

**Psychosynthesis Quarterly— July 2025**

# **Synthesis for a Changing World**

**Special Edition for PS Summit and Festival at Garrison Institute, NY**



**The magazine of the Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis**



**AAP provides resources for people to cultivate peace and purpose**

**Our mission is to advance the theory and practice of Psychosynthesis to benefit individuals and society.**

The Psychosynthesis Quarterly is published by the Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis (AAP) four times a year.

The AAP provides resources for people to cultivate peace and purpose. Our mission is to advance the theory and practice of psychosynthesis to benefit individuals and society.

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

The Psychosynthesis Quarterly accepts announcements, ideas, reviews of books and events, articles, poetry, art, exercises, photos, and letters. Tell us what has helped your life and work, what can help others, and examples of psychosynthesis theory in action.

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

Announcements, book reviews, and upcoming events are also welcome, with a request that non-members who wish to advertise make a donation to AAP. To donate, **[Click here](#)**

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Cover image — The Main Hall at the Garrison Institute (from the Garrison website: <https://www.garrisoninstitute.org>)

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Synthesis for a Changing World

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# Welcome to Synthesis for A Changing World

By Peter Stewart and Mark Skelding

The Psychosynthesis Summit and Festival is due to start at the Garrison Institute in New York state in less than two weeks from now.

The event will kick off with an opening ceremony on July 24th and will comprise three full days of keynote speeches, interactive workshops and what the organizers have called “emergent offerings” that reflect the spontaneity and creativity of all participants, as well as breakfast and evening activities that we hope will allow all those attending to have a rich and profound experience of connection and purpose.

Mark and I have been involved in planning the event from the early days, primarily through the Portal Group, an impromptu committee that formed to envision and plan the event (Val Silidker, Scott Thompson, Jon Schottland, Amy Spalding-Fecher, Mark Skelding and myself). Mark and I were also on the Steering Committee with Kevin Harrington that sowed the seeds for the event, when Jonny Dray, Marjorie Hope Gross and Cristina Pelizzatti were also involved. Mark and I have since been supporting the new AAP Steering Committee (Mark as chair, Kenneth Sørensen, Molly Brown, Christina Gustafson, Scott Thompson and Ruchira Chakravarty).

Speaking personally, the journey has been inspiring but also rather crazy —in my mind’s eye, I think of white-water rafting down a wild rushing river, rather than a smooth stroll through the park to an agreed destination. But by working in that way, the bonds between us have become closer. On behalf of AAP, we would like to thank each and every one of you for all that you have put into getting the Summit and Festival off the ground. On a personal note, I would also like to thank you for your patience, wisdom and openness as we worked through the challenges.

The program for the event is now finally ready, and we are delighted at all those who have offered themselves as keynote speakers, workshop facilitators and as activity leaders. In addition to those “on the program” there is a fleet of helpers who have kindly offered their time, wisdom, experience and organizational skills to help make the event a success.

Although the event itself is the culmination of much time and effort, we are hoping the Psychosynthesis Summit and Festival will also mark a point of departure for those attending. We also hope it will clear a pathway for people and organizations across the global PS community to come together and find ways to advance Psychosynthesis. At this stage, we should not try to second-guess how this might happen, but hopefully the Summit will provide concrete ideas, maybe proposals and even plans for how this might be done. Thanks to Didi Firman for the photo next to this; it seemed appropriate as a metaphor for the forthcoming event.



Photo by Didi Firman

The following pages give a flavour of what to expect: we have some beautiful creative submissions, as well as discussion around some of the themes that will be presented, and the current program and workshop schedule is included at the end, along with the link for any last minute registrations!

For those attending, there will be more details coming your way in the next fortnight. We hope the Garrison event will offer a new beginning for the AAP and its members, and that it will stimulate reflection and growth across the Psychosynthesis community.

*Peter Stewart*

*Mark Skelding*

# Letter of Freedom From Roberto Assagioli

*Letter of Roberto Assagioli sent on November 11-1967, to the presidents, members of the Boards of Directors and other officials of the Foundations, Institutes, and Centers of Psychosynthesis.*

**Published October, 2011 in the “Psicosintesi” Magazine <sup>[1]</sup>**



As most of you know, some questions were raised at the Fifth International Conference of Psychosynthesis, held in Rome in September 1967, concerning the relationships between the various Center of Psychosynthesis which exist, or are to be founded, in various countries and parts of the world (I am using, for simplicity's sake, the word Centers to designate all Foundations, Institutes and Centers).

