



# **PSYCHOSYNTHESIS**

## **QUARTERLY**

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**The Digital Magazine of the Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis**

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*Volume 3 Number 1*

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**Psychosynthesis and Integrative Cancer Treatment - Richard Schaub**  
**Coping With Anxiety and Rebuilding Identity - Catherine Ann Lombard**  
**Mandala Art in Psychosynthesis Counseling - Michael Brown**  
**Poetry of the Soul - Stephanie Sorrell**  
**Trust Only Movement - Pepper Sarnoff**  
**Waking Into a New World - Ruth Eichler**  
**Psychosynthesis and Meditation - Brigitte Macé**  
**Psychosynthesis Trust of Nelson, New Zealand Workshop 2014**  
**Book Announcement: Radiant Awakening by Carmack and Eichler**  
**Psychosynthesis Blossoming: Synthesis Center Life Coach Website**  
**Center for Awakening 2014 Retreat at Wildacres, North Carolina**  
**Inspirational Meeting at Psychosynthesis and Education Trust, London**  
**EFPP's 2014 Psychosynthesis Summer School in Sweden**  
**IPD Summer Academy at Baar, Switzerland**  
**Autobiography Conference at Södertörn University, Stockholm, Sweden**  
**AAP's BodyWise Webinar in June 2014**  
**Invitation for a Student Exchange: France - USA**  
**News Update, Letters**

# Psychosynthesis Quarterly

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Jan Kuniholm

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

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## The Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis:

Founded in 1995, AAP is a Massachusetts nonprofit corporation with tax exemption in the United States. It is dedicated to advocating on behalf of psychosynthesis and conducting psychosynthesis educational programs. Membership and donations are tax deductible in the United States.

**AAP membership** supports this publication and the other educational activities of AAP: \$75 (US) per year, with a sliding-scale fee of \$45 to \$75 for those who need it. Go to

<http://aap-psychosynthesis.org/aap-membership-renewal/> or contact us at [info@aap-psychosynthesis.org](mailto:info@aap-psychosynthesis.org)

If you are NOT a member we invite you to join AAP and support psychosynthesis in North America and the world.

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# contents

AAP's BodyWise Webinar in June 2014	3
The Use of Mandala Art in Psychosynthesis Counseling - Michael Brown	4
Poetry of the Soul - Stephanie Sorrell	15
Coping With Anxiety and Rebuilding Identity - Catherine Ann Lombard	19
Psychosynthesis and Integrative Cancer Treatment - Richard Schaub	27
Waking Into a New World - Ruth Eichler	32
Psychosynthesis Trust of Nelson, New Zealand, Workshop 2014	35
Book Announcement: Radiant Awakening	36
Psychosynthesis Blossoming: Synthesis Center Life Coach Website	37
Trust Only Movement - Pepper Sarnoff	38
Center for Awakening Retreat at Wildacres, New Switzerland, N. Carolina	43
Inspirational Meeting at Psychosynthesis and Education Trust, London	44
Crisis and Transformation: Psychosynthesis Summer School in Sweden	45
Institute for Peace and Dialogue Summer Academy at Baar, Switzerland	46
Psychosynthesis and Meditation - Brigitte Macé (English Version)	47
Psychosynthèse et méditation - Brigitte Macé (French Version)	52
France - USA Exchange Student Invitation	57
News Update: Castlewood Lawsuit - Letters	58-59
Autobiography Conference in Sweden	60

## EDITOR'S NOTES

This issue inaugurates an experiment in multilingual presentation: Brigitte Macé has written an article in French that has been translated into English. We are presenting both the original and the translation in the hope that we can speak to a larger community. At present, we do not have non-English-speaking editors on the staff of the *Quarterly*, so we are doing our best with a little help from our friends. We would like to be able to present other non-English works in the future, but only if we have more help with editing both the originals and the translations.

**If you are fluent in written English as well as another language and would like to volunteer to help us with future multilingual presentations, please email me so we can discuss the possibilities. [Jan.Kuniholm@roadrunner.com](mailto:Jan.Kuniholm@roadrunner.com).**

We have fascinating and informative features by Richard Schaub, Michael Brown, Catherine Ann Lombard, Stephanie Sorrell, and Ruth Eichler. There are meetings and conferences around the world happening in 2014, and many are featured in this issue.

A new book is featured, and a new website for Psychosynthesis Coaching.

This will be the last issue in which Joann Anderson works with us as Assistant Editor. Joann has done copy editing for the *Quarterly* since its first issue, after having been editor of *AAP News* for several years. She has helped make this publication what it is. Thank you so much for being part of this work, Joann. We'll miss you!

Jan Kuniholm



## BodyWise

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



### **SPEAKER HIGHLIGHTS: JUNE 21, 2014**

Here is an opportunity to learn from the experts on site at Columbia College in the northern California foothills, or by tuning into the live simultaneous broadcast: a Summer Solstice date you will want to make.

You may have wondered, “Is Dr. Natalie Rogers related to Carl Rogers, creator of Person-Centered Psychology?” The answer is “Yes,” and his daughter has taken up his seminal work, applying it to the group process using Expressive Arts. (By the way, a little-known fact is that Martha Crampton, famous in Psychosynthesis circles, was a friend and colleague of Carl Rogers who frequently compared notes with him.)

Rogers speaks on "Healing with Person-Centered Expressive Arts." She is on the faculty at Sofia University and is author of *The Creative Connection for Groups: Person-Centered Expressive Arts for Healing and Social Change*, as well as several other publications. Her "Ted Talks"- style lecture brings a practical, spiritual and theoretical joining of the expressive arts and the person-centered approach for groups. After Rogers' lecture in the morning, she will conduct a practicum together with her co-leader, Dr. Herron, who is also on the faculty at Sofia University. You are in for a treat, learning to process body signals using the methods of non-verbal expressive arts. No need to be an artist to attend and learn—just bring an open mind.

Our first speaker, Dr. Dario Nardi, a fellow at UCLA, is a neuroscientist and author of *Neuroscience and Personality, Multiple Intelligences & Personality Type*, and *8 Keys to Leadership*, and other books. His lecture, "Neuroscience and Personality," illustrates discoveries from EEG measurements showing how people with different personality types don't merely rely on different brain regions—they use their brains in fundamentally different ways. A sought-after speaker in the US and Europe, Nardi brings his expertise and "brain maps" to illuminate personality type differences. An afternoon practicum further illustrates this ground-breaking mind-mapping research and even more discoveries about personality styles.

Our own AAP member, author and speaker, Penelope Andrade, LCSW, presents "Let the Body Lead"—lessons on how emotions can truly be the most useful medicine to have at your disposal (and its free!!). The former host of *Transformational Talk Radio* and founder of the Psychosynthesis Center of San Diego teaches how to integrate the best of traditional and alternative psychotherapies using psychosynthesis wisdom.

See you there—in person at Columbia College, 11600 Columbia College Drive, Sonoma, California 95370—or by Live Stream on June 21, 2014, 9-4pm, Pacific time. Did I mention that the Culinary Arts School on campus is preparing a magnificent buffet with local farm-fresh creations for only \$15 (plus tax)? Register on the website <http://aap-psychosynthesis.org/2014-aap-symposium-registration/> now for best pricing.

Be sure to indicate if you want to join with colleagues for the Yosemite National Park Tour on June 22, 2014, following the symposium.



## Mandala Minnow and Transformations of Consciousness: The Use of Mandala Art in Psychosynthesis Counseling

A GO FISH!! Project on exhibition in the Kanawha Plaza  
Richmond, VA, June - September, 2001

(This is a partial, edited transcript of a one-hour video documentary aired on Richmond Channel 6 TV May 25, 2001. The full article will soon appear on AAP's website)

My name is Michael Brown and I am a Licensed Professional Counselor, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and a Clinical Hypnotherapist in Richmond, Virginia. I'm trained in a discipline called psychosynthesis. In this transpersonal approach to counseling we assert that there is a source of guidance, an inner genius if you will, within each of us that can help us identify, address and transform the traumas, challenges, and issues that confront us in living. We call this source of inner guidance the Higher Self. In psychosynthesis, we counselors use a wide array of methods and techniques to help our clients tune inward and connect to this guidance and inspiration. Two of the most powerful techniques that help achieve this goal are mental imagery and mandala art.

Mental imagery is a hypnotherapeutic technique that helps the client relax, tune inward, and focus the mind in a precise way to view through the power of the imagination a particular issue, problem, or dynamic that is the subject of our exploration in counseling. With this focused and imaginative point of view, we are able to see in a broad way the issue that we are exploring. Mental imagery helps us collect energies and see how our emotions, thoughts and actions all come together in the metaphors of imagery. We have these focused perspectives and then, in order to remember them, we create mandala art.

Mandala art is thousands of years old. It has been found in rock petroglyphs, in Tibetan Buddhism, in Native American spiritual practices—throughout the world. The essence of mandala art is that we draw a circle and within that circle we project or represent the visions and the inspiration that come to us from the inner world, from the spiritual dimension. We draw these images out so that we can document them, so that we can study them later, and so that we can continue to learn from them.

I began my training in psychosynthesis in 1973. Since that time, I have been using mandala art to explore and understand my own life experience, and I have been using it in my clinical practice with clients. I have drawn 2000 mandalas and I have helped my clients draw and interpret, and come to understand many thousands more.



What you will see is a five-foot long, 40-inch-tall fiberglass fish. The 1708 Gallery in Richmond, Virginia, in conjunction with the city, is holding the outdoor public art exhibition called GO FISH! 200 of these fish have been festooned with art from artists across the Commonwealth and the United States, celebrating the return of the rockfish to the James River, celebrating our rich tradition of Richmond on the river, and inviting people to come enjoy the city from June until September 2001.

*(Continued on [page 5](#))*

*(Continued from [page 4](#))*

When I heard about the “Go Fish” project, I got very excited. I saw this project as a way for the clients with whom I work and me to exhibit to the greater Richmond community the beauty and the power of mandala art. I decided that I would cover one side of the fish with images that have marked important moments in transitions and transformations in my life. I asked the members of a women’s group/adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse I conduct if they would be willing to share with the public some of the mandalas which have documented the creative transformations that occurred for them through their counseling work with me. On this side of the fish are 14 of my own mandalas. On the back side of the fish there are 18 mandalas from these clients. Now we will take a close look at the mandalas on the women’s exhibit.



Each mandala tells a story all its own, and associated with each one of these is a poem or a writing. In the exhibition on Mandala Minnow, on each side we begin from the experience of trauma, confusion, and difficulty and move through a transformative process to integration and resolution. Each mandala, photographed on the curved surface of the fish and so not always appearing round, tells a story all its own. Together they describe a journey of awakening and self-discovery through art. The images you are about to see come from the counseling experiences and journal work these women have done with me. They sat together several evenings with dozens of journals and looked at hundreds of mandalas in order to piece this story together. It took hundreds of hours of work to create Mandala Minnow. I will share their images with you and guide you on the stories they chose to tell, of women’s journeys of transformation through imagery and art.



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The story begins with a shattering life experience, whether that happens for women as children or at any time in their lives, there’s a shattering experience which wounds the ego and begins a journey of loss, recovery, discovery, exploration, and transformation.

With trauma often comes a splitting—an outer persona which greets and meets the world, and an inner self which is fractured away from the whole, and this can then result in a divided self .



As women begin to look inside, they often find a feeling of floating, a feeling of depersonalization that their real self is separate from the part of them that is mother, doctor, professional person; and it’s necessary to connect with and begin to explore in order to re-own the center, the self. Guided through the inspiration of the Higher Self and working with techniques of mental imagery, we begin to identify these subpersonalities and re-own them.

*(Continued on [page 6](#))*

(Continued from [page 5](#))



Two things for us need to occur for us to identify, address and resolve the traumas that have existed or happened to us. One is to find that connection to the inner genius, the inner guidance. The other is a helping hand from another or from others. This sense of isolation and aloneness we cannot break alone. We need a helping hand.

With inner attunement and the help of another or others—family, partner, lover, counselor—energies begin to be organized, begin to be ordered, and hope springs forth again within the psyche. Energies begin to rise up from the clutch of the negative scripts and self-talk that often come as a result of trauma and crisis.



This is an image of growing power, the power of self-expression, the power of creativity, perhaps the power of sexuality as wounds from these dimensions begin to be healed and one begins to feel wholeness once again.

Very often as we come from the inner world back to the outer world, we notice that our relationships are confusing, that our roles are unclear. We are caught in dependencies and in dynamics that we have to take responsibility for, address, and improve.



This image might represent different things for different people. Certainly as a viewer of these mandalas, any one of these images will have its own unique meaning to you. This image perhaps is showing the opening again of the heart, an expansion of the willingness and ability to love, and a growing sense of connection to the vertical dimension and to that energy that we might call the Higher Self.

All of us find peace and harmony and power from the natural world. These energies are important to free us from the demands, expectations, and constraints of the human community. The world of nature can provide us teachings, lessons, guidance, and inspiration with which to help us be strong in life.



Here we have a growing sense of power and force like a plant that is opening into the full light of the sun, the personality returns to strong functioning having taken the inner journey and redeemed the forces that have been scattered and lost within. True emergence is happening here, fully formed, fully proud of self as person, as sexual

(Continued on [page 7](#))

(Continued from [page 6](#))

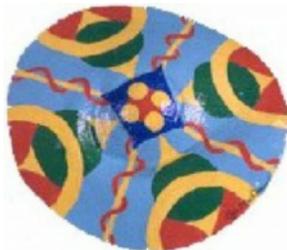
being, as author and agent in life—of one’s destiny. There are many important roles to fulfill; there are many visions to live for each and every woman in life. There are worlds to create and powers to manifest in the world.

Once history and the past trauma have been explored and transformed, we raise our level of attention and work in psychosynthesis from personal to spiritual psychosynthesis. Now we are called to create new and more interesting projects and initiatives filled with love and filled with inspiration with our children, with our peers, and our life-space looking for the manifestation of our highest visions and goals.



From the individual to the collective, from the collective to the universal, we are surrounded by the infinite and the eternal. If we are captured in our personal story, we cannot either see, enjoy or participate in these higher states of consciousness, but as we find the courage and the will to address and transform our individual selves, consciousness expands ever greater and ever more broadly.

Opening to the guidance of the Higher Self to our inspiration and wisdom, the more we open within the more we can move outward in a focused way with love and will.



Ever higher, ever more integrated, a synthesis of our personal, biological, psycho-logical and spiritual realities higher and higher. ■

## **Interview with client/artists**

Michael Brown (MB)  
Jonnie Corbett (JC)  
Kaja MacDonnell (KM)  
Janet Winkelman (JW)

MB: So thanks for coming this afternoon to talk about the process of creating Mandala Minnow and Transformations of Consciousness: Kaja MacDonnell from Williamsburg, Janet Winkelman from New Kent, Jonnie Corbett from Richmond. We’ve come together to talk about why you chose to participate in this Go Fish project, how you go about creating mandala art and maybe about the specific mandalas that you have made. How did we do the process of putting these mandalas on the fish, and then what’s been the value for you in the whole project of representing your mandalas on this large five-foot by 40-inch tall fiberglass fish? Kaja, you

(Continued on [page 8](#))

*(Continued from [page 7](#))*

did five mandalas. "Complexities of Sexuality," "Empowerment Creates Vision," "Beginning Anew," "Creating New Worlds," and "Synthesis."

MB: We spent about 300 hours putting all these mandalas on it. It was a long project. Janet, you created two to put on the Fish called "I" and "The Frog." Jonnie, you did two as well, "Yellow Brick Road" and "The Protector." There are five other artists who are not here today who contributed to this, but you folks were able to come, so this is our interview. Let's talk about why did you get involved with the Go Fish project. Janet?

JW: I was intrigued with the whole process of the Go Fish project and the fund raising for different artists and organizations. This project struck a chord because it reaches both education about the counseling process—the mandalas and the story telling and the journaling that we work with—as well as your Institute for Creative Living.

MB: It's a fund raiser because all of the Fish in the Go Fish project will be auctioned for sale October 20 in Richmond and also online. The viewer can any time, between June and October 20, go to [www.gofishrichmond.com](http://www.gofishrichmond.com) [*this site is no longer active —ed.*] and see the Fish, all 200 of them, and find out where they'll be auctioned—either on eBay or Amazon.com. The organization hasn't decided which one. So it's an educational process to let the public know about the power of mandala art in the counseling process and also to help raise funds for the Institute for Creative Living which has sponsored this project for us. Jonnie, how about for you?

JC: It was a creative process for me. It wasn't quite as noble. It was more that I wanted to share with other artists and be part of the project. I just thought it was very interesting to work on that and again, mine was just more about sharing and creating it.

MB: Share with other artists? The artists of the Women's Group?

JC: Well, the other artists, yes, within the Women's Group, and I wanted to be involved in that aspect of it but also sharing with the public, too, and letting them see what we had done as the Women's Group.

MB: How about for you, Kaja? Why did you get involved in it?

