

PSYCHOSYNTHESIS

QUARTERLY

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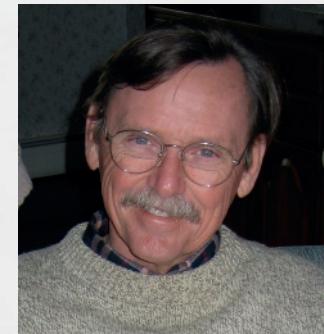
EDITOR'S NOTES

Once again people from around the globe have sent us wonderful material to share with you. Will Parfitt has explored Roberto Assagioli's "egg" diagram to discover new meanings and uses; Shamai Currim discovered how to look from more than one perspective; Didi Firman shows us the gift given by the act of responding affirmatively; Catherine Ann Lombard began to see unusual phenomena in therapy sessions and she shares her experience with us. Abby Seixas shares what is valuable and yet beyond the reach of achievement, and Walter Polt invites us to reach beyond our own points of view to find values.

We have reflections on the Rome Conference from Judi White, a report on the Women's Conference for Future Generations, and the announcement of international conferences in St. Petersburg, Russia, in May and Kristiansand, Norway, in June. And AAP's 2013 Conference in Burlington, Vermont, USA in June.

Notes on psychosynthesis training by Molly Young Brown, Didi Firman and Tom Yeomans; book announcements by Molly Young Brown and yours truly, and a report on the election of a new Board of Governors by the European Federation of Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy. Lots of things happening! We hope to hear from you too.

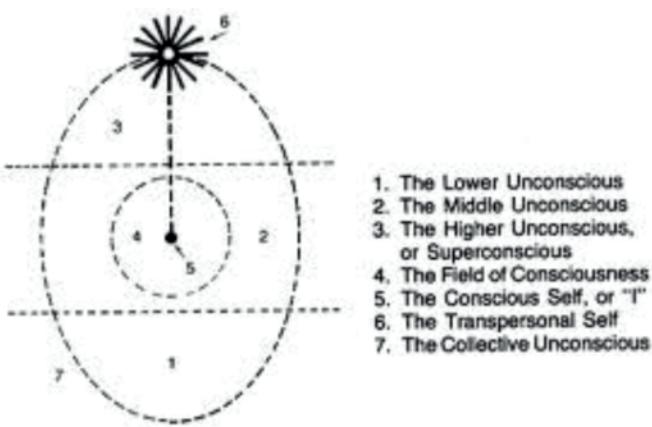
Jan Kuniholm



The Egg Diagram – More Than an Empty Shell

Will Parfitt

Sometimes people say there isn't much in Assagioli's "egg diagram," that it is too simple to be an effective or useful map of the human psyche; but I have found over and over again that spending time studying the egg diagram—which is more intricate than at first appears—helps a therapist become familiar with the territory of a client's psyche and helps a therapist to become fully involved in the experience of the client and the therapist-client interaction.



As all Psychosynthesis practitioners know, the egg diagram represents the whole psyche and its three horizontal divisions represent the lower, middle and higher unconscious. What is more helpful, though, is to see these divisions as representing the past, present and future. Within every moment, 'here and now,' we each carry the past within us as memories and experiences whether these are remembered or not. We also have the future within us, the potential to have new experiences and to find new ways to express ourselves. Whilst the primary focus of therapeutic work is on the present, the past is constantly referred to and through reference to the past, a client may get a clearer understanding of where they want to go and how to get there.

The bottom third of the diagram represents the lower unconscious, the personal past which includes repressed complexes, long-forgotten memories, instincts, 'primitive urges' and bodily functions over which we (usually) have no conscious control. Of primary concern to us is the repressed material found here, often experienced in the form of unconscious controls—phobias, obsessions, compulsive urges and so on, because "in order to avoid personal annihilation, we will disown those areas of experience deemed unacceptable by the environment" (Firman and Gila, 2010, p.18). The most important thing to disown, to both ourselves and others, is the fact that we have such experiences! Thus the shadow is formed, always out of sight yet always present with its influence. When we help a client explore the lower unconscious, it aids their growth because as they learn to integrate more of these 'older' or repressed aspects of themselves, they become more whole. Whitmore reminds us we have the capacity to change and "consciously and deeply to understand our psychological history which can liberate a sense of meaning, of life being more than merely a disordered existence" (1991, p. 12).

The middle unconscious is the realm of everything which can easily be brought into everyday awareness but which is not necessarily relevant. For instance, you know how to do simple arithmetic, but do you really want to choose to have that in your consciousness when you are making love? The middle unconscious also holds suppressed material. This differs from repressed material that has been 'pushed down' into the lower unconscious. With repressed things, we no longer remember them as part of us. Suppressed material, on the other hand, we know is there, it is just that we are choosing, for one reason or another, not to bring it into awareness. Firman and Gila (2010, p. 13) note that "the field of neuroscience has used the term 'nonconscious' with much the same meaning." There is nothing wrong with suppression, but we have to be careful that things that we suppress do not get completely forgotten and then become part of the contents of our lower unconscious from where they start controlling us.

(Continued on page 4)

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The top third of the egg diagram represents the superconscious, the source of our ‘inner genius,’ and is a major area of exploration with clients. From here we receive inspiration, whether experienced in artistic or scientific, grand or simple ways. Usually people connect with the superconscious through insights and ‘inspirational flashes;’ for example, suddenly realizing the solution to a long-term issue. Or a client might suddenly know more about what they want to do with their life after months of uncertainty. Such insights are a sure sign that the superconscious has been contacted.

Frank Haronian (1974) described an aspect of shadow that he called ‘repression of the sublime.’ We don’t only disown material from the lower unconscious; in learning to survive we also hide positive aspects of ourselves—qualities such as compassion, courage and creativity for instance—as exhibiting such gifts can open us to (or make us feel open to) a threat of attack. Thus, we repress the sublime within us and are contracted to a narrow band of expression, or worse, we start to act out self-defeating behaviour patterns.

Psychosynthesis stresses that any distinction between ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ unconscious is developmental, not moralistic. The lower unconscious is simply behind us, and forms the ‘foundation’ of our present awareness. The higher unconscious is not above us or better than us in some way, but is meant to describe the sense that we evolve towards it when we raise our consciousness into new experiences. Similarly, when insights come from this realm of the unconscious, we often get a sense of things ‘dropping into place.’

Although not shown in the diagram, each individual ‘egg’ is surrounded by the collective unconscious which is common to all living beings. Although at times we may feel isolated and alone, we are in reality part of a collective field in which all other beings play a part. It is, of course, vital to understand this when considering the client-therapist relationship. Eastcott (1979, p. 153) notes that “here lie the ancient memories and tendencies of peoples, nations, tribes and families, the primitive patterns that modulate action and reaction, the archetypal symbols to which Jung attributed so much of our behaviour.” Including the collective psyche as such an integral part of the model stresses the importance of including social and ancestral underpinnings in work with clients.

Note also how the lines in the diagram are dotted to show there is free interplay between all the “levels.” With a more rigid client it is as if the egg ‘hardens’ and the work might be to crack it open a little to let in more fluidity. On the other hand, for a client who finds it difficult to separate from other people it is as if the spaces in the egg let in (or out) too much. The work is then to strengthen the eggshell, to create more of an individual identity.

How amazing there is so much in such an apparently simple diagram!

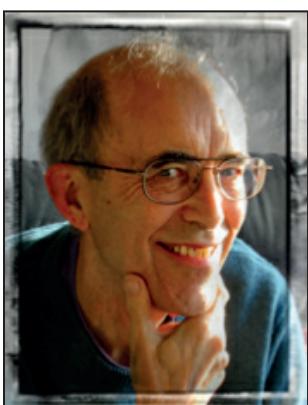
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Will Parfitt is a registered psychotherapist, UKCP, based in Glastonbury, England, UK, the author of numerous books including *Kabbalah: The Tree of Life*; *Psychosynthesis: New Perspectives and Creative Research*; *The Something and Nothing of Death*; and *Psychosynthesis: The Elements and Beyond*. He is the *will* behind **Psychosynthesis Avalon**, which publishes books and poetry and sponsors courses, retreats, and other educational activities.

book announcement

The Gospel Within Us



The Gospel
According to Mark
As a Handbook
for Healing and
Personal Transformation

Jan Kuniholm

A psychosynthesis- influenced interpretation of The Gospel According to Mark by Jan Kuniholm

The Gospel Within Us takes you on a complete verse by verse tour of *The Gospel According to Mark* and shows how this first Gospel can be seen as a workbook that provides a complete program of spiritual learning and growth, from the first stirrings of conscience to the final transformation, as Christ within us guides us into a life led by The Holy Spirit.