I have been asked by some of you to issue a definite statement on this matter, and I am willingly complying with this request, as it gives me an opportunity, not only of dispelling some misunderstandings, but also of emphasising once more the true nature and “spirit” of Psychosynthesis.

Psychosynthesis is not a doctrine or a “school” of psychology; it is not a special or single method of self-realization, therapy and education. It can be indicated (I do not use the word “defined”, because all definitions are limited and limiting) primarily as a general attitude of, and striving towards, integration and [synthesis](#) in all fields, but particularly in those just mentioned. It might be called a “movement”, a “trend” and a “goal”.

There is no orthodoxy in Psychosynthesis and no one, beginning with myself, should claim to be its real or true representative, its head or leader. Each of its exponents tries to express and apply it as well as he or she is able to, and all who read or listen to the message, or receive the benefit of the methods of Psychosynthesis, can decide how successful any exponent has been or [will](#) be in expressing its “spirits”.

From this general premise, it obviously follows that Psychosynthesis cannot be represented outwardly by any organization or super-organization. As I said at the Conference in Rome, the external pattern should not be that of a “solar system”, but that of a “constellation”. In particular, no one Center can claim to be more “international” than the others. All of them should be animated by an international spirit and should work internationally, if or as occasions for such work occur. But the chief function and concern of each Center should be to work as well and as intensely as possible in its own geographical or specific (therapeutic, educational, cultural) area to “cultiver son jardin” to use Montaigne’s phrase.

Of course, mutual exchange of information and co-operation between all the Centers is to be encouraged. An International Secretariat, not connected to any one of the Centers of Psychosynthesis, is being established for this purpose. But as cultural, psychological, legal and material conditions differ greatly in various countries, it is advisable, indeed almost indispensable, for each Center to work with full autonomy and [freedom](#), under the sole responsibility of its leaders.

If we, and those who will gradually take our places in the future, are to remain faithful to these principles and policies, we may hope to make a valuable contribution to the spiritual, psychological and external integration of humanity. Such integration is its urgent need, and alone can counteract the dangers at present menacing it, and help to usher in a truly new human civilization and culture, a new way of living.

Note: Text in [blue](#) contains hyperlinks to word definitions on Kenneth Sørensen’s website:

<https://kennethsorensen.dk/en/glossary/>

## REFERENCES

- [1] <http://www.psicosintesi.it/pubblicazioni/rivista-psicosintesi/eng/n16-october-2011>

# Synthesis in Flight

By Mark Skelding



The seventh paragraph of the Letter of Freedom is a beautiful reminder of Assagioli's openness and vision. The Letter, published [in full](#) in this edition, transports us to the very different world of 1967, when Roberto had recently attended the 5th International Conference of Psychosynthesis in Rome.

It was a thrilling time. Change and challenge were very much in the air, driven by a heady mixture of "revolutionary" politics, social protest, anti-war demonstrations, music, fashion, drugs, mysticism, and more. Consciousness was shifting – or rather, many people were reviewing their understanding and relationship with "consciousness" - and this was causing questions and unexpected possibilities to ripple through the wider collective. Cynicism, manipulation and opportunism jostled with vision, depth and compassion as various worldviews came together.

And for awhile it seemed that cynicism and manipulation were in decline.

Psychosynthesis was alive and well, embraced and celebrated as trainings, centres and programmes sprang up all over the globe. Through the bi-focal lens of consciousness and will, the "science" of psychology could explore spirituality as something more than the desire to fill a "god-shaped hole" in our psyches, while spirituality could find a renewed, contemporary and grounded sense of purpose and meaning.

Assagioli celebrated the diversity, remarking that this wonderful realisation of the work is best not seen as a "solar system" in which there is a central organising and energising form, but as a "constellation", where many entities are in dynamic relationship with each other, meaning and form arising through the collective.

The image of a murmuration of birds comes to mind, where the pattern becomes more visible when one takes a disidentified view of the "whole-in-context", observing how the ever-changing form is shaped both by the members of the flock, and by the landscape over which the birds are moving.

In this regard, the context is equally part of the whole as much as it is the setting in which events occur. Assagioli underscored the importance of recognising context as an expression of will in [the Sam Keen interview](#), saying such recognition was imperative if we are to "somehow tune in and willingly participate in the rhythms of universal life. The harmonisation and unification of the individual and the universal will..."

