁴ Milton, *On His Blindness*



Jan Kuniholm is editor of Psychosynthesis Quarterly. He trained in psychosynthesis at The Synthesis Center in Amherst, MA, with Didi Firman and others, and has been focused for many years on issues involving adult survivors of childhood abuse, and transformation from traumatic experience.

This Light

Stephanie Sorrell

This light
I hold in my hands is intangible,
beautiful and mysterious
as water from some crystal brook,
or snowdrops naked in winter sun,
or the pale egg breaking in the waiting nest.

This light
I have dredged deeply to find
as the trees tap root
quarries far into the soil.
long have I journeyed for it,
traversing forbidding lands where
my fears battled to crush my truth.
Wearily, I have sought it though endless
nights that could not promise dawn.

This light, I have died for once, twice, many times.
Yet . . .
This light in my hands,
beautiful, radiant and eternal
has always been mine.
It is ever I who has travelled far from it.

This light that I now hold,
waiting to come bursting through every heart,
and pouring through every stranger's eyes,
will never let me go. Not ever.
This I know . . .

This I believe . . .

In the Service of Life

Rachel Naomi Remen

In recent years the question *how can I help?* has become meaningful to many people. But perhaps there is a deeper question we might consider. Perhaps the real question is not *how can I help?* but *how can I serve?*

Serving is different from helping. Helping is based on inequality; it is not a relationship between equals. When you help you use your own strength to help those of lesser strength. If I'm attentive to what's going on inside of me when I'm helping, I find that I'm always helping someone who's not as strong as I am, who is needier than I am.

People feel this inequality. When we help we may inadvertently take away from people more than we could ever give them; we may diminish their self-esteem, their sense of worth, integrity and wholeness. When I help I am very aware of my own strength. But we don't serve with our strength, we serve with ourselves. We draw from all of our experiences. Our limitations serve, our wounds serve, even our darkness can serve. The wholeness in us serves the wholeness in others and the wholeness in life. The wholeness in you is the same as the wholeness in me. Service is a relationship between equals.

Helping incurs debt. When you help someone they owe you one. But serving, like healing, is mutual. There is no debt. I am as served as the person I am serving. When I help I have a feeling of satisfaction. When I serve I have a feeling of gratitude. These are very different things.

Serving is also different from fixing. When I fix a person I perceive them as broken, and their brokenness requires me to act. When I fix I do not see the wholeness in the other person or trust the integrity of the life in them. When I serve I see and trust that wholeness. It is what I am responding to and collaborating with.

There is distance between ourselves and whatever or whomever we are fixing. Fixing is a form of judgment. All judgment creates distance, a disconnection, an experience of difference. In fixing there is an inequality of expertise that can easily become a moral distance. We cannot serve at a distance. We can only serve that to which we are profoundly connected, that which we are willing to touch. This is Mother Teresa's basic message. We serve life not because it is broken but because it is holy.

If helping is an experience of strength, fixing is an experience of mastery and expertise. Service, on the other hand, is an experience of mystery, surrender and awe. A fixer has the illusion of being causal. A server knows that he or she is being used and has a willingness to be used in the service of something greater, something essentially unknown. Fixing and helping are very personal; they are very particular, concrete and specific. We fix and help many different things in our lifetimes, but when we serve we are always serving the same thing. Everyone who has ever served through the history of time serves the same thing. We are servers of the wholeness and mystery in life.

The bottom line, of course, is that we can fix without serving. And we can help without serving. And we can serve without fixing or helping. I think I would go so far as to say that fixing and helping may often be the work of the ego, and service the work of the soul. They may look similar if you're watching from the outside, but the inner experience is different. The outcome is often different, too.

Our service serves us as well as others. That which uses us strengthens us. Over time, fixing and helping are draining, depleting. Over time we burn out. Service is renewing. When we serve, our work itself will sustain us.

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Service rests on the basic premise that the nature of life is sacred, that life is a holy mystery which has an unknown purpose. When we serve, we know that we belong to life and to that purpose. Fundamentally, helping, fixing and service are ways of seeing life. When you help you see life as weak, when you fix, you see life as broken. When you serve, you see life as whole. From the perspective of service, we are all connected: All suffering is like my suffering and all joy is like my joy. The impulse to serve emerges naturally and inevitably from this way of seeing.