Through this new, updated, refreshing look at the Gospel of Mark, Jan Kuniholm guides you and then suggests that you experience what it means to become your own spiritual Self. He has taken on the task of deciphering difficult passages into the everyday language of life. He puts into words what we are all searching for: the ability to reach God within us... One of the exceptional beauties of this book is that it allows all, not just Christians, to get a taste of our true, spiritual selves. Through specific exercises it becomes a 'living book' in that you take in as much as you can for the moment, allow it to percolate, and then return to review, revise, or continue your journey.

— Shamaï Currim, PhD, Psychotherapist,
Lachine, Quebec

This book presents a personal approach to the gospel that invites the reader to connect the people and events of the Gospel to one's own feelings, thoughts and the events of everyday life, to understand the crises that may be markers of spiritual growth, and to reach for the resources that Jesus shows us are available to us all for the arduous journey from our own Galilee to our own Jerusalem. With study questions and exercises.

- For use by individuals or groups
- Nonsectarian, nondoctrinal, and inclusive—safe for refugees from organized religion
- A useful tool for spiritual guides, teachers or counselors working with people who find their spiritual roots in the Gospel

**435 p. — \$19.95 US — may be purchased from the author
at www.GospelWithinUs.com or through booksellers online, in the US, and UK**

I had a Dream—Taking a New Perspective

Early Morning Musings by Shamai Currim PhD

I awoke this morning from a dream. I was in school and looking at a picture book. The book was in 3D and I was seeing things from a bird's perspective. At first it was exciting, and then it suddenly dawned on me that I wasn't seeing the *whole* picture. I wanted to see beyond the bird's limited view, and I wasn't able to. This came as such a revelation: the importance of our perspective and of seeing life through many perspectives in order to get a richer, fuller, more meaningful life. I awoke in my dream, all excited to share this with Olga, my psychosynthesis teacher/trainer/guide of more than 20 years, only to find that the house in which we were staying was going through radical changes. All night workmen had been there painting, wallpapering, hanging new curtains, in order to be finished when we all woke up.

Well, I woke up from this dream very excited. This wasn't new information, but it had taken on a whole new perspective. I thought about the many clients I work with who have dissociative functions, and how important it is for all their parts to have compassion and a fuller perspective, to see through the eyes of them all—similar to the subpersonality work we are encouraged to do. I thought of how full and rich life could be if we had and could hold the vision of the all, of many perspectives. This is related to the workshop I'm proposing for the 2013 AAP conference in Burlington, VT at the summer solstice, which is about relativity and the essence of time, and how we relate to time differently—you got it—depending on our perspective.

As I walked the dogs this morning, I was reminded of the work of many shamans, who are able to get the perspective of all living beings and non-living objects by changing their own viewpoint—by identifying with “other” rather than self—and I wondered about the widespread state of dis-ease in people, and how different life could be if we only took the time to be conscious of a different perspective.

What is life? To change what we thought we were into what we may become, is about perspective—and the ability to see life through the eyes of “other.”

How clear life would be if we but changed our viewpoint, our way of knowing the world. Our interactions take on a whole new meaning when they are more than “our own.”

I remind myself that we are more
than our body, mind, and soul,
and I remember to think beyond
that which I thought I already knew

For when we see through
the glasses of change
then we become
More





**Sponsored by Harmony Institute, Russia
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Our mission is to support people in expressing their uniqueness and to help them live in harmony with themselves, with others, and with the world

Dear Friends and Colleagues!

We invite you to the **VI Annual International Conference: Self and Other: Space for Dialogue**. "Space for Dialogue" is the area which we, professionals whose job is to help others, inhabit all the time. *Relationship, meeting, and dialog* are the major areas of our work. They are both our resources and the subject of our study and research. The space for dialogue is the place where changes are possible and where personal potential is realized. As always, this conference is dedicated to a variety of views on humanity, human differences, and relationships.



2013 is our anniversary year. Harmony Institute turns 25 this year and the Annual International Conference turns 20. During all those years we have become friends with many people all over the world, many who will be returning to celebrate with us.

The conference is designed to give people not only new professional knowledge and skills but also a chance to meet colleagues and make new friends. A lot of wonderful traditions also have sprouted during these annual events. We would like to keep them and also to make this conference special.

The conference is experiential: Whether you are a presenter or a participant, or even if you never have attended a conference, you have an opportunity to take part in different activities and not just to observe them. There will be different workshops and seminars, classes and lectures, dialog groups and presentations, and also informal activities—concerts, film screening and discussions, open space activities.

Here are some examples of the last year's workshops and seminars:

- *Healing the Inner Child* by Mark Pevzner (Russia)
- *The Lost Adolescent. Looking for New Relations* by T. Koroleva and N. Valaynis (Russia)

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- *Ways of Seeing and Ways of Being: Love and Power with Others* by Mark Horowitz (USA)
- *Psychological Support of Foster Families* by Ludmila Petranovskaya (Russia)
- *Creative Dance and Developing Movement* by Yelena Kotelenko (Russia)
- *In The Presence of The Other* by Alexander Badkhen (Russia)
- *Helping Children - Victims of Sexual Abuse and/or Commercial Sexual Exploitation: Theory and Practice* by Yelena Zabadykina, Tatiana Lebedeva and Natalia Solntzeva (Russia)
- *The Road to Ourselves and Back* by Danny Shandor (Israel)
- *Unfinished Relations* by Yuliana Budai (Hungary)
- *In Space of Sexuality: Orientation, Identity, Gender* by M. Sabunaeva, V. Rachinskaya (Russia)

We welcome a variety of perspectives on human relations. The conference is always interesting and diverse because of the participation of psychotherapists and counselors who use different approaches and participants who work in other fields and disciplines.

Our conference will appeal to a wide range of professionals, including psychologists and psychotherapists, social workers, teachers, medical doctors, business managers, political scientists, environmentalists, philosophers, anthropologists, students and anyone who wants to investigate ways of human coexistence and cooperation in our diverse world.

Please join us in a wonderful learning environment where you will make new friends and colleagues and acquire practical skills and abilities that will be helpful in your work as well as your everyday life.



Information for Participants and Presenters

The VI International Conference, "Self and Other: Space for Dialogue," will be held in **St. Petersburg, Russia on May 1-5, 2013**. The Conference will take place at Kochubei Palace in Pushkin (former Tsar's Village that is famous for its gardens and palaces), via a 30-minute drive to the south of St. Petersburg.

The registration fee is \$300, and includes transfer from the airport and a letter of invitation that you will need in order to apply for a Russian tourist visa. To receive the letter a 100% prepayment of the registration fee before March 1, 2013 is required.

Total fee including registration fee: Single room \$750, double room per person \$600

If you have any questions, please contact us:

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The Harmony Institute's annual conference . . . structure, unlike any I've attended, moved me deeply. There was a spaciousness, room for my contribution, room to think, room to participate in deeply experiential workshops, room for afternoon tea, room for cultural exchanges, room for imagination. Equally important was the psychological frame and spirit guiding the conference. The elegant paradigm of Psychosynthesis was deeply alive and infused throughout. Self and Other, when seen and experienced through this lens, provided the deepest understanding of my psyche and its relationships to others, even to know that I am Other as well as Self. Something healed in me with this conference.

Something is still at work, unfolding inside me years later. I found myself deeply cooperating with the natural forces of synthesis in life. No small feat. —Scott Thompson, USA

REFLECTIONS on the 2012 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE in ROME

by Judi White

Walter Polt and I entered the foyer of Mondo Migliore Spiritual Retreat Center on Rocca di Papa¹, outside of Rome, Italy, a day early. The place was empty except for a small group of people sitting on the couches off to the right of us. They arose immediately and greeted us. In this group were Paola Marinelli, Yoav Dattilo, and Daniele de Paolis, the coordinators of the conference. Their exceptionally high energy and the welcoming presence of their greetings drew us right into the center of an environment of shared community.

Walter and I were hungry and tired travelers, having run into each other at JFK airport, and we had endured delays before finally getting airborne for the long flight to Italy. After registering and freshening up in our rooms, we met in the cafeteria, a huge, airy, window-lined room with peach and white hues. The Italian cuisine was excellent, and proved to be so all during the conference. The next day, the foyer was packed with people, and it continued to be so all day as people arrived and registered.

A tour of Rocca di Papa was arranged. Thirty-five participants hopped on a bus and headed down the hill to the village. When we finally arrived at a central location, we were on our own to explore this ancient place. Molly Brown and I headed down the slope and, instead of going to the museum, wandered down and down the side of the hill, on ancient stairways, following signs to we knew not where. Homes, a church, stairways leading up, rooftops looking down, and Rome in the distance, until we finally headed back up a winding road. We found ourselves at the same place where we began the descent and ran into a group of Swedish psychosynthesisists who knew Molly. A while later we ran into a group from Canada, from where Molly and Stephanie Lindsay continued up a hill, while I went to find some markers for a scrapbook journal that I had received as a gift for the journey.

The coordinators had a clear purpose for the conference which they had published at the beginning of the conference website. I felt they fulfilled their purpose.