KM: Partly because of what Janet referred to which was the project itself and an opportunity to possibly raise money, although it triggered the memory of the airport exhibition which we did which was a collective project of many women and we spent several days painting them on a construction wall. That was such a wonderful experience.

MB: Putting mandalas on the wall of the airport back in 1997.

KM: And the public really enjoyed it. I found the process wonderful. It was fun to collaborate again with other artists and do it so the Fish project represented an opportunity to do something similar again.

MB: Would any of you like to talk about how you come to create a mandala? How does that process happen for you? It emerges out of counseling. We have a focus upon which we work and then you go home and do a homework assignment. What happens?

JW: Well for me, because I've talked to other people that have frustrations in different areas from mine...

*(Continued on [page 9](#))*

*(Continued from [page 8](#))*

MB: Different issues they're working on?

JW: Well no, the process of the mandala. I know a couple of people that work really hard to duplicate what's in their mind's eye on the piece of paper and they get kind of frustrated if they can't get that to be a photograph of what's in their brain. And for me, I have an idea in my head, more or less. I never get these visions, clarity, or know exactly what's going to come out on the paper. I have an idea and a concept. Some have more detail to them than others but it's through the process of sitting down with that piece of paper and drawing it that I discover what's coming out.

MB: That's true. And everything that happens in the circle as we try to represent the inner image or the inner vision is interesting. It says something about our attention, it says something about our skill, it says something about the resistors or the blocks that we have, the difference between how we want to live our lives and how we manage to actually live our lives. All of that shows up in the mandala process. It's quite interesting and quite fascinating. Do you find that to be true? How is the creative process for you, Kaja?

KM: Well, it all depends. Some of the mandalas I put on this Fish came completely spontaneously, out of the blue, sitting down and just deciding I'm going to swiggle for a little bit and the mandala completely evolved and along with it came a story. All of a sudden I was focusing or representing something that was going on in my life or in my world. Other times I can't shut imagery off. It's a constant story line or snapshots and some of those get to paper. Sometimes, I will try and recreate, as you were speaking, exactly what my mind's eye is seeing which is impossible. And then I have to allow myself to let it go and it will evolve and change and represent itself however it's supposed to be versus what my brain originally thought. So I love any of those ways.

MB: So sometimes it's a task to represent as closely as you can the image that you have focused on in your inner work and sometimes it's more spontaneous, more process of discovery than duplication?

KM: Correct.

MB: The circle is the frame into which you focus your attention, your art, and your expression.

JW: It is interesting that you can come up with a story after you've drawn the mandala because my story comes first.

KM: Just like the process of putting mandalas we have already drawn on the fish, doing them again, another story can evolve as a continuation.

JC: I saw so much more when we were doing the mandalas for the second time and each time I would go back because mine were so light to begin with—

MB: The originals?

JC: My originals, yes. And so when I went back to work on them again—I even think I mentioned that to you—I said, gaw, I've gotten so much more out of it this time to see it transform onto the Fish. Again that was just taking it even a step further for me because a lot of times when I create mine—Janet and I were talking about this earlier—I'm a very conceptual person to begin with, and very abstract, so I'll have these things rolling around in my head and then I'll try to put them onto paper. And I know for me a lot of times mine will come

*(Continued on [page 10](#))*

*(Continued from [page 9](#))*

from dreams, images that I have in dreams, it'll come maybe from lines of poetry that I've written or working with you, I've had several good ones come out in the meditation process and the breathing exercises that we do when you, you know—

MB: —the relaxation part—

JC: The relaxation process, or when I visualize a person, I know that “Yellow Brick Road” came up that way and I was asking questions. And that's been a great tool for me in the work that we do.

MB: Asking questions of the....

JC: —of the image

MB: —in your mind, and in the reflective process or after you've done it as a mandala?

JC: In the reflective process.

MB: Okay. The step that I call—the technique that's called—inner dialogue, where we have an issue that we're working on, we get a mental picture to creatively portray that so then we have a mental image with eyes closed, we're looking at our issue creatively; and then we can talk to the imagery—it's imagination—you can't get it wrong, anything can happen. In our dialogue we ask questions of the imagery and the imagination answers and what happens then out of that for you?

JC: Oh, just it's amazing how it talks back, you know. I mean, any other time if I—I mean I've tried to explain this process to people and they're like, “Aw, yeah, right, you know . . .” .

MB: Right.

JC: But I mean for me—

MB: Psychosis.

JC: Yeah . . . ”You need to see somebody!” “I am—How do you think I've learned this?” But for me, it's beautiful and I've even used it in other areas of my life when I'm trying to—

MB: —the inner dialogue step?

JC: —the inner dialogue, uh hm.

MB: Your original mandalas were done in what medium in your journal? You said they were light. Pencil?

JC: I was using pencils and just the process of going from the colored pencils to the actual paints—the acrylics that we used—the dark.

MB: On the Fish?

JC: Yeah, it was amazing. I mean it gave it a whole other sense of depth and emotion. And that's another thing, too, that I find so fascinating about that mandalas is that it's so emotional.

*(Continued on [page 11](#))*

*(Continued from [page 10](#))*

JW: They're so personal.

JC: Yeah.

MB: They come from the deepest places.

JW: Well, they're our "stories," so you are trying to express a part of yourself when you're doing them.

JC: But the stories that go with it—because I know originally, for me, everything was done through—I journaled anyway, and did a lot through it with poetry and things like that but then to suddenly make the mandalas that correlate to it was a revelation to me.

MB: A whole other process of creative exploration and creative expression.

So we sat in a group with eight women and dozens of journals and we tried to tell the story, the transformational story, and we made a selection out of hundreds of mandalas—we made a selection of about 20 or 30—and then we put the stories together with the mandalas in the sweep that's on the Mandalay Minnow and Transformations of Consciousness Fish. And then we represented those—we—you all, eight women went from the drawing in the journal to acrylic drawing on the Fish.

JC: That in itself was just such a beautiful process too, I thought. That was a very soulful journey—that whole transformation of recreating the stories from eight different lives, and then, well what 24 different—

MB: —18 final ones on the Fish—

JC: Right, but then 24 different facets of everyone's lives—we had to examine every single one. And I thought that was very fascinating in itself, I mean. And that whole process was so interconnecting.

JC: What's, yeah, what's amazing is how similar the cycles are and how we come up with a whole kind of process for—

MB: Sort of a hologram of transformation process as seen through—

JC: With little pieces of eight different people.

MB: What was it like, Kaja, for you to do the mandala art on the Fish, alone, with me, with other clients?

KM: I'm kind of stuck here for the moment because that, too, had been my experience—how the similarity of the stories, recognizing that our lives, however different our personalities might be—I think we found many similarities amongst each other, just in growing.

JC: And just the bonds that are there, because I know the first night that I even came to a group I walked in, and every woman was already here and situated and there was this—you know, I felt like the stepchild coming in, but I thought there's nothing—what could I possibly have in common with any of these women, you know, just superficially? And then as each week has gone by, and then especially this process of the Fish—it's like, whoa! —you know we all have that core, that same inner core, so . . .

*(Continued on [page 12](#))*

*(Continued from [page 11](#))*

KM: Yep.....I'm sorry.....

MB: Did you enjoy the process of working on the Fish with the other women?

KM: I loved it. So now remember that was my primary reason for doing it was the collaboration with other people. It happened to be women. It could have been women and men but the core of it was the Women's Group. I spent a lot of time up here alone working, which I loved. I was surprised. I loved coming up each time and seeing what you maybe had done, or what you had done, to see the differences; because if you remember we all had taken copies of our original and they were taped to the Fish and so we saw the original and the differences on the Fish itself. I found that process—one of the things—it was very . . . there were times it was very difficult to look at what I had done originally and to try and duplicate it—to honor what it originally was, sometimes wanting to change it, sometimes wanting to do a whole different one and working —some of the areas were difficult to work with—so it was—I found it sometimes quite challenging in having to be patient and deep breathe and—

MB: It took a long time to put those on that Fish—

KM: It took an incredibly long time.

MB: I mean, each mandala probably took anywhere from 10 to 14 hours to reproduce...

JC: But the time just flew while you were doing it. You were just lost in it. That's what I found so fascinating and it would be, okay, it's time to go now—no! Because getting here is like. . . “I gotta go work,” you know, but once you got here and once that you looked at everything that everyone else had done, and as soon as that brush got wet and you made contact with the mandalas that you were working on, you were in another world.

MB: A wormhole in time—it was drop into eternity and—

KM: That's right, it's just falling out of time, falling . . .

MB: And to share that with another person . . .

KM: It was so wonderful.

MB: What was that like for you?

KM: I hardly spoke to whoever was painting. You and I painted at times. Now I did occasionally say, “Stop rocking the Fish.”

JC: Yeah, there was a lot of that—probably what I said the most: “Oop, sorry.”

MB: Right. I'm on one side and all of you are on the other. You know, I did 14 mandalas. So you know it was like these flash bulbs of personalities on the other side of the Fish. I'm there, 150 hours, you know. And then there's Kaja, and then disappear, you know, or there's Janet, you know, and Jo or Jonnie. It was quite interesting—sort of trance-like state with these people, you folks, artists, and clients to come tell your stories.

JW: It was a real introspective time for me, that chunk of time that was taken just for me and the Fish, and that's

*(Continued on [page 13](#))*

*(Continued from [page 12](#))*

where that whole other realm or kind of redoing, not just from pencil to paint, but time has gone by—I know time has gone by—I know some of your mandalas were years old—I haven’t been doing them for that long but—and so you had this kind of forced the time you were going to be dealing with that mandala, and it was you and that mandala and that Fish—

MB: And it’s curves and its wiggles—

JW: Sure, and the introspective time was great. I mean, we don’t stop and just take time like that.

JC: Yeah, excuse me, I didn’t mean to interrupt...

KM: No, It was just luxury for me—absolute luxury . . .

JC: Because it forces you to make that time for yourself and to look inward and to actually take care of yourself.

MB: Sort of a final question, what’s been the value now that’s it’s done, when you look back and see the Fish, so beautiful—such a beautiful piece—what do you think about, or how do you react or respond to it, seeing it finished?

KM: Is it time for a joke?

MB: Sure—are you ready to do a building?

JC: Gosh . . .

KM: I think it’s beautiful. I think it’s absolutely beautiful. I love everybody’s work—least of all my own, I’m certain of that.

MB: I understand that, too. I’m so close to my own, it’s like. “Oh nobody will like this, or this is trivial or juvenile—I’m not a professional artist.” Two hundred fish in this Go Fish project. There are extraordinary artists doing extraordinary works, and we’re doing our little consciousness piece, you know. Totally pay attention to here’s a way to explore and heal the issues that, you know, that in a naive way, in a sense unprofessional, but still quite beautiful.

KM: Well, I was at an art show today and was told that if you do art, you’re an artist.

MB: Right. Exactly.

KM: So . . .

MB: That’s true.

KM: I thought, “Oh, that’s a nice way to look at it.” The story we did from the tail forward really did depict from the moment it was on the floor and everyone was looking through and picking out what they thought was appropriate, what we all decided, all that collaboration, then putting it on the Fish and where would it go to make the flow all the way through, it worked. It really has—it flows, and it does tell a story. And we all did with our pieces of those aspects—lower, middle, higher—we were able to do it. So, hopefully . . .

*(Continued on [page 14](#))*

(Continued from [page 13](#))

JW: Yeah, that whole collaboration and team effort was really good for me. That's what I took away from the whole project, and we have something concrete to share that with.

KM: And actually, we all live in the world, and work, and very much, how wonderful it would be to have that type of collaboration in our daily lives, in our work place, it's really what we strive to have in our home, with our families—

MB: Particularly even within ourselves.

KM: Within ourselves, yeah . . .

MB: Collaboration within all the subpersonalities and passions and powers that—

KM: Uh hmm, right. There was a little time of single-mindedness and commitment when we all had the same goal.

MB: Shared in community.

KM: So that community helped us to work out and complete a mandala even if we got in the middle of it and went, “Ooooh, this is too hard, or I don't like it.”

JC: The whole team effort behind all of that . . .

KM: Yeah.

MB: The Fish is called “Mandala Minnow and Transformations of Consciousness.” The transformations of consciousness are both of ourselves as individuals as we work with the imagination to resolve our inner issues and transformations of group consciousness—the Women's Group has become much more intimate and much more connective through the sharing of this process.

KM: Absolutely! ◼



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# POETRY OF THE SOUL

*Stephanie Sorrell*

*Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar...*

***William Wordsworth***

I have always loved poetry. It has been my passion and life saver. More, than anything I have found it to be a therapeutic tool of the soul, both in the reading and writing of it. My love affair with poetry began on my ninth birthday when my Aunt Monica, a head teacher at a school in the East End of London, gave me *The Golden Treasury of Poetry*. The contents ranged from Lewis Carroll's iconic *Jabberwocky* to Walt Whitman's *Miracles*. I still carry certain poems within my memory from Thomas Hood's lines:

*I remember, I remember  
The house where I was born,  
The little window where the sun  
Came peeping in at morn;  
He never came a wink too soon  
Nor brought too long a day;  
But now, I often wish the night  
Had borne my breath away.*

The words of William Henley's *Invictus* ring loud today after the death of Nelson Mandela. More than anything, it was one of his favorite poems. These powerful words, no doubt, served him well during his 28-year internment in prison.

*It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.*

From a very early age I always felt comfortable with poetry—its rhythms and nuances, which flowed like a river into my being. Within these emotive and beautiful words I felt nourished and deepened. They became my second home. Walt Whitman's words opened up new shining vistas which forged and illumined my understanding in a way very few things had:

*There was a child went forth every day;  
And the first object he look'd upon, that object he became;  
And that object became part of him for the day, or a certain part of  
the day, or for many years, or stretching cycles of years.*

(Continued on [page 16](#))

(Continued from [page 15](#))

I was aware, after reading this poem many times, how experiences become imprinted on us, consciously or unconsciously. We become part of everything we see, smell, and hear. Poetry, especially, has the ability to speak to us on many different levels, particularly on the level of soul. As a child and teenager, I loitered in the wings of John Keats's "magical casements" of rhythm and vision, and felt enriched and animated as they dropped deeper still into my heart. Somehow, these verses tamed my restlessness. As I passed through my English schooling and entered the archives of poetry, I noticed, locked in the confines of the classroom, the textbooks somehow intellectualized the meaning of the words. I became silent in myself, retreating back to the world where I felt comfortable and complete. I felt betrayed and disappointed. When I was 12, my mother introduced me to the *Rubaiyyat of Omar Khayyam*, written by an 11th century Persian poet, philosopher, and astronomer [and transliterated by Edward Fitzgerald —ed.]. The book was slim and had a faded velveteen cover. I was told that it had been in the family many years, handed down from generation to generation. As the words came to life, I became captured by their magic.

*Awake for morning in the bowl of night,  
Has flung the stone that puts the stars to flight.  
And lo! The hunter of the east has caught  
The sultan's turret in a noose of light...*

The lines from one particular verse has become a still frame throughout my life.

*The moving finger writes; and having writ,  
Moves on: nor all thy piety nor wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,  
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.*

These words crafted such a lasting impression upon me that I copied them onto a piece of parchment paper and glued it onto a square of plywood where it sat on top of my wardrobe for some years. My eyes rested on it each morning, and I knew that this was where I wanted to be— caught in the rhythm and dance of these words. Poetry could be a truly magical language of the soul. I wrote poetry in secret for a long time before I began to share it with others—even my mother. Mistakenly, I felt that if I shared it with anyone, something precious would be lost.

Yet, ironically, I discovered when I began to share this poetry with others, that sense of presence became stronger. At 14 years old, I was fortunate enough to discover a living poet who inhabited an old working mill in Norfolk in the UK. Mum had been interested in taking a holiday there for several reasons. The mill served vegetarian homemade food and also stood on the River Bure. Additionally, it was owned by Derek Neville, a living poet whose work she loved. Staying there for those two weeks, I avidly listened to Derek Neville reading his work, the verses opening up those "magical casements" within me. His poetry, to me, was an ongoing dialogue with nature and the soul.

*My altar is anywhere, wherever I happen to be.  
My religion is nameless;  
My temple has a million light years  
For its aisle.*

Little did I know then, that some 20 years later I would become editor for *New Vision* (formerly *Science of Thought Review*), one of the magazines he wrote for in the 1920s with its 10,000 strong readership. Uncannily,

(Continued on [page 17](#))

(Continued from [page 16](#))

the founder's daughter, Joan Hamblin, gave me a small wooden mouse which she said had once belonged to Derek Neville! I treasure it to this day.

For me, personally, poetry is the stirring of something wild, nameless, and magical within me. This creates a union of body, mind, and soul where everything seems to come together in a timeless alchemical moment. Energetically, it is like dropping a line into the Universal Ocean and waiting for something to bite. Above all, poetry is both the journey and voice of the soul.

