

Psychosynthesis Quarterly

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This issue's theme:

Transforming Trauma and Addiction into
Recovery and Growth



The Psychosynthesis Quarterly is published by The Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis (AAP) four times a year in March, June, September and December. The AAP provides resources for people to cultivate peace and purpose. Our mission is to advance the theory and practice of psychosynthesis to benefit individuals and society.

The AAP was founded in 1995 and is a Massachusetts nonprofit corporation with tax exemption in the United States. AAP membership supports this publication and the other educational activities of AAP, including scholarships. Membership and donations are tax deductible in the United States.

The Psychosynthesis Quarterly accepts 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.

We hope our suggestion of from 250 to 1500 words may serve as a guideline that helps your writing. We prefer that you use the APA style guide when possible, for things like punctuation and references.

Announcements, book reviews, and upcoming events are also welcome, with a request that nonmembers who wish to submit **advertising** make a donation to AAP. To donate, [click here](#).

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**Special thanks to our
copy editors:**

**Ann McLaughlin
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Letter from our Guest Editor Jean Rhea

It has been such a privilege to guest edit the March issue of the Psychosynthesis Quarterly. As a newcomer to this opportunity, I witnessed the collaboration, commitment and persistence the team of editors, authors/writers/storytellers and artists all bring in making this journal possible. I especially want to thank Marjorie Gross for asking me to participate and for her continuous, invaluable support, gentle guidance and encouragement! I would also like to thank Didi Firman for reminding us of all the rich and available resources in our Psychosynthesis community regarding this very important work, Richard Schaub for providing his Vulnerability Model of Recovery, and Shama Currim's approach and resources of addiction and its connection to body, mind and spirit.

This edition's theme is "Transforming Trauma and Addiction into Recovery and Growth." The many contributors took this invitation to heart, courageously revealing their own powerful and touching experiences of trauma and addiction. From Cliff Ishigaki's survival from War, to Dawn Howard's experience of a tragic, family suicide and substance misuse. From Richard Lamb's incredible story of tragedy on a mountain and addiction, to Jodie Gale's eating disorder. Julie Teetsov shows us that a history of developmental and event-related trauma impacts us to the very structure and function of our body. From Joanne Dziekan's story and reminder of the Handless Maiden to Zachary Rapport's poetry of abandonment trauma. From Karin Hall's experience of transforming her own childhood ACE score of 4 into providing the 'love and genuine connection' as the true healing force.

Each contributor describes the empathic and transformational role that Psychosynthesis played as they each sought their paths to recover and grow. Most importantly, all contributors showed the journey of healing and transforming trauma and addiction is an international path to a new life as professionals, therapists, coaches, helpers and healers in support of guiding others on their own paths of transformation and growth.

As Roberto Assagioli states, "The true solution can be only a "rebirth," that is entering into a broader identification."

Thank you also to the AAP community and the steering committee members who continue to bring the legacy and richness of Psychosynthesis to the world! Perhaps more than ever in a world of increasing trauma and complexities where instant fixes often lead to even more disconnection, Psychosynthesis provides a precious and healing transpersonal roadmap to human connection, empathic love and healing synthesis.

With warmest blessings of peace,
Jean



Jean Rhea, LCMFT (KS), LMFT (CA) lives in Wichita, Kansas with her wife, Nicola, and their two labradoodles, Barclay and Bella. She is a graduate of the Institute of Trans Psychology (now Sofia University) where she met and trained with John Firman and Ann Gila at Psychosynthesis Palo Alto for a decade. Jean recently moved from the Bay Area where she was an Executive in both for-profit and non-profit Substance Abuse Treatment centers, a Clinical Director of one of San Francisco's largest faith-based, non-profit organizations and Adjunct Professor in the Graduate School of Psychology/Addiction Studies/MFT program. She now has a private practice in Wichita, is Director of Trauma Services at Bel Aire Recovery Center; writer, educator and motivational speaker. Psychosynthesis continues to be an important part of transforming her own journey of sexual violence and relationship with alcohol into recovery and growth - and as a guide to those she continues to serve.

TEDx/Place of Heart: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=av3DybCMwLo>

On the Threshold Deep into the Liminal

By Julie Clark

Escape from the Subliminal

I had asked for light to shine

Onto all these parts of mine

And my call for sweet relief

Violently awakened disbelief

What a loss for my naïve heart

I'd been deceived right from the start

And now it's time for me to grieve

The former life that I must leave

Now on to bury the paradigm

It's dirty work, and it takes time

And still it might not be too late

To turn around and shun my fate

But synchronicity is insisting strong

This was my path all along

I do my best to remain humble

Acutely aware of how I stumble

A determined warrior off to war

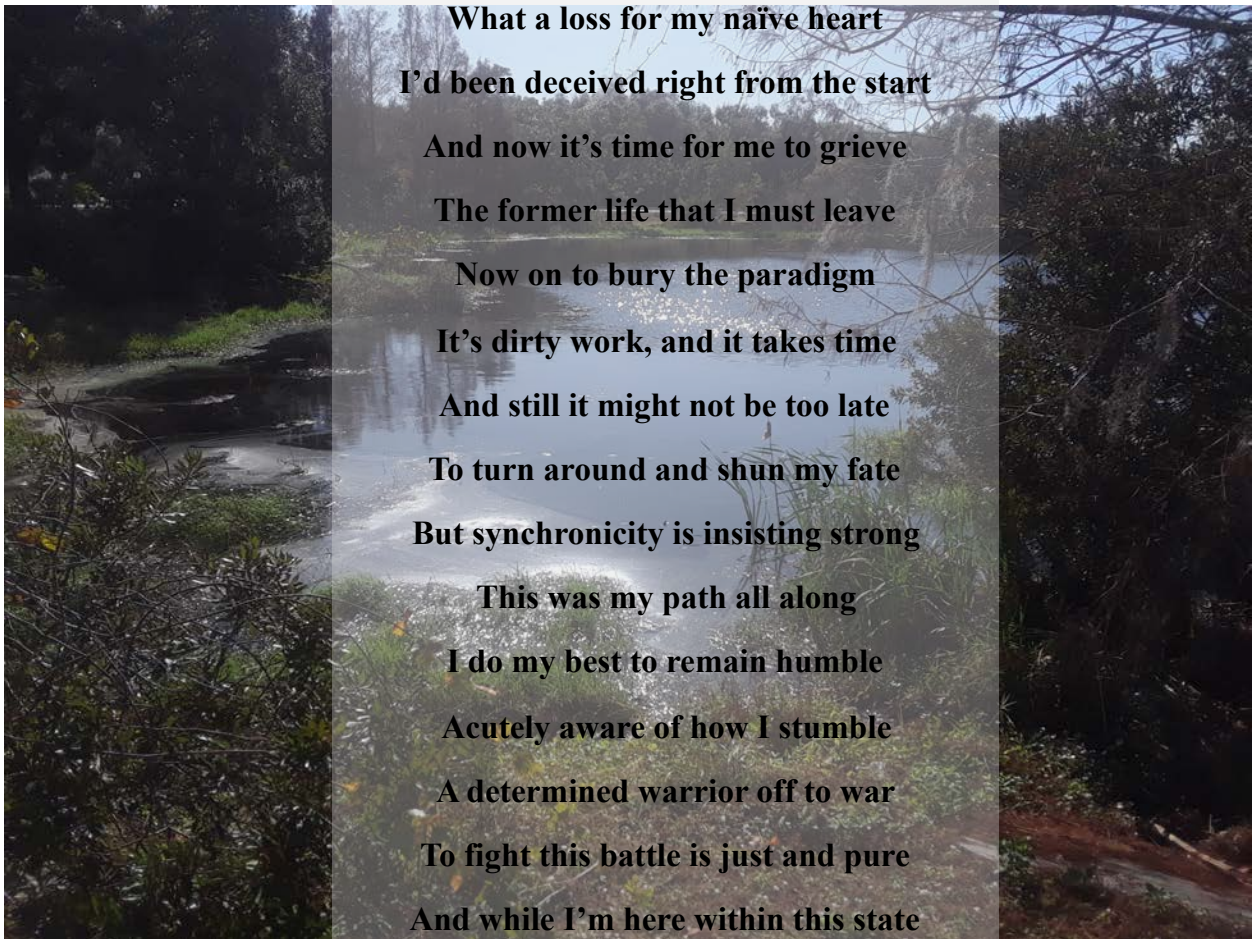
To fight this battle is just and pure

And while I'm here within this state

I stay mindful and contemplate

For the work I do to support this shift

I shall recognize as a sacred gift.



Awakening from Trauma

Writing this poem was a means to further process my state of transition. In this liminal space; this threshold between two worlds, I am shedding mindsets, patterns of action and belief systems that have been largely shaped by traumatic experiences from childhood. The thing about childhood trauma is, when not properly processed, it follows us into adulthood. It never disappears without work.

When I speak of escaping the subliminal, I'm referencing my departure from the ingrained beliefs instilled from my experiences growing up. I am waking up to truths that had been hidden, until recently, from my Field of Consciousness. I am NOT ugly. My worth is NOT dictated by my physical appearance. Verbal abuse, degradation, excessive criticism and passive aggression are NOT necessary tolls I need pay in exchange for sharing space and time with people. Physical and verbal attacks and aggression ARE atrocious, and crying from the pain is NOT an indication that I am "too sensitive."

My work with Indigenous Plant Medicines has shown me that exploring the painful, jagged and dark parts of my shadow can be a great catalyst for healing. Thus, I've learned to ask that light should shine onto all these parts of mine; all these parts that I've been unable to see until now. There was the Yin and Yang of having the above truths revealed. Having to accept that what I went through was not normal, was not just, was not *right*, had been agonizing. There was also sweet relief. This way of life was not, in fact, a life sentence.

Within this liminal space, there is much work to do, and it can be exhausting. No part of me wants to be bitter; I want to forgive. I want to have compassion, and I want to understand, not just intellectually, but on a SOUL level, that the pain that had been projected onto me was born out of the deep wounds, shame and heartache of those who had dealt it. I never want to deny or suppress the love that I have for the people who have hurt me; indeed I never could. I do not want to erase the good times from my memory either.

I am now charged with learning to establish appropriate boundaries, and to consistently enforce them. I must now practice listening to the whispers of Divine Guidance as she speaks to me through my bodily sensations, and to respond appropriately as I perceive energetic fluctuations in my internal and external environments. I am working out how to let go of feelings of unworthiness and social anxiety as I allow myself to interact with people who are kind, supportive, mature and grounded.

I am showing my "Anger over Injustice" Subpersonality love, kindness and warmth whenever starts to go on a tirade. I assure her that she has skills upon which my Higher Self will call should a need for forceful protection arise. I honor her anger, and remember to feel it fully, so that she may be heard.

I welcome my "I'm not Worthy" Subpersonality to join me in the present moment, and remind her that even those who she'd put onto pedestals experience uncertainty, imperfection and failures. I honor her fear and shame, and remember to feel them fully, so that she may be seen.

Awakening from trauma is a process. Injuries take time to heal. Emotions take time to process. New mindsets and emotional responses take time to become natural and flow effortlessly. It is good to honor our time spent in the liminal space; the threshold between two worlds. It is the school that trains us to effectively transition from helpless victim to humble victor.

Julie Clark, BCC
Grateful Founder of Cosmic
Warrior Wisdom, LLC
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Julie Clark is a fellow Cosmic Warrior. She is a Board Certified Coach and specializes in Psychospiritual Coaching. Julie's training, certifications and special skills include Psychedelic Medicine Integration, Psychosynthesis, Living Foods Preparation, Addiction Recovery Coaching and she is fluent in Spanish. Julie works with individuals, coaches in group settings, and facilitates workshops for personal and spiritual growth, empowerment and connection with the Divine.



The Vulnerability Model of Recovery

By Richard Schaub, PhD, and Bonney Gulino Schaub, RN, MS

At an Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meeting one night, a man told such a profound emotional truth that everyone at the meeting roared with laughter. What did he say? “By the time I got to kindergarten, I knew I needed a drink.”

He was referring to the feelings of underlying vulnerability that drive people to find a “medicine” to get rid of that feeling: vulnerability and sensitivity are replaced, via drugs and drinking, with numbness. There are AA phrases which refer to this trouble with vulnerable feelings: “Everything gets to me;” “I don’t have a heat shield;” “I’m too thin-skinned;” “When they handed out the book on how to live, I didn’t get one.”

When people realize that their “medicine” (alcohol, heroin, amphetamines, cocaine, opioids, etc.) is slowly destroying their life, they may turn toward recovery and again confront the vulnerable feelings that drove their addiction in the first place. While there is professional dispute over whether or not addiction is a disease entity, there is consistency about the key part of the recovery process: learning new responses to old feelings.

To help with this, the authors collaborated years ago with Richard Harnett, an addictions specialist in the Hazelden Treatment Center in New York City. Richard was drawn to both the psychological insight and the spiritual developmental path inherent in psychosynthesis. Together, we formulated a simple but elegant teaching tool to pass on to our private practice patients and to his patients at the center.

The model was a triangle. From a psychosynthesis perspective, you could say it was a sub-personality map. The triangle consisted of

the Inner Child, the Inner Critic and the Inner Addict. The purpose of the triangle model is to emphasize that they are in dynamic interaction with each other.

The Inner Child represents the vulnerable feelings that every human being has their entire life, regardless of how they present themselves on the exterior.

The Inner Critic represents the interior criticisms and judgments toward the vulnerability of the Inner Child. As one person in recovery put it, “I really needed the job and I was doing well at the final interview until my mind told me I was a lying piece of crap.” The Inner Critic consists primarily of negative opinions told to us as children by others - *What’s wrong with you? Who do you think you are? You’re no good* – along with societal pressures to be a winner/success and not a loser/failure. At the deeper unconscious level, the Inner Critic is actually frightened by life, lives in a state of vigilance and anxiety, has no answers, and ineffectively lashes out at the self. In modern neuroscience terms, the Inner Critic is a function of the fear center of the brain.

The third element of the triangle, the Inner Addict, has an “answer” to block both the Inner Child and the Inner Critic: take some “medicine” and get rid of this tension, these feelings, these challenges to being in the world. Numb yourself to your reality.

Using this model for people in recovery, the task is to replace the guaranteed-to-fail Inner Addict with a more effective, healthier response to the Inner Child and the Inner Critic. In the triangle model, what should be the new third point to improve the dynamics of the Inner Child and the Inner Critic?

While being both praised and criticized for being a spiritual mental health movement, AA offers an answer by substituting the Inner Addict's insane "answer" with a concept of a *higher power* that can *restore us to sanity*. In other words, there is a higher power that can guide the Inner Child and the Inner Critic to calm down and feel safer in this world. AA keeps the spiritual higher power concept both open and vague, suggesting such understandings as "God as we understand God." In our experience, many people in recovery through AA like the concept of the higher power but have no direct experience of it. For some, the psychosynthesis imagery of the higher self or inner wisdom gave them for the first time an experiential sense of "higher" guidance. Neuroscience is now beginning to talk about the "oneness" center of the higher brain, and this may prove to be a way to scientifically legitimize the higher power or higher self concepts.

We use the simple but profound formula of *consciousness and choice* espoused by Roberto Assagioli. Once the patient finds a new way to respond to their vulnerability (their Inner Child), their Inner Critic can relax and not get so panicky or angered about their vulnerable feelings. Consciousness and choice is a set of inner skills that 1) notices the vulnerable feelings and notices the critical reactivity, 2) chooses how to treat them, 3) has the skills (such as meditation, self talk, relaxation practices, physical movement) to reduce the level of both vulnerability and reactivity.

But vulnerability never goes away. It is our human condition. From that view, not only people in recovery but every single one of us is looking for a way to be in harmony with life as life is. We all have an Inner Child and an Inner Critic. We all need a third point on the triangle that helps us. The journey is to find out what does.