Definitely, we were renewed by a deep sense of connectedness. Without a doubt, the conference was co-creative and experiential, full of superb demonstrations and presentations of high quality products and programs. It was a demonstration of the vital global community to which we all belong, and it challenged us to continue this connectedness in our local communities.

I believe that this conference was a demonstration of what Roberto Assagioli meant by supreme synthesis, this conference being the heart of the **ideal model**. Now, the task before us is to facilitate our local groups' journey toward this vision of communities of service. Many aspects are already in place and need the support of a global networking community for the momentum to continue.

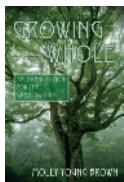
Molly Brown's keynote speech set the stage for creating a healthy environment where this can happen. She brought awareness to the role of psychosynthesis in systems transformation: psychosynthesis can help individuals heal; can support us and help us support others as we guide them through the challenges of the hard times ahead and teach such skills of centering, disidentification, developing the will; it can help strengthen activists working on the front lines, strengthening their courage, compassion, and connection to Self; and it can contribute to the shift in consciousness, away from egotism to experiencing and acting from our essential Oneness in the diversity of perspective.

She invited us to proceed into the conference, "in the auspicious year of 2012 to contribute to the transformation of humanity and to the birth of a new era of cooperation, harmony, synthesis, and joy, to bring **Psychosynthesis in the World.**" □

¹ Rocca di Papa is a small town and [comune](#) in the [province of Rome](#), [Lazio](#), [Italy](#). It is one of the [Castelli Romani](#) about 25 km south east of [Rome](#) on the [Alban Hills](#). It is bounded by the other communes of [Velletri](#), [Rocca Priora](#), [Monte Compatri](#), [Grottaferrata](#), [Albano](#) and [Marino](#). It is the centre of the Regional Park known as the "Parco Regionale dei Castelli Romani."(Wikipedia)—ed.

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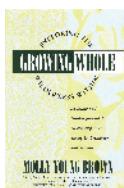
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thoughts

YES!

Didi Firman, EdD

We've all heard the oft-repeated phrase, "Just say no." It's been used to respond to drugs, food, or even other people—a way of making boundaries. But there's a real invitation in the opposite phrase . . . just say "yes." As a country we've just done that again in a way that many of us would never have imagined possible. We've said yes to something new, something hopeful, something larger: a possibility. "Yes, we can" has mobilized us towards the possibility of being a better country, better people.

Saying yes to possibility is a gift we need to accept. Held back by fear or comfort, we say no. Unsure of ourselves, we turn away. Lacking confidence, we stay put. But just saying yes to some of the many invitations that we are presented with every day allows the unfolding of possibility: that possibility of being better, more of who we truly are. Saying yes to the call of Self is our single most important piece of work.

In the busy pace of life, it is hard to even hear the invitation, let alone take time to respond. And the invitation comes frequently. Not in a stamped envelope, but in the passing awareness of a Call, the still small voice, the synchronicity, the sudden open door. It may be the tweak of conscience or the sudden sight of a bird. The invitation may come in Technicolor: ***Do this now!*** More likely it comes quietly, without demand, without consequences, without a promise of reward or a threat of punishment. The invitation comes because it is from our Self to our self. There is no one to judge us for responding or not. But somewhere in us we know when we hear the invitation, that we want to say yes. We want to, from deep inside us.

Did I write that letter that I wanted to, to a friend in need? Have I slowed down to smell the roses? Have I responded to the crises that exist around me in big and small venues? Have I remembered to tell my partner, my kids, my parents that I love them? Did I take time to pat the dog? Have I laughed? Have I cried? When was the last time I read a poem?

The invitations are small ones. We aren't likely asked to save the world. But we are asked, every day, to be true to ourselves. This is the invitation to which we just say yes. ☐



Didi Firman, EdD, is director of the Synthesis Center in Amherst, MA (www.synthesiscenter.org), a professor of psychology, an author, and a blogger on the *Psychology Today* website. This article was adapted from Didi's blog at [psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/living-life-purpose), *Living a Life of Purpose* at <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/living-life-purpose>. Contact her at didid@synthesiscenter.org.

training programs

The Nationally Certified Psychosynthesis Coach Training Program!

Several years ago I became interested in becoming a Life Coach and completed a course with a nationally known Coaching Institute. Unfortunately, I found the material so cookie-cutter and dry, that even though I earned Life Coach Certification, I did not feel confident enough to market myself. When I had the opportunity to take the Psychosynthesis Coach Training, I jumped on the chance. After only a few weeks into the whole-person, comprehensive approach of this program, I have learned more and feel more prepared than I did after completing an entire course elsewhere.

—Marjorie Gross, certified psychosynthesis practitioner



The Will to Grow: Transformational Life Coaching A Psychosynthesis Life Coach Training Program

This teleconference (and/or live) program offers an opportunity for psychosynthesis practitioners with BA's or above to become nationally certified by the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) through their credentialing arm CCE (<http://www.cce-global.org/BCC>). In addition, the Center offers Psychosynthesis Life Coach ([PLC](#)) certification as part of this program. (National & Psychosynthesis Certification in one package!) PLC certification is available to all who complete the course work. Visit our website for more information. There are many configurations that allow for single courses, full certification by CCE and the Center and more.

The Synthesis Center, Amherst MA 01002
www.synthesiscenter.org

35 years and going strong

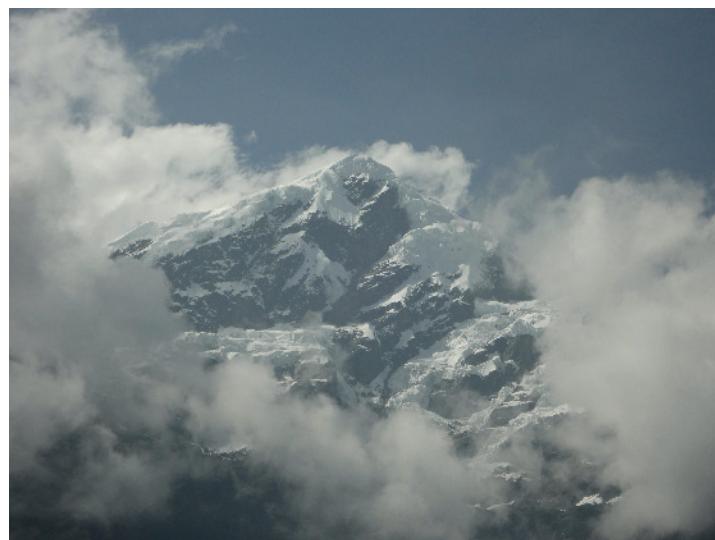
Jon Schottland and Didi Firman are passionately committed to this core and defining work of the Synthesis Center.

Our Level 2 Psychosynthesis Training program is in process with a wonderful group of people coming together to deepen their psychosynthesis training.

Our Psychosynthesis Training will continue side by side with our coach training, honoring our intention to take psychosynthesis into the world in many ways!
Look for news and dates about the start of our Fall 2013 Level 1.

In-person training as a psychosynthesis practitioner/guide can be combined with coach training to meet the unique needs of all interested in the field of psychosynthesis.

The Synthesis Center
285 Pomeroy Lane, Amherst, MA 01002
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A Touch of Light

Catherine Ann Lombard

Two years ago, I started quite unexpectedly to see clients' auras. The first time it happened I wasn't even sure what was going on. The light in the room suddenly changed, the client's face became flat, almost two-dimensional, and I felt like I was suddenly in another dimension. Then I realized that the vibrating colors I was seeing around the client's face and shoulders were her aura. What a surprise!

My Webster's dictionary states that an aura is "an energy field that is held to emanate from a living being." The word derives from the Latin for puff of air or breeze, but some say it comes from the Sanskrit root *ar* meaning the spoke of a wheel, in that the human aura radiates from the body as spokes of a wheel radiate from their axis.

Clients' auras usually appear whenever I am leading them in a guided meditation. I am not sure why this happens, perhaps because we both have slowed down and are fully present. We are in a sacred space where the Self can emerge through superconscious material. Whenever I see auras, I am in full awareness of what is happening and present to the client in a very deep way. I am wondering if anyone else has had a similar experience?

I have learned to allow for the presence of this light and not identify with it. Initially this was a challenge as auras can be a captivating spectacle. The light is wonderfully luminous. The tones are deeply rich and dense close to the person's body and more tenuous and indistinct as one looks further away. Auras appear unique in character, and usually actively shift and vibrate around the person. There are times when I am so fascinated by the appearance of a client's aura that I just want to focus on the kaleidoscope of color and movement and forget that I'm the psychosynthesis guide! It is difficult to stay grounded and not fly away.

During the past two years, I have become better at accepting this gift. I no longer become mesmerized or overwhelmed; but, I have to admit, I still struggle sometimes to watch the aura, lead the visualization, stay connected to the client and my own feelings, as well as observe, assess, interpret, and remember what the client is saying and I am experiencing. Doing all this is undoubtedly multitasking!