This journey led me to the work of Russian poet Irina Ratushinskaya, who at 29 years old was sentenced [in 1983] to seven years hard labor, followed by five years internal exile, for writing “contentious” poetry. Her work came into my life when I too felt in exile within myself and cut off from the outside world.

*No, I'm not afraid, after a year  
Of breathing these prison nights  
I will survive into the sadness  
To name which is escape.*

And then on to the last stanza:

*And how am I to carry to an alien planet  
What are almost tears, as though towards home...  
It isn't true, I am afraid, my darling!  
But make it look as though you haven't noticed.*

Amidst these grueling conditions, where there was little to feed the body, Irina was going through a process which, in psychosynthesis, we are only too familiar with—that of soul-making. Soul-making isn't something you can study for or gain a degree in; it is an internal process where loss, pain, and often agony, inscribe themselves onto the heart's scroll. Wisdom, like the oyster's pearl, is born through long-term suffering. Irina writes that the prison was so cold that ‘my eyelashes froze.’ During her long internment she created 500 poems and—unable to write them down—memorized them word for word. Like those of St. John of the Cross, they were direct communication from her soul to the soul of the world. I believe these are what sustained her during this long imprisonment. She was literally subsisting on her work of soul-making: transmuting the base metal of her soul into the gold of the Spirit.

This is the path of the spiritual disciple, but also the path of our own soul embedded in the fertile matter of everyday life. And here I am reminded of St. John of the Cross and his iconic work in the 16th century when writing *The Dark Night of the Soul* when he was imprisoned in a tiny cell and beaten daily. Within this crucible of pain, he conceived one of the greatest living spiritual works ever. He writes in his *Canticles of Praise*:

*On a dark night,  
Inflamed by love-longing—  
O exquisite risk!—  
Undetected I slipped away.  
My house, at last, grown still.*

In psychosynthesis this is what we refer to as *suffering meaning*. The gift that can be conceived from soul-making has been known as *the imprisoned splendor*. In this context, suffering is a major component of our

(Continued on [page 18](#))

(Continued from [page 17](#))

work in the world of matter. Understandably, we long for relief from our suffering through recreational drugs, sex, and holidays. Yet it is interesting that the word *holiday* comes from *holy day*. The need for spiritual sustenance is rarely assuaged unless we genuinely take a spiritual holy day through connecting with like-minded people or a pilgrimage to a spiritual place.

*O WORLD invisible, we view thee,  
O world intangible, we touch thee,  
O world unknowable, we know thee,  
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!*

When I first listened to or read poetry as a young child, I experienced a union with something greater than myself. I felt *enthused*.<sup>1</sup> The words and the music they invoked engaged me in occupying another level—heightening and broadening my experience. When I began to write poetry myself, I felt connected to something that both enlivened and broadened me. There was a sense of sinking down to a deeper level, of leaving the area of speech, mind, and chatter, yet simultaneously being elevated. Certainly, during my years of suffering with bipolar disorder, poetry has been a therapeutic tool in my darkest moments, freeing me from the limitations of mind and body. I want to include a poem I wrote many years ago in my mid-twenties when I felt as if I had been in an “interminable night” that had lasted months:

***May I Ever Be Thankful***

*May my heart be too full of love to allow  
fear and judgement admission.  
Instead of feeling inadequate,  
may I bear my lantern with pride.  
Out of my inner pain, may I learn  
to touch my fellow creatures with  
healing fingers of compassion and understanding.  
May the silent tears I have shed cleanse me  
of all bitterness.*

*Oh—Nameless One  
Whose breath colors the dawn  
and whose music spins liquid chords  
across the most desolate heart.  
May I ever be thankful...*

Somehow, the mantra of those words marked the beginning of my journey back into the world again. I want to end with several questions:

Can you remember when you first heard poetry that ‘touched’ you? What poem was it?

Where were you at the time? How old were you? ■

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<sup>1</sup> *En theos*, the root of the Greek *enthousiasmos* is "to be inspired by a god" or "having a god within."■

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# **Coping with Anxiety and Rebuilding Identity: A Psychosynthesis Approach to Culture Shock\***

**Catherine Ann Lombard, MA**

## **Introduction**

Culture shock is a well-known term used to define the initial experiences of immersion in an unfamiliar culture. Kalvero Oberg (1960) first defined culture shock as involving two processes: (1) contact with or immersion in a different culture; and (2) loss of the safety net of predictable social roles, cues, and practices. Since Oberg's identification of culture shock, there have been numerous contributions to its study, models, causes and prevention. Besides finding oneself in a stressful situation, a person undergoing culture shock can experience adjustment strain (Crano & Crano, 1993), acculturative stress (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987) and even grief and bereavement for significant others left behind (Ward et al., 2001).

Contemporary theories and approaches to culture shock are currently based on its affective, behavioral and cognitive components, referred to as the ABC framework of culture shock (Ward et al., 2001; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping & Todman, 2008). The *affect* aspect of culture shock revolves around the significance of life changes during cross-cultural transitions, the appraisal of these changes, and the application of coping strategies to deal with inherently stressful situations that automatically arise when living in a foreign country. Intervention methods for the affect component of culture shock include stress management skills to help the foreign visitor develop coping strategies and tactics (e.g., Zhou et al., 2008).

The *behavior* aspect of culture shock is based on the theory of cultural learning (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). Researchers who adopt a cultural learning approach see intercultural contact as a skilled and mutually organized performance (Argyle, 1969). This model leads to practical guidelines for changing behavior in order to manage the "shock" which is seen as the stimulus for acquiring new culture-specific skills that are needed to engage in unfamiliar social situations. Cultural learning includes an understanding of the attitudes and behaviors in the host country with regard to social skills such as gift-giving, etiquette, conflict resolution, and non-verbal communication like bodily contact and mutual gaze (Ward et al., 2001). Intervention methods include pre-trip preparation, especially behavioral-based social skills training (Zhou et al., 2008).

The *cognitive* aspect of culture shock is anchored in the theory of social identification, where identity is the fundamental issue for cross-cultural travelers (Ward et al., 2001). During cross-cultural contact, people suddenly find themselves in a much broader context which can lead to anxiety-provoking change in how they perceive themselves and their identity (Zhou et al., 2008). Intervention guidelines for the cognitive component of culture shock include techniques for enhancing self-esteem, the establishment of inter-group harmony, and emphasizing inter-group similarities (Zhou et al., 2008). From the cognitive point-of-view, Ward et al. (2001) present four alternatives for people facing culture shock:

- 1) Remain staunchly monocultural in their traditions of origin.
- 2) Assimilate totally, and identify monoculturally with the host country.
- 3) Synthesize the best elements of both cultures and become bicultural.
- 4) Vacillate between cultures, identifying with neither (p. 272).

(Continued on [page 20](#))

*(Continued from [page 19](#))*

Anderson (1994, p. 305) similarly states that the cross-cultural traveler has four ways of reacting to the new environment:

- (1) change the environment
- (2) change oneself
- (3) do nothing
- (4) walk away

A psychosynthesis approach to such decisions attempts to accept the challenge of Anderson's second choice in order to achieve the goal of Ward et al.'s third alternative.

## **A psychosynthesis approach to culture shock**

Despite psychosynthesis having the possibility of providing an inclusive view of the skills, coping mechanisms, attitudes and abilities required to intervene and manage culture shock, the psychosynthesis approach remains missing from the research literature. Whether by chance, circumstance, or an unconscious or conscious act of will, all international students choose to leave what they outwardly think of as home to reinvent their lives on foreign soil. Giddens (1991) argues that away from the routines and rituals associated with home, individuals come face-to-face with disturbing existential questions and the threat of personal meaninglessness. Stripped of their familiar identity and way of life, student sojourners are often forced to face inner struggles that have previously remained buried. Feelings of loneliness and emptiness can emerge, questions about past relationships or work choices are raised, and even deeper, childhood traumas can suddenly appear in need of attention and healing. Psychosynthesis concepts and techniques have the potential to provide a comprehensive and integrative approach to managing the inner and outer struggles experienced by foreigners living in a host country.

The aim of this study was to ascertain if the two psychosynthesis techniques of the self-identification exercise and subpersonality model might help international students in the Netherlands to intervene and manage the ABCs of culture shock. The following results are presented through the case study of Maria. Maria's narrative was chosen to demonstrate the findings because: (1) her process best represents the processes of the other student sojourners, (2) her inner and outer journey best illustrates the psychosynthesis process, and (3) she was most able to articulate her experience. Please refer to the entire published article for further details on the research methodology, including the participants, data collection and analysis, techniques employed, a comprehensive explanation of the subpersonality integration process as well as other client results that support the findings of this study. Please note that all clients were assured of confidentiality and anonymity and Maria has granted her permission to quote her in this article and publish her drawings.

## **Easing the affect component of culture shock with the self-identification exercise**

Maria's presenting issues were depression and feelings of being sad, lost, and unhappy. In addition, Maria was having a difficult time relating to her Dutch PhD supervisor. Midway through her PhD, she was considering returning home:

I just don't identify with Dutch culture—its values, even its food. I've completed all the Dutch language courses, but still can't understand the morning news. After three years here, I just feel done with it. Especially the weather.

*(Continued on [page 21](#))*

(Continued from [page 20](#))

The counselor's initial task was to provide Maria a technique for managing and coping with stress. During the first sessions, Maria was led through the self-identification exercise. After six sessions, she sent the following email:

I feel stronger now with all the things I discovered about myself and also calmer and safer.

## **Subpersonalities and the cognitive component of culture shock**

Once Maria started to feel less disorientated, more supported, and, hence, more grounded in her reality, she could then move towards the more challenging work of reconstructing her personal identity into a newer and more authentic way of being through the subpersonality process. Results showed that the fact of living in a foreign country appeared to be the "shock" that such subpersonalities needed to become dislodged and less dominant in a student's life.

### **Rebuilding a student sojourner's identity**

During her second session, Maria identified two conflicting, polar subpersonalities: Miss Victorious and Miss Silent (Figure 1). Miss Victorious wanted to control all situations and to be the best. She needed recognition and could operate in the rational world with great success. Miss Silent was sensitive, deeply emotional, and more creative. She wanted acceptance of who she was, and needed safety, space and time alone.



Figure 1. Miss Victorious and Miss Silent.  
(Drawing by client).

Miss Victorious, the more dominant subpersonality, was the one who propelled Maria through her scientific studies and managed her success in the outer world. But, by constantly wanting control, Miss Victorious left little space for Miss Silent. Part of Maria's unconscious reason for entering counseling was to give Miss Silent

(Continued on [page 22](#))

*(Continued from [page 21](#))*

the space she was inwardly demanding. The reason Maria initially felt depressed, sad, lost and unhappy was her not recognizing and accepting the needs of Miss Silent, compounded by the limitations of always operating as Miss Victorious.

Maria agreed to more closely explore the origin of these two subpersonalities and found that both had developed very early. Maria is the first born of three daughters to parents who, while attentive caregivers, also carried psychological wounds from their own childhood. As a young woman, Maria's mother attended university but did not finish her studies. As a result, Maria's mother emotionally related to Maria almost entirely around her education. In addition, when Maria was born, her father explicitly expressed disappointment that she was not a son. Parental love and acceptance, therefore, depended upon, for the most part, high academic achievement. Maria is gifted intellectually and strong willed, so she was able to excel in school. However, her deeper emotional life and sensitivity was forced underground as Miss Silent. Here we clearly see the promise that the infant Maria made to her parents: "I will be victorious in all that I do" and the promise made to herself: "I will hide the more emotional, sensitive side of myself from the world." When Maria made these promises in order to survive in her familial environment, she broke her connection with the Self—which is a synthesis of the higher qualities of the two subpersonalities (amongst others).

The higher qualities that each of the subpersonalities held were also explored. The higher qualities carried by Miss Victorious were trustworthiness, dependability, will, initiative and persistence. And the higher qualities of Miss Silent were creativity, intuition, and wisdom. Living away from her home and country, facing scholastic challenges and difficult relationship issues with her supervisor only augmented and mirrored Maria's disconnection from Self. Through recognizing, accepting, and dis-identifying from her Miss Victorious and Miss Silent subpersonalities, Maria was eventually able to reconnect with each subpersonality's higher qualities. This process of integration was aided by a visualization in which the two subpersonalities dialogued with each other alongside Maria as an observer. During the dialogue, both Miss Victorious and Miss Silent expressed their unique needs and by the end of the visualization, Miss Victorious had become more humble and vulnerable and Miss Silent more assertive. Afterwards, Maria drew the two subpersonalities in reconciliation, kneeling before each other, holding hands and smiling (Figure 2).

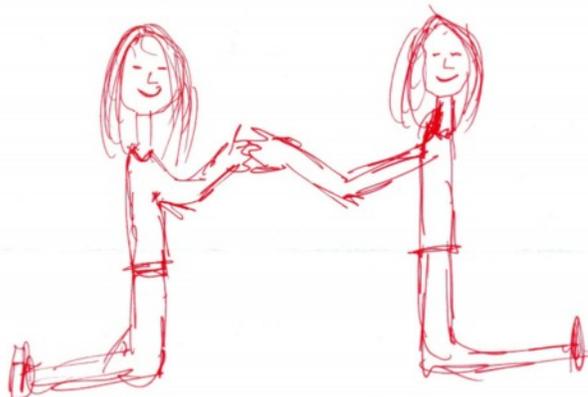


Figure 2. Reconciliation leading to synthesis of Miss Victorious and Miss Silent.  
(Drawing by client).

*(Continued on [page 23](#))*

*(Continued from [page 22](#))*

Reflecting on her drawing, Maria said:

Miss Silent has hope now. She trusts Miss Victorious. Miss Victorious has to create space for Miss Silent. She has to be silent also. Patient. Not so anxious about things. They go good together. They should do this more often!

The counseling work continued around balancing, coordinating, and integrating these two subpersonalities as well as other challenges during the year including the pain and sadness around Maria's "childhood promise" to herself and her parents. One example of Maria's continual integration of her subpersonalities occurred when she created a space in her home called her "temple" where she started to paint and meditate. Through this new endeavor, her Miss Silent subpersonality was allowed to fulfill her needs of safety, space, and time alone in a new way, and hence integrate more fully with Miss Victorious. This new approach also enabled Miss Silent's higher quality of creativity to be expressed in a more conscious and harmonious way.

## **Changing behavior and releasing creative energy**

As Maria was more able to objectively recognize her subpersonalities, she could better direct them from a stronger center of her personal "I," choosing what role was most appropriate in any given situation. Consequently, her behavior changed as evidenced by her new ability to engage in relationship with others and even the pursuit of her PhD. By the time she finished her meetings, Maria had come into a working relationship with her supervisor, successfully finished her PhD, married, was better able to relate to her parents, and was offered a post-doctoral position within the university.

Ultimately, by working through the subpersonality process, Maria and the other students were able to reconcile polarities that they faced in the outer world. As they identified and then dis-identified from the roles that they played during the day, they were more present and able to choose the most appropriate role at the most appropriate time, even in an unfamiliar cultural landscape. Consequently, all students were able to engage with others more effectively, assess and express their own needs and wants, and execute clearer decisions

In addition to positive behavioral change and personal growth, students' stymied energies moved towards their full human potential. Maslow (1970) has also noted that "creativity . . . seemed to be an epiphenomenon of . . . greater wholeness and integration" (p. 141). He writes that "the extent that creativeness is constructive, synthesizing, unifying, and integrative, . . . depends in part on the inner integration of the person" (p. 140). Maria was no exception, as shown in her following reflection:

I feel like I was on hold for the past year. Waiting. Like my life was on hold. Not knowing for what. Just having faith. I was busy, but I was questioning why I was doing the PhD. And it felt like there was no clear path. Also in my personal life. Then things started to develop when I started to look for clarity. Things started to unblock. The data came, my personal life improved.

It's incredible how much energy is consumed by doubts and feelings of sadness. How much energy is consumed by being someone else. I want to be seen for who I am, not just for who I'm expected to be. Now, I have more creative energy. It's more "green" to be myself! I see the postdoc that I want. And I have the energy to grab it. And it feels exciting and so much better.

*(Continued on [page 24](#))*

*(Continued from [page 23](#))*

## **Discussion**

This case study illustrates how two psychosynthesis techniques were applied to intervene, relieve and transform the effects of the ABC components of culture shock experienced by a student sojourner in the Netherlands. The student sought psychosynthesis counseling as a result of the stress and anxiety triggered by her living in a foreign environment. Through these stressful situations, her personal identity was challenged and forced to develop and transform. With a new, more authentic identity, the student was then able to direct her behavior and successfully meet the challenges presented by the ABC aspects of culture shock.