"Harmonisation" does not mean that the same note is being sounded by all. "Unification" of the symphony does not require all instruments to be in unison. Indeed, the contours of the contextual landscape are revealed more fully when multiple perspectives are included. We see this presently in the way the many dimensions of the so-called "polycrisis" can be seen as arising from an overarching "metacrisis" which involves some particular identification dynamics. Assagioli again: "I think most discussions about identity have gone wrong because academic psychologists don't take the trouble to experiment in appropriate ways. They run rats through mazes but they don't go into the inward laboratory and examine their own experience of the will."

The technology of 1967 may have been sufficient to create the then revolutionary sonic landscapes of Sgt Peppers, but it did not yet have the ability to link us in a Zoom call. In one way, 1967 required a greater degree of trust in an inner knowing and certainty in regard the harmonising potential of the zeitgeist and collective consciousness. One suspects that the deepening of this trust requires both practice and developmental evolution.

The Letter of Freedom takes a “both/and” approach. The various centres are encouraged to recognise and respond to the needs and emergent vision arising within their own community – whether of place or of interest – AND to engage in exchanges of information, research and learning. Such systemic thinking around both energy and information reminds us of Dan Siegel’s definition of Mind as “an embodied and relational process that regulates the flow of energy and information”.

A sense of this is surely captured in the original naming of our practice: “bio-psycho-synthesis”.

2025 sees us equipped with many tools that can assist our “joined up thinking”. These aren’t just the many elegant ways of facilitating deep and soulful sharing and interaction, whether in person or online. There is much to be learned both from collegial psychological and psycho-spiritual disciplines, and from the wider sciences. As we are seeing from many of the offerings and topics being presented at the Garrison Summit and Festival this month, biology, physics, climatology, medicine - and even the psychedelics that were so significant in 1967 – have much to offer in assisting us to deepen our understanding of self, purpose and identity in this changing world. And, likewise, Psychosynthesis has much to offer these and many other disciplines.

In 1967, the Psychosynthesis world was on the cusp of establishing what Assagioli called “an International Secretariat” that would “not be connected to any one of the Centres of Psychosynthesis”. The intention was to enable and catalyse an international spirit of co-operation and vision.

It seems this never quite happened – it would have been challenging, clumsy and expensive in the days before digital technology. In the intervening years, the task has become easier and now it is possible that the various centres, locally, nationally, regionally and globally have the strength and confidence to bring their different perspectives together in the spirit of synthesis, inspired by curiosity rather than competition, recognising that each perspective serves a context, and is informed and included within a greater and unfolding purpose of universal will.

In the spirit of “advancing psychosynthesis”, and more fully exploring the many dimensions of bio-psycho-synthesis as an evolutionary process intrinsic to all life, we might consider how the “International Secretariat” might have evolved.

For example:

—What conversations would we have had through the 1980s and 1990s, referencing Assagioli’s “Fifth Force” paper, as quantum physics and bioenergetics slowly revealed a universe far more integrated and participatory than we had imagined – or at least, not for a hundred generations or more of the now-dominant tradition?

—How would we have revisited some foundational thinking in the light of Siegel’s suggestion that “as long as we define self as a singular noun the planet is cooked”?

—How would the collective have helped staff and students at the original San Francisco centre when its founder became increasingly unwell?

—How might we have taken the Seven Core Principles and, as a powerful collective, researched and worked them into some internationally approved guidelines to inform globally accepted standards of training and professional credentials?

—How might we have reflected on, learned from and integrated work by members of the Psychosynthesis community in areas such as decolonisation, climate justice, parenting, relationships, and so much more?

—What more could we have done - as a collective – to ensure the ongoing publication of a coherent body of work reflecting the range and depth of psychosynthesis and its “strength in diversity”?



—In what ways might we have worked with those who have seen the power of the work, and been able to adjust and adapt it within particular therapeutic models – such as IFS and subpersonalities?

—And, with all of that behind us, where would we be today? And how would we be responding to the context of these times?