Bio: *The Vulnerability Model [VM] was originally developed by Bonney Gulino Schaub and Richard Schaub in the early 1980s. It became a way to bring Assagioli's transpersonal vision into mainstream healthcare. It has been taught to health practitioners working in hospitals, clinics, substance misuse and physical rehabilitation centers. It became part of a federal grant from the Veterans Administration units working with veterans in treatment for addiction and PTSD and also received a federal grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to work with their employees. The VM was also taught at psychosynthesis institutes internationally in Florence, Venice, Munich, Amsterdam, Stockholm, Toronto, Montreal and in their hometown of New York. It has since been expanded by other professionals. The model is integrated into the Schaub's book, Transpersonal Development: Cultivating the Inner Resources of Peace, Wisdom, Purpose and Oneness, which now serves as one of the texts in their Huntington Meditation and Imagery Center trainings.*



Unblocking the River Within

By Richard Lamb

Since following the Call of Self back in 2010, involving a journey of self-discovery that brought me to Psychosynthesis Coaching and Hypnotherapy, I've worked with a growing number of people who, at some point in their lives, sustained trauma of varying degrees. You'll find that trauma (and PTSD, its "complex" variant) is a pretty common experience in the 21st century and can come about at any age.

A couple of examples might help to illuminate this. The first is a client, the second, me. On working through the details of a performance-related target shooting goal, the space between the client and I seemed heavy with an embodied, physical energy, radiating from the client as he described his most recent attempt at resolving an emotional block when he was mid-flow in a tournament. His voice began trailing off, and I noticed a youthful turn to his speech, a little too vulnerable for a man I knew to be very matter of fact about his emotions. It seemed to me that he'd been transported to a time in his childhood where his father paid him scant attention for his then-budding county swimming career. The flow of his embodied vitality was blocked, like the blocking of a river, preventing life further downstream from receiving the much-needed nutrients of the past.

Maintaining conscious focus to be fully present, I listened intently. The simple act of acknowledging his psychological pain invoked by the traumatic flashback opened a door to accessing deep inner resources of emotional resilience and perseverance he didn't believe he possessed. For a brief time the client didn't believe such long-term indifference to his hopes and dreams could have affected him so deeply, and yet, over the course of the work, he came to recognize, accept and transcend those inner limitations.

By supporting his own inner growth through inspecting those childhood memories (which included physical abuse, on top of the emotional), and by reconnecting his experience somatically through the body, he was able to move forward.

This scene isn't likely to be unfamiliar to many Psychosynthesis practitioners whose clients have experienced trauma in some form. To be is to suffer, and through that suffering we come to know reality more clearly, honestly and with integrity. Holding the Egg in awareness, the sources - and solutions - to trauma lie in lower as well as higher unconscious. So by entering the "basement" and the "loft," we gain access to resources made accessible through the body. It is encouraging to note that a number of coaching authors have engaged the challenge of coaching through the body, such as Richard Strozzi-Heckler's *The Art of Somatic Coaching: Embodying Skillful Action, Wisdom, and Compassion* (2014) and Eunice Aquilina's *Embodying Authenticity: A Somatic Path to Transforming Self, Team & Organisation* (2016).

Sometimes we may, out of necessity for the individual's intention to realize their goals, be required to enter the basement of the Lower Unconscious in order for them to acknowledge the potential wholeness of their experience (and so explore their inherent, unique greatness). It needs to be made clear that some material is better suited for psychotherapy and that the Lower Unconscious work, i.e., "working in the basement," is perfectly appropriate in coaching when it is not the only identification, and when the client has access to a disidentified self.

My own journey really began in late February 2001 on the icy slopes of Ben Nevis in Scotland, when I survived a winter mountaineering fall from a beautiful, exposed 600 meter long route called Tower Ridge, killing my climbing partner

and leaving me to freeze overnight with significantly disabling and lifelong injuries. The physical injuries were, over time, recognized for what they are, decisions made on a way forward based on an awareness of my limitations and capabilities, together with application of strong, skillful and good will (in hindsight) in re-forging a new life from the wreckage of the old.

However, the psychological injuries, the “wounds to the soul,” are more often than not quietly sidelined. I sustained disorienting episodes of extreme anger and outrage to despondency and the blackest despair. It was during such later episodes that the “I” that is me (what in time I came to understand as dominated by Survival Personality) began recognizing and accepting the presence of a very quiet, yet insistent voice within. I acknowledged and acted on those inner messages and dreams, embodied intuitions and emotions, and embarked on a concerted program of hypnotherapy, counseling, stress reduction methods (which included self-guided imagery techniques I later encountered during my introduction to Psychosynthesis in 2011), reflecting on my own waking inner processes and dreams through journaling, voraciously studied psychology and its application to recovery from trauma.

In June of 2004, I followed the Call of Self in planning to return and re-climb Tower Ridge on the Scottish mountain of Ben Nevis. I had been climbing this beautiful granite ridge line on February 24, 2001, which I had fallen from with a fellow climber, Neil Stoodley, who was killed during that terrifying fall. We fell over 650 ft., where I sustained serious and multiple injuries to my head and both legs. As a result of the fall and overnight stay in temperatures exceeding 10 degrees Celsius, most of my fingers were removed due to 3rd degree frostbite, while the injuries to the legs required a below-knee amputation of the right leg, and resetting of the dislocated and broken left ankle. Three and one-half months later in mid-June, I walked out of the hospital and on a new path: Learning how to

walk, to use my hands again (I lost all the fingers and most of the thumb of my preferred right hand, and over half those on the left); Learning how to write (and use chopsticks) again was one of many humbling, testing, and illuminating goals. The psychological journey was no less challenging, as I learned that exploring the basement of the Lower Unconscious helped me understand, move through and beyond the fears and memories of that day in February 2001.

So I set myself a ‘fulfillment goal’ of reaching the summit cairn, where I imagined myself beside the cairn of stones, in good order and in good company, surrounded by supportive friends, clutching a victory cigar in one hand and a small dram of Scottish whiskey in the other to celebrate! Without realizing I had done so, I set ‘balance’ and ‘process’ goals supporting this fulfillment goal, and in June 2004, I found myself standing at the foot of the first section of the climb up the ridge, a little edgy though grounded and fully present with my experience. It was not until I reached the start of the narrow stone bridge-like formation out to Tower Gap, no more than 30 meters from the summit, that I was fully confronted by the “wounds to the soul” I had sustained that bitterly cold night in February 2001.

My body shook almost uncontrollably in that warm June air, as I shuffled across the natural bridge to Tower Gap on all fours, where I had to set up a belay for my climbing partner— and local mountain rescue team member, Mike— to follow me across the gap. I remained with these difficult experiences, focusing my awareness on each body area in turn, being present with those sensations, while acknowledging the beauty of my environment, my slowing thoughts, my steadying emotions, my natural desire to be anywhere else but where I was, until I was able, in my own time, to continue with the rest of the climb.

The feeling of working through how my body responded, of the “fight or flight” sensations I felt, led me to the summit cairn, to my goal; and

to a realization. Having read *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma*, by Dr Peter Levine during the months of preparation for the climb, I understood first-hand how our deepest, instinctual, primeval responses to threat were anchored in our bodies: how we process our physical sensations, and the links to the other five psychological functions seemed to be a key. The physical shaking I experienced in re-climbing Tower Ridge was a closing of a primeval survival loop that had been running, almost without end, from March 2001 to the day of the climb in June 2004.

Speaking now as a Coach and Hypnotherapist, it is my view that Psychosynthesis-trained coaches are in an almost unique position to work with self-actualizing people who present trauma as part of their life's journey.

It is this facet of the 'Work within the Work' that I felt drawn to, as part of answering the Call of Self, that warm summer's day in 2004. The unblocking of the flow of that deep - and high - river restores nutrients to the Soul.



"I'm from England, UK, working full-time as a Psychosynthesis/Transpersonal Coach and Hypnotherapist, working with people in a 'Life Transitions Coaching' context for the past c.4 years.

I live in Nottingham in the Midlands, and I've been subjected to the usual suite of Robin Hood puns. So that's the semi-professional intro out of the way, time for some extras.

My previous career in IT as a business consultant for 12 years, since late 2005, and before making that career choice, I was a post-graduate

researcher in ancient environmental and climate change.

My background prior to that was in (mainly) prehistoric field archaeology, with a big helping of human evolution/paleontology. I loved the research work, especially the field work, as I was (note the was) a mountaineer. Turning a little serious for a moment, I took a pretty big tumble off Ben Nevis, Scotland, in February

2001; I've come to term this event as the 'Call to Self', my deeply personal, visceral "initiatory event".

Surviving that c.800 ft fall planted the seed for the continuing evolutionary path which led me to Psychosynthesis, central to my coming to terms with that life-transforming day and its consequences, and ultimately bringing me into contact with others as a Guide (an relatively recent identification that has at times a curiously numinous quality).

My 'journey' with Psychosynthesis began without my even knowing of the existence of Assagioli's 'framework of becoming', through being drawn to Carl Jung's work, and Depth Psychology in general, in the Spring of 2012. I took a 5-day introduction to Psychosynthesis with the Psychosynthesis & Education Trust in London, and afterwards took a quiet step back from Psychosynthesis. I wasn't aware that life coaching had a transpersonal element - despite naturally integrating guided imagery approaches as part of my work with clients - so when I discovered that life coaching formed part of this year's International Conference in Psychosynthesis' agenda, I took a chance...more a leap of faith...booked my place, a flight and a hotel room, and trusted.

It was in Sicily in 2016 that I met Didi and Jon, together with a whole bunch of like-minded folks, and took another leap of faith on the journey, to sign up to the Synthesis Center's Transformational Life Coaching Program." Since then I have certified, and integrate Psychosynthesis throughout all my work with fellow Travelers, in honoring their own Call of Self.

*Besides my evolving Psychosynthesis practice, I have begun co-leading on one of the Synthesis Center's coaching programs, and am currently facilitating an online peer discussion group, **Evoking Presence, Exploring Purpose: Unfolding the "I-space" in Service of Self.***

A couple quotes that really resonate right now, from seriousness to lightness:

"Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back-- Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth that ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamed would have come his way. Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now."

~ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

*"To do is to be" - Nietzsche
"To be is to do" - Kant
"Do be do be do" - Sinatra*

Addiction and its Connection to Body, Mind, and Spirit

By Shama Currim PhD

Addiction seems to be the human way of dealing with extremes. This dependency is a craving for something, a repetitive pattern of trying to remove ourselves, from trauma and the pain of living. Wikipedia refers to addiction as a brain disorder characterized by compulsive engagement in rewarding stimuli despite adverse consequences.¹ They remind us that the core pathology that drives the development and maintenance of the addiction is intrinsically rewarding.

While some people seem to have the ability to adapt to extremes, others find it rather impossible to move forward. The levels of trauma, as well as our ability to cope, play into our addictive patterns. Psychosynthesis reminds us that we are a triad: body, mind, and soul, and that all components of this human existence need to be considered in order to reach a stage of healed health and conscious living.

Roberto Assagioli reminds us that:

"Psychosynthesis ought really to be called "biopsychosynthesis," thereby including the body in a complete synthesis of the human personality. The continuous reciprocal interrelation between the body and the psyche is already generally accepted. The whole of psychosomatic medicine is based on this fact. There are certain psychotherapists who do not sufficiently consider the physical aspects of the personality and the reciprocal influences existing between these aspects and the other psychological functions. A healthy human body is an admirable example of biopsychosynthesis: a

harmonious synthesis of many different and opposing functions. Thus, the way a body is functioning can reciprocally illustrate how the mind is functioning. The dual influence of the body on the mind obviously indicates that the human being operates from both these spheres and that we ought to work on both sides (Assagioli, 1966).²

In his paper on *The Body in the Process of Psychosynthesis*, Massimo Rosselli speaks to the three fundamental stages of the biopsychosynthetic process: know yourself, own yourself, and transform yourself (Rosselli, 2000).³ He describes this as the act of working on, with, and through the body, becoming aware of and analyzing where the body is, and reconstructing the personality through centering and mastering. Transforming requires one to be present in the body, which houses our essence. In order to go beyond it, we must be aligned and fully embodied. Rosselli speaks to the body as being the seat of past memory, the affirmation of full presence and of future potential, the understanding that 'the body never lies'. The re-owning of the body in our transition to wholeness is necessary in order to reach the unity of childhood, or 'becoming again like children'.⁴

Complex psychological trauma is a term currently found in the DSMV. It refers to the impact of chronic and/or childhood attachment abuse, referring to the youngest age at which the first traumatic event occurred.

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Addiction>

² Assagioli, R. (1966). Knightsbridge Hotel talk (unpublished manuscript). Firenze: Istituto di Psiconsintesi

³ Rosselli, M. (2000) An introduction to psychosynthesis. Firenze: Istituto di Psicosintesi

⁴ Van Der Hart, O., Nijenhuis, E.R.S., & Steele K., *The Haunted Self, Structural Dissociation and the Treatment of Chronic Traumatization*, 2006, W.W.Norton and Company, New York

The degree of dissociation is closely connected to the intensity, as well as the longevity of trauma, and the betrayal of an attachment figure. ⁵

Najavits and Walsh did a study on dissociation and substance abuse. In it they found that the high-dissociation group was consistently more impaired than the low-dissociation group, with stronger expectation that substances could manage their psychiatric symptoms. ⁶

People take drugs and alcohol (DA) for the range of pleasant effects produced. DA can inhibit anxiety or the feelings of stress, or help individuals to lose their inhibitions. DA distorts the user's perception and blocks off all sensation, and blurs memory. Unfortunately, the use of drugs and alcohol wear off and eventually require more and more stimulus for the needed affect. Many see addiction as a disease from which it becomes more and more difficult to disengage, thereby losing its initial attraction.

Addiction is not only a body/mind connection; it is also a spiritual malady. Boucher, a registered nurse who has helped women overcome alcoholism for the past 28 years, states that people are just trying to fill the hole of the soul. Even Alcoholics Anonymous emphasizes a spiritual awakening as a necessary step in breaking free from alcohol's grip. ⁷ In a letter to Bill W. in 1961, Jung stated that "craving for alcohol is the equivalent, on a low level, of the spiritual thirst of our being for wholeness." ⁸

How Meditation Conquers Addiction

Meditation has been valued in the East for centuries as beneficial to physical, mental, and spiritual health. Once touched by this inner force, we undergo a profound transformation. We

experience improved health of the body, mind, heart, and soul. ⁹

1. *Meditation Gives Us A Natural High*
The prefrontal cortex is stimulated during intoxication and incredibly under-active during withdrawal. Meditators have significantly more neural density, cortical thickness, and overall activity within their prefrontal cortexes. Meditation releases endorphins, a pleasurable natural brain chemical.
2. *Meditation Elicits The Same Brainwaves That Doctors Use To Treat Addiction*
Alpha and theta brainwaves are naturally elicited during a meditative state.
3. *Meditation Moves You Past The Pattern of Urges*
Meditation works not by suppression (which makes things worse) — but by allowing the mind to simply step aside from the waterfall of addictive thoughts. The meditative mind neutrally observes the coming and going of urges and cravings in a very unemotional and detached way.
4. *Getting Our "Fix" Naturally*
Dopamine levels of meditators is high and remain at this optimal level
5. *Meditation Is "6 Times More Effective" Than Traditional Drug Treatment*
A 2006 study by University of Washington researchers found that inmates who practiced meditation for 3 months drank 87% less alcohol, and used 89% less marijuana which was 6 times

⁵ Ed. Courtois, C.A., & Ford J.D., *Treating Complex Traumatic Stress Disorders* Scientific Foundations and Therapeutic Models, 2009 The Guilford Press, New York,

⁶ Najavits, Lisa M, PhD; Walsh, Marybeth, BA: *Dissociation, PTSD, and Substance Abuse: An Empirical Study*, *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, Volume 13, 2012 - Issue 1

⁷ https://www.theepochtimes.com/addiction-a-disease-of-the-soul_2368160.html

⁸ https://www.silkworth.net/pages/aahistory/general/carljung_billw013061.php

⁹ Singh, Rajinder: *Meditation As Medication for the Soul*, 2012, Radiance Pub, Lisle, IL

more effective than the control group's more traditional chemical dependency treatment plan.