This research indicates that the psychosynthesis self-identification exercise and subpersonality model might provide an effective intervention for the ABCs of culture shock for international students. As such, these tools could be offered as part of the larger multicultural training program for both international students and university counselors and staff. Establishing an acculturation program for student sojourners does not only entail constructing a website that can instruct student sojourners on the academic protocol, social conventions, and local services in their host country. As Brown and Holloway (2008b) point out, we have a moral and educational duty to take international students' specific circumstances into account and provide them with long-term solutions. In their ethnographic study (2008a), they also conclude that, while it may be appropriate at times for international students to focus on the acquisition of appropriate behavior and skills, university counselors and pastoral staff also need to better understand the complexity of the adjustment process. With a more comprehensive perspective, support personnel could then better consider each student's individual needs and circumstances when deciding how he or she might best be supported.

Psychosynthesis counseling and training focuses on such challenges by aiding students' with their individual needs, helping them to acquire appropriate behavior and skills, and dealing with complexity of the adjustment process through various techniques and models. Psychosynthesis can also enable student sojourners to come closer to their own personal consciousness and will and, consequently, more easily in touch with their own wants, needs, emotions, intuitions, and imagination. Gradually, student sojourners can become directors of their diverse subpersonalities and more freely and consciously choose and execute their daily actions. This is the real goal of any acculturation project – to learn how to maintain one's identity, self-esteem, and psychological well-being while at the same time interacting in a constructive way within a society that maintains a world view different from one's own.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to ascertain if two psychosynthesis techniques—the self-identification exercise and the subpersonality model—might help international students in the Netherlands to intervene and manage the ABCs of culture shock. The self-identification exercise allowed students, as exemplified in this case study, to deal with the affect component of culture shock, namely stress and anxiety. During subsequent sessions, students were then guided to integrate their subpersonalities and hence manage identity conflicts (the cognitive component of ABC). As students were able to feel calmer and grow in awareness with regard to their subpersonalities, in psychosynthesis terms, each student began to synthesize into a more authentic personality. As a result of this personal synthesis, their behavior (the second ABC component) changed and new creative energies were released.

Ultimately, this study illustrates the effective results of psychosynthesis and, in particular, the self-identification exercise and subpersonality process when applied to student sojourners and their experience of

*(Continued on [page 25](#))*

(Continued from [page 24](#))

culture shock. Most international students have particularly intense emotional experiences at the start of their studies as they must adapt, not only to a new environment, but also to unfamiliar academic protocol and procedures (Brown, 2009). But at the same time, these young students also have a powerful opportunity for transformation, a chance to glimpse and grasp their full potential, and search for deeper meaning in their lives (Anderson, 1994; Lombard, 2012). Those who have accepted, integrated, and ultimately synthesized the challenges posed by adapting to a foreign culture inevitably deepen and broaden their relationship with themselves and, consequently, are more able to engage fruitfully with others who hold different world views. Psychosynthesis concepts and techniques are not only potentially effective and inclusive tools for adapting to a host country, but also viable methodologies for anyone searching to synthesize a new personal and social identity. ■

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(Continued on [page 26](#))

(Continued from [page 25](#))

For a copy of the full article, please go to:

<http://www.catherineannlombard.com/uploads/Psychosynthesis%20Approach%20to%20Culture%20Shock%20-%20C.A.%20Lombard.pdf>

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## HELP WANTED

Copy editor needed for *Psychosynthesis Quarterly*.

Proficiency with English grammar, spelling, syntax and punctuation required, and ability to pay attention to written details is essential, as is the ability to meet deadlines. Work at home with Microsoft Word or other word processor, and communicate via email. We prepare issues of the *Quarterly* for a period of three weeks prior to publication. You will be reviewing and proof-reading the articles in preparation for the layout of the issue. This is all-volunteer work! We do it for the love of psychosynthesis and the people who use it, teach it, and share it. Please email Jan at [Jan.Kuniholm@roadrunner.com](mailto:Jan.Kuniholm@roadrunner.com) if you'd like to join us. Work on next issue starts May 7.

# **Psychosynthesis and Integrative Cancer Treatment: Reducing Mental-Emotional Suffering**

*Richard Schaub, PhD*

## **Introduction**

A cancer diagnosis generates mental-emotional suffering because of its associations with painful treatment, disfiguring surgery and an uncertain long-term prognosis. The mental-emotional suffering includes shock, anxiety, terror, anger, envy of healthy others, groundlessness, and loss of the predictable future. Otherwise skilled clinicians often bypass these “negative” thoughts and feelings in patients in order to promote a positive vision of treatment and outcome. Supportive encouragement from healthcare providers and personal relations, of course, help; but the patients’ mental-emotional suffering also needs to be given attention. This article offers the reasoning and methods for a psychosynthetic approach to the mental-emotional suffering of patients with cancer.

## **Integrative Cancer Care and Spirituality**

The field of integrative medicine combines conventional medicine and alternative medicine in its treatment approach: for example, in cancer care, it will combine radiation therapy with herbs to offset the side effects of radiation. The integrative field frequently cites the philosophy of holism and a “mind-body-spirit” approach to the patient. “Spirit” and spirituality in general are promoted by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) as a part of health and mind-body medicine. Many practitioners see the effectiveness of actively bringing spirit and spirituality into integrative treatment ( Hvidt, Iversen & Hansen, 2013; Brode, 2012; Firman, 2012; Fish, Ettridge, Sharplin, Hancock, & Knott, 2013; Haylock, 2010; Targ & Levine, 2002).

As one example, clinical psychologist Kristina Brode, a specialist in psycho-oncology and a psychosynthesis teacher in Cologne, Germany, advocates that spirituality needs to be included in the early treatment plan. As soon as possible after the initial diagnosis, she contacts the patients, reminding them of their potential and resources. Her interventions follow the “time-windows” of the psyche that determine the patients’ coping-strategies to prevent further traumatization (2012, 2013). She sees that the diagnosis is a shock to the patient’s mind, emotions and body, and that the normal egoic sense of self can become overwhelmed, making it more difficult for the patient’s immune system to rally. (The author experienced the benefits of Brode’s approach when he participated in her seminar at the 2013 European Federation of Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy conference in Florence and faced the recent death from cancer of his sister-in-law.)

In the psychosynthetic map (Assagioli, 1965), the ego is only one aspect of the human mind. Higher and deeper resources also exist in latency and can be awakened to help the patient. In Brode’s work, she draws upon the psychosynthetic concept of the higher self to help patients, the “higher self” referring to the innate inner wisdom in each person. In this article, another aspect of the psychosynthetic map, the Self, will be described as beneficial through a case study: “Self” refers to the aspect of our nature which participates in the universal field of consciousness and energy.

*(Continued on [page 28](#))*

*(Continued from [page 27](#))*

## **Psychosynthesis and Spirit in Integrative Cancer Care**

The application of psychosynthesis to integrative cancer care brings a pragmatic approach to spirit and spirituality. Because psychosynthesis relies on what is already present inside each person, it does not require beliefs/non-beliefs or other formulations about spirituality. It views spirit as an available and direct experience, not a concept. Assagioli (1965, p. 193) put it this way: “What distinguishes psychosynthesis from many other attempts at psychological understanding is the position that we take as to the existence of a spiritual Self . . . We consider that the spiritual is as basic as the material part of man.” Assagioli also posited that one day there would be “a science of the Self, of its energies . . .” (p. 194). In the following case study, we see both the immediate experiential effect and long-term sense of meaning that derived from the patient’s contact with the Self.

### **Case Study**

Sara was diagnosed six months ago with Stage 4 ovarian cancer and is being treated at a major cancer center in Manhattan. She is a 70-year-old widow living in retirement on her own. Her two grown children and one grandson live nearby. She came to the author asking for help with feelings of anxiety and terror: “The ground has been ripped out from under me. I don’t know who I am anymore. I’m a terrified child.”

Sara reported her anxiety and terror to her oncologist and was given a prescription for an anti-depressant medication. Anti-depressants can take several weeks to show their benefits. Sara needed immediate relief, and she also did not like the “out of it” feeling she was experiencing as a side effect. She stopped taking the medication and returned to her physician looking for another answer. With some reluctance (because such medications can become addictive), the oncologist then prescribed an anti-anxiety agent. Sara gained some relief from the anti-anxiety agent, but the high anxiety would creep in soon after the pills wore off. She began to worry: “Am I supposed to just keep popping pills?” She also worried if the anti-anxiety medication would affect the round of chemotherapy coming up soon.

Another aspect of Sara’s mental-emotional suffering was the reaction she was getting from others. Her grown children were encouraging and helpful in getting her to medical appointments, but did not want to hear about their mother’s internal struggle. A few of her friends were asking how they could help, but others had disappeared after they heard about her diagnosis. When she would try to speak honestly about her anxiety and terror, only one friend proved capable of truly listening and not silencing her with cliché-ridden advice. She did not want to “over-burden” this friend, and so began to feel very isolated with her suffering. At this point, our work together began.

When it was established that our dialogue could be about anything and everything, Sara stared straight at me and asked, “Do you just get annihilated when you die?” Sara’s anxiety/terror was being fueled by both the fear of losing this life and the fear of the nature of death. This is typically the territory of religion and/or philosophy, not healthcare, but an integrative healthcare approach aspires to consider all aspects of a patient’s condition. Asked if she had a religion or philosophy to help her, Sara replied that all the injustice and cruelty in the world had long ago proven to her that God does not exist. Healthcare professionals need to note that Sara is representative of a growing trend in America, in which at least 20% of the population report no affiliation with any religion (Pew Forum, 2012). There will be more and more patients in our offices who do not have any religious faith to draw upon in times of existential crisis.

*(Continued on [page 29](#))*

(Continued from [page 28](#))

Asked if she had her own perspective on dying, she said that “everyone dies sooner or later,” but added that “I was just hoping it wouldn’t apply to me.” She cracked a smile, and it was clear that she was experiencing relief and even humor from expressing the terror out loud. *The principle here is that expression brings relief.* There is also an accompanying principle: if the patient expresses herself/himself to a healthcare professional who is sitting face to face, paying close attention and listening patiently, the patient feels the relief of contact and connection. What does it relieve? The isolation of suffering in silence and/or pretending to be fine for the sake of reassuring the people around the patient.

The second aspect of her “annihilation” terror was that her beloved grandson would never be able “to find me” in the world again. This projection into the future broke her heart. She couldn’t imagine how to prepare her grandson, and she couldn’t imagine that the boy’s mother (Sara’s daughter) would know what to say, either. She noted to me that she felt better just talking about these fears. The principle again is that relief comes when the patient is allowed to give full expression to even her most pessimistic and morbid thoughts.

Regarding Sara’s death anxiety, psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton (Vigilant & Williamson, 2003) outlines five ways that patients can soothe their existential anxiety by identifying symbolically with immortality: 1) the biological way—your children will live on after you (for Sara, this was a source of sadness, not comfort); 2) the theological—you live on in God (not credible for Sara); 3) the creative—you have created something that will live on after you (Sara did not feel such an accomplishment); 4) the natural—you are at one with the universe (Sara could not draw comfort from this); 5) the transcendental—you have experienced states of consciousness which seem to be greater than your separate self.

Sara responded positively to the transcendental way. She’d studied meditation several years ago and had two meditative experiences that, to this day, remained a mystery and a fond memory for her. They were feelings of a state of peace and oneness with everything. It turned out not to be by coincidence that she had sought out the author for help since he was known to teach clinical meditation and psychosynthesis to health professionals.

Our work then focused on guiding Sara into meditative states. Utilizing the meditative awareness practices of Roberto Assagioli (1965), the author led Sara into deeper explorations of the peace and oneness state (One of the methods is outlined at the end of this article). After one of the sessions, she declared, “This is what I need.”

What had happened in that session? Sara had gone into a state of deep peace which seemed to enfold her in it: she felt “inside the peace.” Far more than relaxation, she felt she was in touch with some spirit or energy completely beyond the self she knows. Though highly verbal, Sara felt that words could not adequately describe the state. During the experience, however, she said that all fear was gone. Her capacity to experience such a state of peace gave her hope that the rest of the course of her illness did not have to be dominated by fear.

## **Discussion**

Bruce, Schreiber, Petrovskaya and Boston (2011) chose the term “groundlessness” as a way to summarize the fear-ridden statements of patients at their cancer center. Sara had used similar language when she described that “the ground has been ripped out from under me.” Bruce et al. frame “groundlessness” as an issue to be especially sensitive to within the palliative care patient population, but the shock of diagnosis, a suddenly changed future, and the dread of pain can apply to anyone dealing with illness. Bruce et al. also report that a severe form of groundlessness and quiet terror can occur in patients who thought they had a religious faith but lost it when they became ill.

(Continued on [page 30](#))

*(Continued from [page 29](#))*

Could Sara’s meditative peace potentially function as a new “ground” to replace the groundlessness? During the meditation itself, she could believe in this new ground—but would it help her when the anxiety and terror rose up? Was she just fooling herself by going into the meditative states and feeling good? Was the peace just a form of denial? Wasn’t she, after all, just a cancer patient with a poor prognosis? She resolved that she could only answer her own doubts by meditating more and finding out what the results would be.

An unexpected development took place as a result of the meditative experiences. They gave her a new purpose in life—spiritual seeking—to not only reduce her anxiety and terror, but to learn things she could pass on to her grandson. The two of them already spent hours doing art projects and talking, and now she could somehow include the meditation and perhaps even add spiritual wisdom to their time together. This new purpose relieved some of the tension she felt about abandoning her grandson (through her eventual death) by giving him something of spiritual value. The medical writer and philosopher, Rachel Naomi Remen, MD, has been particularly articulate about the importance of spiritual seeking for someone like Sara (see, for example, Remen, 1997).

## **Conclusion**

Practitioners in integrative cancer care can learn these spirit-oriented methods and offer them in the clinic and office (Schaub & Schaub, 2012). For one patient, the methods may simply produce some pleasant relaxation. For others, like Sara, they can change the way in which they frame what matters to them in the face of a difficult diagnosis. The methods used with Sara do not require belief or non-belief in any system. They simply tap into the innate spiritual capacities of each person—a fact we recognize in psychosynthesis and in the integrative healthcare motto of mind-body-spirit. ■

## **Appendix: The Method Used with Sara: Awareness Itself**

This is a modification of the psychosynthetic methods for dis-identification and self-identification (Assagioli, 1965, Schaub & Schaub, 2012):

1. Settle yourself in your chair and lower or close your eyes...
2. Now begin by listening...(Pause about 20 seconds)
3. Now begin to notice your body in the chair...(20 seconds)
4. Now begin to notice your mood, your feelings...(20 seconds)
5. Now begin to notice the sensations of your face...now, within your face, your mouth...now your nostrils and breath...
6. And now move your awareness to your left eye...sensations of your left eye...and now over to your right eye...
7. And now move awareness to the space between your eyebrows...
8. You have just moved your awareness from listening...to your body...to your mood...to your face...mouth, breath, eyes, space between your eyebrows...
9. Now see if you can sense and feel this awareness itself that you have been moving through you...sense and feel the awareness itself...

Wait two minutes and then say, “And now let go of the practice and turn your attention to noticing how you are...”

Wait thirty seconds and then say, “And when you feel ready, at your own pace, begin to come back to the room...”

*(Continued on [page 31](#))*

(Continued from [page 30](#))

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# WAKING INTO A NEW WORLD

*Ruth Eichler*

Adapted from excerpts from the book, *Radiant Awakening: Humanity's Transformational Journey* by Ruth Eichler and Lesley Carmack (See the notice of the book publication on Page 36 of this issue)

*When an old culture is dying, the new culture is created by those people who are not afraid to be insecure. — Rudolph Bahro*

We are in times of enormous, unprecedented change on this planet. One kind of acceleration is simply the speed of change, as can be seen in technological innovations that come and go so quickly that the latest device is out of date within a year or so. Acceleration also means rapid shifts in consciousness.

Much has been written about what has been called the “ascension process,” meaning that humanity is at a stage of evolution in which far more human beings than ever before are experiencing states of consciousness only available in the past to a few enlightened beings or mystics. Therefore, these states of consciousness are now becoming potentially accessible to the “average, ordinary” person as our lenses to “see” are expanded. We now have the opportunity to see wholeness in others by meeting them in and through our own sense of wholeness. As we rediscover our own sacredness, the world changes in response. Transformation, rather than rebellion, occurs.

*The pulse of the future is greater than the tug of the past. — Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan*

It appears to be the first time in the history of this world that a sufficient number of living beings can bring to embodied consciousness such teachings and principles. The monumental shift for humanity at this time is that the doors are opening to bring about a level of consciousness that was once only experienced by enlightened ones or as occasional mystical and peak experiences by some others. With greater and greater complexity and diversity on this planet, there is greater potential for more refined expression. There are more opportunities to come into contact with wisdom from many different cultures and paradigms. The Dzogchen stream of Buddhism believes that we can become enlightened in one lifetime. Perhaps that lifetime is now— if we choose it.