After a particular intense experience with a client and her aura, I decided I needed to paint what I had felt. An aura is not just what you see, but what you feel and experience about the person. Sometimes I can sense an aura without being able to see it. Here are some of those paintings along with notes taken from my journal soon after I experienced a client's aura. All the clients' names have been changed and all have granted me permission to write about our sessions.

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Susan

During the visualization when Susan met her deceased grandfather, it was quite the pulsating light show! Her fourth, fifth, and sixth chakras were deep purple across her entire lower torso. Her head gleamed with a tight golden light like a corona. And the light around her shoulders and arms was red. It was really remarkable to watch.



Jim



During our second session, we explored Jim's current state of sadness in a guided visualization. Jim imagined his sadness as a lion cowering between his legs. After some encouragement from Jim, this lion stood up and ran free and wild with Jim beside him. While the lion was running, I saw Jim's aura become a wide and beautiful crimson red. This seemed to indicate that he had reached a point of vibrant virility. Jim felt very

satisfied after the visualization. In retrospect, this visualization seemed to map the journey ahead of us for the next year. Turning this cowering lion into a virile, vibrant, and free potential force would prove challenging to us both.

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Laura

Laura said that her subpersonality, “The Scary Clown,” is triggered whenever she emotionally feels out of control and spontaneously expresses strong emotions like anger. Throughout the meditation, Laura’s aura was pulsating in and out from her body and only on the right side. The color was a dull red.

Maria

Maria started talking about how she used to try and look good for her estranged father, so he might love her. She used to go to sun tanning studios every week. She smoked because he smoked. “How stupid! How stupid!” she said. “And look where it got me. It got me cancer!”

At this point, I became deeply emotional and saw bright yellow light shining all around Maria. I felt so much compassion for her and asked if she might also be able to feel some compassion and mercy for the young woman inside herself who was seeking love, attention, and recognition from her Dad.



Reflection

So what does this all mean? And can I possibly use the auras to better understand my clients in the moment that this energetic light appears? I have struggled with this question for some time, and remain unsure. Some people say that the colors are significant as well as their clarity, shade, hues, and tints. For example, a clear bright red shade, similar to the color of blood, indicates health, life-force, and vigor. However, darker or duller red, like mud, can indicate anger or selfishness. Crimson means Love and the highest form of Love is a rose tint. Different color combinations also carry different meanings. The color of

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greed is supposed to be a combination of dull, dark, red with a dirty ugly green. Is this all true? I honestly have no idea.

Perhaps the only thing I am certain about when the aura appears is that the Self is aligned with our work, the Transpersonal Will pulling us along in this journey towards synthesizing ourselves into authentic beings. The aura assures me that I have hit some deeply rooted crevice in the person's soul; we are exactly where we need to be. The lights may shift and leap, dance and disappear. But ultimately, we are left alone once again in the dark, groping closer towards the client's inner and outer story. The aura simply shines a heavenly "Yes!" and restrengthens my faith that we will eventually discover who we are meant to be. □



Catherine Ann Lombard is a Psycho-synthesis Psychologist and Counselor, writer and poet. Catherine has recently published her research into student sojourners' experience of culture shock and their search for meaning in **From Culture Shock to Personal Transformation, Studying Abroad and the Search for Meaning** available from lulu.com. She received her MA in Psychosynthesis Psychology from Middlesex University, and her Diploma in Psychosynthesis Counseling from the Institute of Psychosynthesis, London. To learn more about her, see catherineannlombard.com

(Photo by Gijs van Ouwerkerk)

Molly Young Brown - On-line Courses in Psychosynthesis and Ecopsychology

<http://mollyyoungbrown.com>



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Two year-long distance training courses for people who live in areas with no nearby psychosynthesis center, and/or others who prefer to work at their own pace and schedule: Personal & Spiritual Psychosynthesis, and Psychosynthesis Guiding Skills.

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The program includes 10 teleseminars (on-line) at two week intervals with reading, writing, and exercise assignments between seminars. Enrollment limited to six-seven students.

Pre-requisite: One year of psychosynthesis training or equivalent. **Next course starts in January 2013.**

Women's Congress for Future Generations

By Molly Brown

Towering red rock mesas welcomed some 150 women and more than a dozen men to the high desert town of Moab, Utah, at the end of September 2012 for the first *Women's Congress for Future Generations*. People came from 23 states, Canada, and Russia to help create a Declaration of the Rights of Future Generations. I was grateful that I could participate, traveling there by train with nine other women from Northern California.

Why consider the rights of future generations and the responsibilities of present generations to uphold these rights? To quote the Congress program:

All bodies—from human bodies and bodies of water to the welfare of the body politic—bear the imprint of the ways in which this generation, and previous generations, handled nuclear technologies, mining, war, pollution, industrial farming, and the fossil fuels at the center of our economy. Future Generations will inherit the consequences of what has been released, buried, leveled, left behind, and squandered without full consideration of long-term consequences. The needs of Future Generations for clean air and water, fertile soil, and raw materials have rarely factored into decisions about how we plan and organize our society today.

Participants in the Congress believe that we humans must acknowledge these consequences as well as the responsibilities of present generations to protect Future Generations from further harm. The Declaration we drafted and will continue to craft and disseminate—with the help of many other hearts and minds—can serve to awaken and educate our communities and assure that we humans consider the effects of all decisions on Future Generations. This document could be adopted as a resolution or ordinance by our local towns and counties, and/or by our state governments, to inform their decision-making processes.

The “Rights of Future Generations” are closely aligned with the “Rights of Nature” (as recently incorporated into the Constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia). Both are needed because of the damage we do to our own life support systems when we emphasize the “bottom line” of short term profits over the innate rights of ecosystems and natural communities to survive and thrive. Affirming the Rights of Future Generations and the Rights of Nature protects the essentials for healthy life: clean water, clean breathable air, fertile soil, balanced and beautiful ecosystems, social justice, and supportive communities.

The planning group created a rich program for the Congress. Focused work sessions were interspersed with inspiring talks, films, workshops, and excursions out to the land. The men were honored as “sacred witnesses,” and invited to participate in everything except the formal Congress sessions, which they observed.

We began Thursday afternoon by honoring our ancestors and conversing with “future beings” about our world today. Friday morning we were invited to a “Theater of the Oppressed” to confront our unconscious assumptions about privilege and the ways we may oppress one another. Then in the afternoon, we met in caucuses representing various groups of animals, plants, and elements to draw up lists of the gifts of each group, their rights, and our human responsibilities to them. (I joined the earth/soil/rock group as a spokesperson for mountains and their right to remain intact, because of my horror at “mountain top removal” for coal mining.) These rights and responsibilities were synthesized into our draft declaration, presented to the group for response and suggestions for revisions on Saturday afternoon.

We celebrated Saturday night by walking out on a foot bridge across the Colorado River and speaking there of the many watersheds and rivers from which we came. We were welcomed by a group of Taiko drummers and the rising full moon.

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On Sunday, in a very moving ceremony, a group of Elders offered their observations and blessings on the work of the Congress, as did the men, our Sacred Witnesses. Then many of the artists attending the Congress shared their responses in art, music, and dance.

I want to give you a taste of what we came up with, while acknowledging that it needs much more editing and refinement. Here are some examples of rights and responsibilities:

- **Right of individuals to a clean and healthy environment**

Individuals of all species have a right to a clean and healthy environment. This right cannot be bought or sold. It is inalienable.

- **Right of nature to exist**

Nature and all ecosystems have the right to exist, whole and intact.

- **Right of Future Generations to whole, biologically diverse, unpolluted ecosystems**

Future Generations of all communities, human and ecological, animate and inanimate, have the right to a wholesome ecosystem that is biologically rich and diverse with its vital integral cycles and systems intact, to be respected, and to not be wasted, degraded, polluted, devalued, excluded or cast aside. This right cannot be bought or sold.

- **Responsibility to honor Earth's systems**

Present Generations carry the responsibility to honor the continuity of life and Earth's systems, to hold reverence for life, respect and protect the integral limits, boundaries, relationships and natural organization of the Earth and its natural systems, rhythms and cycles.

- **Responsibility to act as guardians for Future Generations**

Present Generations carry the responsibility to act as guardians for Future Generations. Present Generation will take active responsibility to speak and openly discuss matters that affect Future Generations. Present Generations carry the responsibility to educate Present Generations, decision-makers, and children.

Much work lies ahead refining, editing, and expanding these rights and responsibilities. Anyone interested in joining this effort can check the Web site <http://wcffg.org/> or the Facebook page for Women's Congress for Future Generations. ☐

Molly Young Brown, MA, MDiv, studied with Dr. Assagioli and has authored two major psychosynthesis books: *Unfolding Self* and *Growing Whole*. She offers on-line training and counseling/coaching by phone. MollyYoungBrown.com, PsychosynthesisPress.com.