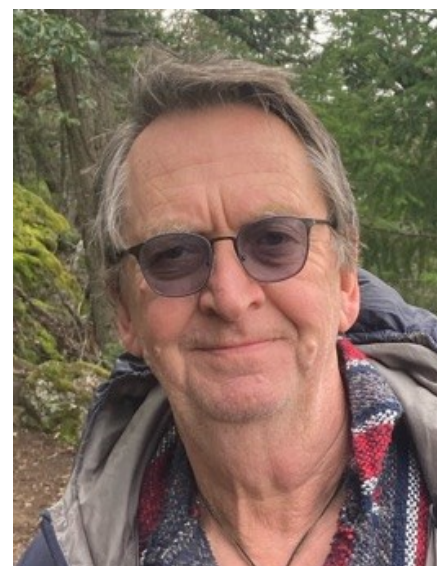
Any one of us reading these questions is likely to have our own often powerfully held answers, each with their own insight and relevance, but that's not the point. Within our own being we aspire to recognise the push, pull, value and limitation of our various "parts" and then make choices from a disidentified perspective. This vantage not only recognises this intrapersonal flock of parts, but also the shaping from the contextualising "landscape" – personal, familial, social, etc - within which this particular inner murmuration is happening.

Similarly, Psychosynthesists from various parts of the world bring a wide variety of understanding, influences from very different social, spiritual and cultural traditions, styles and language from diverse characters and teachers.

As some of us come together in person this month, and all of us are touched by the often hair-raising unfolding of events around us, what is it that Psychosynthesis has to offer – personally, in our local communities, and on wider regional, national and even global stages? What does social synthesis mean? What is seeking to emerge that moves in our hearts and souls, bringing us together in various ways, consciously and in the wider consciousness that is part of the planet ourSelf? And what can we do individually and collectively to hold these levels lightly, but together, weaving a strong, simple basket for an evolutionary step of consciousness?

The stakes are so much higher now. Collapse is a possibility that scientists insist we consider. And still it is difficult to think of a better ending paragraph than Assagioli's, also from the 1967 Letter: "If we, and those who will gradually take our places in the future, are to remain faithful to these principles and policies, we may hope to make a valuable contribution to the spiritual, psychological and external integration of humanity. Such integration is its urgent need, and alone can counteract the dangers at present menacing it, and help to usher in a truly new human civilisation and culture, a new way of living."

Beginning his career in wildlife conservation communications in the 1980s and '90s, Mark transitioned to psychosynthesis in 1998 after realizing that ecological issues were rooted in human psychology and worldview. Discovering Psychosynthesis through Will Parfitt's seminal "Essentials" he returned and trained in Aotearoa/New Zealand. He was later invited and joined the teaching faculty of the NZ Institute of Psychosynthesis for over a decade. Influenced by thinkers like David Abram, Andy Fisher, Tom Yeomans, Molly Brown and Joanna Macy, he explored ecopsychosynthesis and completed a Master's in Social Ecology. Now based on Salt Spring Island, BC, he maintains a global practice, is active in the Climate Psychology Alliance, writes an occasional Substack blog, Exploring the Blue, and advocates for psychology's role in transforming our relationship with the planet - and ourselves.





# Psychosynthesis Musings: Reflections on an Approaching Summit

## By Jon Schottland

In the The American Crisis, at the outset of the revolutionary war in 1776, Thomas Paine wrote “these are the times that try men’s souls.” This seems as true as ever as we come together to convene the 2025 Psychosynthesis Summit & Festival at the Garrison Institute this summer. The global context for this gathering is surely that we are living in a changing world, confronted by difficult and even extreme challenges on many levels.

If these are once again times that try our souls, how fortunate that psychosynthesis is a psychology that emphasizes the soul and the transformative potential of the spiritual dimension. To embrace and breathe life into the principle of synthesis in a changing world, we’ll have to dig deeper into who we are and move beyond reactions, choices and behaviors that reflect the less mature side of our nature.

Assagioli once said: no personal choices, on a personal level, for personal reasons. Here he is referring to the tendency to live on the surface without any consideration of what lies within our own soul. We have to prepare for a changing world by residing more in our own depths, and therein find the capacity to respond well and become beacons of light in dark times. Nothing less will do.

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As a member of the planning committee for the 2025 Psychosynthesis Summit & Festival, I’ve been aware from the outset that this event was going to be something different from standard conference fare. Even the name itself suggested we were charting a course towards a more mysterious and potentially creative destination.

Early in the planning process, our committee members began to talk about the event as though it were a living organism with a life of its own. Our job, as we saw it, was not so much to curate and define everything ahead of time, but rather to open a space (or portal) and trust that the event, and what it could become, would reveal itself to us.