Of course, just learning and drawing from the many diverse traditions available to us does not alone create ascension, nor does the world become a utopian paradise. Instead we develop new capacities of feeling, sensing and thinking that allow new possibilities of living in cooperation with each other and of co-participating with spirit. Ascension requires that we attune our “antennas” to deep universal wisdom principles and become more aware of the consequences of our choices. Our attention to what we intend matters. What we put our attention on generates more of the same. Ascension, like the view of the hawk, can be high and wide and can hold a world view in which all beings and all life is sacred.

In the past great teachers such as Jesus and Buddha were surrounded by disciples who could only observe and report their experiences at a level of consciousness that was available to them at that time. Therefore, a more complete understanding of their teachings was limited by the constraints of the reporters. Those few who have walked the earth before as enlightened beings served as living examples, but they did not have a collaborative collective of others to participate in the teachings at the level at which they were demonstrated.

*(Continued on [page 33](#))*

(Continued from [page 32](#))

Many contemporary researchers of consciousness have identified developmental phases that correspond or reflect various levels of consciousness. One cannot experience a sense of oneness with the universe unless one has progressed through various earlier levels of understanding. Many writers such as Clare Graves, Don Edward Beck, Deepak Chopra, and Ken Wilber have mapped stages of consciousness. Each stage contains its own perceptions, beliefs, and even biochemistry particular to that state. Beliefs about religion, politics, education, and mental illness vary from one level to another. In a presentation at the World Future Society in 1981, Dr. Graves said that the transition into higher states of consciousness would not be easy, but it would be exciting. He further said, “It is not merely a transition to a new level of existence but the start of a new ‘movement’ in the symphony of human history.”

Even though only a relatively small percentage of the population may be truly living in these higher states at the present time, the coherence of these higher fields catalyzes those in the less evolved levels to come into stability and pattern, matching with the higher level. The less coherent energies come into resonance with the higher note. Much has been written about “the hundredth monkey phenomenon” in which once a critical mass is reached, a rapid shift occurs and all of the monkeys washed their sweet potatoes in the same way. As we put our attention on what is possible rather than what is wrong, change is catalyzed. Attention to intention brings about further acceleration.

In the past, the knowledge and skills that shamans from indigenous tribes possessed were not accessible to most in their communities. They were often obtained through great personal sacrifice and years of training. Eons of shamanic practice have created a field of energy and information that is now much more accessible to humankind. It is no longer necessary to be the son or daughter of a shaman in order to access this wisdom. Some people tap into this field intuitively, and the Internet makes much information available that used to be secret. However, just receiving the data certainly does not make a shaman or wise being. Not only are practices and training required, but also one has to learn how to embody these principles with integrity.

On an individual level, the first person that ran the four-minute mile did what people thought was impossible, yet once it occurred, many others began to break through that old barrier. The “possible human” is now viewed on living room televisions and even more frequently on YouTube. It extends our capacity to believe and know what is possible. Whether it is a three-year-old conducting an orchestra or a ninety-year-old man lifting weights, our psyche is opened to greater possibility. The edge is constantly moving to incorporate expanded potential. Whereas we used to talk about the Possible Human (as Jean Houston so eloquently titled a book), we now are becoming the Possible Collective. What was once only available to the very few is now possible for the many.

Yet no one said it would be easy. Humanity has habituated to fear, and resistance to the unknown and change often are responses to fear. For some, fears and questions arise at the thought of ascension: Will I turn into a blob if I am one with Source? Will I lose my unique identity? What will it really mean for my life? Who will I be?

In order for transformation to truly occur, fear must be faced rather than ignored or prematurely transcended. Ignoring fear leaves us bereft of objective discernment about what needs to be paid attention to and what can be managed in another way. Premature transcendence occurs when someone mentally hangs onto spiritual beliefs and pretends or denies that they have human fears and foibles. In her beautiful *Co-Creation Code Deck* of cards, Rowena Pattee Kryder advises:

(Continued on [page 34](#))

(Continued from [page 33](#))

*Cease trying to become fearless or to get away from, or defend yourself from fear. It is time to enter into it, face it and stare it down into dissolution . . . You now have the inner strength and love and power to transform the very root of fear in your psyche. Allow! Allow!*

Love and imagination can transform fear, for fear is essentially love held back for any reason. What isn't love eventually returns to ash. In spite of our fears, grace and ease can assist our acceleration of consciousness.

*When you have a profound awakening that you are part of a cosmic process that is going somewhere, you find yourself falling more deeply in love with what is possible than you are with what has already happened. — Andrew Cohen*

The ascension process is dependent upon the Sacred Feminine principle. She holds the archetypal patterns that are becoming actualized. She holds the impulse through which new patterns are emerging, liberating us from old, outworn ways of being. In the East, the Feminine has long been associated with birth, transformation and rebirth, the nurturing and sustaining influence in the universe.

The living presence of the Feminine as the Divine opens us to the sacred in all things, allowing the possibility of transfiguration. We are becoming conscious of the sacred that is embodied in all matter. As we open to light and love, we are infused with the light of higher consciousness, which transforms form, and we begin to realize that we are Light and Love. In order to realize Light, we have to have an experience of inner light. The mysteries are then revealed to us through the creation process occurring within and around us every moment. Thus, as we embody Love and are permeated with Light, the Divine is revealed to us, and our form becomes an expression of love itself. Therefore, the Sacred Feminine provides the container, integral to the ascension process.

The Sacred Feminine is both illumined substance and also a process inherent in transformation. As Creatrix, we are birthing individuated expressions of Source, of Creator. This gestation period that we are collectively moving through now is impressed in the psyche and the form-nature of humanity. We then become more transparent to each other with nothing hidden, for only the authentic self shines through.

While the Sacred Feminine is an integral part of the Ascension process, paradoxically she also expresses an awakening impulse that descends from the etheric into physicality. This impulse activates the divine that already is hidden in body, mind and spirit—in consciousness itself.

One of the qualities of the Sacred Feminine is the capacity to embrace wholeness, to know and to be the hologram rather than just the parts. This view allows us to join with the complexities of the quickening, energetic fields of potential in which we are immersed. The quickening is both outside and inside, so we are changing and moving to a higher vibratory rate just as the earth is changing. The Sacred Feminine doesn't leave anything out; all is included. She unites polarities—fierceness with compassion; creation with destruction; light with dark; birth with death.

Complex components are brought into a whole—unity out of diversity—so that the whole is much greater than the parts. Numerous levels of consciousness can express simultaneously and synergistically. We can move from the belief that “you are my brother or sister only if you think like me,” to “we are all in this together.” Many people see the divine in all things—animate and inanimate—trees, rocks, plants, animals, land formations, human beings, the earth, gods and goddesses. Spider Woman appears in numerous Native American cultures, and she attempts by her effort to weave the great diversity of life into one integrated whole. The Sacred

(Continued on [page 35](#))

(Continued from [page 34](#))

Feminine creates a spacious context that can hold both the teachings that have come down through the ages along with impulses that come from subtle realms far beyond mental fields. All dimensions are included—those that include time and space, and those that are non-local and timeless. This vast wholeness opens to a greater reality than we have previously known.

Regardless of what appears to be polarized destruction around the earth, we live in unprecedented, creative opportunity as we together with Spirit co-create the New World. ■



**Ruth Eichler** was a founding member of AAP and was a steering committee member for several years. She has taught Psychosynthesis classes and principles since the 1980s, is in a private psychotherapy practice and is a certified Imago therapist in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Her first book, *Twelve Songs of the Soul: an Integration of Astrology and Psychosynthesis*, is available at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

## **The Psychosynthesis Trust of Nelson, New Zealand**

is giving a workshop on **8th & 9th of March, 2014**

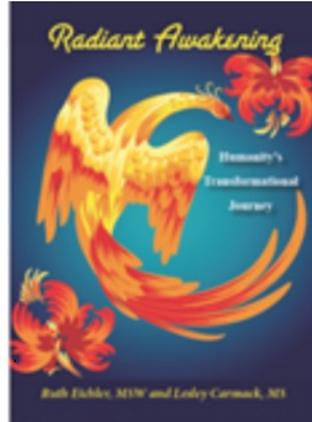
at Whenua Iti Outdoors, Nelson, New Zealand:

***Connecting with Our Soul Purpose for being alive on the planet at this time***

We will be seeking to access the Transpersonal both individually and collectively, for guidance and inspiration at this transformational time.

Those interested please contact [Anne.verity@xtra.co.nz](mailto:Anne.verity@xtra.co.nz)

## book announcement



# Radiant Awakening

*Radiant Awakening: Humanity's Transformational Journey* combines scholarly, contemporary spiritual wisdom with personal stories that are vulnerable and authentic. It is both visionary and inspiring, providing insights from the subtle realms as well as down to earth observations. The book addresses paradox and challenges of today's unprecedented, evolutionary acceleration and guides dialogue toward humorous self-observation and intention to cultivate living fully.

**Lesley Carmack, MS**, has an extensive and multi-level world-view derived from personal experience, esoteric meditative practices and scientific theories in parapsychology and transformative states of consciousness.

**Ruth Eichler, MEd, MSW**, is a psychotherapist in private practice and has developed and facilitated hundreds of groups and programs for personal and spiritual growth throughout the United States, Germany and Russia.

Jean Houston, PhD, a widely recognized leader of the Human Potential movement and author of many books including *The Possible Human* and *The Wizard of Us*, says:

*This luminous work is a journey into the frontiers of spiritual, scientific and personal quest. To read it is to awaken into the mystery of our origins, the revelation of soul crafted living and the potential future of those who take seriously the rise of the Sacred Feminine. The book is in itself a Mystery School offering training and inspiration for seekers who would prepare themselves to be making a difference in both inner and outer worlds.*

*Radiant Awakening* may be ordered from the publisher at [www.inkwellproductions.com](http://www.inkwellproductions.com) or from Amazon in either Kindle or paperback.

Pages: 309 – Language: English

ISBN-13: 978-1939625533



**THE NEW FACE OF PUBLISHING**



## Psychosynthesis Blossoming

The Synthesis Center is pleased to announce the opening of its second website. [www.Psychosynthesiscoach.org](http://www.Psychosynthesiscoach.org) is dedicated to the coaching arm of the Center.

Psychosynthesis and coaching are blossoming, with new training and new Psycho-synthesis Life Coaches, taking psychosynthesis into the world with a wide variety of specialties and access to work that reaches beyond borders. Living in the snowy Northeast, but coaching clients in sunny California! A Psychosynthesis Café, on-line, with live conversations over virtual coffee! So much exciting movement in the blossoming of the Psychosynthesis Rose!

The Center is also a CCE-Approved Board Certified Coach Training Provider and many of our coach graduates are becoming Board Certified Coaches, as well as PLC's (Psychosynthesis Life Coaches),

Martha Crampton, in the last years of her life, stepped into the field of psychosynthesis coaching and quietly and beautifully planted the seed for the growing of this field. Her article *Empowerment of the Will through Life Coaching* is available through AAP and The Center. I want to share a bit of her inspiration, from the article, because it resonates as deeply for me as it did for her.

*Recently I woke up in the night from a dream that movingly portrays my vision of coaching. In the dream a woman was walking along a road, an archetypal life path. I was struck by the unusual quality of her energy. She had an amazing clarity of purpose and her intent was unwavering, as though she was carrying out a sacred mission. I felt that nothing could deter her from her purpose, yet she was not driven in an ego-based way. Her energy was peaceful and balanced. She walked with ease, grace, and quiet confidence, in what could be described as a "flow state." She appeared to receive strength and be moved along her path by an energy that came from beyond herself, as though from a higher power. I was inspired by her presence and remarked to my companion in the dream, "This woman must have a coach."*

A coach, like any guide in psychosynthesis, working in any field, is there to hear the client's *Call of Self*. And then it is our work to help that client manifest the call. It is profound and wonderful work.

Visit our new site! Try on some coaching for your own growth. Consider becoming a coach, adding to your rich domain in work. However, wherever, and with whomever you work, know yourself as one who supports the blossoming of this precious rose that is psychosynthesis.

Didi Firman, The Synthesis Center, Amherst, MA  
[training@psychosynthesiscoach.org](mailto:training@psychosynthesiscoach.org)

*If you are psychosynthesis trained and have a Master's degree in counseling or the equivalent, The Center is offering a **30 hour teleconference coach training**, starting in mid April. This program will make you eligible to sit for the national (BCC) coach exam, to become board certified.*

# **Trust Only Movement – Exploring Our Embodied and Relational Experience**

*An Exploration Choreographed by Pepper Sarnoff*

Based upon a workshop given at the AAP Conference  
*Psychosynthesis: At the Heart of Systems Transformation*, Burlington, Vermont  
June 21-23, 2013

AUTHOR’S STATEMENT: How do I create and arrange the words that can give you a glimmer of the experience of the exploration originally designed for the 2013 AAP Conference? In *Smiling Wisdom*, Roberto Assagioli said, “Our motto should [be] to study and teach with joy,” which resonates with the words of my mentor, Kay Ortman, who said, “Let go to the unknown in a state of joyful expectancy.” With that intent in my planning, I began to orchestrate the complexity of ideas and experiences evoked by my contemplation on systems and transformation. I began with a huge piece of paper and created a mind map to chart the flow of ideas and information bubbling up. This movement of colored ink across the paper became an evolving mosaic of my most salient interests, my personal passions, and my life experiences, including years of movement exploration with a group of beloved friends. From that mosaic, I envisioned the possibility of novel explorations of those emerging themes through authentic engagement and expressive methods. According to Ellen Langer, a Harvard psychologist, providing adults with opportunities for novel exploration results in improved well-being and longevity. We adults need play to thrive! With words of wisdom on multi-colored paper, in a sterile basement classroom, at the end of a very long and hot day on June 22, 2013, a small group of tired, but willing, courageous participants engaged in an embodiment of the emergent systems that shape our encounters with each other. I hold them and AAP in my heart with gratitude. I also express appreciation to participants of the South Carolina Society of Adlerian Psychology for allowing me to explore these ideas in more depth in an all day workshop in September, 2013. The following words were the *spark* for dialogue and encounter at both conferences, and I hope they inspire your own exploration. Trust movement as you expand your perspective on the systems you experience.

## OVERVIEW

We develop in complex, interacting social systems intricately influenced by our purposive behavior. Our creative responses to our embodied sensations and perceptions and our felt sense of the other becomes our experience. Our experience shapes our learning and our learning shapes the regulation of our emergence. Through evolving patterns of movement, we navigate our belonging in our family, community, and the cosmos, and embody the flow of energy and information that enlivens the interactional systems in which our lives unfold.

THIS MOMENT OF MEETING . . . A FEELING-FLOW OF VITAL ENERGY. . . RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW, IN THIS MOMENT. WE KNOW MORE THAN WE CAN TELL. . . LANGUAGE ALONE WILL NOT LEAD YOU. . . TRUST THE TRUTH EMBODIED IN YOUR EXPERIENCE.

## ANCESTORS

Contemplate the biocosmic intelligence that resulted in our emergence at this time . . . the planet that we arrive on . . . the multiple generations of humans for at least the last 100,000 years who survived various and sundry threats in order to make our entry into this world possible . . . the stories, known and unknown, of all

*(Continued on [page 39](#))*

(Continued from [page 38](#))

those who came before . . . the family of origin who initiated the relationships that led to our birth . . .

## FIRST CONTACT

From the branching of MULTIPLE CONTACTS, the relationship begins with our PARENTS. Our existence begins with a RELATIONSHIP of two persons engaged in an emotional and physical bonding, whether the relationship is fleeting or enduring, happy or tragic.

## ENTRY: WE ARE PRESENTED TO THE TRIBE

Albert Einstein said the most basic question we have to ask is, “Is the universe a friendly place?” We arrive embodied—100 trillion cells in our body, 100 billion neurons in our brains, neurons and cells dependent on connections to survive. It begins! Parents, members of our families, caregivers, and community members participate in our arrival. Our attachment patterns, secure or insecure, are shaped in the context of our relationship with our early caregivers. Our brains and bodies are shaped by our experiences with our caregivers and the quality of emotional attunement between them and us, influencing our emotional regulation processes and our making of meaning. Our long period of dependency required for our survival results in natural feelings of inferiority. Our development is immersed in context.

WE ARE DESIGNED TO ENGAGE OTHERS AND TO EXPERIENCE OUR WORLD! OUR CIRCUITRY IS ACTIVATED BY BONDING. ENERGY AND INFORMATION IS FLOWING IN THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS AND IN OUR UNIQUE ENCOUNTER WITH OUR SENSATIONS.

*touch eye contact tone of voice consistency presence safety  
attunement facial expressions rhythms of engagement and disengagement play rest*

We arrive equipped for connection. Our sense of the other is felt. We have neural wiring and mirror neurons in place for empathy and compassion. We have fast fibers for exteroception, our primary sensory capabilities, which feed our system with information about our world. Our bottom up processes favor early learning from direct experience. Donald Winnicott identifies embodied self-awareness in the present moment as the essence of our True Self.