Soul Process Work: Individual Consultation Practice

with Thomas Yeomans, PhD

"The stunning paradox of human spiritual maturity is that, as we become one with all creation, we also at the same time become completely and uniquely ourselves"

—Thomas Yeomans, PhD

My practice in individual consultation is designed to support those people who are intent on living an authentic, deep, and creative life in the midst of the challenges and chaos of our present culture and who are seeking to take greater responsibility for their gifts and contributions in response to these troubled times. Their desire to do this may arise as the result of a crisis, or it may quietly emerge in the course of life, but this quest is always a sign that the soul is seeking fuller embodiment and expression, and often at such a time additional help is useful. Individual consultation within a spiritual context can help a person move through the process and phases of this awakening and deepening more easily and enable them to make full use of the opportunity.

More and more people are asking the "big" questions of what has most meaning and value in their lives and how can they live closer to what is most alive and precious for them. The arena of focus may be personal identity, relationship, work and vocation, or spiritual calling and service; but the underlying need always is to find a deeper source of being from which to live, and from there to work out the complexities of bringing this rooted life into the daily world.

I have spent forty years in the fields of Transpersonal/Spiritual Psychology, working as a teacher, trainer, therapist, consultant, guide throughout the United States and in Europe and Russia. In this time I have seen a huge growth of interest in the spiritual dimension and its integration into daily personal and professional life. I am very grateful to have been part of this development within the field of psychology and to have been able to contribute to it.

Over these years I have gradually shaped my individual practice in ways that speak directly to this vast and growing need many people have for spiritual direction and guidance within the secular context of everyday life. As the soul has been taken more seriously and its powers and wisdom increasingly recognized as necessary and influential in personal life, there has been more and more opportunity to integrate the spiritual and psychological arenas of human experience and to work in both arenas in ways that fully support the process of human maturation and mature commitment.

This is not psychotherapy, but rather a modality that is closer to an intensive consultation on psycho-spiritual issues, with emphasis on expanded awareness, autonomy, responsibility, and consequent self-direction.

In response to this emerging need, my individual consultation practice has three interrelated offerings. These are the Three Session Series, Intermediate Sessions, and Long-term Mentoring.

Three Session Series

This series is designed for people in crisis, or transition, who need short-term counseling/coaching within a spiritual context. The primary focus is to develop a creative orientation to a particular life challenge. Sessions are conducted over a six-week period (one every two weeks) with self-reflection and writing in-between. Usually, the six-week time frame is sufficient for reorientation to the opportunity the crisis affords. However, if additional work is needed, we can extend the series by a few sessions, or I can arrange a referral to a large network of practitioners who do kindred work.

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The time-limited approach intensifies this focus, and making the spiritual issues the foreground of concern acknowledges the true nature of the crisis and gives needed perspective on the psychological issues that are also always involved.

I have found this a particularly effective form of work in its explicit honoring of spiritual crisis, and in its combination of spiritual and psychological work toward developing a creative response to a critical change-point in a person's life. The format can be varied according to an individual's particular needs, and, if the person lives in another part of the country, I can do this work by phone or Skype.

Intermediate Sessions

The Intermediate Series is designed to deepen and amplify the work of the Three Session Series and fill out the inner and outer possibilities that have developed. The work may include up to seven sessions. The spacing of the meetings is tailored to the specific needs of the client and there may be interim reading and writing that supports the client's process and learning.

A range of issues can be covered, including personal, relational, spiritual, vocational, health, and lifestyle, in order to integrate and make the most use of the learning arising from the crisis or transition in daily life.

Long-term Mentoring

This series is a mutually contracted ongoing relationship designed to support the client's psycho-spiritual maturation within the context of his or her personal, professional, and social life. In essence, it is designed to help a person stay connected, and to deepen the connection to his or her soul in the midst of a largely soulless and increasingly chaotic culture; and to cultivate spiritual strength and creative expression in the personal, professional, and social spheres of living.

The work has two aspects. The first aspect is to expand and deepen soul expression through discernment of one's vocation and through deliberately pursuing this chosen path as life unfolds. The second aspect is to confront and work creatively with the many psycho-spiritual challenges and opportunities that life presents us, including transitions, identity issues, relationships, vocation, health, aging, expansion of commitment, and, generally, the complex process of spiritual maturation. Both aspects of the Long-term Mentoring invite and challenge us to find our particular path as a soul on earth and then to stay on it toward an eventual experience of mature soul-realization and personal mastery.

This series includes periodic reading and writing. The spacing of the sessions is usually one a month, but it can be tailored to the client's needs, and may include periods of intensive work in a retreat format. Mentoring can be done via phone, Skype, or e-mail, so that people from other regions and countries can avail themselves of this service.

Cost and Times

The cost for the Three Session Series and any Intermediate Sessions is on a sliding scale from \$100 to \$150 an hour. The Mentoring Series is on a scale of \$120 to \$150 an hour. All rates are prorated, if, by mutual agreement, sessions extend beyond the hour's time, which occasionally happens. I do these sessions on Mondays and Tuesdays in my office in Shelburne Falls, MA, and sessions can be done by phone and/or Skype, if need be, after some initial contact. I am glad to speak further about this work and hope it is of interest to you and/or to others you may know who need this particular kind of support.

Thomas R. Yeomans, PhD

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Email: tyeomans1@gmail.com

Soul Process Work: Our Human Journey

With Tom Yeomans

“We must learn to live as souls on earth”

—Roberto Assagioli, MD



*Sponsored by
The Synthesis Center
Amherst, MA*

A seminal question I have been exploring for a long time is how best to support the human soul's journey on earth toward an experience of full, unique aliveness and spiritual maturity. I have pursued this question through Psychosynthesis and Spiritual Psychology, and, most recently, I have been developing an approach that I call “Soul Process Work.”

This approach, rooted in both Psychosynthesis and Spiritual Psychology, focuses particularly on sensing and cooperating, moment to moment, with the natural experiential process by which the soul is at work in our immediate personal lives. Presence and making direct contact with the flow of experience in the here and now within us, or in another, are central skills in “soul process work”. From here skill is also needed in working within the various arenas of human experience that the soul process passes through. These include personality, psyche, center, will, transpersonal qualities, life cycle stages, body, vocation, death, and transformation.

The central idea here is that the soul is not removed from, or higher than, our daily experience, but rather is embedded within it. This means that we best nurture, liberate, and ground our unique soul force and qualities through close attention to the details of our immediate experience and through learning both how to discern and express who we most truly are **and** to recognize and transform the blocks that always exist to soul expression.

“The work of soul process is gradually to true the personality, and eventually all else in a life, to soul. Soul force can then flow unimpeded through our person into the world.”

—Thomas Yeomans, PhD

This daylong training will include teaching, demonstration, experiential work, practicum, and dialogue, and there will be recommended reading for both before and after.

Date: Saturday, April 27, 2013

Location: The Synthesis Center, 274 North Pleasant Street, Amherst, MA 01002

Time: 10 AM to 5 PM with a one-hour break from 1:00 to 2:00

Cost: \$200-\$100 sliding scale.

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Suggested reading: Yeomans, T. *Living Experience as Spiritual Practice*
(available on the Synthesis Center website www.SynthesisCenter.org)

For more information, see Synthesis Center website: www.SynthesisCenter.org
E-mail to programs@synthesiscenter.org for registration information.

Thomas Yeomans, PhD, has been involved with Psychosynthesis and Spiritual Psychology for over forty years. He studied with Roberto Assagioli, MD in the early 1970's, and has trained professionals in Psychosynthesis and Spiritual Psychology since then, in individual and group work, throughout North America and in Europe and Russia.

He has published writing on Psychosynthesis and Spiritual Psychology as well as three volumes of poetry and a children's book. He is founder/director of the Concord Institute and cofounder of the International School in St. Petersburg, Russia. He is also a painter and musician.

Currently he is writing a book about the soul and spirituality in our present time of global crisis and transformation. He also maintains a private practice in psycho-spiritual consulting and mentoring in Shelburne Falls, MA.



Sunset at Crescent City, Florida — courtesy of Judi White

ELECTION SYNTHESIS **Time for *Complementary Political Values***

By Walter Polt

This article is written in response to the recent election in the USA. We hope readers in other countries will also find it applicable to them—especially when an election comes up. —ed.

You just won, your candidate won, your clan won, your team won, your party won. Hooray! And still . . . God and country need you to be mindful, to revere diversity. That's a big order, but it would transform politics. By mindful I mean being aware of the experience without judgment. That means we can at least transform *our experience* of politics. Below I'll identify a few political opposites from an election so we can try out being mindful and feeling the positive tension between them. Before long, we may be remaking politics itself.

Justice David Souter presented a vision when he described the workings of opposites in America at a speech at Harvard University May 27, 2010 (Paragraph 7). He said that the U.S. Constitution “grants and guarantees . . . values that may well exist in tension with each other,” and contains “good things that compete with each other,” such as order and liberty. Essentially, our justice system has the ongoing job of bringing such opposite good things closer to balance and synthesis over time.