6. *Most Addictions Stem From Stress*
Meditation transforms the central nervous system and brain, shifting the body chemistry out of "fight or flight" survival mode.
7. *Meditation Fixes The Deep Rooted Reasons For Addiction*
Meditation is the act of living consciously. It puts you face to face with all that is disharmonious in your life

(especially addiction), and brings everything back into harmony. ¹⁰

Why some people find it easier to fall into an addictive pattern depends on their personal history and body/mind/soul connection. How they begin the journey back to balance and a healed sense of being depends on their motivation, their ability to elicit change in their lives, their willingness to surrender, and their support system. Meditation has been proven to be an excellent tool to overcoming the addiction pattern.



Shamai Currim, PhD, lives in Montreal, Quebec, Canada with her children, grandchildren, dogs, and grandkitties. She is a graduate of Psychosynthesis Pathways of Montreal and has served for many years, in many varied positions, on the Steering Committee of the Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis. She is a retired psychotherapist, educator, and educational consultant and has done volunteer work in hospice and home care services, prisons, and senior's residences. She continues to support the community of people who have lived through extreme abuse.

Shamai is now immersed in the arts and has had her work displayed in many local shows. She is a professional, BOD member of her local art association and encourages her children and grandchildren to be their most creative selves.

Shamai has presented at numerous conferences, has been published in many peer review journals, and is the author of Meaghan's Story.

¹⁰ <https://eocinstitute.org/meditation/7-reasons-meditation-can-naturally-beat-addiction/>

Recovering the Self

By Cliff Ishigaki

I had heart surgery recently. I wasn't there for it. The miracle of anesthesia prevented me from experiencing an invasion of my body and heart. The only telltale clue of what occurred was the sore throat from the breathing tube. For more than a few days I marveled at not remembering a trauma to my body.

What a stark contrast to the body's recall of any deprivation, abuse, invasion or threat to safety that so many of us carry over our lifetimes.

When I joined a Psychosynthesis training group in the early 1970s I was part of a predominantly white women's group of holistic seekers. We worked under the watchful eye of a wonderful instructor, Edith Stauffer. Over the years of training until my certification as a trainer I wondered why I continued to carry a deep unease in myself?

During those years of training we dealt with what we might view as normal neurosis through subpersonality work and withdrawing energy from unwanted complexes. I was beginning to feel like the class symbol of the 'resistant masculine' out of touch with his feelings. I had managed to avoid talking about my tour as a Marine Officer in Vietnam and the darkness that lived within me.

Things changed. I co-taught with my colleague Vivian King at the Pasadena Psychosynthesis Center for some years after I became a trainer. Vivian died after a long coma, assisted care and final decision to pass. I was crushed, retreated from the Psychosynthesis community and was taken in by the Veterans Administration. It was there that I found others were carrying a condition called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Psychosynthesis has much to offer this world. However, it must update itself -- trauma and addictions are part of the world and not a subpopulation on the edge of Psychosynthesis work.

Every human being has been affected by feeling unsafe in their life. We now know that when this happens changes in the brain take effect immediately. We even shift nervous systems within ourselves. The result is that for many of us we live in the context of an unsafe world. It is near impossible at times to attain to the subtle realms when we are preoccupied with physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and relationship threats both overt and covert.

I could not reach for joy when I searched in vain for some 'relief' from an unsafe world. Terror and rage are substitutes for normal emotions.

In this brief time together let me share some observations that are not only relevant to addictions and trauma recovery but to our work in general on ourselves and with others. It may be helpful to view this in the format of body, emotions, mind, spirit and relationships.

Body

It took until 1983 for the clinical community to give a name to this reality called PTSD. The current usage is now PTS since the 'Disorder' nomenclature bodes ill for anyone labelled.

Through the countless studies done on the brain we now recognize that all human beings subject to a threat to their 'safety' will revert to a different part of the brain to control their destiny. Regardless whether one has been in combat or a combative family of origin the brain automatically engages the 'reptilian' brain. It only 'thinks' in terms of 'life or death.' And it only allows choices between running, freezing or fighting to guarantee surviving.

Translated into human behavior we use the terms: 'loner,' 'pleaser,' or 'controller' to work with these 'subintincts' that are more powerful than 'subpersonalities.' When the reptilian brain is engaged, we literally shift nervous systems from parasympathetic to sympathetic and with that our bodies no longer are available for normal

functioning. Serotonin levels plunge, cortisol levels rise, digestion ceases, adrenaline soars, etc.

The necessity to restore serotonin levels has been at the heart of psychotropic medications for decades now but we are now understanding why it's essential to restore this brain chemical for normal thought functioning in clients. Stress will erode normal levels of serotonin and slowly we will not be able to 'think things through.' There are natural supplements such as Holy Basil or the amino acid Theanine, as well as prescribed medications, that can supplement our body's production of serotonin.

We also need to recognize evolution's desire for wholeness via the reptilian brain. In giving us three possible options to preserve our life at any cost, what if we carry only one or two of these as instincts in our life. We can see that a child cannot afford to use the 'fight' instinct within a family of origin so it must withdraw that instinct and rely on the loner or pleaser 'subinstinct' to navigate its safety needs.

When we follow that child into adulthood, we may find that the reptilian brain still does not have access to that instinct of fighting to survive. Part of the healing process is to bring back a whole reptilian brain to a person. There are times as a child or an adult where we need to feel that primal sense of self-respect and not rely on the more abstract sense of dignity taught as a principle in a classroom, or in guided visualization -- it remains abstract.

In our work with veterans and civilians there is constant work of making whole even the reptilian brain in ourselves. We work to support and reclaim that part of us that can stand up for our self as well as the part that knows there are limits and give ourselves permission to say 'this is enough' and not go further. We are designed for total reality as befits total spirituality.

I would recommend as required reading the book: *The Body Keeps the Score* by Dr. Bessel van der Kolk. Nature has embedded protection systems into us that must be understood or we detour around them and out of misunderstanding promote transcendence of the self prematurely.

Emotions and Feelings

When the body is governed by the reptilian centers of the brain our access to emotions and feelings are limited to two: 'terror' or 'rage.'

Because the reptilian brain only sees a life and death struggle occurring for us, the body is primed to support only these two emotions. Normal disagreements disappear and only a death struggle ensues between even intimate partners. There is only one right or one wrong, one winner and one loser. The goal I place in front of military and civilian clients for their recovery work is that we aim to become 'grumpy.' When we can experience stress and translate that into normal feelings of 'anger' or 'fear' we have made the return from the reptile kingdom to the mammalian kingdom and as humans we can manage ourselves and our world. No one can manage a life and death zone of terror and rage.

The reptilian brain closes off access to normal sensations so in the process of stabilizing our emotions and feelings we must regain our sensations again. Early in veterans treatment programs our group therapist would become so frustrated with us because we couldn't report on our feelings during therapy. She did not recognize that we had to shut down emotions and feelings by shutting off the sensations that accompany them. When surviving involves numbing it prevents the consequences of feelings and it becomes the basis for addictions as well. Regaining access to sensations, impulses and desires and emotions and feelings are one half of Roberto Assagioli's psychological functions of the personal self.

In the early days of training I was curious why many Psychosynthesis students tended to be more mentally identified in their approach to the work. We did not spend much time below the neck in those early days of training.

Mind

When addictions and trauma have shifted us to see only the life and death world of the reptilian brain, our sympathetic nervous system sees only a polarized world. We are either going to 'win' or 'lose,' be 'strong or weak,' 'good or bad,' 'right or

wrong.’ The 12-Step Program refers to this as ‘black and white thinking.’ We see it as evidence that there is stuckness in the brain. We must recognize that no thought or belief or attitude in the mind is up for negotiation. It is entirely built on survival or some form of death.

Spirit

The spiritual or value-based side of ourselves are a primary casualty of our struggles. Too many times we have been the ‘losers’ or ‘bad’ ones or ‘wrong’ ones and we carry the stain of shame on our spirit. There is no antidote to shame except through heroism or perfectionism to the injured human. If we cannot prove ourselves exceptional or meet our internal requirements for flawless living, we live with the stain of reptilian death -- shame. In the 12-Step Programs the whole movement of recovery aims to move us from shame-based to guilt-based. We cannot make an amends if we are stuck in shame.

Relationships

For movement to take place by ourselves or with others we must learn to stabilize. There can be no personal self or contact with the Higher Self if there is no stabilization. This is an absolute stage of work under all circumstances of our life. Traumas and addictions simply underscore this necessary part of all life and conscious evolution. If we cannot learn to disidentify from the reptilian system and stabilize our body, emotions and feelings, mind and spirit, we will remain caught in that black and white world of survival living.

We often must ask: ‘*who is speaking?*’ When we can identify the non-survivor within us, we can begin to manage our lives and live as *grumpy* and functional humans. To those amongst us who have been a part of violence, there is nothing more sublime than the experience of managing our lives now. This is not to lessen the sublime of the transpersonal reaches -- for many, the path of Psychosynthesis must first find a home in personal synthesis.

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Transforming Trauma and Addiction into Recovery and Growth

By Joanna A. Dziekan, iPEC, AHA

Story to Heal the Wounded Feminine



Myths and stories are an incredible source of the knowledge about the human psyche. In my personal experience the most powerful story that I not only recognized as an archetypal

structure in my life but also as visions shared with me by the clients that I had a privilege to talk to, is the story by Brothers Grimm called *The Handless Maiden*.

The Handless Maiden is a tale that talks about a girl whose father sells to the devil in exchange for a better life. During the 'transaction' her hands are chopped off and she is sent to the forest in search of healing. Robert A. Johnson, Jungian analyst, proposes that this myth is the story about the wounded feeling function, in which the girl (maiden) represents our soul and parents – our leaders.

Wounded feeling function is one of the most dangerous wounds in the Western culture. This wound is so common that it became a norm and most people do not see it as a problem. The presence of this wound causes people to miss the experience of the most precious human faculty, which is the ability to 'sense value and worth' (Johnson, 1993). This wound represents a feminine aspect of the psyche in both women and men. In everyday life it expresses itself as hopelessness and inability to feel, touch or hold anyone close to our own hearts.

Modern world in all its sophistication is not free from heartbreaking crimes, wars and events that bring deep traumas to people. So, when an already wounded psyche is exposed to hurtful events, she tends to further withdraw into the subconsciousness, causing ties with deep instinctual levels to no longer be available. The emotional energy released during such experiences becomes frozen in the time and space of the event, haunting the person for years, with many psychological and physical problems. When that takes place, we end up living in an emotional poverty, stuck in the head, disconnected from feelings and from the body. Life is experienced as suffering where our inner pain is inflicted on to others.

So, how can we heal that wound?

Before you move forward reading this, please understand that I'm not trying to convince you that trauma is a good thing, because that is not the case. What I'm asking you to become open to, is the idea that the impact of trauma might bring surprising effects. As much as it might sound counterintuitive, as soon as the inner relationship with the traumatic event shifted, I witnessed incredible transformations. What once looked like a dark, painful, damaging, experience was transformed as soon as we allowed our psyche to guide us. The road through the 'dark inner forest' might become the cure for our wounded feeling function. This is the moment when the hands of our wounded psyche mysteriously grow back.

Carl Jung's (1980) primary dictum was 'in filth it will be found', which in terms of psychotherapy and spiritual development can be seen as the acknowledgment that within the confines of everyone's experience (in both the conscious and unconscious minds) there exists forgotten and repressed aspects of the self that will leave us stuck in our development. However, if we are brave enough to encounter them, we will be able to redeem them and unite them with the reminder of our personality and consequently it will make

us stronger. In other words, the journey into the inner world can help us to become whole.

To this day, I recall warm tears on my cheeks when finally, I became ready, and I found myself standing unguarded in the presence of my suffering. No judgment, no resentment just peaceful witnessing of what is. I knew that something more powerful than my conscious 'I' is supporting this experience. I felt like time stood still and out of the darkest corners of my being someone is looking at me. Endless eyes of all wounded aspects of myself. In all shapes and forms, traumas of my life started to come out. Slowly and hesitantly at first, unsure what to expect. They knew that they are causing pain and turmoil in my everyday life but, deep down, all they asked for was to be accepted and loved. To be held in the peacefulness and compassion of my being. To be forgiven and released from the duties that made them tired. The growing feeling of inner peace and loving acceptance reached the point when I took a deep breath. The breath that felt like the entire Universe within became filled with warm, loving life washing away my pain.

Was I able to 'expand the personal consciousness into that of the Self; to reach up, following the thread to the star; to unite the lower and the higher Self' (Sorensen, 2019)? Or, did I experience what Roberto Assagioli described as 'the opening of the channel between the conscious and the superconscious levels, between the ego and the Self, and the flood of light, joy and energy which follows, often produces a wonderful release' (Sorensen, 2019)? Did my wound heal? In the original story, the hands of the maiden grow back after she puts her stumps into the river – the river of life. From now on, she 'takes life in her hands.' I believe I experienced what Roberto Assagioli explained: opening the channel between conscious and the superconscious levels uniting the lower and the higher Self. And by 'reaching up to the star', my spiritual hands grew back. My feeling function wound healed, and I am no longer a handless maiden in the middle of the dark forest.

However, the most crucial aspect of using Psychosynthesis is that the process allowed me to confirm that as we proceed on our journey through our inner world, we will discover that fundamentally we are loving towards all aspects of our personality. We possess the ability to accept and include a wide range of experiences and take responsibility for our healing and growth. And as time passes, we will be able to form an incredible expression of our experiences into the world. We will discover our ability to 'selfless love' towards ourselves and others.

It is precisely as Roberto Assagioli affirms, "I am a living, loving, willing self" (Assagioli 1973, 176).

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Move Beyond The Brokenness And Connect With The Place That Has Never Been Broken

By Jodie Gale, MA

Our body is the home for our soul:

Can you remember a time when you felt completely at home in your body?

For many women, these moments are becoming increasingly rare and infrequent. We are suffering from a deep sense of homelessness as we battle, loath, neglect, hurt and objectify our body. Because we are estranged from and don't know our true identity, we have somehow come to believe, 'I am my body'. But... our body is not all of who we are; it is a part of who we are; our body is the home for our soul.

Massimo Roselli, in *Being Your Self at Home* writes,

"The Soul needs the body in order to be truly manifest, just as the body needs the Soul in order to be fully alive and animated."

"There are fundamental ingredients for this journey, and one of them is to have a home for all this movement. The Self needs a home, a holding structure, welcoming and acknowledging, protecting and allowing the freedom to manifest oneself."

Our true identity:

From a spiritual perspective, in each of us, there exists a spiritual centre of identity; this is known as the Self or soul.

The soul is whole and unbroken and is considered the deeper essence and source of our being.

It is made up of life energy, will, and consciousness. It is our life-force. The soul is continuously calling for us to grow and awaken to our innate wholeness; often calling us through our symptoms.

We also have a personality. Diana Whitmore writes that the personality is 'made up of a unique blend of physical, emotional and mental characteristics'. It is through our personality that we are able to express our soul's essence in day to day life. To this effect, all parts of the psyche – including our body, feelings, and mind – encompass soul and spirit.

The trance of unworthiness:

When we do not know our true identity, our life-energy can become trapped in ego defenses and maintaining cycles of anxiety, addiction, depression, disordered eating and body image concerns, as well as unhealthy relationships with self and others. When we are trapped here, we feel broken and in need of fixing.

Geneen Roth writes,

"Like everyone else in this diet-mad culture in which we live, my retreat students all loath to stop the frantic attempts to change themselves. They know that something is not quite right in their lives, and because they are not at their ideal weights, they believe that food is the problem and dieting will fix it. When I suggest that they're trying to fix something that has never been broken, a wave of anxiety courses through the room."

They ask,

"How could you say that nothing is broken when I can't fit into any of my clothes? Can't you see something is terribly, terribly wrong?"

And I say,

"Yes, something is terribly wrong, but it will not be fixed through losing weight."

One of the 'terribly wrongs' that Geneen is talking about, is that our being has experienced shame, neglect or trauma, and as a consequence, we live our lives from a deep sense of separation and unworthiness.