Lastly, fixing and helping are the basis of curing, but not of healing. In 40 years of chronic illness I have been helped by many people and fixed by a great many others who did not recognize my wholeness. All that fixing and helping left me wounded in some important and fundamental ways. Only service heals. ■

Rachel Naomi Remen is one of the earliest pioneers in the mind/body holistic health movement and the first to recognize the role of the spirit in health and the recovery from illness. She is Co-Founder and Medical Director of the Commonweal Cancer Help Program featured in the Bill Moyers PBS series, Healing and the Mind and has cared for people with cancer and their families for almost 30 years.

She is also a nationally recognized medical reformer and educator who sees the practice of medicine as a spiritual path. In recognition of her work she has received several honorary degrees and has been invited to teach in medical schools and hospitals throughout the country. Her groundbreaking holistic curricula enable physicians at all levels of training to remember their calling and strengthen their commitment to serve life.

Dr. Remen is Clinical Professor of Family and Community Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine and Director of the innovative UCSF course The Healer's Art, which was recently featured in US News & World Report. She is Founder and Director of the Institute for the Study of Health and Illness, a ten-year-old professional development program for graduate physicians.

She is the author of the New York Times bestseller Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories That Heal, Riverhead Books, 1996. Her newest book, My Grandfather's Blessings: Stories of Strength, Refuge and Belonging, Riverhead Books, 2000, is a national bestseller. As a master story-teller and public speaker, she has spoken to thousands of people throughout the country, reminding them of the power of their humanity and the ability to use their lives to make a difference. Dr. Remen has a 48-year personal history of Crohn's disease and her work is a unique blend of the viewpoint of physician and patient.

www.rachelremen.com

"In the Service of Life" was adapted from a talk given at the Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS) fourth annual conference, "Open Heart, Open Mind" in San Diego, California, July 1995, and first appeared in *The Noetic Sciences Review* (No. 37, Spring 1996, pages 24-25) published by the IONS, and is reprinted with permission, all rights reserved. Copyright 1996.



Journey to Self in Ancient Ireland May 16-22, 2014



Join this sacred Journey to the passage tombs and standing stones of Newgrange, Nowth, and Dowth, ... to Carro-more and Carrowkeel... to Tara, Loughcrew . . . and to your Self!

For more information, contact Journey facilitator:

Phyllis Clay, PhD be email at synthesisintl@aol.com

Be mesmerized by the beauty of the land and awaken to your own beauty on this Journey to Self.



The *Group Alle Fonti* invites you to

AN INSPIRATIONAL LABORATORY AT THE WELLSPRING OF PSYCHOSYNTHESIS Fourth International Meeting at Casa Assagioli

Florence, 18 - 21 September 2014

This four-day meeting offers participants a unique opportunity to be inspired and nourished by the spirit and soulful energy of Roberto Assagioli, the founder of Psychosynthesis, directly in his home: Casa Assagioli, steeped in the history of his extraordinary approach, where he lived and worked, and where he met collaborators, students and people from all over the world.

Casa Assagioli is now home to the Istituto di Psicointesi and also houses the Assagioli Archives and Library, containing materials that will be available to participants for consultation and study.

Meeting other members of the international psychosynthesis community and exploring together the fascinating and precious notes, articles and books, creates a strong group encounter. This co-creative process will inspire and empower participants with ideas and visions and may evoke further development and collaboration.

Participants will be able to:

- discover more about Roberto Assagioli's life, the sources of his inspiration, the unfolding of his ideas, his spiritual background, and his intentions for the future;
- learn more about the unique structure of the Italian *Istituto di Psicointesi* as Assagioli had envisioned and created;
- explore and study in the archives and the library, have access to Assagioli's writings (many of them handwritten), drafts of his books, articles and presentations;
- reflect and meditate together, as well as individually, in the garden and in his study;
- share and discuss ideas, impressions and theory, with other participants, allowing insights, ideas and visions that have been “seeded,” to flower.

Organizers: Gruppo Eventi (Paola Marinelli, *Italy*, Livia Frischer, *Sweden*, Renate Baier, *Austria*, Rosella D'Amato, *Italy*), a section of the group *Alle Fonti*.

Making everything possible: *Gruppo Alle Fonti* [At the Wellspring]: A group of 12 experienced members of the *Istituto di Psicointesi*, working on a voluntary basis. The group has been involved with Casa Assagioli since 2006 and is responsible for preserving and cataloguing material in the archives and library of Roberto Assagioli. The section *Gruppo Eventi* is responsible for organizing different events in Casa Assagioli.

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Maximum number of participants: **20**

We regret that Casa Assagioli, being an old villa, does not have facilities for persons with disabilities (no elevator).