We, the People, similarly need to be working out the interactions between opposites touching our lives—not abruptly trying to smother or eliminate one of the opposites. We have a luxury that the Supreme Court and Congress seldom have: We can enrich our lives in a moment simply by identifying opposite principles for ourselves—without having to make the kind of immediate, specific decisions they do.

I know. Some might wonder: What happened to good old schadenfreude: gloating, ridiculing the loser? I understand: After all, I write about conflict because I have so much experience picking myself up after mistakes.

Prehistoric “Irritation Reactions” and Mindfulness

Both snapping at the TV screen during an election and gloating after it are examples of “irritation reactions.” Brain science points out something important: although we moderns think we are rational and know why we do everything we do, we are barely aware of instinctual reactions still with us since prehistoric times (R. Siegel, 2010)!

The reason I’m calling them irritation reactions is that they may indeed run the gamut from irritation to rage but are most often about minor issues. Plus they mostly go unnoticed by the one having them—though not by others. We sometimes express our irritation reactions, sometimes keep them secret—even from ourselves. Yet we sense them in ourselves and in others around us. I think of them as ancient, unseen, unloved, untrained guard dogs reacting to anything that seems strange or suspicious.

This often includes pretty minor experiences of opposition, not just big ones. The growls of the dogs make it unclear how real any particular danger is. Piero Ferrucci noted, “Scores of studies in various fields have shown how our world is not an external objective reality, but a subjective universe generated by us” (Ferrucci, 2012, p. 7). Even when a frustration is small, we may take our sharply felt reaction at face value. Irritation reactions are so prevalent people constantly fail to notice them backfiring and reverberating silently, under

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the surface, out of sight. And so, opposition bounces to opposition. Those faithful inner guard dogs deserve mindful, accepting notice—and discernment.

The hormones produced by submerged anxiety and anger are a major health hazard, not just to us, but increasingly to our country. Today's neuroscience alerts us that we need to get better acquainted with our instincts, not write off irritation reactions as passing emotions or pretend that instinctual triggers disappeared with the dinosaurs. Plus it alerts us that *mindfulness* puts these irritation reactions in a new light. It's not hard to pass this information along, because it is documented by MRI pictures available to the general population. As soon as we and our fellow citizens notice ourselves exaggerating slights, we can be mindful, relax, and reassess them—even slights related to politics.

Mindful Acceptance of Political Reactions

I'm not saying let our political guard down completely. But we could monitor our reactions during elections and remember to notice just how disappointed or disgusted or angry or frustrated or fearful or anxious or hopeless we sometimes feel. Being mindful of those moments will take our response to a whole other level where it is not harmful to us or anyone else!

That is no small thing. And there's more good news: if we forget at the time, we can be mindful after the fact, such as when we notice ourselves ruminating about it later. Even "late" mindfulness changes our immediate mental state and begins effective change to ongoing habits. Being mindful beats being ashamed; after all, those instinctual urges were *designed* for instant action with no hesitation.

Staying mindful can affect how we interact with others. If we are with like-minded people, it helps them relax too. If we are with someone of a different political persuasion, our own mindfulness can quickly help us decide whether there's any point to having any discussion. There isn't, without agreeing on a purpose first. We can quickly eliminate trying to change minds if they're already made up! We might agree to a heartwarming purpose such as "trying to understand each other's values or preferences." Even then, in today's climate we would need to agree to stick to that purpose carefully and drop the discussion if we can't.

During elections, even ordinary citizens can feel personally insulted and attacked. One person told me, "I'm glad *you're* doing this writing about mindfulness and diversity. I don't want to do it." Heavy-duty feelings about politics were on his mind. I usually recommend people start practicing mindfulness first in the arena of day-to-day life, where irritation reactions are easier to detect and change. You know your spouse or friend isn't the enemy; you're not so sure about that fellow-American political foe halfway across the country. People feel hammered by the other party camouflaging outrageous ideas and ulterior motives to look like high ideals. (Make no mistake: folks on both sides feel that way!) People are afraid that being mindful might weaken their resolve when they are steamed and determined. Plus, they don't want to weaken their party's public efforts.

Still, with enough courage, maybe we could even change those negative *political* tensions—it's up to us. The recent (2012) U.S. election was a pinball machine of oppositional reactions flying in all directions. Could we turn instinctual political reactions into beneficial energy? That could be useful to the body politic. Could we make our focus less "winner and loser," and more "*important-value-and-important-value*"? In the next election I personally could benefit from having less negative tension and more positive, creative tension between opposite good things. So could the larger community.

What makes me hope this is possible? Facts from neuroscience help:

- A. Our neurons keep changing—our brains' plasticity lasts all through our lives.
- B. Our modern brains are still hardwired to react with irritation to anything too unusual—a negative focus that kept our ancestors alive but is killing us.
- C. Mindfulness literally changes this hardwiring. It not only produces *immediate* neuronal change (a new state) but also before long produces *ongoing* neuronal change (new stable behaviors) (D. Siegel, 2010).

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And the ability of mindfulness to move us past our knee-jerk tendencies to lord it over the opposition also helps reinstate our brains' executive function. Every time our inner guard dogs rise up from our brains' nether regions, they suppress the empathic intelligence of our frontal lobes! So being mindful helps us relax, breathe, and sort through complex positive and negative feelings and reconnect with the people involved.

Mindfulness is available to us not just during our quiet time at home but also during our clinical and teaching work and other daily-life activities. Modeling it for each other opens up a remarkable opportunity. Just imagine: we have the chance to shift away from the centuries-old grip of automatic, instinctual oppositional reactions and start welcoming the effective and colorful tension between opposite good things.

That's not relativism; we're talking about fundamental values like those Justice Souter cited. Yes, it's good to cherish one fundamental value, but that doesn't invalidate its opposite. Two opposite values joined together form a broad foundation for full living and good decision making.

What's Our Gift to Contribute?

Mindful synthesis-oriented people just may be indispensable in today's world. Any one of us may be that vital force, that vote that puts our planet's survival over the top. We can help change American politics. The chart below is an effort to illustrate how we could take our thinking (and talking) to a new level before and after the next election. I confess I catch myself shaking my head in amazement at what I consider lame comments from "the opposition," but I'm starting to remember to be gently mindful of my reactions at those moments. And, yes, some members of the opposition probably consider my comments lame too. That's when I would want *them* to be mindful and search for the truth buried in *my* lame comments. So, more and more, I'm remembering to be mindful and then dig in to find the opposite good things. That in turn may be affecting how I talk to others about issues.

How do we want to be treated after elections that don't go the way we desire? We still want respect. We don't want the country to toss out our kernel of truth. We know it is still valuable. Similarly, when we are the winners, we may be able to lead the way with skills we and our psychosynthesis forebears and teachers have already spent a solid century polishing.

Two of our greatest skills are discovering the gift that an unliked part of us has to offer, and working with positive opposites. And we know what to do when clients are trying to "get rid of" a part of them they think is obstructing their progress. We often help them be mindful and find out what that part wants, needs, has to offer. Then we help them combine the exciting quality it offers with an already established opposite quality.

Perhaps we could use a similar questioning process for our inner political life—for example, when reacting to a political opponent on TV. Using imagination, we could mentally give that opponent the kind of honorable treatment we give a problem part of ourselves whose unique gift we need to discover. In a sort of interior time-out session, we could mindfully express respect for the opponent and listen for a value he or she knows about that we may be ignoring. We could then embrace that value along with our established values, making room for the pleasant tension resulting in ourselves as we move toward another inner synthesis. Eventually we might be able to be equally open and appreciative in direct political conversations—and equally ready for the surprises and benefits and new combinations that come with movement toward synthesis.

Can We Change the System?

We say our election system works. But for how much longer? We may have something valuable to offer beyond changing standards for financing and commercials, such as establishing essential rules. How could elections promote candidates highlighting the *values* on both sides of issues—and discourage attacking opposing values and people? Jonathan Haidt (2012) writes about politics tragically dividing good people. We need to reduce such divisions. Imagine a debate where the winning candidate verbalized the opponent's most essential values most clearly. That would promote true leadership.

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That may sound impossible, given human nature; but keep in mind that studies show mindfulness has a very powerful effect on human nature. I'm not suggesting we stop espousing important causes, good decisions, and effective policies—or exposing opponent's dirty tricks when they're real. And comedy lives: the intense pressures in politics make for great laughs. Don't worry—life is hilarious! Mindfulness and synthesis don't weaken good causes, decisions, policies, and laughs. They strengthen them. Nor do I want to lose elections. And I'm not holding my breath until campaigns stop being negative.

Yes, it's hard enough even in private trying not to distort a political opponent's weaknesses—let alone trying to praise the values buried in those weaknesses. But strong feelings and rivalries are precisely the place for mindfulness. Abraham Lincoln did astounding things with these principles, working within the American system, as Doris Kearns Goodwin showed in her book *Team of Rivals* (2005).