Tara Brach calls this 'the trance of unworthiness'. She writes,

"... we have the feeling that something is wrong, something is missing. We want life to be different from the way it is. An acute sense of separation—living inside of a contracted and isolated self—amplifies feelings of vulnerability and fear, grasping and aversion. Feeling separate is an existential trance in which we have forgotten the wholeness of our being..."

Both our upbringing and our culture provide the immediate breeding ground for this contemporary epidemic of feeling deficient and unworthy. Many of us have grown up with parents who gave us messages about where we fell short and how we should be different from the way we are. We were told to be special, to look a certain way, to act a certain way, to work harder, to win, to succeed, to make a difference, and not to be too demanding, shy or loud. An indirect but insidious message for many has been, “Don’t be needy.” Because our culture so values independence, self-reliance and strength, even the word needy evokes shame. To be considered as needy is utterly demeaning, contemptible. And yet, we all have needs—physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual.

So the basic message is, “Your natural way of being is not okay; to be acceptable you must be different from the way you are.”

Thus begins our search for wholeness but in all the wrong places. We search for Self-identity and soul qualities such as:

- joy, love, and the emotional connection we missed out on through food
- acceptance and worthiness through the ideal body
- wisdom and knowing through wellness, diet and exercise gurus

The problem with this misdirected search is that we continue to feel empty and disconnected because emotional and spiritual needs can never be filled with food or by changing our physical being. Focusing on changing or fixing our body is a wild goose chase, or what Dr. Anita Johnston calls, a red herring.

The call of the soul:

To heal from our food, weight and body image concerns, we need to explore in depth where our deep sense of ‘not good enough’ stems from, and begin to view our symptoms not as something to get rid of, or to fix – rather – as a call from the soul to awaken to our intrinsic wholeness.

We don’t need to search outside of ourselves because the soul and spiritual qualities of beauty, goodness, worthiness, acceptance, and compassion, to name a few, already reside within.

Our work is to come home to our true self and to realize, “I am already the Self/soul that I am seeking to become”.



Jodie’s journey to become a Soul-Centred Psychotherapist, a Carolyn Costin Eating Disorder Coach (Recovered) + Eating Psychology Specialist began with her own recovery from bulimia over 20 years ago. She now works in private practice in Sydney, Australia. Jodie’s extensive work experience in the eating disorder field includes being the Disordered Eating Consultant for Byron Private Treatment Centre, former Assistant Clinical Director of a Sydney Eating Disorder Outpatient Treatment Program using the Dr Anita Johnston Model and stints at the Eating Disorder Association of NSW (now The Butterfly Foundation) and in the Eating Disorder and Feeding Unit of Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in London. She regularly appears online, in print and on National radio regarding her work with women and disordered eating. Jodie has a free eBook, ‘4 Ways to Befriend Your Body’ which is available through her website.

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He Has No Right to My Life

By Carole Dawn Harward MATP, IHCRSS, BHT

It was a very hot and arid day in mid-July when my phone rang. The call was from my son. I heard the words, “Mom, I got a cryptic note from Dad.” He was very careful about what he said and how he said it. I had trouble getting a straight answer, so I knew something was wrong. He said, “Dad sent me an email and I don’t know what to make of it.” Finally, after a couple of minutes, I forced him to disclose the contents of the unusual letter. It was a suicide note. The suicide note that I had feared would eventually arrive and for which I prayed many times to never see. Life slowed down to a disturbing crawl. He had sent it to each of our three children by email.



Battle of Wills This imagery is from a dream. There was a battle of will between my mother-in-law who chose an electric knife as her weapon and my weapon of choice was a cell phone. She, of course, blamed me for her son's suicide. I thought the electric knife was poetic since it tears rather than cuts the meat. The wounds take longer to heal and it would leave a terrible scar. The jacket was felted and thick and it seemed as if I were protected but she did get through my armor so to speak and irreparably harmed me. In the dream, I remember feeling a warm sensation that turned out to be the blood running down my arms into a pool of tears. She never had a change of heart and died with her version of the truth. The image is framed in by volcanic rock which is forged by fire. If I were to hang this is an exhibition, I would include a framed cell phone and an electric knife. I thought the cell phone may represent communication in this case that failed communication and an unwillingness to hear the truth which I was privy to. It is a disturbing image and yet

The letter opened with, “Kids, this is the last communication you will receive from me.” I knew him well enough to know that he would have never sent his kids the note unless, and until, he really meant it. My son told me that he had received the note an hour or so before he called me. My son had called the local police and had them contact the police in San Diego. Despite their best efforts, they were unable to locate my husband. I then had my son contact a friend of their dad’s who lived in San Diego. He told her about the note and then he asked her if she would help us find him. Two hours later, he was found dead in his office at Sony Entertainment. The police investigator described the scene: The body of a Caucasian male was viewed at 1830 hours.... lying on a mat in the corner of the office, clad in a t-shirt, jeans, and socks.”

It took about six months before the fog of disbelief and denial slowly became a dense haze. My daughter described it as an emotional tsunami. I can’t think of a better description. Essentially everything I believed in, knew to be true and held dear, where wiped out in a matter of seconds. Some people spend the next few years wandering around in an emotional wasteland. I took off running. I heard the wave of pain and trauma coming in my direction. I was determined to outrun it. For a little better than a year, I managed to stay just ahead of pain that I knew to lay in the shadows. Then one night, when I least expected it, grief slipped into my weary mind and took over my tired body. I felt nothing. The next three days would be spent lying in bed. I was in the clutches of despair. A dark stranger.

I knew deep sadness was a normal reaction after a major loss, but I had no idea just how debilitating and devastating it could be. Trauma had me in its grip. I was in a very gloomy place. A place that is as close to death as one can get and still be alive. I

laid in bed unable to move. I felt nothing. No pain, no sadness, no happiness, just nothingness. I felt no will to live and it felt like too much work to die. I was emotionally numb. I felt no hunger. I felt no thirst. I felt nothing. I was lifeless. I certainly was alive in my thoughts. It took all three days to convince myself to get out of bed. The voice in my head kept saying “you got to get up” and then I would think better of it. Finally, convinced that I was going to die if I did not get help, I found the strength to make my way to the bathtub. I have always used the power of water to meditate and get grounded. I felt a bit hopeful.

While in the tub, I had conversations with myself that went like this, “I really should call someone. I am in trouble.” But I thought that it was too hard to dial the phone. I said to myself, “If you don’t get some help you are going to die. I should go to the psyche hospital.” Then I thought; it’s too far to drive. I was getting scared that my will to die was becoming stronger than my will to live. For some reason, call it a miracle, I heard my-self, or someone, or something, say, “Jeff took his life, but he has no right to take yours.” The seemingly ethereal voice resonated with confidence. I was never afraid but rather taken aback by the truth of the revelation. After giving it some thought, the idea that his choice was effectively taking my life pissed me off. It was in that moment I came to the realization that I had a choice. The option to take back my life. Jeff may have taken his life, but without question he had no right to take mine in the process! Although my body was heavy and weighed down by sorrow, I somehow found the strength to get out of that tub with the intention of choosing to live.

The next morning, I woke up with the will to live. I soon learned that the will to live was only the beginning. Reclaiming my life was and is a series of second by second, minute by minute, hour by hour decisions. The first decision I made was to accept and live through all the stages of grief. Grief is a psychic vampire. It literally sucks the life out of you. I have always been a very active,



Picking Through the Bones This painting is an intuitive expression. The image I manifested loosely suggests the familiar skull and crossbones. While the skull and crossbones are often associated with mortal death this is not my interpretation. My version is one of accepting death as a part of life as well as a crossroad. The color choices foretell of personal growth. The small gems in the lower corner signify hidden knowledge. The roses represent the paradox of life and death, joy and pain, and the price of love. The Cali Lilies speak to the cycle of life, mourning, clarity, and rebirth. The femur I interpret as a talking stick, which in my experience asks that I speak for the dead, those who lost their lives to suicide. Bones are the last part of the human form to decay. Bones remain strong long after the body returns to the earth. Bones witness death and rebirth. The candles symbolize eternal life and a portal between the living and the dead. The denotes the potential for enlightenment.

highly energetic person. This was the first time in my life where I had to make the decision to be ok with doing nothing. All my energy went into surviving and living through the emotional trauma. By resisting the grief process, I had inadvertently created the extremely depressed state that I had found myself in. So, I began by embracing each step of the grief process. If I only got out of bed long enough to make myself something to eat or take a bath, I considered it a good day. This was an act of good will.

I often think of how many times people have said to me, “You should be over it (the suicide) by now.” I shake my head. There is no getting over it. The trauma of suicide lives in you. It never leaves you as it becomes a part of who you are, a

shadow-self, that has changed you forever. I have learned many important life lessons as a result of this tragedy. The most important of which I had heard many times from the author Wayne Dyer. He says, “Change your mind, change your life.”



Shadow Dancing Shadows dancing was inspired by Debbie Ford’s book, “The Dark Side of the Light Chasers.” This image is about shadow self (sub-personalities). The circle of figures is tied together by a single strand of rope which symbolizes the interconnectedness of sub-personalities. Each figure presents in different colors and patterns to reflect that each personality is unique. The figure that stands alone is the obvious. This form symbolizes a troublesome subpersonality or maybe a more dynamic personality depending on the trigger or the inspiration. Shadow dancing is about integrating each aspect of who we are into healthy cohesive waltz, with a touch of bunny hop, and an occasional game of tug o’ war

He is right. Quality of life begins with our thoughts. My thought, “Jeff took his life, but he has no right to yours,” saved my life. Taking back my life is and continues to be a series of conscious positive thoughts followed by small achievable decisions. Secondly, my experience with depression has given me the gift of insight. I got a glimpse into what it must have been for my husband to live for so many years with major clinical depression. William Styron says, “The feeling a depressed person gets is that they are condemned to live.” Understanding the severe emotional pain caused by depression has freed me of the guilt. The type of guilt that one feels after

someone they love has opted out of life. These insights are what the author Carl Jung refers to as the “gold is in the dark.” I have asked myself many times why me? But in the final analysis; why not me? I have concluded that I am not defined by my husband’s suicide, but rather, I am defined by how I take his death by suicide into my life.

My husband’s suicide manifested a spiritual awakening. This came as a result of having heard my higher self say what I needed to hear to survive. My recovery has not been easy, and people have often said that “you are so strong.” Honestly, my only strength was the strength of will. Unfortunately, having the strength of will also prevented people from helping me, which hindered my ability to heal. I worked hard to present as a woman who had not been adversely affected by the trauma and betrayal of living through suicide. The problem with this is that while my persona was one of strength and well-adjustment, I knew the truth and the truth was: I was regularly going to dive bars and drinking heavily with other wounded people to avoid feeling the pain of the transformative grief process. Grief had caused a survival personality to surface, while protective, was not interested in my wellbeing as much as it was punishing me for not preventing or somehow causing the suicide. Or worse, the fear of being perceived as having been devastatingly harmed by his actions.

It has been thirteen years since my husband’s passing and I have been, and continue to be, an intentional, mindful, and proactive survivor since receiving the spiritual message that relieved me of guilt and propelled me forward using righteous indignation. It was common-sense truth, but the reality is grief does take us out of our minds and hinders reason. It collapses our emotionally scaffolding and reveals the truth of who we were, who we are, and what we can become. Grief, which is often trauma-informed, can manifest a miraculous outcome if we allow the process to unfold and not resist the painful journey.

Bereavement is a creative process and one that has meaningful and self-empowering outcomes. We do have a wonderful innate ability to transcend our suffering, and it is done by way of introspection, gratitude, creativity, spirituality, and a daily decision infused with the intention of doing just that.

As the weeks and months passed, I found myself searching for meaning and purpose. I asked myself questions such as, “why did this experience manifest in my life?” I spent many hours sitting in the dark pondering this question. I had thought that surely there must be some reason or something for my suffering. I would sit on my doorstep in the dark. I would gaze at the moon while smoking a grape cigar. Weird, I know, and not my M.O., but I found comfort in the ritual. What I have failed to mention is that I sold the family home and moved to Arizona. I purchased a small townhome on the edge of an arroyo. A hovel in the desert. It is on a dead-end private road. I thought it a safe place to get my shit together. It was, up until the point I discovered I was alone and a long way from the people who would have supported my journey into the dark places grief takes a person. Thanks, strong will. One of the “aha” moments that came as a result of this quiet pain ridden introspection was a keen awareness that there was more to me than the roles I had played in my life. I realized that I had the ability to observe my thoughts and I was able to discern which of them held meaning and directed me towards purpose. One such thought was “look for the opportunity in the tragedy.” This became my recovery motto.

I decided to begin by evaluating my life. This was an act of skilled will. I reviewed all the many accomplishments, relationships,

hardships, hobbies, and interests. I realized, through this process, that I had a toolbox of experiences that I could conceivably leverage into a life that was meaningful and purpose driven if I were to focus my energy, the same energy it took to be sad, and redirect it into an opportunity. The first big redirection came as a decision to return to college. I enrolled at a local junior college, a school I enrolled in many years earlier, later transferred to the University of Arizona on a full ride scholarship, and then applied for and completed a master’s degree at Sofia University, in Palo Alto, California. It took nearly 10 years to complete my education. It became obvious during my educational years that suicide came into my life as not only a teacher but a subject and population to which I could offer a lifetime of experience, compassion, as well as a voice for those voices who had been silenced by suicide. My strength of will has given me the courage to stand up for suicide loss survivors and their loved ones who have opted out of life.



Darkness Visible This image emerged during a life drawing class. This work is about layers, textures, distortions, and the composition of the human form. The distorted form with its organic lines, blurred realism, and defenseless nakedness is a visual commentary on the many layers, textures, the grotesque thoughts, and the skewed sense of reality we experience when trauma and loss. The shadowy figure is this darkness visible. The gloomy form presents in somewhat of a fetal position symbolic of rebirth. The seed of hope. The image is purposefully unified with a rich earthen-like texturing, layering, and color choices that suggest soil and seeds. Further, the human form is made of the same matter from which all things are born, live, die, and are reborn. Grief is a transformation process and one that makes us painfully aware of what we are truly made of.

One of my primary motivations for entering college was to help other suicide loss survivors utilize creativity. Painting, writing, and creative problem solving had lifted my spirits and buoyed my faith in future possibilities. I had been an artist most of my life, and a successful one at that. I turned to it to help me sort through my feelings and sometimes dreams. I thought “there is something magical about the act of creating.” It was the creative voice that called me to action. When I applied to the U of A, I wanted to explore that mysterious and wise voice in my head. I wanted to know what “that” was. I talked to counselors and professors and no one really understood what I was asking to do. While in the art program, I had professors who were willing to allow me to explore the inner dialog of a suicide loss survivor on a two-dimensional surface but they did not know what the “that” was I was referring to. One professor was intrigued by my deep questioning but had no idea where I could find the answers I was seeking. It never occurred to them, or to me, that what I was seeking was spiritual in nature and a psychology that was non-traditional.

I had read a book by Debbie Ford many years before my husband’s death that deeply resonated with me called the *Dark Side of the Light Chasers*. It was my interest in her philosophy that would lead me to Sofia University. I mastered in transpersonal psychology with an emphasis in creativity and innovation along with transformative life coaching. While at Sofia I took an elective course in psychosynthesis. I have come to know “that thing” I was searching for was not only a creativity-focused spiritual psychology, but a relationship with one’s self, a mindset, a conscious way of being, called psychosynthesis. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that the will was an actual “thing.” The act of will is no stranger to me, as is evidenced by my story: Good will, strong will, skillful will and transpersonal will. Psychosynthesis has given me the tools to not

only be more present to the complexities of self but has provided a construct by which I can better help those I now serve as a drug and addiction counselor and trauma coach (suicide postvention specialist). I am a long way from mastering psychosynthesis as I am still very new to psychosynthesis. I wish I could quote Roberto Assagioli without questioning my ability to do so in a way that reflects a deep understanding. So instead, I will simply assert that my personal experience with trauma has revealed to me a pathway, a deeper level of conscious awareness, a way of being, that is self-empowering. *Psychosynthesis* is the “thing” I sought to know and understand in response to the seemingly ethereal experiences I had in response to traumatic loss. I am the will and the willer.