## LEARNING, LEARNING, LEARNING = EXPERIENCE, EXPERIENCE, EXPERIENCE

Our learning is shaped by the earlier development of the right hemisphere of our brain with its proclivity for sensory information, body awareness, emotional memory, pattern recognition, social awareness, intuition, and meaning making capacity. Our navigational systems are being created before our language and cognitive processes are fully formed. Our early experiences of a “felt minus” and a “perceived plus” shape a style of life, creating steering currents for our future. Our developing lifestyle limits, arranges, and predicts how energy and information will flow through our interactional system. Sub-personalities reflect an emerging private logic based on limited experience, created as part of a developing navigational system that shapes our interactional patterns.

OUR NAVIGATIONAL SYSTEM BECOMES MORE COHERENT—OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE FUTURE IS EMERGING: One day, when I grow up . . .

Based on our childhood experiences, including our natural feelings of inferiority and our attachment pattern,

(Continued on [page 40](#))

(Continued from [page 39](#))

we imagine a better world and a better future. As a child, we create a purposeful goal, which is an embodiment of our *hope* for the future. We create a guiding fiction, primarily influenced by the earlier development of our right hemisphere and, therefore, more easily understood through experience than language or reason. One day, when I grow up . . . Where we are going becomes more important than where we have been. We create “shortcuts” in the way we think, feel, and behave; these shortcuts are organized through the unique experience of the individual, in the service of our guiding fiction, and energized by our striving toward an imagined future.

*This triologue between past, present, and future occurs continuously from moment to moment in art, life, and psychotherapy. (Stern, 2004)*

WORKING WITHIN OUR CIRCUITRY: The Dance of the Amygdala and the Hippocampus: Is the universe a safe place?

Our ancestors who survived were successful at recognizing potential threats and taking action – fighting or fleeing. Our amygdala continues to quickly alert us (within 10-12 milliseconds) to possible danger, bypassing the neo-cortex, and activating our sympathetic nervous system, and triggering our most primitive survival interest, resulting in the negative experience of the low road. Our perception of possible threat is often based on automatic processes that are not always attuned to our here and now experience. More energy is required to evaluate the probability of a threat and to formulate a coherent plan for self-care. This cultivation of a high road response requires processing time as well as language that activates resilience, promotes awareness of choices, accepts tolerance of discomfort, maintains feelings of connection to others, uses creativity and integrated action on behalf of our well-being, and dynamically informs us of our past and future by embracing the present moment. Such integration happens through our hippocampal learning, which can be activated 30-50 seconds after the amygdala alerts us to possible threat. Remembering who we are, remembering the support and resources that are available to us, and remembering the story of our unfolding life requires us to RETURN AGAIN . . . AND AGAIN . . . AND AGAIN. The practice of mindfulness changes our circuitry.

*It is always easier to fight for one’s principles than it is to live up to them. – Alfred Adler*

MOVEMENT IS BASIC TO LIFE – THE DEEP INTRINSIC INTELLIGENCE OF OUR BODY

Body maps create our emotional and physical awareness of who we are and where we are in relationship to others and to the world. Our ability to respond, to be responsible (response-able), requires us to move. Movement, as well as the memory of movement, and the anticipation of movement activates our nerve cells, hormones, and neurotransmitters. Even in the imagination of movement, the cells of our bodies respond. Our emotions are the protectors of vitality in relation to our movement toward our goals and our relationship with others.

*Movement is what we are, not something we do.” – Emilie Conrad*

COMMUNITY AND COSMIC FEELING

According to Hanna (1996) community feeling is “ultimately experiential;” it is not possessed but only discovered and explored; it “may be characteristic of the nature and structure of human consciousness.” Community and cosmic feeling is activated by processes of inquiry and discovery, relevant meditative practices, and social interest that activate cooperation and helping. Empathy is the transformative experience that promotes our community and cosmic feeling.

(Continued on [page 41](#))

(Continued from [page 40](#))

Commenting on Alfred Adler’s ideal of community feeling, Dr. Henry Stein wrote in an interview in *What Is Enlightenment* (2000), “[t]his feeling of connectedness can extend as far as the cosmos. And as if that wasn’t enough, he said that this feeling should also extend to the past—through looking back in time and seeing a vision of what all of these people did who brought the world to where it is now, in the positive sense, and appreciating that.”

## HARMONIOUS RELATIONS – INTEGRATING THE SPIRIT OF BIO-PSYCHOSYNTHESIS

The active techniques of psychosynthesis are used to awaken, develop, balance, and strengthen energy to be able to express our creativity in integrated and socially useful ways, ultimately promoting the individual into the community by way of harmonious interpersonal and group relations. The awareness needed for attunement to the present moment, the energy for the cultivation of high road responses, the activation of will which supports our ability to choose and create, and the integration necessary for optimal functioning are inherent in the process of bio-psychosynthesis.

*The spirit of bio-psychosynthesis is to . . . promote and achieve the development and integration of all aspects of human life into increasingly expanding and inclusive wholes.* – Roberto Assagioli

## RESOURCES FOR THE DANCE OF LIFE – INTEGRATION (AND JUST A LITTLE CHAOS TO KEEP IT CHALLENGING)

Fill your dancing shoes with COAL (Courtesy of Daniel Siegel) –

	Curiosity, Openness, Acceptance, and Love		
Move it out	Practice the courage to be imperfect	Be aware of choices	
Exercise your creative power		Express embodied experience	
Expand tolerance by the activation of will		Savor life with all our senses	
Develop meditation/contemplation/centering practices		Sleep	Dream
Slow down sometimes	Speed up sometimes	Keep it interesting	
Offer encouragement to self and others		Express gratitude	Share your story
Use Humor	Play	Breathe deep	Let it go

Have fun



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**Pepper Sarnoff** is a licensed professional counselor and marriage and family therapist in private practice in Charleston, South Carolina. She has been involved in creative and expressive arts for many years as a member of Lifiedance, a group of women who explore themes of everyday living through movement and sound. She lives on a small tidal creek in Charleston, SC with her husband, David.



# **Center for Awakening Retreat at Wildacres, Little Switzerland, N. Carolina Inspiration on the Spiritual Journey**



This retreat is offered for people interested in the inner journey. During the retreat, participants will discuss topics related to finding and hearing that inner voice. In addition to meditation and periods of silence, there will be other activities that emerge as our small group spends time together. Beautiful mountain views, easy companionship, laughter, joy, humor, and playfulness will weave their way through the day.

**Where:** Wildacres, Little Switzerland, NC

**When:** Monday, April 21, 4 PM to Thursday, April 24, 2014, 11 AM

**Cost:** \$320 covers everything for the entire stay including lodging (two people per room), meals, program and materials.

**Registration Deadline: March 24, 2014**

(The number of participants is limited to the first 15.

Register ASAP. Checks will be cashed in April.)

Moving from Wisconsin where the annual retreat was held for many years, this is our second year in the beautiful mountain setting of Wildacres in the Blue Ridge Parkway of North Carolina. We look forward to seeing those of you returning and those of you who are moved to join us this year.

**Facilitator Hedwig Weiler**, MSN, CNS, CSW, Founder of the Psychosynthesis Center of Wisconsin and one of the Center for Awakening founders, works with individuals and groups; conducts retreats; teaches courses in Psychosynthesis and Meditation.

## **REGISTRATION INFORMATION:**

Please contact Hedwig Weiler: e-mail: [hedwig.weiler@gmail.com](mailto:hedwig.weiler@gmail.com). Phone: 704-348-5465

The Center for Awakening is a nonprofit 501(c)3 educational organization dedicated to fostering the evolution of individual and planetary consciousness. Council of Servers:

Abigail Loomis, President; Hedwig M. Weiler, Vice President; Marilyn Wedberg, Treasurer; Carla Peterson, Secretary; Jan Lovell

Web site: [www.centerforawakening.org](http://www.centerforawakening.org)

# INSPIRATION MEETING

## At PSYCHOSYNTHESIS EDUCATION and TRUST, LONDON

**March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014, from 4:30 pm until 8:30 pm**

On Monday March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014, From 4:30 pm until 8:30 pm, there will be inspiration session open to all graduates, students and trainers interested in sharing their experience in the context of European Psychosynthesis and wanting to learn more about EFPP (*European Federation for Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy*) activities.

Free Admission. Venue: PET, 92-94, Tooley St, London SE 1 2TH

Register by email: [tandante@gmail.com](mailto:tandante@gmail.com) or [mshepherd@petrust.org.uk](mailto:mshepherd@petrust.org.uk)

Website: [www.psychosynthesis.net](http://www.psychosynthesis.net)

The inspiration meeting is a new meeting format that EFPP started in Paris last April.

It is a meeting open to all members of the psychosynthesis community.

There is no agenda or nothing at stake.

The purpose is simply to share our sense of belonging to the same community of minds and hearts.

Often, as professionals, we are in charge of tasks and we may feel the pressure of deadlines and experience isolation. We may lose the sense of being inspired by what we are doing and not feel how our work does inspire others.

Thus the purpose of the inspiration day is an exchange of inspiration among the participants.

Thank you for coming and sharing your inspiration.

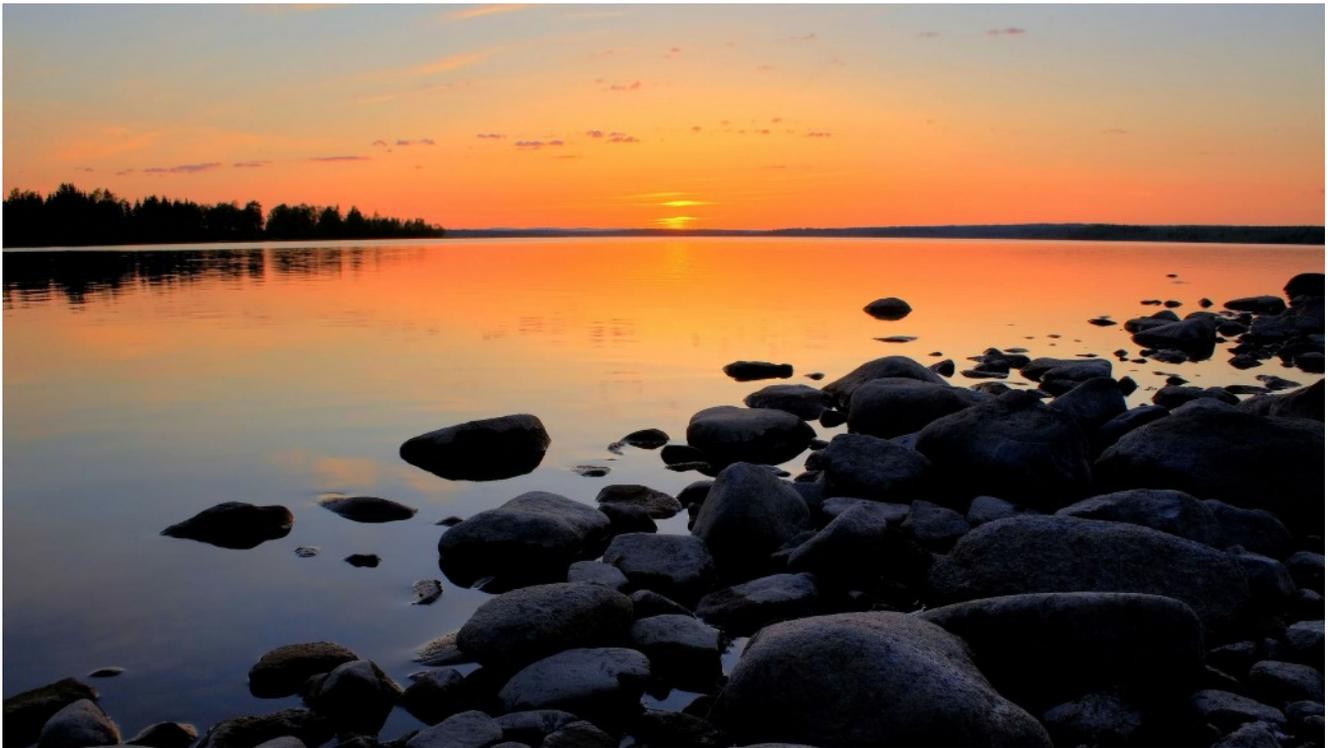
Kindly yours,

Tan Nguyen, EFPP Chair



# CRISIS AND TRANSFORMATION

The challenge of facing  
the present: awakening our spirit  
of transformation  
in times of deep changes



*Midnight sun in Sweden*

for the fifth European

## PSYCHOSYNTHESIS SUMMER SCHOOL

*Sättra Brunn, Sweden*

AUGUST 6-10, 2014



Visit the EFPP website  
<http://www.psychosynthesis.net/>  
for information and registration

## **International Summer Academy in Peace-building & Intercultural Dialogue**

### **Call for Participants**

**17-27 August 2014 Baar, Switzerland**



Are you interested in learning skills in **Peace-Methods, Mediation, Intercultural Dialogue, Confidence Building and Conflict-Solution** that can arise everywhere?

We offer you an informative and essential **11-days** training with international experts, who are professionals in their fields and where you will get the knowledge to see the world from another perspective, which will help you to capture certain things in a positive way.

For more details please visit our web page: <http://www.ipdinstitute.ch/International-Summer-Academy-2014/> or send an email to [fhuseynli@ipdinstitute.ch](mailto:fhuseynli@ipdinstitute.ch)

**Institute for Peace and Dialogue (IPD)** is an independent, international non-profit and non-religious institute located in Lucerne, Switzerland where it dedicates itself in the promotion of the prevention of conflicts between and within states by strengthening institutional dialogue between civil societies, international peace- and state institutions. To achieve its purpose, IPD can provide its beneficiaries with institutional broad research-survey outputs, publication of educational materials, implementation of academic-scientific programs, carrying out mediation, negotiation, reconciliation initiatives as well as reports.

*We will be Glad to See You Among Us*

**Psychosynthesis and Meditation:  
Andrea Bocconi's Workshop  
at the EFPP Research Seminar in Florence**  
*Impressions by Brigitte Macé, mountain psychotherapist*  
(translated from French by the author)

During the research seminar organized by the EFPP<sup>1</sup> in Florence in October 2013, I chose to attend Andrea Bocconi's workshop on *Psychosynthesis and Meditation*. Since I meditate, teach meditation, and integrate a time for meditation in almost all the therapy sessions I give, I was highly interested in this subject.

Andrea Bocconi began by explaining that the words *meditation* and *medicine* have the same root: the Sanskrit word "*mederi*," which means both *to ponder* and *to heal*. In traditional cultures, the functions of doctor, priest or healer were filled by one person, in the *shaman* archetype. Later on, those functions were separated, but the archetype of shaman remained vivid.

As Buddhism reached western countries in the sixties, meditation became so popular as a healing tool that it provoked a debate opposing psychoanalysis and meditation. Some people were saying that psychotherapy was now obsolete, as meditation and spirituality could heal anything; others insisted that psychotherapy was necessary, and that spirituality was only a spiritual quest, and tried to reduce meditation to a mere psychological tool. However, the regular number of psychotic crises that arose during intensive meditations and retreats influenced the debate, and helped define the respective domains of meditation and psychotherapy and build bridges between both techniques.

Roberto Assagioli<sup>2</sup> may have been the first modern practitioner to systematically use both therapy and meditation. He organized group meditations in his home in Florence in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and Andrea Bocconi first met him in this context. Assagioli always started sessions with a meditation, so Andrea Bocconi, who wasn't familiar with psychosynthesis at that time, initially thought it was a school of meditation. Bocconi went on to study Vipassana meditation, and received the teachings of Tibetan lamas.

During our workshop, Andrea Bocconi gave the following summary of psychosynthesis' main features:

Assagioli established a distinction between *personal psychosynthesis* and *transpersonal psychosynthesis*, the latter following the former. *Personal psychosynthesis* is about mapping the patient's psyche, followed by deeper work ("an archaeological and geological study") to help the *I* gain some degree of freedom. By *disidentifying* from sub-personalities and story, a person is able to engage in the process of identification to the Self and the reconstruction of the personality. At this stage of the work, the psychotherapist may use creative meditations (using symbols, for instance) to explore the Higher Unconscious, instead of working only with the Lower Unconscious. Receptive or contemplative meditations can also be used, so that a new ideal can emerge as a direction towards which the patient can rebuild the personality.

Here is how Andrea Bocconi differentiates the paradigms of psychotherapy and meditation:

**Psychotherapy** explores the bottom of the sea, to try to discover something; its main interest is learning reasons, and uncovering the psychological structure of the person.

**Meditation** is more about waiting on the shore for something to occur, and learning how to say "yes" to what emerges. It is not interested in why, but favours acceptance of what is, welcoming what emerges.