We can move away from polarization (clinging to one pole) toward positive polarities (embracing both poles) (Polt, 2011). Americans have needed to do this more every decade since the Constitutional Convention. Fortunately, neuroscience clarifies where to start. Mindfulness is one of the few things known to work.

Another of the gifts granted our professional community is knowledge about higher levels of the self. We know how to set our meta-thinking free to do what it does best: "both-and" in place of the old, endless "either-or" and "we-win-they-lose." Indeed, in many religions and philosophies you can find mindful practices, such as praise, spirituality, ethics, forgiveness, awareness of Self, therapy, awareness of God, love of God, music, sound, poetry, dance, color, light, sacred ceremony, meditation, nature, prayer, laughter, stories, hypnosis, communing with ancestors, or other practices that help us hold ourselves gently. Many practices take humans to a level above irritation reactions—provided we use them to rise above sectarian fears, exclusiveness, blame, and smoldering desire for retribution.

Progressives I know will long be exuberant about 2012 election results; and conservatives will be unhappy—some ready to secede from the Union. What are the lessons? Some say this proves again that America remains essentially centrist, not extremist. Some say America is more progressive than conservative. Some say Romney was simply not favored for a variety of reasons particular to him. I am as good as anyone at celebrating, cheering, and gloating when my side wins. But when I do, I tend to forget that for every "winning" value there is an important opposite value on the "losing" side.

Losing either of these values sets progress back. The chaos that results when negatives or extremes clash demonstrates the importance of constantly remembering the substantive goals beyond beating the opposite party. Centrism and compromise may be vital to the future of American democracy, but so are the concepts of mindfulness and balancing strong transpersonal qualities such as those of which Justice Souter spoke. Who can help lead the way? Each of us.

The 2012 Election: Values on Both Sides

In that spirit, here we go. In the chart below, I try to put into words a few examples of values that a majority of voters seemed to affirm in the 2012 election. Then I try to pair each of these with *opposite* values in danger of being diminished after a decisive election. For the benefit of all, we need to make sure that these endangered values *also are recognized and affirmed*. Even Americans that think the other half of America is insincere or brainless need to help espouse essential human values.

American lawmakers and judges need this support. They have concrete decisions to make—about fiscal specifics, our economy as a whole, poverty, hunger, the very wealthy, differences with the Iranians, Afghans, and Syrians, and many other questions facing our nation and the wider world of nations.

Please suggest changes you think the following chart needs Synthesistoday@aol.com (but if you lose your calm, stop long enough to be mindful).

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THE 2012 U.S. ELECTION

VALUES Affirmed	OPPOSITE VALUES That Also Need to Be Affirmed
<i>Equality for all, including LGBT</i> (gay marriage victories in Maryland, Maine, Minnesota, Washington)	<i>Respect for legitimate desires and preferences of any and all other groups</i> for their traditional standards as sincerely understood
Appreciation of <i>young voter concerns</i> as indicated by the increase in young voter turnout (higher share of electorate than in 2008)	Appreciation of concerns and needs of “ <i>middle America</i> ,” the wealthy, older citizens, etc.
Support for <i>health-care reform</i> , which the election kept alive	Support for health-care <i>plan improvements</i> (e.g., cost efficiency, freedom of choice)
The “little guy’s” voice is heard in the face of high expenditures by big corporations and Wall Street lobbyists (<i>Financial reform</i>)	Legitimate interests and <i>practices of corporate business and financial entities</i>
Possibility of Supreme Court becoming more progressive (and prolonging safety and respect for women making <i>hard pregnancy decisions</i>)	Safety and respect for <i>unborn lives</i>
<i>Confidence and calm</i> , versus anxious extremism	Vigilance and <i>constructive action on real fears and dangers</i>
Progressives elected (e.g., Elizabeth Warren, Tammy Baldwin, Sherrod Brown, and Bernie Sanders) supporting <i>progressive values</i>	Stability, safety, <i>conservative values</i>
Appreciation of the <i>needs and contributions of Latinos and other minorities</i> . President Obama won more than three out of four Latino votes, 55 percent of American women’s votes, and 93 percent of the black vote. (McCormick & Giroux, 2012)	Appreciating and assuaging fears and law-and-order concerns or other <i>concerns of members of the white minority or other minorities</i>

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It amazes me how hard it is even to admit that the other side has positive values, let alone to name them! This seems a lot easier to do on a smaller scale, such as in individual guiding sessions!

On the two sides of the chart on page 29 are related “opposite good things.” If you can find two that you would like to explore, try calmly, mindfully holding or appreciating them both. Don’t eliminate either prematurely. Feel the quality of the tension between them. Allow any imagery of possibilities for the future. Don’t try to rush synthesis.

Embracing opposites may seem like hard labor. No surprise: it’s about giving birth. For our nation to be constantly born and reborn, we ourselves have to (or in more positive terms, *get to*) be born and reborn, over and over. To prepare for the next election, win or lose, we can do three vital things: 1) Be *mindful* of irritation reactions to differences between us. 2) Discover *opposite good things* needing to be integrated. 3) Experience the *tension* between them as we participate in the process.

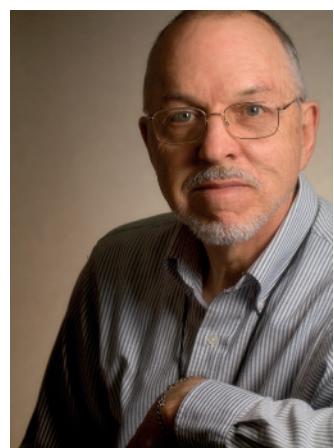
Our country has a job to do, and we have an opportunity to offer leadership as synthesis professionals and laypersons—and to help evolve a mindful politics of the future.

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Walter Polt, MA, Columbia, is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and author of the book *From Anger to Power*. He works as a writer, coach, and consultant in New York.



Summer Institute - Reunion, June 14-18, 2013, Kristiansand, Norway.

Dear Friends and Colleagues!

As 2013 is getting closer, so is also our **Summer Institute - Reunion in June 2013**. We are looking forward to this opportunity to come together and share our deep interest in working within a spiritual context and to learn, grow and enjoy.

The organizing committee, Sasha Badkhen, Vitalija Lepeskiene, Tom Yeomans, Mark Rousseau and Liv Grendstad Rousseau, are looking forward to seeing you all again.

We are glad to announce that **Tom Yeomans** will teach in the mornings of the Institute:

Soul Process Work: the Human Journey
(See Description of this training on Page 23 of this issue —ed.)

"We must learn to live as souls on earth"
—Roberto Assagioli, MD

I am excited to offer this and to learn more about this "soul process work" with you. I send every good wish and hope to see you in June.

Warmly,

Tom

In addition to the teaching in the morning, there will be different structured slots throughout the days of teaching, working and sharing. We are inviting you to share your needs and wishes as the Reunion gets closer.

*Similarity and diversity--calling and connection,
sharing and learning – inspiration and blessing.*

This reunion is an opportunity to reflect together as we are meeting our growing edges and preparing the next step on our journey. As in the past, we are looking forward to re-connect and to refresh our body, mind and Souls.

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Please contact us at post@meta-senter.no If you know of anyone who has participated through the years, and who has not gotten this information, please feel free to forward the message and send us a note.

On behalf of the organizing committee,

Liv Grendstad Rousseau

www.meta-senter.no

Logistics:

Location: The seminar is being held in beautiful surroundings close to the sea at Agder Course Center, in Søgne 30 west of Kristiansand in the south of Norway. For more information, check www.meta-senter.no and go to "lenker."

The Reunion Summer Institute begins Friday the 14th of June at 1330. Registration from 10 am and lunch is served from 1230 – 1315. The Institute ends Tuesday the 18th with lunch at 1230. Throughout the seminar we will work from 0900 – 2100 with a long break in the middle of the day.

Tuition: We are aware that the strong Norwegian currency makes prices in Norway higher for foreigners. There will be an adjustable seminar fee for participants outside of Scandinavia. Please contact us for more information around this.

Tuition: NOK 5000, — NB: Individual rates available for participants outside of Scandinavia.

Room and board:

Single room: NOK 4105,

Double room: NOK 3805,

Application date: Please confirm your interest by mail post@meta-senter.no as soon as possible, and at the latest by February the 28th, and we will send you an application form.

The Peace of Non-Doing

Abby Seixas

Today is my birthday. Though it's midweek, I've managed to clear my schedule so I have a completely open day. On the one hand, "Hallelujah!" On the other hand, "Gulp."

The gulp has to do with Aristotle's observation that nature abhors a vacuum. (And, I would add, so does the busy mind in the midst of our busy lives.) Make a space like the one I've created today, and it's astonishing—almost to the point of amusement—how many to-do's start making noise to be checked off the list.