Carole Dawn Harward, MATP, IHCRSS, BHT was awarded her master’s degree from Sofia University in transpersonal psychology with a focus on creativity and innovation. While at Sofia she certified in the therapeutic use of art and transformative life coaching. Dawn earned her bachelor’s degree at the University of Arizona where she studied studio arts with family studies with human development. Dawn is a certified integrative health care recovery support and suicide postvention specialist. Dawn currently works as a drug and alcohol counselor in Tucson, AZ. She spends her free time facilitating an online grief support group for suicide loss survivors with nearly 6000 members.

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Holding Trauma in the Cradle of Loving Kindness

By Abigail De Soto, MA

Healing from trauma is about *restoring connection* with self and others. It is essentially about restoring *a person's ability to feel alive, whole, and connected with life*. Roberto Assagioli offered psychosynthesis mind-body-spirit practices to uncover and heal hidden roots and dimensions of impaired connection and psychological dis-ease linked to trauma, well ahead of his time.

Today science has proven survivors of developmental and shock trauma develop psychological and/or physiological survival responses in the form of neurological shut-down in order to survive traumatic experiences. These survival responses continue to kick in long after the trauma ceases, taking the form of unconscious nervous system dysregulation, disruptions in attachment responses, and numerous identity distortions. (1) Roberto Assagioli pioneered new healing alternatives knowing we were more than our pathologies...i.e. pathology did not define intrinsic (S)self. Today, thanks to neuroscience we understand that focusing on the psychopathology or the dysfunction, we risk reinforcing the dysfunction, not healing it.

Since Assagioli's time neuroscience has corroborated his beliefs in brain plasticity and the importance of a mind-body connection. Medical approaches do not universally prone the importance of a spiritual dimension in healing, but somatically-based psychotherapy has become prevalent and alternative therapies such as yoga, mindfulness, EFT, and many others have achieved recognition for their contribution to well-being and overall health.

Working to heal developmental trauma in my own life and in that of others, I have found Eastern

(Buddhist) practices of compassionate mindfulness and loving kindness invaluable. Awareness of our responses even when these feel *disruptive, unwanted*, or 'bad,' is imperative to letting them go. Without recognition and 'naming our demons,' they quietly change form and slip through our fingers to become a new form of addiction or phobia that controls our life, short of authentic freedom, offering yet another crutch that helps us 'get through the day'. As one therapist remarked to a client struggling with cigarette addiction on proudly affirming to have not smoked a cigarette in 12 months, 21 days, 15 hours and 30 minutes. *"That merits recognition and applause; still, while you may not die of lung cancer, anxiety and high blood pressure created by an over-active mind may very likely do you in"*.

How often the fear to honestly look at what scares us, preferring to run away to distraction or another form of denial...keeps us caught and identified with something we give power to. (2) Only in looking deeply at our foibles, fears, desires etc...with genuine compassion for ourselves and those who have hurt us, can we find a path to healing. For this to occur we must awaken to responsibility *to* our lives (not *for*, but *to*), commit to awakening, and explore *what we do* and *why*; and in all of this take refuge in a cradle of loving kindness.

Loving kindness is not about a path of resignation. It is not about condoning behavior and does not mean acceptance in the sense of '*oh well, I am powerless, so I have to accept this*'. As Assagioli explains in his notes on Acceptance (3), accepting 'what is' reveals a door to peace and true power. If you are willing to deeply explore

what you find difficult to accept and *why*... not in someone else's behavior, but in your own... wisdom, insight and freedom follow. It all comes back to knowing yourself....what you honestly feel, believe, want...and why? And the only way to know that is to look moment by moment... and keep looking. A wise author said. "*The price of freedom is eternal mindfulness*".

Thich Naht Hahn (renowned Zen Buddhist monk and father of mindfulness) teaches; "*the way out is in*", not in a judging, critical, hateful manner. To look deeply, with mindfulness in order to be free, requires the balm of loving kindness and acceptance, gentleness and love... to *whatever arises*. With this approach (which needs support to repeatedly cultivate), I find for myself and in observing those I accompany, the malaise we seek to release.... melts of its own accord. No longer focusing on what we hate and seek to destroy, no longer watering the ill, the fear, the hate, the hurt dissipates. In courageously looking while holding ourselves (and others) in a cradle of loving kindness, old triggers and patterns melt by themselves. In removing the nourishment they need to exist, they naturally wither and die in time, creating space for the new life and freedom we seek to create!

Can we choose to water and cultivate loving kindness in our lives as we start this new year and decade? Trauma whatever its form, does not have to define us, if we choose to follow a path of freedom and renewal. Blessings on your journey! Joy, happiness, and renewal to all in this new moment! There is hope and there *is* a way out!

Recommended reading:

L' Amour Déraisonné: Reclaiming Self

Transformational Teachings from Psychosynthesis and A Course in Miracles; 2010 Psychosynthesis Press

(1) Much has been written about the deep, ingrained effects of different forms of trauma. For more info on the effects and healing of developmental trauma, see works of Bessel Van der Kolk, Peter Levine, Bowlby, Winnicott and al.

(2) See Assagioli's discussion and practices of dis-identification to promote emotional freedom.

(3) Notes accessible by internet in the Casa Assagioli archives in Florence.

Abigail De Soto, M. A.

S.E.L.F._System for Embodied Living and Freedom
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Abigail accompanies people 'home' ... to Self, reconnecting with innate wisdom, possibility and freedom. Educated in psychosynthesis at the Psychosynthesis and Education Trust (London, U.K.) and with Molly Y. Brown, she developed her own therapeutic process S.E.L.F._ System for Embodied Living and Freedom with mind-body tool, YinDance-Your Inner Dance TM... With Psychosynthesis Press in 2010 she published an inspiring story of transformation and courage on her own healing journey from developmental trauma.

Abigail brings 25 years' global corporate learning and development experience to her worldwide coaching and personal growth work. She offers online and in person coaching and personal growth workshops. For more information visit: www.abigaildesoto.com



Every Other Sunday

By Zachary Rapport

Aug 12, 2000 (Revised Oct 5, 2000)

Every other Sunday, I found
I awoke feeling bad, nightmares abound

I dreamt of an event I couldn't prevent

...then it happened...

...there I was again—wanting to leave...

Abandoned

...another Sunday eve...

I stood near the road, as they drove
away
I sighed and I cried—wishing not to stay

They left me to roam,
at a place, not my home

Parent's fail
Child's jail
Nothing to gain
Endless pain

...every other Sunday...



Live With Heart

By Zachary Rapport

Original date unknown (Revised Nov 1, 2010)

Life can feel painful—like a splinter
I could freeze my emotions—cold as
winter

I could walk the Earth half-asleep
and join the crowd 'baaah-ing' like
sheep

I could dislike people—refuse to connect
and follow the motto: "You, I reject"

I could stew in emotions—bitter and tart
But then, I too, would live without heart

Despite the traumas and resulting stress
I feel living *with* heart is best



PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SEPT. 15, 2019 BY ZACHARY RAPPORT

Between the ages of 11 and 13, I repeatedly experienced the same abandonment trauma. It was one of the most negative and potent memories I carried around for years. Just thinking about it would cause me to tear. I took many actions to bring about healing. Meditation and writing poems were two of those actions. The result was a transformation in my attitude and emotions reflected in the second poem.

Dr. Zachary Rapport teaches courses at various universities. He holds four graduate degrees. He currently is taking a course in Psychosynthesis with Dr. Molly Young Brown. When he is not researching, writing, or teaching, he's hiking the trails and taking photographs of the beautiful regional, state, and national parks around the United States.

Trauma, Addiction and Transformation

By Karin Hall

I like to start by asking myself: what is trauma and what is transformation?

Trauma

When we experience trauma, we will naturally start to protect the most precious parts of ourselves; the open, spontaneous innocence of who we are, our soul. The ego structures will be built into different subpersonalities and other patterns of survival, and if the armoring becomes too thick because of trauma, we can get isolated and separated from others and lose connection with the soul.

Trauma is a well-known word today. It started being used in relationship to accidents and war veterans and then expanding to sexual assault and other childhood abuses. With the attachment theories, the word Developmental trauma became a new way of seeing. Trauma was not only a physical experience, but could be an emotional, mental or a spiritual trauma as well.

I also believe trauma is part of all of us, living in a world with the environmental acute situation, polarized ethnic and religious and political wars and fractioned societies, which creates fear, lack of safety and isolation. A world which isn't supporting our soul and the soul of the world, will create a form of trauma-trance, where being ourselves doesn't feel safe. Thomas Hubel calls this Collective trauma.

Our Autonomous nervous system

We know today through neuroscience that safety is a basic condition for our growth as individuals. We need to have good enough parenting, connection, belonging and safety. Steven Porges, the founder of the Polyvagus theory, said that co-regulation is as important as being able to self-regulate. Co-regulation means that we can relax, feel safe, be spontaneous and present with

someone else. If co-regulation is not present, enough fear will rule the perception and patterns of behavior. We cannot really listen to our deeper sense of self when our survival-needs are not met.

Addiction

Addiction can be part of our way of living when we live in a trauma pattern. We will do what we can to relieve ourselves from the pain. We may start to eat more and unhealthily, work or workout more intensely, go shopping more often, drink too much, take psychotropic medicine or find some comfort in social media, just to feel good for a little while.

I think we all do this at times, and it's not a problem if we are aware of it. But if we don't know we are avoiding deep uncomfortable feelings and thoughts, our condition will gradually get worse and we will need help.

We can also all lose our way in life and experience it as traumatic. The expression "the dark night of the soul", when we feel lost, might be a needed experience to truly become aware of the signs and messages from the soul- what life is calling us to do or be. We might have to lose ourselves in trauma patterns or addiction to find ourselves again. In other words, a traumatic experience doesn't necessarily have to be bad, but a wakeup call to be more present and truer to who we really are.

Before I write about my professional experience of working with trauma and transformation, I will tell you a short story of my own background, from a developmental and generation-trauma perspective.

My story

In my own story, I have a 4 in ACE ¹¹, which means that my upbringing wasn't all that safe. I grew up in a middle class family. My father was a doctor and my mother a physiotherapist. I had a younger sister and an older brother. We lived in a safe neighborhood and I loved both my parents. But I never felt really safe. My mother and father liked to have dinner parties, playing music and dancing. This was both exciting and somewhat scary for us children as it involved a lot of alcohol, and at times hard words and quarreling between our parents. They divorced when I was 18 years old.

My mother really loved my father, but my father was repeatedly unfaithful to my mother. She also had breast cancer when she was 37 years old and lost one breast. All this created a deep wound and pain in our family. My grandfather was also unfaithful to my grandmother which also makes it a generation-trauma. I believe my grandmothers pain was part of my mother's pain and my mother's pain became part of my own pain. So, trauma can also be downloaded through generations.

The good thing about our family was that music and dancing was allowed and both music and dance became part of my self-regulation and connection to my soul.

Transformation and the work
Without seeing the perspective of the soul, I believe it's easy to get lost as a therapist. Bifocal vision is important to be able to meet people where they are, with their stories and present

situation, and see the beauty shining through the cracks. "It's in the crack where the light comes in" as Leonard Cohen said.

It's natural to want control and we do need some control and safety to be able to open up. That is why the therapist has to hold a positive attachment perspective when orienting the client toward self-connection, self-compassion and belonging in the world. We need to be a safe haven when helping people reverse their isolation and the sense of not belonging.

Transformation is usually a slow process but can also happen in a second, when we have an AHA-moment. But integration usually takes time. When we experience trauma, we act out of behaviors and patterns of survival and unconscious subpersonalities. We need to experience that we have a choice to be able to change the trauma patterns and let light shine through.

But there is also something we cannot and shall not transform - our self or soul. The inner most Self is constant and so is our pure awareness and Beingness. We need to help our clients to experience this Self and Beingness in therapy so that life can be felt as more than just faltered life experiences and stuck trauma patterns in the body and mind.

When the body can be our home of experience again and life is not as threatening anymore, we can start to live our lives with more openness and curiosity. We can create a new platform where our soul can be in the world and life can again be a

¹¹ ACE means "Adverse Childhood Experiences. Based on a groundbreaking study in 1998 on physical and mental health problems in over 17.000 adults. It shows different types of childhood abuse and its different effect on health and wellbeing. The higher Ace score, from 1 -10 the greater risk for chronic mental disease, violent behavior, depression etc.

Traumatic experience can be things like abuse, neglect, violence, addiction, parental depression and poverty. Not all stress is bad of course. Some stress is healthy and positive because it prepares us to respond to temporary challenges in our lives. We go into fight/flight behavior and can quickly get out of it again. But intense or longer lasting stressors can only be tolerable if we have help. If we don't certain types of stress can have a 'toxic' effect on the body and brain, and we get stuck in a fight/flight/freeze behavior that is hard to get out of without a support system.

For more information, here is a good, short video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-8jTTIsJ7Q>

miracle or a mystery to be lived and not only to survive.

There is a saying: “There is no sickness but Home sickness”, and I think that is what it’s all about. You have left “home” for whatever reason and you are trying to find your way back.

The therapist

As a therapist I need to be really present with my client, both in movement and in stillness. Our relationship is the foundation and therefore my relationship to myself is crucial. I need to have worked well enough through my own stuff, traumas, and have a spiritual practice where I daily connect to my ego, heart and soul. And when I get lost, I sometimes need to go into counseling myself. It's not about being or becoming perfect. Life can be messy, and no one ever said life was going to be easy. I believe it's an everyday task living who we are, relating more truthfully and giving our gifts to the world.

Finally, I like to say that Love and genuine connection are the true healing forces. Fear and trauma always need to be met with loving care. After 26 years of working as a therapist, I have a lot of different approaches, models, tools and ways to meet people and make soul more present and fear more embraced. I use different approaches for every client, but the relationship itself will always be the most important ground of work.



Karin is Swedish and has lived in Norway for over 30 years. She took her education as a Psychosynthesis guide/therapist at the Swedish Institute in Gothenburg; 1988-1993. She's had her own practice for over 26 years.

She is also educated as a:

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During the years she has kept on learning, getting inspired and participated in courses, such as: Creative art therapy, Yoga and Meditation, Buddhism, and Polyvagus therapy.

She has been a teacher in the Swedish and Norwegian institute of Psychosynthesis, and a coach in business life.

Somatic Experiencing Trauma

By Julie Teestov, Ph.D., CST, SEP

Like many addicts, I have a history of developmental and event-related trauma that helped create the need for my body to develop a modified anatomy and physiology. In other words, adverse conditions especially in childhood (and perhaps from generations past), affected the very structure and function of my body. Today in recovery I frequently make time to notice and acknowledge an important sub-personality, the little girl whose voice often says “I’m scared.” Not only do I make space to listen to this little girl’s feelings but I actively create opportunities for her to be nurtured by others in a caring community through touch and movement as a key to my healing. I would like to tell you about how I work with clients as a Somatic Experiencing Practitioner with a background in body therapy, movement education and psychosynthesis. While all six channels of the STAR diagram of psychosynthesis are important in the resolution of trauma, my focus on body sensation and movement help expand a client’s capacity for self-regulation and integration of their current life experiences as well as facilitate a completion of incomplete survival responses. In addition and very importantly, my clients explore sensation and movement in the context of social engagement which offers an opportunity for growing their capacity for secure attachment.

Our sessions start by creating the best conditions to experience safety and comfort. Choice and curiosity are essential tools for learning and shifting a “trauma physiology” to a “safety physiology.” My clients either experience trauma-related symptoms continuously or these symptoms arise in certain situations that trigger their traumatic memories. A signature of trauma physiology is compulsively scanning for what’s wrong or dangerous, compulsive behaviors (fight/

flight/freeze or appease) to protect or defend against perceived danger, extreme highs and lows, and an inability to return easily to homeostasis after activation. We come across danger in life, so it is important not to disregard a client’s healthy defensive responses. Instead, we want to introduce a dis-identification from their trauma sub-personalities and spend time experiencing safety. There are many strategies for deepening a client’s experience of safety using touch and movement and thus slowly re-wiring their experience of themselves. As clients can begin to spend more time experiencing their safety physiology and learn to differentiate between their trauma physiology and safety physiology, life begins to expand bringing with it a host of new resources, including access to sub-personalities with greater capacity to experience the ups and downs of life. Clients go from feeling alone and hopelessly stuck in addictive behaviors in an attempt to manage big survival energies trapped in their body to feeling nurtured and empowered to make choices, create safety and restore a sense of agency in their body.