*(Continued on [page 48](#))*

(Continued from [page 47](#))

Two concepts are fundamental for both psychosynthesis and meditation:

**Equanimity:** maintaining a neutral attitude, no matter what happens;

**Impermanence:** accepting that all things change, identification being considered as a form of attachment.

The term *disidentification* can be somewhat ambiguous, so Andrea Bocconi prefers the word *awareness*. The patient comes to the psychosynthesis psychotherapist because of emotional suffering, and spiritual aspirations. It is important to begin by developing the patient's body awareness, and connecting it to the emotions; then, to create the sense of *presence*, of "I". With the study of various subpersonalities, it is also important to make the connections between them and the corresponding physical sensations and feelings. Meditation, which consists of observing the body, the physical expression of feelings, and the recurring thoughts of a subpersonality, facilitates the *disidentification* process.

The psychotherapist can use a wide variety of meditations, chosen according to the needs of the patient. It is equally important for the psychotherapist to know a network of practitioners in different fields—yoga, Tai Chi, Zen meditation, Vipassana, etc.— to whom to send the patient, according to his or her affinities and problems.

There are sometimes good reasons for not using meditation in psychotherapy. Some practices can, indeed, reinforce the patient's pathology and therefore be harmful. The therapist should avoid proposing meditations to people who are dissociated, who have hallucinations or psychotic episodes, or to hypochondriacs, among others.

Therapeutic transference to the psychotherapist may be altered by the meditations. In some cases, the transference may be reduced, or changed into a "transfer to the guru" if the person projects his or her Higher Self onto the psychotherapist.

For Andrea Bocconi, practicing meditation in psychotherapy consists of four elements: the psychotherapist's meditation, the patient's meditation, the meditation taught by the psychotherapist to the patient, and the meditation with the patient.

**The psychotherapist's meditation** allows an opening of the therapist's intuition about transference and counter-transference with the patient, cultivates presence and self acceptance, and allows the therapist to attune to the frequency (wave length) of the meeting with the patient, etc. For instance, when a patient is late, Andrea Bocconi suggests the psychotherapist use this time for self-work and to meditate about the patient. When the patient arrives, we can propose a few minutes of meditation to help them become more present. The psychotherapist's meditation may allow him or her to radiate a precise energy<sup>3</sup> favourable to moments of awareness, transformations in the patient, etc.

Andrea Bocconi then proposed a psychotherapist's meditation to the group. We were invited to imagine ourselves in our office, waiting for a patient coming for a therapy session without knowing who was coming. We were to observe our feelings about the fact that we didn't know who was coming, open the door while being aware of our reactions; lead the session while observing what was occurring in ourselves and in the patient; then end the session, taking the person back to the door while being aware of our reactions.

The discussion that followed showed that we were all surprised by the patient who appeared and the way the session had evolved. As for myself, I had quickly recognized one of my subpersonalities as the unknown

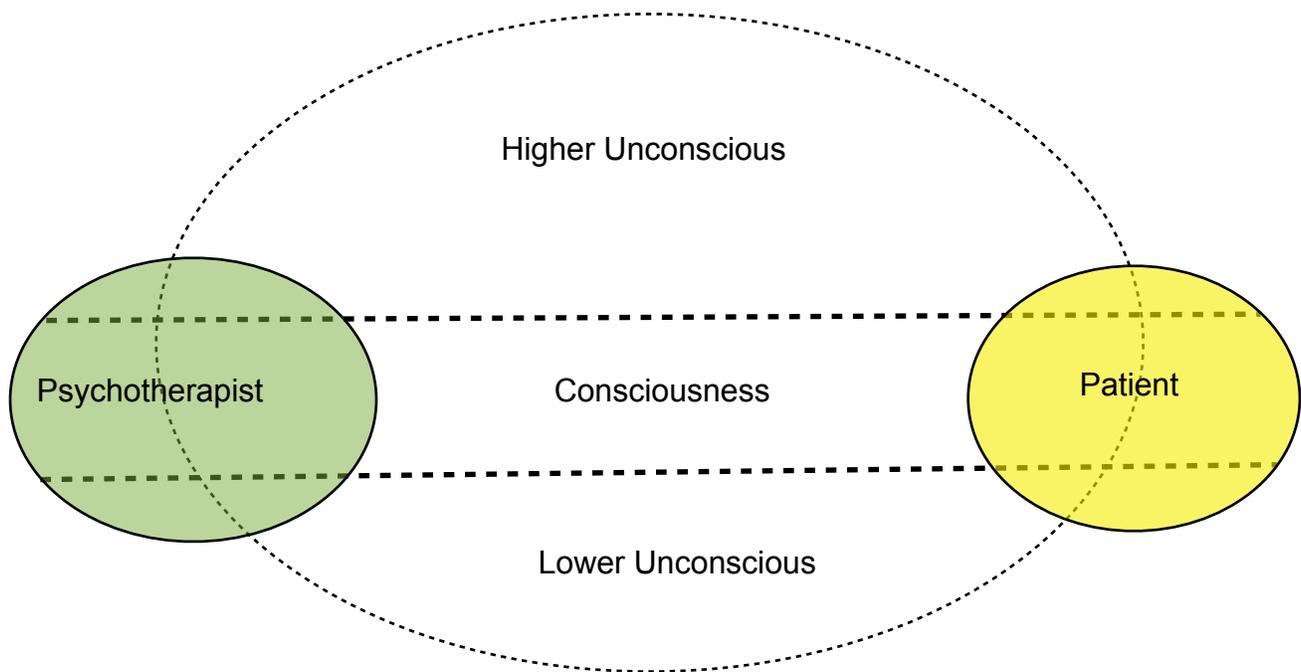
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patient, and was feeling guilty that I hadn't done the exercise correctly! There is a lot to be learned about the way we function as psychotherapists with this type of meditation.

Andrea Bocconi stressed the importance of opening oneself to the other person's suffering, and of the kind of listening that implies opening to all levels of resonance within the therapist. When the therapist and patient are together, the consciousness, the higher unconscious, the lower unconscious, and the therapist-patient relationship are involved as a whole, immersed in The collective unconscious. (see diagram)

### Collective Unconscious



### The relationship between the therapist and the patient

When we have made a mistake, or have forgotten who is coming to a session, we need to be aware of what we want to protect in ourselves (so as to not show our vulnerability), and what the patient can bear (is he or she expected or not?).

The group then made several more therapists' meditations; for example, we meditated on what the patient thinks about us, so as to disidentify from our fears.

Andrea Bocconi invited us to visualize a patient whose emotions were difficult for us. We were to imagine him or her in this condition, and observe our own reaction, focusing on the following elements: Why this person? What does he or she trigger in us? What is the link with our own story? How are we moved? What can we do with that? What do we need?

Andrea Bocconi then invited us to imagine the psychotherapist who arrives at their office being aware of which sub-personalities come into the room with them, and which stay outside. Which subpersonalities should not come into the professional office?

(Continued on [page 50](#))

(Continued from [page 49](#))

We ended by listing on a paper all the qualities we have as psychotherapists, and imaginatively recalling the positive feedback of a patient about what happened for him or her during therapy. It was very moving to hear what each of the group members had heard from their patients, and what they considered to be their main quality as psychotherapists.

This technique is rich. I regularly propose meditations with sounds and breathing to the people coming to me for therapy, and to others, and I had noticed how much quicker the people who come to these group meditations progress in their therapy. But until now I hadn't used meditation to better understand the challenges of a session, or my reactions when faced with a person. Andrea Bocconi's theoretical explanations enabled me to better understand the processes involved and how much easier the reconstruction phase could be, using the ability of these people to let something new emerge within themselves, thanks to meditation.

During this seminar, I had a discussion with Richard Schaub and his wife Bonney, specialists in meditation from the USA who teach meditation to doctors and other health practitioners. They are references for the use of meditation as a psychosynthesis tool and as a personal tool for psychotherapists. In conversations with French psychosynthesis colleagues, I have often felt marginalized with my meditation practices—for instance, the sending of energy to a person to facilitate awareness and insights. This workshop enabled me to realize that my practice is part of an important trend in psychosynthesis, which puts meditation at the heart of psychosynthesis, a trend initiated by Assagioli himself, who practiced and taught meditation.<sup>4</sup>

(Note: The editors of *Psychosynthesis Quarterly* have assisted in the translation of this article into English; however, since we are not professional translators, we are not always certain that the most appropriate English terms have been employed in this article. The original French article is presented on page 52 of this issue. Readers with questions are invited to contact the author at [contact@brigittemace.com](mailto:contact@brigittemace.com) )



French Alps (photo: Brigitte Macé)

## References

<sup>1</sup> European Federation for Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy

<sup>2</sup> Italian doctor and psychiatrist (1888-1974), founder of psychosynthesis

<sup>3</sup> This process is not the same as commonly used methods of empathic attunement between a therapist and a patient. Bocconi and I are making a totally different point, that people who aren't used to meditation may have difficulty grasping. When one of my patient is going during a session through a very difficult process about a deep trauma, or an overwhelming emotion, I quickly go to a deep state of meditation in front of the patient, and *put my heart in radiation* : I am literally, silently, radiating waves of love that surround the patient and build a safe place around him or her. On an unconscious level, the patient will feel it and use it to go through the therapeutic process to the end, and come safely out of it. So I change the frequency of the higher unconscious field surrounding the patient and therapist.

<sup>4</sup> [www.creativegroupmeditation.org/](http://www.creativegroupmeditation.org/) ; [www.meditation.com/teachers/Dr\\_Roberto\\_Assagioli](http://www.meditation.com/teachers/Dr_Roberto_Assagioli)

(Continued on Page 51)

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*Former conference interpreter for International organizations, **Brigitte Macé** is now a certified psychosynthesis therapist, a meditation teacher and a specialist of healing sounds. She receives individual clients at her private practice in France, in front of the Mont-Blanc (the highest peak in Europe); regularly organizes group meditations and workshops in France and in other European countries; and gives "Sound travels" concerts alone or with international musicians in many European countries; she has played crystal bowls, gong and drums and sung in international concerts for peace with the American musicians Laraaji and Don Conreaux. She is an environmental activist as chairwoman of the natural preserved area of her village and is actively engaged in the regional fight to protect the Mont-Blanc area.*



*She had the opportunity to give a concert "Sound Travel" with shamanic drum, crystal bowls, gong and percussions, and voice at the Florence psychosynthesis gathering. Richard and Bonney Schaub attended it along with other american psychosynthesis people.*

*As a healing sounds specialist and a meditation teacher, She will give a workshop "Sound, meditation and peak experiences: creating a modified state of consciousness with sound" at the Summer University of Psychosynthesis in Sweden next summer.*



French Alps in Spring (photo: Brigitte Macé)

# **Psychosynthèse et méditation**

## **Atelier d'Andrea Bocconi au séminaire de Florence**

### **13-14 octobre 2013**

*Impressions de Brigitte Macé, psychothérapeute de montagne*

J'avais choisi, pour le séminaire de recherche de Florence organisé par l'EFPP<sup>1</sup> en octobre 2013, de participer à l'atelier d'Andrea Bocconi intitulé « Psychothérapie et méditation ». Je pratique et j'enseigne la méditation ; j'intègre d'ailleurs une méditation à chacune des séances pour presque toutes les personnes en thérapie chez moi. Ce sujet me passionne donc.

Andrea Bocconi a commencé par expliquer que les mots *médicament* et *méditation* avaient la même racine, le mot sanscrit « mederi », qui signifie à la fois *réfléchir profondément* et *guérir*. Dans les cultures traditionnelles, les figures du médecin, du prêtre ou du guérisseur se confondaient souvent, renvoyant à l'archétype du shaman. Ces fonctions ont ensuite été dissociées, ce qui n'a pas empêché l'archétype du shaman de perdurer.

L'arrivée du bouddhisme dans les pays occidentaux à partir des années 1960 a mis la méditation à la mode en tant qu'outil de guérison, ce qui a suscité un débat opposant psychanalyse et méditation. Certains soutenaient en effet que la psychothérapie était inutile car la méditation et la spiritualité pouvaient tout guérir ; d'autres voix défendaient l'idée que la psychothérapie était indispensable et que la spiritualité se limitait à une quête spirituelle, tendant à réduire la méditation à une simple technique psychologique. Toutefois, les décompensations psychotiques qui survenaient régulièrement lors de méditations et de retraites intensives, ont infléchi le débat et permis de mieux délimiter les domaines de pertinence de la méditation et ceux de la psychothérapie, et d'élaborer des ponts entre les deux techniques.

Roberto Assagioli<sup>2</sup> organisait des méditations collectives dans la maison de Florence où il vivait et enseignait, et c'est dans ce contexte qu'Andrea Bocconi l'a rencontré pour la première fois. Au début de chacune de ses rencontres avec Assagioli, il y avait une méditation, si bien qu'avant de se familiariser avec la psychosynthèse, Andrea Bocconi pensait qu'il s'agissait d'une école de méditation. Il a ensuite fait de la méditation Vipassana, puis étudié avec des lamas tibétains.

Lors de son atelier, Andrea Bocconi a résumé d'une façon originale l'essence de la psychosynthèse : Assagioli établit une distinction entre psychosynthèse personnelle et psychosynthèse transpersonnelle, l'une devant se faire avant l'autre. La psychosynthèse personnelle commence par un travail de cartographie de la structure psychique du patient, et se poursuit par un travail d'archéologie, puis de géologie permettant au Moi de gagner en liberté. Lorsque la personne s'est partiellement désidentifiée de ses sous-personnalités et de son histoire, peut commencer le processus d'identification au Soi, c'est-à-dire la phase de reconstruction de la personne. C'est alors que le psychothérapeute peut utiliser la méditation créative (avec des symboles par exemple) pour aborder l'inconscient supérieur au lieu de se cantonner à l'inconscient inférieur. Il peut également utiliser la méditation réceptive, permettant de laisser émerger le nouvel idéal permettant à la personne en thérapie de se reconstruire, ou la méditation de contemplation.

(Continued on [page 53](#))

(Continued from [page 52](#))

Voici comment Andrea Bocconi délimite les paradigmes de la psychothérapie et de la méditation:

**La psychothérapie** creuse, explore le fond de la mer pour en exhumer quelque chose ; elle se préoccupe du pourquoi et de la structure psychique de la personne.

**La méditation** consiste plutôt à attendre sur la plage que quelque chose arrive, et à apprendre à dire oui à ce qui émerge. Elle ne cherche pas le pourquoi, mais favorise l'acceptation de la réalité, l'accueil de ce qui émerge.

Deux concepts sont fondamentaux, pour la psychosynthèse, comme pour la méditation:

- **l'équanimité**, qui consiste à garder une attitude neutre quoi qu'il advienne;
- **l'impermanence**, qui consiste à considérer que tout change, l'identification étant considérée comme un attachement.

Le terme de *désidentification* pouvant être ambigu, Andrea Bocconi lui préfère le terme de *conscience*. Le patient vient chez le psychothérapeute en psychosynthèse en raison de sa souffrance émotionnelle et de ses aspirations spirituelles. Il est important de commencer par développer sa conscience du corps, et de la relier aux émotions ; puis de créer la notion de présence, de Je. Lors de l'étude des sous-personnalités, il est aussi important de faire le lien entre les sous-personnalités, et les sensations corporelles et les émotions qui leur correspondent. La méditation qui consiste à observer le corps, l'expression physique des émotions, et les pensées récurrentes d'une sous-personnalité, facilite le processus de *désidentification*.

Ensuite, le psychothérapeute peut avoir recours à des méditations très diverses qu'il choisira en fonction des caractéristiques du patient. Il est aussi important que le psychothérapeute connaisse un réseau de praticiens dans différents domaines, le yoga, le Tai Chi, la méditation Zen, Vipassana, etc. pour orienter les patients en fonction de leurs affinités et de leur problématique.

Il existe parfois des contre-indications importantes au recours à la méditation en psychothérapie. Certaines pratiques peuvent, en effet, renforcer la pathologie de la personne et s'avérer nocives. Il faut par exemple, éviter de les proposer aux personnes présentant des états dissociés, des hallucinations ou des délires, et aux personnes hypocondriaques. Le transfert vis-à-vis du thérapeute peut être modifié en raison des méditations. Ces dernières permettent dans certains cas de réduire le transfert, ou peuvent le transformer en un « transfert sur le gourou », lors duquel la personne projette son Soi sur le thérapeute.

Pour Andrea Bocconi, la pratique de la méditation en psychothérapie se compose de quatre éléments : la méditation du thérapeute, la méditation du patient, la méditation enseignée au patient, et la méditation avec le patient.

**La méditation du thérapeute** permet à ce dernier d'ouvrir son intuition au sujet du transfert et du contre-transfert avec le patient ; cultiver sa présence et l'acceptation de soi ; se mettre sur la fréquence particulière de la rencontre avec le patient. Andrea Bocconi propose, lorsque le patient est en retard par exemple, d'utiliser ce moment pour travailler sur soi, et méditer sur le patient. Quand le patient arrive, il est possible de lui proposer alors quelques minutes de méditation pour lui permettre de se poser. La méditation du thérapeute peut permettre à ce dernier de rayonner une énergie déterminée<sup>3</sup> facilitant les prises de conscience, les transformations chez le patient, etc.