But I'm not listening to them today. It's my birthday. It seems we often need a special occasion to give ourselves permission to let go and step off the treadmill of Doing. And still, even on those set-aside, special days or hours or minutes, it can be hard to ignore the strange seduction of get-it-done, whatever it is.

Today, saying no to that siren call is a little easier for me because less than a month ago, I returned from a two-week silent meditation retreat. On retreat, the main thing to get done is...well, nothing.

I try to go on retreat for at least a week around my birthday each year, and it always takes me a good two or three days of restlessness to downshift and begin to allow the slower rhythms of retreat-time to settle my body and mind. This retreat was a bit longer than I'd done before, and somewhere in the middle of it, I began to experience moments and then some stretches of time, when my mind was clear and quiet, and the urge to 'do the next thing' was absent.

One evening, I ate dinner in silence, as we do on retreat, and found myself continuing to sit at the table after I had eaten, with an empty plate, looking at the trees out the window, and, most importantly, *having no desire to be doing anything else*. This may not sound particularly important, but it was so strikingly different from so many after-dinner moments and other moments in my daily life, that I named it in my journal later: "*the peace of non-doing*." And then, this comment: "It's so unfamiliar that I don't quite know if it's real."

In this culture, in 2012, the peace of non-doing is a rare occurrence. So rare that if by chance the conditions are right to bring us to an experience of this peace, we might not quite know if it's real. When the phrase came to mind, I thought of a cartoon by Robert Weber that I often give to participants in groups I lead on the art of slowing down. It shows a man in a suit sitting on a couch with his wife nearby. He has a puzzled, somewhat shocked look on his face. The caption reads, "*What the hell was that? Something just swept over me—like contentment or something.*"

I understand his disbelief, despite the fact that I *teach* about how to find contentment in a more-is-better, achievement-driven culture. I teach about it, of course, because we teach what we need to learn. My inner achiever started developing in kindergarten, if not before, and had teamed up with my budding inner perfectionist by the time I was in grade school. What a pair!

But while I owe some of my achievement-oriented mindset to this internal dynamic duo, I also understand that the tendency to value 'doing' over 'being' is not simply my personal challenge. It is *our* challenge, all of us. Why? Because we live in a culture that encourages us to keep moving, keep doing, keep achieving, even if what we "achieve" in a given day amounts to nothing more than drawing lines through a to-do list.

While crossing things off the list can be satisfying, there is at least one fundamental problem with the non-stop Doing generated by an achievement-based frame of mind: *we can't 'achieve' our way into the peace of non-doing.*

We have to stop.

We have to let go.

We have to learn to let things be just as they are.

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And given the culture we live in, we have to create conditions in our daily lives that encourage us to stop, that help us to let go, that invite the peace of non-doing to show up. The conditions in my case that gave rise to my after-dinner experience of contentment were taking a five-month ‘pause’ from giving talks and workshops; within that pause, attending a two-week silent retreat; and then within that retreat, experiencing some moments of deep peace.

That may sound extreme, but there are plenty of small, simple ways we can create conditions for more contentment in daily life without going to extreme measures. Over and over, I’ve seen people in my seminars do just that. They begin to understand the deep importance of pausing, and then they make small choices that have a surprisingly large effect on the quality of their days. Such as halting the perpetual motion of *doing* for a few minutes to greet their kids when they get home from school. Or closing the office door in the middle of a workday and taking some deep breaths. Or taking a walk instead of answering e-mails when there’s an unexpected 20 minutes with no immediate demands.

There are countless ways, when we’re looking for them, to invite moments of non-doing into daily life. I like to take the long view about this kind of endeavor; that is, that we have the rest of our lives to work with allowing things to be as they are, to appreciate the pauses in between things, to find our way to the peace of non-doing.

My husband and I started a birthday tradition when our children were little: We light a candle on the birthday morning, sing “Happy Birthday,” and then the person whose birthday it is states their wishes for themselves in the coming year, followed by each family member adding theirs.

Our kids are on their own now, but we continue the tradition. On my birthday, my wishes for myself usually include good health, time with the people I love most, depth and satisfaction in my work, and so on. This year—and maybe for many years to come—one of my wishes for myself is to experience the peace of non-doing. Often. Many times throughout the coming year.

Whether it’s your birthday or not, I wish the same for you. □

Abby Seixas is a psychotherapist, author, and speaker specializing in issues of life balance. She offers workshops and retreats based on her highly-acclaimed book, *Finding the Deep River Within: A Woman’s Guide to Recovering Balance & Meaning in Everyday Life*. Her work has been featured on national and local television, radio and print media, including NBC’s *The Today Show*, *O. The Oprah Magazine*, *Self*, *Woman’s Day* and *Body + Soul*. Abby studied psychosynthesis with Roberto Assagioli and has practiced psychosynthesis-oriented psychotherapy for 30 years. She has been a clinical trainer and supervisor at centers in the U.S. and abroad.



European Federation of Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy Elects New Governing Board

The European Federation of Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy (EFPP) at its 16th annual meeting held on the French Riviera last Tuesday, November 6, elected a new five-member Governing Board. Tan Nguyen of Marseille, representing the Centre Source in Paris, was elected President. Joanne Wilson, representing the Centre AEON in Basel, Switzerland, was elected General Secretary. The general assembly elected two Vice-presidents: Dr. Massimo Rosselli of Florence and Ewa Falck of Stockholm, and their Treasurer Dr. Kristina Brode of Cologne.

The delegates from seven countries also voted to open the federation of psychotherapy training centres to isolated psychosynthesis psychotherapists by creating a Chamber of Individual Members and by allowing observers, creating the statute of Associate Member for professionals having an interest in psychosynthesis, such as doctors, paramedics, family and couple counsellors, teachers, specialised educators and social workers.

EFPP is a member of the European Association of Psychotherapy (EAP), with a representative on the Board of Directors. For more than 20 years, EAP has grouped together the national psychotherapy organisations and the professional organisations accredited for their particular modalities of psychotherapy, such as psychosynthesis, from 41 countries. These organisations regulate the practice of the profession of psychotherapist in conformity to the Strasbourg Declaration of 1990 and according to a professional code of ethics established jointly at national and European levels.

Psychosynthesis was founded in 1909 by Dr. Roberto Assagioli, a former colleague of Jung and Freud. Its growth really started in the 1970's when psychosynthetic tools were made available to the general public searching for well-being. Where psychoanalysis seeks the depths of the unconscious, psychosynthesis adds the dimensions of the supra-conscious to facilitate, for example, vocations, purpose and a sense of life.

Tan Nguyen was one of the founding fathers of EFPP in 1997 and of the FF2P (Fédération Francaise de Psychothérapie et Psychanalyse), the national organisation grouping qualified French psychotherapists. He is Director of European Certificate of Psychotherapy. He directed a collection of articles *Why Psychotherapy? And Foundations, Methods, Applications* published by Dunod Editions in 2005, and a special edition of *Roberto Assagioli & Psychosynthesis*, published by the International Journal of Psychotherapy in July 2012.

Joanne Wilson has been representing EFPP on the EAP Board of Directors for the past three years. A former business executive and lawyer before studying psychotherapy, she favours a pragmatic psychosynthesis model. She used psychosynthesis on a government contract with the unemployed where 86% were off the dole within three months, representing a yearly savings of over £500.000 per group of 12. She is the author of several articles including *From Corporate Stress to Inner Balance: The Manager's Search of Fulfilment* demonstrating that business and humanism can get on well together [International Journal of Psychotherapy, Vol. 16, No. 2, July 2012].

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EFPP Board meeting in Cannes, from left to right : Kicki Karlsson (Sweden), Claudia Dalforno and Dr. Massimo Rosselli (Italy), Tan Nguyen and Joanne Wilson (France), Gerhard Schobel (Switzerland), Dr. Kristina Brode (Germany), Susie Rosselli, Dragana and Savo Djukic (Great Britain), Gabrielle Steiner (Germany) and Robert Bakker (the Netherlands).



The 2013 AAP Conference Psychosynthesis: At the Heart of Systems Transformation

Extension of Deadline for Call for Proposals: January 19, 2013

We, the Conference Committee, are all anticipating a memorable AAP Conference, June 21-23, 2013 at Champlain College in Burlington, VT, USA.

We already have much in place for this to happen.

We are extending the deadline for the submission of presentation proposals until January 19, 2013 and are just waiting for yours.

The perfect presentations will present psychosynthesis in the way that you share it best.

You will find the proposal form at The Conference Page on the AAP Web site:

<http://aap-psychosynthesis.org/2013-conference-rfp/>

We invite you to register for the conference, as well, while you are there.

Early Registration ends January 1, 2013

The keynote address, *Transformation Through Creative Leadership Conversations—The Coach Approach* by Dr. Patrick Williams, pioneer of Coaching in North America, will begin a weekend of learning and dialogue about transforming social and psychological systems to more effectively create a healthy sustainable planet, in ourselves, families, communities, and through organizational networks of global concerns.