As a therapist, I am curious about the following questions: What happens when my clients turn their attention towards their body sensations and movements or behaviors? What happens when self awareness can happen in the presence of another or within a group setting? How can touch and somatic support help repair past ruptures to secure attachment? While clients learn to dialogue with their body through sensation and movement, they are learning self regulation via healthy co-regulation. After this capacity to stabilize and regulate, we then ask “What or who was missing that the client needed when they experienced the traumatic event(s)?” What did the body want to do but couldn’t or didn’t have

the time or support to do to defend itself? In other words, we engage the will to complete incomplete survival responses and liberate bound survival energy stored in the body. This bound survival energy can show up as constriction, emotional numbness, chronic pain or fatigue and a variety of somatic illnesses or syndromes. Addictions to substances, people, or behaviors are management or coping strategies used to mask the pain and discomfort and fear of being alone and overwhelmed by these survival energies. For addicts, the experience of lack of control and inability to exercise their will to escape overwhelming danger often leads to exercising their will via numbing out overwhelming feelings or acting out in ways that attempt to complete these incomplete survival responses or make attempts at connection with insecure attachment adaptations.

From a very early age my body became used to extreme situations that overwhelmed my young and developing nervous system and what was required then became familiar and compulsive survival responses of fight, flight or freeze in every day situations as an adult. Over the years, my body devised a variety of creative and highly effective coping strategies to get through overwhelming life experiences on its own and many of these coping or management strategies were associated with specific sub-personalities. Somatic Experiencing was developed by Peter Levine and works with the physiology of chronic stress and trauma. A hallmark of trauma physiology is a tendency for a person to go from high states of activation or sympathetic arousal to high states of freeze/immobility or parasympathetic arousal. Going between states of highs and lows and experiencing chronic freeze state where the body can numb one's experience of life describe the daily experience of people suffering from addiction.

Our body develops with a natural wiring for social engagement. This involves highly sensitive

use and recognition of fascial expression, voice tone and prosody and the use of skin to skin touch as a way to regulate our sense of safety and comfort. Our body's vagus nerve modulates small increases and decreases in our heart beat that facilitate intimate connections with other humans, and mirror neurons facilitate our capacity for attuning to other. However, social engagement can be terrifying for people with trauma histories. Isolation is a big part of an addict's life, where survival on one's own is the name of the game. Social interactions are coupled painful memories abusive, neglectful or simply care-givers who were not capable of attuning and being present to the physical and emotional needs of a child. Trauma is often experienced when our system is overwhelmed and when there is no-one there to offer support either during or immediately after the overwhelming event. As adults we can often seek out support after traumatic events, but as children we are often confused by the double bind of having the person we are wired to trust and turn to for emotional and physical support being either scary and dangerous or simply incapable of offering the support we need to feel safe and secure. A child often interprets the confusion of the double bind as there being something wrong with them, either they are incompetent or unlovable to cause the care-giver's abuse, neglect or mis-attunement. As a result of early experiences of negative social engagement outweighing the positive, the addict is often the master of isolation, secrets and shame. I started isolating at an early age, as a way to control my environment and thus by exposure to possibly activating and triggering people and circumstances. I also existed in a functional freeze state during the first half of my life. Ignoring my body sensations was a way to avoid feeling the painful experience of feeling alone, unsafe, overwhelmed, scared and unsettled. My mind and imagination became my companions and I left my body and emotions behind.

One of the roles of our primary caregivers is to provide an experience of co-regulation. By attuning to our needs, our caregivers develop out safety physiology were we learn to regulate our feelings via skin contact, eye contact, tone of voice and prosody and emotional and physical containment. Without this early co-regulation with our primary caregivers, life's intense survival energy and even simple activations can feel overwhelming to a child. When children are terrified or frightened and when fighting or fleeing are not options, children are left with the option to freeze or dissociation from my body. The physiology of freeze is interesting. We initially restrict and brace our muscles and tissues in order to survive the impact of danger but without the possibility to "motor-out" the high charge of sensory information coming into our central nervous system, the body simply freezes that healthy survival response of fighting or running into the tissues. On the outside, the infant or child might have the appearance that everything is OK, but on the inside the experience is likened to having one foot on the accelerator and one foot on the break and there is a cognitive extension of this physiological state which is to dissociate on a cognitive level. In other words, the survival physiology is activating the sympathetic nervous system but the survival physiology is at the same time activating the parasympathetic nervous system to shut down and become still and conserve energy. Eventually, many people go from freeze to a state of collapse in which case the body's tissues loose their agency or will and there is often very little awareness of sensation in the body. With early developmental trauma, a person's body often learns to quickly move from activation of any kind straight to the immobility freeze response of their parasympathetic nervous system, which nature intended only for extreme life threatening situations rather than daily every-day life.

Moving from immobility and isolation to flow and connection have been major landmarks on my

journey to recovery. I have new awareness of my body sensations and willingness to engage my emotions and motor-out to express natural survival impulses towards safety, comfort and pleasure.



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Psychosynthesis & Addictions

A brief, informal and incomplete Lit Review

By Didi Firman, Ed.D., LMHC, BCC

We are dominated by everything with which our self becomes identified.

We can dominate and control everything from which we disidentify ourselves.

In this principle lies the secret of our enslavement or of our liberty. (Assagioli, 1965, p.22)

Thank you to Jean for bringing this important topic to light through the lens of psychosynthesis. While I have been a licensed therapist for over 40 years, I have never specialized nor specifically trained in addictions work, but I am deeply grateful to the people who have and, of course, I have worked closely with addictions in my professional life, as well as in my personal life, where I, like most of us, have seen, too closely, the difficulties and dangers encountered by people struggling with trauma, addictions and substance abuse. It is clear that trauma often has a direct impact on addictions, and as psychosynthesis practitioners we know that trauma impacts development in every possible way. Because addictions, particularly, have tended to be held in a tight container of theory and practice, within the field of psychology and recovery, these issues are less visible in the field of psychosynthesis. I am glad to see this changing.

Psychosynthesis has much to add into this field. I note, by way of reflection and creating a clear frame for psychosynthesis theory and practice, Assagioli's seven core themes, as he wrote them in one of his last pieces of writing, [Training: A Statement by Roberto Assagioli](#). Each of these core principles and the practices related to them, can be used in service of recovery. In fact, it is fair to say, I believe, that recovery could not happen without *all* of them in play.

- 1) Disidentification
- 2) The personal self
- 3) The will: good, strong, skillful
- 4) The ideal model
- 5) Synthesis (in its various aspects)
- 6) The superconscious
- 7) The transpersonal Self

But my goal here is to simply guide the reader who wants to delve more fully into the

relationship of psychosynthesis to the work of recovery, to some of the resources that exist written by psychosynthesis practitioners. I quickly apologize to all whose work I did not reference and encourage you to send the name of any article or book that is missing from this list to AAP, where I trust that Marjorie will post it, and so help to elaborate our resource list! What I offer is just a morsel, from each piece of writing that I personally know of, pointing to the principles and practice of psychosynthesis that inevitably (and powerfully) support the work of recovery. This is an appetizer, designed to whet our appetites for further study!

In 1993, Dr. Anne Bewley published an article, *Addiction and Meta Recovery* in volume 10 of "The Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly." That article became a book *Meta-Recovery: A Journey Beyond the Twelve Steps*. She notes, as she unpacks the inevitable identification as "addict" and the building identification of the "recovering self" that: "In psychosynthesis, change is seen as occurring when we shift our identification from one subpersonality—perhaps one that is limited in scope and effectiveness—to another, a more capable subpersonality. Growth, on the other hand, occurs through the synthesis of two or more parts of the psyche (remember, it's *psycho* + *synthesis*) into a more harmonious whole." (p.49). Synthesis (Assagioli's fifth theme) invites a continuous expansion of identification, onwards and upwards towards Self-realization, including both the essential nature of the "addict" subpersonality and its deepest needs, as well as the "recovering" sub and what it brings to the table.

Even earlier (1988), Jonathan Kessler elaborated the essential need to work with subpersonalities in order to recover. In his article *The Addict Meditation*, he proposes an ongoing process for identifying, working with and integrating the key

subpersonalities that are likely involved in an addictions process. Kessler, himself a recovering addict, reminds us of the core tenet of 12 step programs as the experience of “powerlessness” over the addiction. “We who are in the field of helping substance abusers must be committed to the idea that this *recognition* (my italics) precedes an individual’s exploration to find the hidden treasure within the addiction” (p.30). Recognition, the first stage of subpersonality work, opens the door to the movement through acceptance, coordination, integration and synthesis. It is the essential first step towards disidentification, Assagioli’s first theme. For all of us, addicted to substances, patterns, limiting beliefs and as-yet unrecognized trauma and its effects, this core work supports recovery and healing—in all arenas.

1997 brought us the first of John Firman and Ann Gila’s deeply important trilogy of books on psychosynthesis. *The Primal Wound: A Transpersonal View of Trauma, Addiction and Growth*, digs deeply into psychosynthesis as a means of working with trauma and addiction. A statement early in the book points to the depth of where the rest of the book takes us: “Psychosynthesis offers a broad outline of human being that includes the suffering of early wounding and trauma; the resulting defenses, compensations, and addictions; the confrontation with nonbeing and life meaning; the freedom and responsibility of self-actualization; the realms of the paranormal, archetypal, and spiritual experience; and the challenge of Self-realization—all areas that need to be addressed in the healing of primal wounding and in the healthy development of the whole human being.” (p.9) A single sentence spanning the vastness of human experience, and the way we know psychosynthesis to hold that great expanse: true recovery. And a deep nod to Assagioli’s sixth and seventh themes.

Also in 1997, Bonney and Richard Schaub wrote *Healing Addiction: The Vulnerability Model of Recovery*. Essential elements of this work continue to come to us in other of their books and in articles and chapters. Luckily for us, they have continued to write and teach in this field. By the time they wrote *Dante’s Path: Vulnerability and the Spiritual Model* (2014), addiction, like other forms of trauma and suffering are taken on the

same metaphorical journey that Assagioli himself was so connected to: the journey through Dante’s hell. The Schaub’s give us a comprehensive view of just what addiction looks like: “Some addictions are about as subtle as a huge truck coming down the road. You will certainly know if you cannot stop drinking or drugging or overeating or staring at Internet pornography or gambling. But there are other subtler forms of addiction—addiction to self-defeating ways of thinking—that you may not recognize as causes of suffering to yourself “ (p.51).

Having invited a larger view of addictions than the classic substance use version, they also invite a deeper question of how one is to know whether there is an addiction, an unsolved trauma, a limiting pattern running the show behind the scenes. The truck we see, the subtler addictions we may not. Complex question/simple answer.

“As we continue through hell, however, it seems fair to ask whether Dante, or any of us, has the wisdom to judge what is right or wrong about behaviors such as indifference or addiction? The answer is, yes, we do. The process of judgment is made elegantly simple with one question: Does the behavior increase suffering for ourselves and others?” (p.52) The one who answers that question, like the one who sees the truck coming, points us to Assagioli’s second theme: the personal self. In that “I space” we do know the answer.

For a quick, early version of the Schaub’s deep dive into the world of recovery as a psychosynthesis process, you can read this article: [*The Psychosynthetic Treatment of Addictions*](#).

The Schaub’s much earlier article, *Alcoholics Anonymous and Psychosynthesis* (1988) points us to a core truth of psychosynthesis and its impact on recovery. Twelve Step programs always invite a relationship to a higher power as key to the process of recovery. Especially in the absence of a clear and defined religious orientation, that relationship may not be so easy. This is where, for the Schaub’s, the psychosynthesis theory and practices of relationship to self and Higher Self will deepen and strengthen the process of recovery. “The Twelve Steps of AA seek to strengthen the level of sobriety in the recovering person. However, the problem of the repression of

the sublime or the resistance to spirituality, can hinder the recovering person's use of AA. Psychosynthesis provides an extensive system of principles and techniques that can help clients effectively work through their resistance to an innate spirituality." (p. 59) As a client begins to create their own version of spirituality, personalizing it to their own deeper knowing, they are both pulling from and developing their own ideal model (Assagioli's theme #4), as the goal to which they aspire, both in recovery from their addictions and in their deeper understanding of a spiritual truth.

To go further into the problem of resistance to spirituality, read the original article on [*The Repression of the Sublime*](#) by Frank Haronian, one of Assagioli's earliest students and colleagues.

This wonderful magazine, *Psicosintesi*, kindly published by the Psychosynthesis Institute in both Italian and English, offered an article, *Psychosynthesis and Drug Addiction*, also in 1997, by Carmelo Percipalle, who focuses on the work that might be done **before** the advent of addictions, specifically, in classrooms. The most comprehensive statement, pointing to the role of psychosynthesis in prevention notes that "the primary prevention of the phenomenon of drug addiction is found inside the work carried out on human consciousness, in an attempt to reinforce the I as the center of the personality, as the principle motor for progress and human development. The discovery of the I and of the will and its practical actuation in daily life, represents, without a doubt, the most powerful barrier against the intrusion of addiction as a breaking up phenomenon of the personality" (P.24). Hurrah! Noting the essential nature of consciousness and will, the functions of the personal and Higher Self, the role of the will (Assagioli's third theme) is emphasized as the "practical actuation in daily life" and "the most powerful barrier against the intrusion of addiction..."

Most recently (2013 & 2014), in my readings, are the articles from within "Essays on the Theory and Practice of a Psychospiritual Psychology" published by The Institute of Psychosynthesis, London. In Volume 1, *From Survival to Love: The Heroine's Journey*, Wrigley focuses on "love

addiction and co-dependency" and the therapeutic work involved, noting, however, that all addictions and recovery share a common process. Summing up her work as a clinician in this field, she reminds us: "The holding and the mirroring of the Self connects the client to their own will: to work with an addict it is essential to stay connected to the underlying impulse from the Self towards love and relationship. When we find Self within, we are also connected with our values, meaning and purpose" (P.260). The Call of Self is always waiting to be heard. In one line we hear all of Assagioli's themes, his final holding of the core principles of psychosynthesis.

Bethell, in this same edition, offers us the wonderful metaphor of the Pinocchio Syndrome, used specifically in relations to self-endangering compulsive behaviors. Delving, of course, more deeply into the theme of his chapter, on understanding addiction and Self-realization, the author gives us a powerful one liner that evokes both our imagination, our experience of this childhood story and our understanding of psychosynthesis in the context of recovery. "The Pinocchio syndrome is the misdirected attempt to heal the wound of spiritual disconnection through addictive process. Pinocchio also reminds us that even the naughtiest of puppets, made of the hardest of all woods, can still find their way back to their real Selves" (P. 263). If you don't remember that story, it is worth a read, because Pinocchio uses his will to make a different choice and he becomes, then, a real boy. We never need step outside the bounds of Assagioli's principles of psychosynthesis to see it in action, even in a field as daunting as that of addictions.

Volume 2 (2014) of this same book offers us the last of our quick dip into the waters of psychosynthesis, addictions and recovery. Again, the Schaub, offer us *Psychosynthesis and the Addictions Recovery Process*, a fitting end to this article. They start the chapter with a clear description of why psychosynthesis works in this work of recovery. "Psychosynthesis, because its central concepts are self-knowledge, choice, and spiritual development, can contribute to the effectiveness of a person's recovery from addiction" (p.79). So be it. Psychosynthesis is here to stay, and for good reason, in the field of addictions and recovery.

We can return to Assagioli's seven core themes and see them all at work, as our many authors have noted. From the first recognition of an addiction issue to the disidentification that can follow, leading to the experience of I, the personal self, through the consistent and daily use of the will in its goodness, skill and strength, aimed towards an ideal model deeply held by each individual, the synthesis begins, supported and inspired by the superconscious and its transpersonal qualities, leading, ultimately, but not easily towards the *sine qua non* of any life's work, the lived experience of the Higher (transpersonal) Self. And thus we travel.