(Continued on [page 54](#))

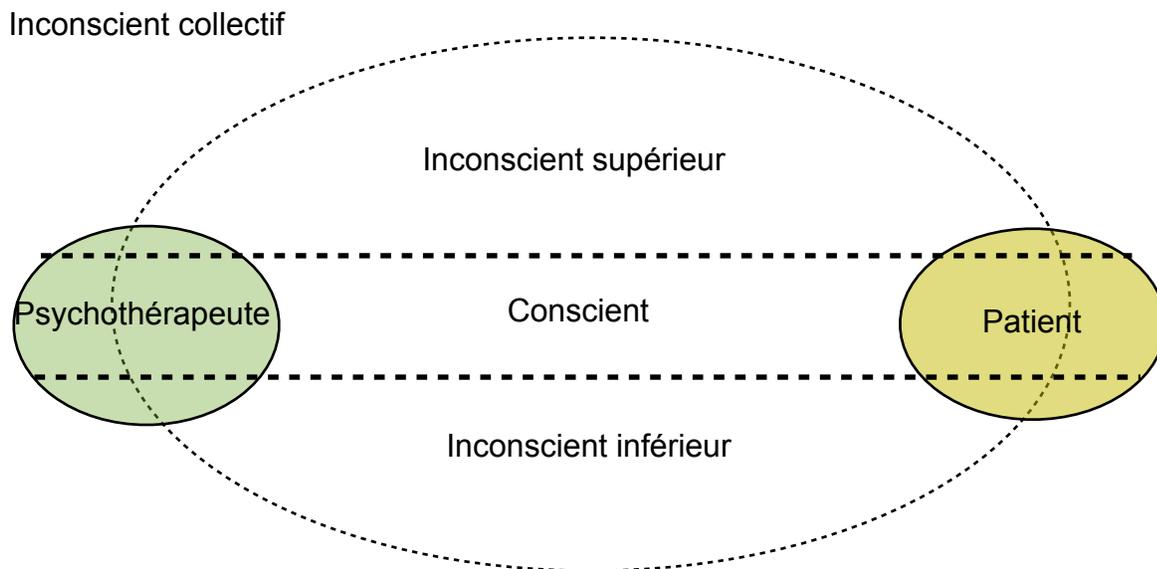
(Continued from [page 53](#))

Andrea Bocconi a ensuite proposé au groupe une méditation du thérapeute: il fallait s’imaginer dans son cabinet, attendant une personne qui venait en thérapie chez nous, sans savoir qui allait arriver. Nous devons observer notre ressenti par rapport au fait d’ignorer qui allait venir, ouvrir la porte en observant notre réaction, conduire la séance tout en observant ce qui se passait en nous et avec l’autre, puis terminer la séance, raccompagner la personne à la porte et prendre conscience de notre réaction.

La discussion qui a suivi a montré que chacun avait été surpris du patient qui était apparu, et du déroulement de la séance. Quant à moi, j’avais rapidement reconnu une de mes sous-personnalités dans la personne inconnue qui s’était présentée, et je culpabilisais de ne pas avoir fait correctement l’exercice ! Il y a beaucoup à apprendre sur son fonctionnement en tant que thérapeute grâce à ce type de méditation.

Andrea Bocconi a alors insisté sur l’ouverture à la souffrance de l’autre, sur l’écoute qui implique de s’ouvrir à tous les niveaux de résonances à l’intérieur du thérapeute.

Lorsque thérapeute et patient sont face à face, interviennent le conscient, l’inconscient supérieur, l’inconscient inférieur, et l’ensemble thérapeute –patient baigne dans l’inconscient collectif. (voir diagramme)



### **La relation entre le psychothérapeute et le patient**

Quand on s’est trompé ou qu’on a oublié qui vient en séance, il faut faire attention à ce qu’on veut défendre de soi (pour ne pas montrer sa vulnérabilité) et à ce que le patient peut supporter (est-il attendu ou pas ?).

Nous avons fait ensuite une série de méditations du thérapeute. Par exemple, méditer sur ce que le patient pense de soi, pour se désidentifier de ses peurs.

Andrea Bocconi nous a ensuite proposé de visualiser un patient dont les émotions nous mettent en difficulté. Il fallait le voir dans cet état, et observer notre réaction, en nous concentrant sur les éléments suivants: pourquoi cette personne précisément ? En quoi nous touche-t-elle et quel est le rapport avec notre propre histoire ?

(Continued on [page 55](#))

(Continued from [page 54](#))

Comment nous touche-t-elle ? Que pouvons-nous faire de cela, quel est notre besoin ?

Andrea Bocconi nous a ensuite invité à imaginer le thérapeute qui arrive dans son cabinet et qui prend conscience de toutes les sous-personnalités qui arrivent dans la pièce, et celles qui restent à l'extérieur. Quelles sont les sous-personnalités qui ne doivent pas rentrer dans le cabinet ?

Nous avons terminé en énumérant sur une feuille toutes les qualités que nous avons en tant que thérapeutes, et en repensant au feedback positif d'une personne sur ce qui s'était passé pour elle dans la thérapie. C'était très émouvant d'entendre ce que chacun avait entendu d'un de ses patients, et ce qu'il considérait comme sa principale qualité.

J'ai beaucoup apprécié cet atelier, et les différentes méditations du thérapeute proposées, qui me semblent intéressantes à refaire régulièrement. Je propose souvent des méditations aux personnes qui suivent une thérapie avec moi, mais jusqu'à présent, je n'utilisais pas la méditation pour mieux comprendre les enjeux d'une séance ou d'une réaction face à une personne. Cette technique me semble très enrichissante.

J'enseigne des méditations collectives à base de sons et de respirations à certaines des personnes en thérapie avec moi ainsi qu'à d'autres personnes, et je constate que les personnes qui suivent les méditations en dehors des séances avancent beaucoup plus vite dans leur thérapie. Les explications théoriques d'Andrea Bocconi m'ont permis de mieux saisir les processus à l'œuvre, la plus grande facilité de la phase de reconstruction, la capacité de ces personnes grâce à la méditation à laisser émerger quelque chose de nouveau en elles...

J'ai par ailleurs pu aussi discuter, en marge du séminaire, avec Richard Schaub, et sa femme Bonney, grands spécialistes de la méditation aux Etats-Unis, qui enseignent la méditation aux médecins et au personnel de santé. Lors de conversations avec des collègues français de psychosynthèse, je me suis souvent senti marginale avec mes pratiques de méditation, l'utilisation du rayonnement, par exemple, pour installer la personne dans une énergie qui facilite ses prises de conscience, etc. Cet atelier m'a permis de comprendre que je m'inscris en réalité dans un courant important de la psychosynthèse qui met la méditation au cœur de la psychosynthèse, courant initié par Assagioli, qui pratiquait et enseignait la méditation. <sup>4</sup>

## Références

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<sup>1</sup> European Federation for Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy

<sup>2</sup> Médecin-psychiatre italien (1888-1974), fondateur de la Psychosynthèse

<sup>3</sup> Ce processus est différent de l'écoute empathique classique du patient par le thérapeute. Andrea Bocconi et moi-même parlons de tout autre chose, que les gens qui n'ont pas une grande habitude de la méditation ont du mal à saisir. Lorsqu'au cours d'une séance, un de mes patients s'engage dans un processus très douloureux, portant sur un traumatisme profond et qu'il est submergé par une émotion, je descends rapidement dans un état de méditation profonde en face de lui, et je mets mon cœur en rayonnement : ceci me permet d'émettre silencieusement des ondes d'amour inconditionnel qui vont l'entourer et lui permettre de se sentir en sécurité. Au niveau inconscient, le patient va sentir cette énergie et il pourra l'utiliser pour aller au bout de son processus et en sortir en contactant une paix intérieure. Je change ainsi la fréquence du niveau de l'inconscient supérieur de la relation patient-thérapeute grâce à ma méditation.

<sup>4</sup> [www.creativegroupmeditation.org/](http://www.creativegroupmeditation.org/) ; [www.meditation.com/teachers/Dr\\_Roberto\\_Assagioli](http://www.meditation.com/teachers/Dr_Roberto_Assagioli)

(Continued on [page 56](#))

(Continued from [page 55](#))

Après avoir été interprète de conférence auprès des organisations internationales, **Brigitte Macé** est devenue psychopraticienne en psychosynthèse, titulaire du certificat européen de psychothérapeute. Elle enseigne la méditation et est spécialiste des sons énergétiques. Elle reçoit des personnes en thérapie individuelle à son cabinet, face au Mont-Blanc (le mont le plus élevé d'Europe) et organise régulièrement des méditations de groupe et des stages en France et dans d'autres pays d'Europe. Elle donne des Voyages sonores, sortes de concerts qui mettent en état de conscience modifié, où elle chante et joue du tambour shamanique, des bols de cristal, des gongs et des percussions, seule ou avec d'autres musiciens internationaux. Elle a participé à des concerts internationaux pour la paix avec les musiciens américains Laraaji et Don Conreux. Militante écologiste, elle est présidente de l'association de la réserve naturelle de son village et participe à la lutte pour protéger le pays du Mont-Blanc.



Elle a eu l'occasion de donner un Voyage sonore lors d'une réunion européenne de psychosynthèse à Florence (Italie) où elle a chanté et joué du tambour shamanique, des bols de cristal, du gong et des percussions. Richard et Boney Schaub assistaient à ce concert, avec d'autres membres américains de la psychosynthèse. En tant que spécialiste des sons énergétiques et professeur de méditation, elle va donner un atelier « Sons, méditation et expériences des sommets : créer un état de conscience modifié avec le son » à l'Université d'été de la psychosynthèse en Suède l'été prochain.



# exchange student invitation: france-usa



Hi!

My name is Alessandro Serradimigni.

I am 16 years old.

I am studying in a high-school in Annecy (France) and want to specialize in movie making. I have been studying English for 6 years. I listen to soul and hip hop. I make a lot of sports videos with my friends: we film each other while skiing, or jumping on trampoline, and I edit videos.

I would like an exchange with a boy of my age. He could come to ski with me and discover France and I could come to the US to learn more English.

I live with my mother (Brigitte Macé, author of the previous article) in a house in France, close to the Mont-Blanc, near Chamonix.



I like sports: I do a lot of skiing, freestyle skiing (jumping); and in summer, I do climbing, skateboarding and trampoline.

If you want to contact me, please send me an email at: [contact@brigittemace.com](mailto:contact@brigittemace.com) or on facebook at: [www.facebook.com/youwantsomeMM](https://www.facebook.com/youwantsomeMM).



### **Castlewood Eating Disorder Lawsuit to be Dismissed** (this is an update on an issue reported by Shamai Currim in the September, 2013 issue of *Psychosynthesis Quarterly*)

*from a December 16, 2013 article by Blythe Bernhard, St.Louis Post- Dispatch*

Two years after Lisa Nasseff accused psychologist Mark Schwartz of implanting her with false memories of sexual abuse and satanic cult activity, her lawsuit against Castlewood Treatment Center [in St. Louis, MO] and its former director will be dismissed Friday, according to filings in St. Louis County Circuit Court.

Attorneys say Nasseff's case was resolved favorably for both sides. Few details were available. The case appeared headed for settlement, then last month the court file indicated the case would be dismissed.

Separate lawsuits from three other women with similar claims of brainwashing, hypnosis and concocted memories during their lengthy stays at the eating disorder treatment clinic on the outskirts of Castlewood State Park in Ballwin appear headed to the same conclusion.

But an additional 25 to 30 families across the country who have formed the group Castlewood Victims Unite say the dismissal of the cases and the expected confidentiality agreements are disappointing because Schwartz and other staff members won't have to testify under oath . . .

Castlewood staff deny the allegations of brainwashing and say no therapist has ever created false memories or hypnotized clients.

Since the fourth lawsuit was filed by Colette Travers in late 2012, Castlewood has made sweeping changes to its leadership team and public relations strategy. Gone are Schwartz and his wife, Lori Galperin, who co-founded the treatment center a dozen years ago and remained consultants until April. The couple also resigned from a Castlewood affiliate they opened in California. Schwartz declined to comment when reached by phone . . .

The decision for Schwartz and Galperin to step down was made by the couple, the Castlewood board of directors and the owners, Trinity Hunt Partners of Dallas, which bought the sprawling treatment center in 2008. At the time of the agency's \$25 million move into behavioral health, Trinity Hunt referred to Schwartz and Galperin as "highly regarded clinicians with extensive experience in treating individuals suffering from eating disorders and psychological trauma." Their departure is not related to the lawsuits, according to Nancy Albus, who has worked at Castlewood for 10 years and was promoted to CEO a year ago . . .

"It's time to really address some of the misperceptions and misrepresentations and show the quality of care we provide," Albus said in a recent interview inside the spacious home where 16 men and women can live while undergoing intensive therapy for eating disorders. Castlewood's properties include space for 26 residential clients as well as outpatient services . . .

Eating disorders have the highest death rate of any mental illness. Some residents of Castlewood are so ill that they require feeding tubes, and others are so weak that they use wheelchairs. Almost all are also dealing with anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder. About half of the people who come to Castlewood have been deemed treatment failures by other facilities, according to staff members.

*(Continued on [page 59](#))*

(Continued from [page 58](#))

Much of the debate surrounding Castlewood has been its use of a therapy called internal family systems, which involves encouraging patients to improve the parts of themselves that are destructive. Several experts in eating disorders have said internal family systems is not the standard of care because malnourished patients and those on psychotropic drugs are particularly vulnerable to having their memories and personalities twisted.

Jim Gerber, Castlewood's clinical director, said internal family systems is just one of the options available to residents, and that accessing painful memories is a part of the healing process. People who have compartmentalized memories might need help to access them during therapy, but it's not a "fishing expedition," he said.

"We have to deal with a person's past experience," Gerber said. "The goal is for a person to come to an understanding of their life to deal with what they struggle with in the present. In no intervention does someone say 'this happened to you.'"

Several alumni and current residents who agreed to recent interviews at the facility say they credit Castlewood with saving their lives and could not relate to the experiences detailed in the lawsuits.■

(To read the full article, go to [http://www.stltoday.com/lifestyles/health-med-fit/health/castlewood-eating-disorder-lawsuit-to-be-dismissed/article\\_28cf3275-a29e-5391-997e-243bdae361c3.html](http://www.stltoday.com/lifestyles/health-med-fit/health/castlewood-eating-disorder-lawsuit-to-be-dismissed/article_28cf3275-a29e-5391-997e-243bdae361c3.html) )

## letters

To the Editor:

As someone very interested in both Psychosynthesis and Nonviolent Communication (NVC), I am always eager to find ways to make a bridge between them. I saw specific parallels' in at least two articles in the last PS Quarterly.

First, Jan Kuniholm specifically mentioned NVC in his article about rogue subpersonalities. I was happy to see the recognition that NVC can support social synthesis. I actually DO see a way that NVC offers to deal with people or sub-personalities that he described as "rogue"—i.e., the concept of "protective use of force." This is very much in alignment with the nonviolent social change movements of Gandhi and MLK, and it is relevant on the interpersonal and intrapersonal levels as well as the social change level, in my opinion. It can involve taking specific actions to limit harm and serve or enhance life. Some of these behaviors could look similar to punishment but are done out of love instead of anger, with minimal force necessary.

Second, I saw that Ann Schafer expressed how happy she was to have found a list of "feeling words." I wanted to alert people to the way NVC can support people in identifying and expressing their feelings and needs. In Nonviolent Communication, there are many versions of lists for feelings and needs. Marshall Rosenberg talked about how feelings are maybe 15% of it when we are wanting to really connect with empathy to what is going on for someone; needs really get to the core of it. Our needs—and specifically whether we are in touch with the life energy behind them in a given situation or interaction—are what give rise to the feelings. Going to that level, in my experience, creates more of a connection and deepens the dialogue, helping to surface what really matters to the person involved. (Of course Marshall would also say it's not about the words, it's about the presence and intention—but the words help!) Here are examples:

<https://www.cnvc.org/Training/feelings-inventory>

<https://www.cnvc.org/Training/needs-inventory>

If you google feelings and needs lists you can find more. Or NVC feelings and needs lists.

—Jean McElhaney  
[jean.mcelhaney@gmail.com](mailto:jean.mcelhaney@gmail.com)

# Autobiography

Södertörn University, Stockholm, 2-4 October, 2014

You are cordially invited to this international conference on autobiography organized by the English Department.

This interdisciplinary conference seeks to explore a broad variety of ideas within the field of autobiography.

We invite papers and presentations on the following or related topics:



Call for Papers:

Contact:

Dr. Kerstin Shands, Professor of English  
English Department,  
School of Culture and Education  
Södertörn University  
SE-141 89 Huddinge  
Stockholm, Sweden  
Phone: +46(0)8-608 4414

- Spiritual Autobiographies
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- Autofiction
- Auto-ethnographies
- Autobiography in Cartoons
- Autobiography in Dance and Film
- Postcolonial Autobiography
- Celebrity Autobiographies
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- Autobiogeography
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