Requisites: in order to have a common background, participants need to be trained in psychosynthesis (not necessarily working as therapists) and have a good understanding of English.

Language: **English**. There will be no translation.

Schedule: September 18th: 10:00 am to 10:00 pm
 September 19th/20th: 9:30 am to 10:00 pm
 September 21st: 9:30 am to 3:00 pm approx.

Fee: **€ 350,00** including all activities and meals (vegetarian), cold and warm drinks.
Not included: accommodation and transportation

We offer a reduced fee for young people (under 30) and/or people coming from developing countries or under special circumstances. See application form.

Refunds: withdrawal **before** June 1st: € 100,00 refund; no refund for withdrawal after June 1st.

To apply for the Meeting (applications will be accepted in order of arrival, only if fully completed, and subject to receipt of payment):

- 1 – e-mail the application form to: ps.events@psicosintesi.it
- 2 – you will receive confirmation, together with instructions for payment
- 3 – participation will be confirmed after receipt of payment,
- 4 – then you can book your room.

Accommodation: we have *provisionally* reserved about 12 single and 5 double rooms for the group at Hotel Villa La Stella, within a 15-minute walk of the Casa Assagioli. **It is necessary for participants to make their own reservation with Villa La Stella best before April 30th**, as after that date rooms may not be available. (Please note that rooms are hard to find at this time in Florence).

N.B. prices including breakfast:
Single rooms € 60,00 per night
Shared double rooms € 45,00 per person

Reservations at Villa La Stella (by April 30th): please refer to the Istituto di Psicossintesi reservation for 18-21 September, calling or writing (don't do it through the Internet, you miss the discount given to the Istituto) to: www.villalastella.it mail: info@villalastella.it phone: +39 055 5088018

Please forward this invitation to your colleagues and friends!
Looking forward to meeting you in Florence,

Gruppo Eventi

To obtain an application email Phyllis Clay at synthesisintl@aol.com
or Paola Marinelli at paolamarinelli@tiscali.it

BodyWise



A Webinar-Style Mini-Conference Sponsored By
The Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis (AAP)

June 21, 2014

A primary audience that will be attracted to this webinar-style mini-conference, planned for June 21, 2014, is the existing AAP membership as well as practicing psychosynthesists, physicians, neuroscientists, psychologists, MFTs, LCSWs, nurses, coaches, bodyworkers, creative/expressive somatic arts professionals, yoga instructors and others who are curious about psychosynthesis and the body.

In the webinar style of Ted Talks we explore such questions as: Why is becoming "bodywise" important in the practical application of Psychosynthesis? What does neuroscience know about body memory and body language? If 80% of all communication is non-verbal, then what do we need to learn about body movement to become more "bodywise"? How is the body affected by emotional memory and stress-related conditions? How does the body conduct and inform mental patterns with emotions and vice-versa? Can we alter what how the body perceives mental messages from learned "hard-wired" brain patterns? Can brain/body/emotion patterns change and, if so, how? Can creative body movement like yoga and dance be used to stabilize neurological pathways? Learn about these topics and more by attending a three hour morning session with three speakers to include lessons from neuroscientists, body/mind/emotion practitioners, and body movement experts, who will teach us more about being "bodywise."

All psychosynthesis centers, dance centers, yoga centers, counseling, coaching, creative expressive arts and health-related centers are invited to gather together with colleagues for the morning session with an after-lunch practical application of what was learned during the BodyWise video conference. The morning session will offer 3 hours of CEUs and the optional afternoon session will offer another 3 hours of CEUs, as well as a chance to connect with colleagues who will continue the psychosynthesis connection. Centers will be provided with an outline of suggested applications resulting from the morning session offerings or they will be free to create their own applications within AAP guidelines if additional CEUs are desired.

Stay tuned as we announce the dynamic speaker selections—our aim is to astonish you! Start forming your center groups now. Watch for announcements of the availability of publicity packets to advertise the June 21, 2014 BodyWise Mini-Conference. Have a concurrent Summer Solstice Party! We have ideas for that too!

On behalf of the Conference Committee,
Dr. Ann Schafer

Think of this world as modelled at your whim,
Perfectly trimmed for you from east to west;
Yet know yourself a snowdrift on the sand
Heaped for two days or three, then thawed and gone.

—v.16 of *The Original Rubaiyyat of Omar Khayyam*
By Robert Graves and Omar Ali Shah



Falls near Nuwara Iliya, Sri Lanka
Photo by Judi White