Passing In inner quietness, slowly listening to hear the right word, I am obeying certain conditions. Shall I take this road or that? Shall I respond to this call or await another?
(from the Archives of R. Assagioli, box 45. Casa Assagioli, Florence, Italy)

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Didi Firman, Ed.D., LMHC, BCC is the founder of the Synthesis Center and Director of Curriculum at Synthesis Center San Francisco. She has been living, working and playing with psychosynthesis for forty-five years. Her most recent contributions to the field include the edited book The Call of Self: Psychosynthesis Life Coaching and her training work through Synthesis San Francisco's new teaching platform. Didi is, among many things, a mother to 3 adult children, mother in law to two, grandmother to four. They are all amazing people, as is her best friend and husband of 43 years, Ted. There is more to come in this life, as it moves quickly into its 70th year.

Reflections on Phyllis Clay's Life

By Walter Polt, MA

Phyllis Clay died on Thursday, December 12, 2019. It was a gentle, peaceful passing. Her husband was present with her at the time. She was 75.

Phyllis lived her last ten-plus years in Albuquerque, NM. She and I were long-time friends/colleagues. For some seven years we had been sharing an hour every week or so encouraging/coaching/supporting each other, mostly via the internet.

We didn't talk so much about facts and life history as about thoughts and feelings, and about present and future events and efforts. I would have been lost writing this without her husband Steven Mandeville's generous sharing of information about the wide range of her history. It included a strong religious upbringing, a stint as an international airline stewardess for TWA, work as a researcher (qualitative and quantitative) and program evaluator, and long-term, energetic leadership in the Psychosynthesis community. Always, spirituality and excellence were of primary importance for her. Below is a small fraction of the information Steven shared. Many other friends and colleagues in her international circle can attest to the wealth of her contributions to the world.

Phyllis was warmhearted, brilliant, and energetic. She and Steven were constantly traveling, very often by car, to visit relatives and participate in events on both coasts and in between, such as San Antonio and Kansas City. They were both avid devotees of museums. As a child, Phyllis would visit the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, MO, on her way home from Sunday school, to sit with a certain Monet painting of water lilies. They studied Chinese painting together. She was a devoted student of shamanism and led Peruvian shamanism events. She led vision quests and conducted expressive arts workshops with a focus

on spirituality and internal growth. As a couple she and Steven were serious partners in the competitive ballroom dance world. A highlight was to have participated in the world-famous Blackpool Dance Championships. A few years ago, their dancing, quiet and unpretentious, inspired awe at a dance party my wife Cynthia Lashley had organized.

Phyllis's Education and Interests

She acquired a myriad of diplomas, was an ordained minister, and had two PhDs. The first was in Program Evaluation and Educational Research from Ohio State University. Her dissertation for the second PhD, from Saybrook University in San Francisco, was a study on people mentored by mentors no longer on the physical plane. She experienced being mentored herself by Roberto Assagioli after his death. I learned a surprise from Steven: She became certified as a professional clown. She had one master's degree in divinity, from Midwestern Theological Seminary in Kansas City, MO, and another in early childhood education, from Texas Women's University in Denton, TX.

She studied Psychosynthesis with a variety of trainers in centers including the Berkshire Center, the Kentucky Center, and the Psychosynthesis Institute of New York. Also, in the 1980s she studied with Molly Brown, Morgan Farley, and me here in NM at our center, Intermountain Associates for Psychosynthesis.

She founded and directed Synthesis International, which included a Psychosynthesis professional training program, in Kansas City, KS. She was an exceptionally capable presenter around the world, as a Psychosynthesis practitioner, shaman, professional consultant, and trainer. Phyllis was a solidly independent researcher and evaluator. Her experience was deep in both external evaluation (to improve interactions for individuals, couples,

and institutions) and internal evaluation involving expressive arts (seeing, evaluating, and showing what was happening internally). A strong interest of hers was her consulting on gender equality, for individuals and for private, religious, and public institutions.

Her experience and work with expressive arts was extensive. Her shaman work was cross-cultural, embracing new-world shaman traditions and also shaman wisdom gleaned from Paleolithic times and structures in Ireland and at Stonehenge. Having grown up with fundamentalist Christianity, she went on to more progressive Christianity and beyond religions to a fuller embrace of spirituality. A highlight in her life was leading tours she called “A Journey to Self” around sacred spaces in Tuscany. Steven said her way of combining all this with her work in program evaluation and statistics made her a sort of Renaissance professor.

People enjoyed spending time with her: Cynthia commented, “Phyllis was a whirlwind of energy, creativity, and love,” adding, “We have dear memories of her visiting us. She loved staying in our rounded ‘kiva’ room, taking nature walks along the Rio Grande, and joyfully shopping!” Phyllis loved, owned, and created great art and enjoyed music. We sometimes went to choral concerts together. She also at times attended the classical orchestra-chorus concerts in which Cynthia and I regularly sing.

Her Work

When things gave her joy and had deep meaning for her she threw herself into them. She taught graduate- and undergraduate-level courses, including program evaluation, human growth and development, and organizational development. She supervised teachers at Wheelock College in Boston and evaluated programs in Boston schools and at the Boston Children’s Museum.

In 2002, while she was cochair of the AAP steering committee, she edited *Reflections on the Will Part II: Transformation Through Will*. This

was a monograph in the AAP series “Conversations in Psychosynthesis.”

She was a highly valued researcher and evaluator for organizations and school systems from east coast to west. She designed research studies, survey instruments, and observation protocols still in use. More recently: starting in 2002, she spent more than four years as cofounder, co-owner, and president of Youth Policy and Research Group, Inc., in Kansas City, MO, doing research and evaluation, and organizational improvement for women- and youth-serving organizations. She spent some three years as director of research and evaluation at Kansas State Department of Education and provided a wide range of services to the Kansas City area. She coordinated the preparation of Federal Institute of Education Sciences applications for research. She was also involved in curriculum-development grants in the areas of science and multi-tiered systems of support. From 2009 to her retirement in July, 2018, she was a manager of research and evaluation at Albuquerque Public Schools, providing many services: for example, chairing the APS research review board, providing evaluation support for the Indian Education Department, and coordinating planning for school-success conferences.

As an example of her extensive work as an independent contractor, she designed and facilitated a project called Forward Modesto IV. It was a city-wide needs assessment and planning process that guided policy development for the mayor and city council of Modesto, CA.

Her 13-year first marriage was to John Falk, a minister. They parted amiably as friends in a warm divorce ceremony, which they published for the benefit of others. Cynthia and I attended her second wedding, to Steven, up on a stunning, wild, rocky property in NM’s Jemez mountains near Jemez Pueblo, overlooking the “ancestors.” They had planned to build a home there. Cynthia played a cello piece she had composed for them. Wes Morgan (a dear friend and colleague of

Phyllis's) came up from Galveston, TX, to conduct the ceremony.

She was a devoted member of the *Gruppo Alle Fonti della Psicosintesi* (Group at the Wellspring of Psychosynthesis) in Florence and spent many a sojourn there helping create the richly useful, vast (and still-growing) Assagioli Archives. Catherine Ann Lombard in Italy said that Phyllis was a fundamental mover in the Archives' creation.

Phyllis made her last trip there this summer. She had told me she was afraid to go for fear she would find herself in some Airport and not know where she was. She was no longer her former bold-traveler self. Nonetheless, in spite of her increasing memory problems, Steven wisely encouraged her to go. She did, and it was a great trip. After the meetings of the *Gruppo*, she spent precious days with her friend Susie, Dr. Massimo Rosselli's widow, in Florence. Then she went to Geneva to visit another friend, educator and writer Isabelle Küng (Bagdasarianz-Faillettaz), a longtime student and colleague of Assagioli's. Ms. Küng commented: "Phyllis had been saying this would be her last journey to Europe. Then, at the airport when our time together was over, she said, 'Maybe after all I will come back.'" I've been reminding myself that such travel may be easier for Phyllis now.



Walter Polt, MA Columbia University, co-created Intermountain Associates for Psychosynthesis and its training program. His experience in counseling and coaching with groups and individuals is in a variety of settings, including hospital, community mental health, and private practice. He has written numerous professional articles, and his book From Anger to Power is newly revised to focus on resolving inner confusion related to conflicts in close relationships.

My friend Phyllis Clay

By Paola Marinelli

We have been dear friends for many years, as we met in 1994 at a Conference of the Istituto di Psicosintesi in southern Italy that she attended, though she spoke no Italian. This already says something about Phyllis: she was so enthusiastic about Psychosynthesis that she didn't mind not being able to understand what we said -- she could enjoy the atmosphere and somehow she absorbed the meaning of speeches in another way.



I don't want to tell about her life and activities, someone else has done that very well. What I want to tell you about is our friendship, which was strongly based on our shared love for Psychosynthesis (and for Jane Austen!), and which developed some years later in the work for the Assagioli Archives and Casa Assagioli.

Phyllis had been coming to Florence once a year for many years, spending a whole month attending an Italian language course (I'm afraid fruitlessly), visiting museums, and sitting every day four, five hours at the Istituto in via San Domenico browsing through the thousands of small notes Roberto Assagioli had written and which had already been partially catalogued. Truly, at that time I could not understand such a devoted presence -- it was something we didn't share. I simply found it uninteresting to go through all those "dead" papers when you could experience Psychosynthesis in many lively ways!

It was actually only during the summer of 2005 that her passion for those "dead" notes opened the door to something important.

Being the architect in charge of the renovation of the building owned by the Assagioli family and

left to the Istituto, I was suddenly called, in the first days of August, by the secretary, Siria: she told me the room on the roof floor, which was filled with thousands papers and books, was now endangered by the renovation work, open to dust and even to rain. So, as Phyllis had come to my place in Rome for holiday, we decided to leave immediately for Florence, where we spent some days camped in a room saved from the building renovation work, and tried to save the papers, putting them in boxes and bringing them to a safer place.

Well, this was *the* moment: I was bringing boxes and putting papers and papers in them with a kind of desperate order, and saw her happily reading a note, a smile on her face. Things often happen in life in a strange way, quite different from an idealized form that we imagine should occur. I had a strong, quick irritation towards Phyllis. How, when I was working hard -- it was an emergency -- could she take time in *reading*!

I suppose I said something, but we were able not to quarrel, and one moment later *I was totally taken* by a manuscript letter young Assagioli had written to his parents. In the letter he speaks about some of his dreams, about writing four books -- he even gave the titles -- which we know he never wrote. Just after this, I could *read* some other quite interesting papers which covered in many different issues -- Judaism, women, inner life, astrology... I suddenly understood why Phyllis could spend one whole month each year on such papers. Far from being dead writings, they were so alive and so interesting, showing the living soul of the writer such that you could hardly move away from them.

So, our work slowed down, we were not able to finish it - luckily someone else from Florence came later. But what happened was the birth of the awareness of this available treasure -- available for the whole world of the Psychosynthesis community, not just for Italy. Many manuscripts where in English, some in French or German, and the range of issues he dealt with was huge. This meant the opportunity for an immense, interesting work to be done, and internationally -- the best opportunity for Psychosynthesis lovers to come

together to a communal home to cooperate in giving a life's work to the world.

This was the starting point that led to the establishment of the Assagioli Archives in Florence, to build the Archivio Assagioli website, to organize the International Meetings at Casa Assagioli since 2010 and many other activities there. Phyllis has always been part of the team during the Meetings, giving her gentle and lively touch to the days -- someone on whom we could count for any task.

This is what I feel I want to tell about Phyllis, as sometimes bigger things get their beginning from a small, and unaware act, such as reading a note with pleasure, as a spark in the right time and space.

For sure, she has been a good friend to me and a *spark* for Casa Assagioli.

Paola Marinelli was born in Verona in 1952 and graduated in Architecture in 1977. Having moved to Bolzano in 1976, she had the opportunity to meet and fall in love with Psychosynthesis as a path of personal growth, and in 1982 co-founded the Bolzano Center of Psychosynthesis, a local branch of the Istituto di Psicopsintesi.

Since then Paola could practice her two main passions as parallel activities, one supporting the other: Architecture, as a professional on her own, and Psychosynthesis as service, in the leading team of the Center. Later her responsibilities in the Istituto grew, and in 1994 she became trainer in the Official Self-Development Program and member of the Board of Directors of the Istituto (1994-1998).

From 2004 she has been working at "Casa Assagioli", first as an architect, rebuilding the house where Roberto Assagioli lived and which was left as heritage to the Istituto after his death. Then she founded the Gruppo alle Fonti, which takes care of the written materials left by Assagioli and opens Casa Assagioli to Italian and foreigner Psychosynthesis friends who want to live the deep experience offered by it.

Considering Casa Assagioli as a natural International Center of Psychosynthesis, Paola is working to build a net of cooperators from all over the world who want to share Service and Group Work within the context of Self-developmental Psychosynthesis.



Photographic Memories of Phyllis

From Isabelle Clotilde Küng

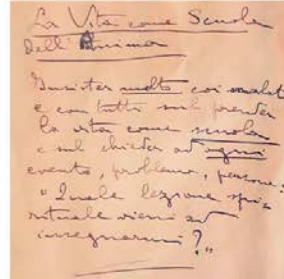


I met Phyllis at CASA ASSAGIOLI Sept. 14-16, 2018, she was part of the reception team lead by Paola Marinelli.

Assagioli manuscript note

Life lived as a school of the Soul

Insist a lot with the patients and with all on taking life as a school and to ask at the ushering in of every event, problem, person: "What is the spiritual lesson you come to teach me?"



On Friday I shared anecdotes about my learning years under Assagioli's guidance so as to become a teacher of educational Psychosynthesis to the teenage and young adults students of my mother's boarding school for girls. Isabelle Küng



On Saturday Didi gave a most welcome talk describing the process of meeting with success and disaster that marked the first years of the development of psychosynthesis on American soil, and which (as far as I understand it) is part of the process of growing out of personality reactivity and exclusiveness so as to blossom into the more genuine attitude of appropriate inclusiveness and benevolence advocated by Assagioli. Not only people but also groups too grow and develop and eventually reach the stage of maturity where they function in a negentropy oriented manner (focusing on finding good, strong and skillfull synergies).





Sunday Sept. 22, 2019 Phyllis at Place des Nations – Geneva offices of the UN



Sunday Sept. 22, 2019
Phyllis at my place – Geneva



Sunday Sept. 22, 2019 Phyllis at Ariana Park,
activating the SHINAGAWA BELL – Geneva

Isabelle Clotilde Küng lives in Geneva, Switzerland “I would so like to know everything about life from the atom to galaxies that I sometimes forget to see the obvious ... but this sense of relativity means that even if I stress sometimes, I do not dramatize and above all, I prefer to find solutions not necessarily and at all costs "new" but in any case "renewing", promoting harmony”. She was Headmistress and also educational psychology teacher at Institut Bleu Léman · September 1970 to August 1981 · Villeneuve, Vaud, Studied at Istituto di Psicosintesi Firenze. Class of 1970 · trained with Dr Roberto Assagioli · Florence, Italy.

Webinar: Transforming Complex Trauma Into Recovery and Growth

Presented by Jean A. Rhea, LCMFT (KS), LMFT (CA), MS

Date: Sunday, May 17, 12-1:30PM (EST)

Target audience: This session is oriented towards those who may have experienced complex trauma, recovery and growth personally or are now interested in or currently guiding others professionally. One of the key take aways from this webinar is the importance of asking the question, "What's happened to you?," instead of the often misguided question, "What's wrong with you?," thus opening to the possibility and opportunity for transpersonal recovery and growth.

Learning Objectives:

1. Explore moving away from the stigmatizing, marginalizing and polarizing label of 'addiction', instead using substance use and misuse.
2. Explore seeing and holding substance use and misuse as a healthy survival strategy and important primary relationship!
3. Identifying survival subpersonalities with creative, incredible strengths and survival skills.
4. Practice identifying and simplifying complex trauma (individual, family, community national and global) and patterns of substance use and misuse into a
5. single snapshot using a new model I am currently developing: Complex Trauma, Recovery and Growth: A self-directed wellness plan.
6. Explore how to turn Survival Subpersonalities and their Survival Skills and Strengths into new and more Authentic Selves with Recovery Skills and Strengths.
7. Identifying recovery and post-traumatic growth as an often immediate response.

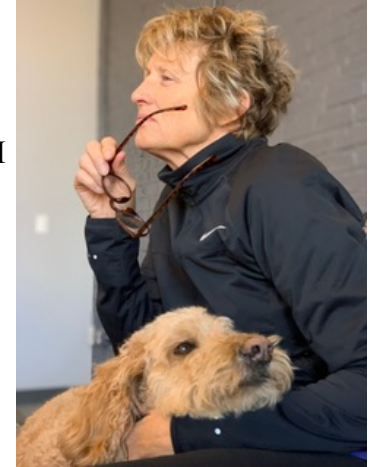
[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS MAY 14, 2020



Jean Rhea, LCMFT (KS), LMFT (CA):

Upon taking the Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACE assessment, I personally scored a 5 which correlates with the level of childhood abuse I experienced as a child growing up in a midwestern family, many of whom had also experienced complex trauma and substance misuse. There is no doubt the survival subpersonalities developed over time saved my life and sanity. Alcohol not only proved to be an important, primary relationship.



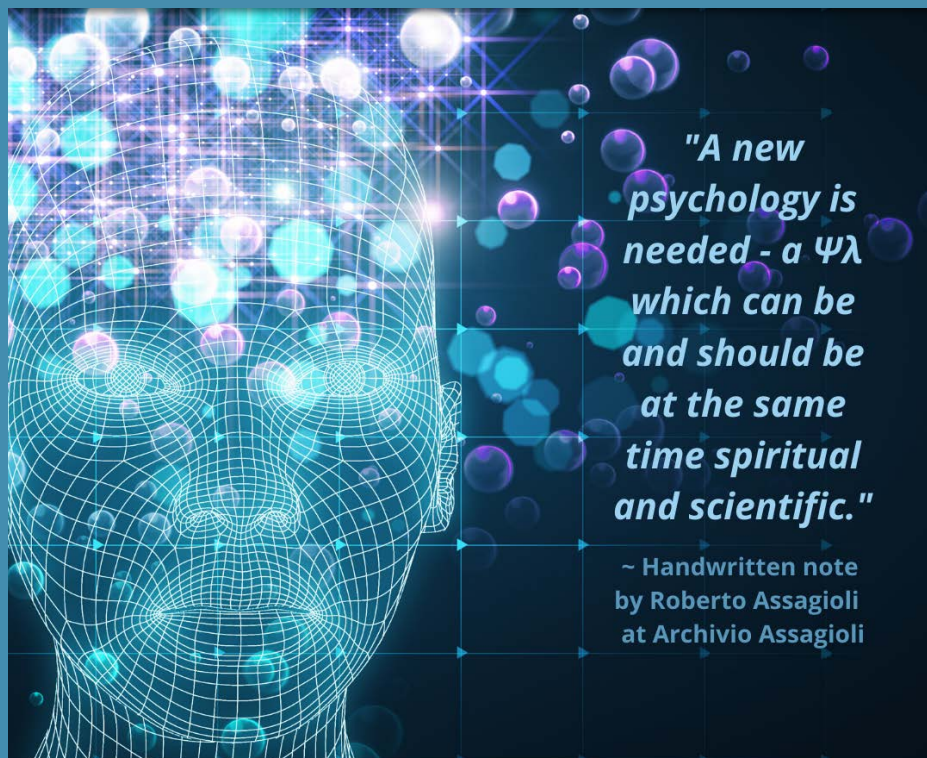
Growing into adulthood, the survival subpersonalities and skills I developed became more polished as they expanded and deepened throughout all areas of my life until becoming my *reactions*, *not responses*, to the layers of trauma I came to experience. Some of those trauma's included my sexual orientation identification as LGBTQ in a family, community and religion that was unaccepting, unsupportive and instead punishing. I also experienced sexual violence by a sexual predator and as a result over thirty years of navigating the U.S. Criminal Justice and Victim Services System. Finally in November of 1993, a horse accident and subsequent Near-Death experience that let me finally to Sofia University where I met and trained with Ann Gila and John Firman at Psychosynthesis Palo Alto over the next ten years.

Currently I am a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in both California and Kansas, a Professional Interventionist and Recovery Coach with past experience as the Clinical Director of St. Vincent De Paul/San Francisco, and as a behavioral health consultant with Felton Institute, where as part of a team, I educated, trained and implemented a trauma-informed, strengths-based and culturally relevant way of finding treatment solutions instead of punishment for Transitional Age Youth in San Francisco's Drug Court.

Psychosynthesis provides the foundation for a model I'm currently developing and utilizing in my current work. It is a compassionate, insightful, strengths-based and trauma-informed approach that moves away from stigmatizing, marginalizing and polarizing labels and instead provides insight, compassion, collaboration and guidance into one's own ability to completely transform complex trauma into recovery and growth - in one's own way, using one's own language and in one's own time.

Jean Rhea, LCMFT (KS), LMFT (CA) lives in Wichita, Kansas with her wife, Nicola, and their two labradoodles, Barclay and Bella. She is a graduate of the Institute of Tran Psychology (now Sofia University) where she met and trained with John Firman and Ann Gila at Psychosynthesis Palo Alto for a decade. Jean recently moved from the Bay Area where she was an Executive in both for-profit and non-profit Substance Abuse Treatment centers, a Clinical Director of one of San Francisco's largest faith-based, non-profit organizations and Adjunct Professor in the Graduate School of Psychology/Addiction Studies/MFT program. She now has a private practice in Wichita, is Director of Trauma Services at Bel Aire Recovery Center, writer, educator and motivational speaker. Psychosynthesis continues to be an important part of transforming her own journey of sexual violence and relationship with alcohol into recovery and growth - and as a guide to those she continues to serve. TEDx/Place of Heart: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=av3DybCMwLo>:

SYNTHESIS CENTER SAN FRANCISCO



DISTANCE LEARNING & IN-PERSON PROGRAMS IN PSYCHOSYNTHESIS *BEGINNING SPRING/SUMMER 2020*

+ Psychosynthesis for Life:

Manifesting Purpose through the Act of Will

Distance Learning: 6 live experiential group webinars + 6 web-based on-demand units

(This 30-hour Self-development program is required for our Board Certified Coach Training & is ideally taken as a first step in training)

BEGINS APRIL 6, 2020

(additional dates to be added in Spring/Summer/Fall 2020)

+ SUMMER INTENSIVE:

Board Certified Coach & Leadership Training in PSYCHOSYNTHESIS

45 hours of Distance Learning with an In-Person/Hybrid option - Part 1 of a 3 Part program

JUNE thru AUGUST 2020

(Participants will join our Winter/Spring cohort to complete Parts 2&3 of training beginning September 2020 thru June 2021)

Contact us to request your Program Guide:

info@SynthesisCenterSF.com

SynthesisCenterSF.com



Psychosynthesis Northeast Community

A “Sacred Box”

a new Psychosynthesis exercise created by Val Gilman

March 15, 1-5 pm at our Greenfield location,

Saints James & Andrew Episcopal Church

Whiteman Room, 8 Church St., Greenfield, MA 01301

Come explore the illuminating and healing power of somatic imagination as it relates to psychosynthesis. Val Gilman, psychosynthesis coach, artist, teacher and regular attendee of PSNE will guide us through an exercise that she calls the “sacred box”. It engages the imagination at the juncture between the psyche, the body and the spirit and provides a potential for transformative awareness and healing.

There will be discussion of Assagioli’s work including the psychological functions and the egg diagram as we explore how to use metaphor to tap into and engage transpersonal qualities. She will also lead a discussion about best practices in using guided imagery. Val will share her use of authentic movement as a generative technique for guided imagery structures and invite a peer discussion on how to develop your own visualization structure for personal meditative practice and for use with clients.

Two years ago Val introduced some of her work with somatic imagination in a PSNE workshop. This workshop will engage some of the same principles and take the work into a new path.

Val Gilman is a practicing psychosynthesis life coach who works with individuals in her office in Shutesbury and via phone and Zoom. She completed her two-year program at the Synthesis Center in 2016. At the 2016 psychosynthesis conference, she presented a workshop on the Villain, Victim and Savior. In the PSNE February of 2017 meeting, she co-lead a workshop Amy Sun Finlay called Manifest your Purpose in the New Year through Dialogue with the Body. She studies contemplative dance, also known as authentic movement, with Alton Wasson and Daphne Lowel and has an ongoing practice which she draws on in her coaching. Having earned her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and taught at the college level for 14 years, she currently teaches both at Northampton Pottery and also through the Cancer Connection. With an extensive national exhibition record, she is currently a member of Gallery A3 in Amherst where she will have a solo exhibit in July of this year. Val is engaged in an ongoing collaborative project with dancer Michelle Maroquin within which she performed the “sacred box” in a collaborative performance called “Persephone’s Diary; the Descent”.

Potluck snacks: Healthy, hearty contributions that are quick to put out and tidy up afterward are ideal. Thanks!

Suggested donation \$20. Any amount will be deeply appreciated.
Please RSVP to amy@amyfinlay.com.

Our Time: What is Being Asked of Us Now?

*Three Women's Circles with
Anne Yeomans*

March 21st, April 18th, June 6th, 10 AM to 5 PM, Greenfield, MA



At a time when the future of life on earth as we know it is seriously threatened, and so much political leadership is either buried in denial or mired in deceit, it is easy to lose one's way, doubt one's perceptions, and feel isolated, confused and powerless.

It has been my belief for a long time that women have an important role to play at this time in our history. And yet in order to be able to contribute what we know and to stand up on behalf of what we care about, two things are essential. 1. We need each other. The situation is far too complex and overwhelming to even contemplate alone. 2. We also need safe places and time to listen within and align with what is most important to us, as well as to discern realistic and grounded next steps.

To this end, I will be offering three one-day circle/workshops for women this spring in Greenfield, Massachusetts. They are open to anyone who identifies as a woman. **These circle/workshops can be taken separately, or together, though I encourage anyone who can to take all three.**

The following topics have been chosen to provide a context for our explorations:

1. ***Finding Connection, Strength and Sanity in a Time of Isolation, Confusion and Overwhelm.*** (Saturday March 21st)
2. ***Exploring the Relationship between Love and Power: Towards a Powerful Love and a Loving Power.*** (Saturday, April 18th)
3. ***Reclaiming the Mother Principle both within ourselves and in our world: Maternal Values, Self-Mothering, Mother Earth.*** (Saturday, June 6th).

The work we do will draw from Psychosynthesis, an approach to growth and development that acknowledges both the psychological and spiritual dimensions of life, and also from the field of Women's Spirituality, and of circle work. The circle provides a non-hierarchical way of working which allows us to listen for the insights that come when all voices are welcomed. Together we will consider the following question: What is sacred to each of us, and how can we best nurture, protect and express it? Dialogue, inner reflection and experiential exercises will be our way of exploration.



Anne Eastman Yeomans, MA, LMHC
Facilitator and Holder of the Circle

Anne has been a psychotherapist for many years. She recently closed her psychotherapy practice, and is currently re-defining her work to be that of a mentor, a teacher and a supervisor. Her original training to become a psychotherapist was in Psychosynthesis. As a young woman she studied with its founder Roberto Assagioli, in Florence Italy, and they spoke together about women's wisdom and the great need for the re-honoring of the feminine in a world so seriously out of balance. Anne was one of the cofounders of The Women's Well in Concord, MA, a center dedicated to the circle and the healing and empowerment of women <http://womenswell.org/>. She has taught women's circle work in this country and also internationally. Anne is a poet and a social activist. Her poem about Christine Blasey Ford, *The Silence is Broken* was published in the magazine *Voice Male*. She is married, and is a mother and a grandmother.

Time: Saturdays March 21st, April 18th, and June 6th from 10 AM to 5 PM

Place: The Episcopal Church of Saints James and Andrew, 8 Church St, Greenfield, MA.

Cost: ***For all three days: \$360***

For two days: \$250

For one day: \$135

Payment plans are available. There are also some work/study opportunities and a small scholarship fund. If you want to talk any of this over, or if you have other questions, please email Anne at anneyeomans@gmail.com

Huntington Meditation and Imagery Center

Innovative Programs for Health Professionals
Approved provider of continuing education credits



***Transpersonal Development:
Vulnerability and the Spiritual Search,
April 1-3, 2020
Our Lady of Grace, Manhasset***

Transpersonal means beyond the personality.

It refers to the deeper spiritual resources in human nature: inner peace, inner wisdom, life purpose and oneness.

Professionals can awaken these resources in their patients and clients.

Join us at this beautiful center in early Spring.

If you are interested in attending,
please contact Richard directly at:
drichardschaub@gmail.com

Modestly-priced onsite housing available.

FACULTY:

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Mary Beth White, RN, MS, WHCNP, APHN-BC
Richard Schaub, PhD, LMHC
Victoria Gulino, MS, LMHC

<https://huntingtonmeditation.com/>

***Clinical Meditation and Imagery
Certificate Training,
Six Saturdays in Huntington
9/12/20, 10/10/20, 11/14/20,
12/5/20, 1/9/21, 2/6/21***

We are delighted to announce the start of our training program in Huntington, Long Island NY, beginning in September, 2020.

We are now pleased to announce the opening of our CMI training in Huntington, Long Island. It is held over six Saturday meetings, one per month. In between trainings, one phone supervision per month is held to guide you in your particular areas of interest. <https://huntingtonmeditation.com/portfolio-posts/certificate-in-clinical-meditation-imagery/>

The tuition total is \$1795. This includes training, supervision, a supplemental training manual and three practice CDs of the methods. You need to buy *Transpersonal Development: Cultivating the Human Resources of Peace, Wisdom, Purpose and Oneness* as your textbook. https://www.amazon.com/Richard-Schaub-PhD/e/B001JRXLYK%3Fref=dbs_a_mng_rwt_sns_share

APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR 2020-21
The Call of Self: Transformational Life Coaching
Psychosynthesis & Professional Coach Training

Fully Accredited 144 hour program with dual certification options
hosted at *Hallelujah Farm Retreat Center*, near Brattleboro, VT

Psychosynthesis Coaching weaves together a holistic vision of human nature with a set of recognized coaching principles to produce a dynamic model for personal and professional growth.



ANSWER THE CALL OF SELF
Discover meaning • Find purpose •
Become a professional coach

Part 1 Psychosynthesis Training – Weekend Dates:

October 10-11, 2020

November 7-8, 2020

December 5-6, 2020

January, 2021 - winter break

February 6-7, 2021

March 6-7, 2021

April 10-11, 2021

May 8-9, 2021

June 5-6, 2021

July & August 2021 – summer break

Part 2 Advanced Training – Weekend Dates:

September 11-12, 2021

October 2-3, 2021

November 6-7, 2021

December 4-5, 2021

ALL Training weekends are
Saturday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. and
Sundays 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

More Information: www.synthesiscoaching.org
email: jon@synthesiscoaching.org

HELP US GROW



We hope you enjoyed this issue of the *Psychosynthesis Quarterly* and want to say thank you once again to everyone who contributed. Did you know that everyone who produces the Quarterly, presents webinars, maintains the website, updates the calendar, upkeeps membership and

communication, and does all the behind-the-scene planning of events ARE ALL VOLUNTEERS? We do it because we love psychosynthesis and are committed to fulfilling the AAP's mission "to advance the theory and practice of psychosynthesis to benefit individuals and society." However, in order to grow, we need your help.



- Are you or would you like to suggest someone who is accomplished in your/their field on a particular subject or concept to present a webinar or consider being a guest editor of the quarterly?
- Are you a copyeditor who would like to lend your skill to assisting in the production of the quarterly?
- Are you computer savvy and want to help with the website?
- How about helping us actually "steer" the direction of the AAP by joining the Steering Committee?
- Want to help but don't see your interest on this list? Contact us anyway and share your thoughts.
- Please contact us at communication@aap-psychosynthesis.org