This is how we came to refer to ourselves as “the portal committee”, and we its members became the portal people. We look forward to opening the space with all of you at the end of July to give birth to something that will hopefully feel vital, alive and magical to all of us.

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I awoke this morning with a feeling of heaviness that has been present at dawn these past few weeks. Dreams of strange, dark, primal energies all gathered in my psyche.

*In one dream, I am riding in a car with (psychosynthesis author/trainer) Tom Yeomans through a dark, sketchy, abandoned part of town, with warehouses and empty streets. Then Tom pulls over in a small fenced off area, says he can’t drive any further, that he needs to stop and rest. I get behind the wheel, yet the vehicle hardly seems a car at all, with no mirrors or even gas pedal. An open-air sort of jalopy. Only a hand-held device or switch to activate the car, it can go forwards or backwards, but I don’t see how to make it stop. Tom has gotten out of the car and is busy talking with someone... where is the brake?*

What does it mean to be driving a “psychosynthesis” car that seems not to have the familiar controls and components? I climb out of bed and begin my morning ritual, heading out the front door to greet the sun, take in the new day and any signs of life. Today, there are flocks of geese one after the other flying overhead, an invigorating announcement of spring’s pending arrival.

“Welcome back!” I call to them. And watching the geese, I am reminded of how we need each other, that there is something powerful and essential in our togetherness. Perhaps above all, this is the thing that draws me to the upcoming Summit.

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As Abraham Maslow famously quipped, if the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem starts to look like a nail. This is a different way of stating what Einstein noted, that we can’t solve our problems with the same thinking that created them in the first place.

In a changing world, with increasingly complex global challenges, it is we ourselves who must change. *Consciousness* must change and we have to evolve. Despite all our great technological advances, when you consider humanity as a whole, we are still at a relatively less mature stage of development. The world as we have made it is a result of a human psyche that is often self-absorbed, fragmented, adversarial, and dominated by combative and aggressive energies.

I used to think to myself, somewhat innocently, “when will people just learn to get along with each other?” That has since changed. It occurs to me now that we don’t have to all get along, that’s probably an unrealistic goal. But what *is* possible is that we could do a better job of *not* getting along. We can learn how the many disparate and even conflicting elements can co-exist more harmoniously.

*E pluribus unam* – “from the many, one.”

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The advice of two older friends, both of them since departed for other pastures, is ringing in my ears as we approach the Summit. My tennis partner Steve, at the time well into his eighties, was patient enough to entertain a question from me about what he had gleaned in terms of advice or lessons learned over the course of a long life that he might want to share. Steve paused, grew silent, then turned to me decisively and said:

“Yes, don’t count on having fewer problems as you get older. Count on handling them better.”

That seemed near perfect to me. While Steve knew nothing about Assagioli or psychosynthesis, he was essentially pointing at the sublimation and transformation of how we respond to our struggles and challenges in life.

My other friend Peter led quite a distinguished career in the music industry. During the time of his illness and shortly before he died, I asked Peter how he had become so successful as an artist in a highly competitive field. Was there a single breakthrough moment that launched his career?

“Not really,” he replied, then he added his favorite mantra, “but chance favors the prepared mind. When my chance came, I took it.”

How might we prepare ourselves for a changing world and what will be required of us? When chance comes knocking, how will we respond? These are useful questions to help guide our conversations at the Garrison Institute, and beyond.

- Jon Schottland  
July 1, 2025



Jon Schottland is a senior psychosynthesis trainer, writer, therapist, and coach. He will be a workshop presenter at the upcoming Psychosynthesis Summit & Festival, July 24-27 at the Garrison Institute.

# Transforming bio-psychic energies in Psychosynthesis

By Petra Guggisberg Nocelli

The following article by Petra Guggisberg Nocelli was published in 2021 under the title “The meaning and importance of transforming of bio-psychic energies in psychosynthesis”. It was the first talk at the evening event “Semi di Psicosintesi” (Seeds of Psychosynthesis) organised by the International Institute for Educational Psychosynthesis (IIEPE).

[Watch the video](#) (in Italian, activate subtitles in English!)

[Listen to related interview](#) (in Italian)

When Ivan Ordiner and Amanda Matussi invited me to participate in this event on the “Seeds of Psychosynthesis”, they asked me about what I would like to talk about. The transformation of bio-psychic energies immediately came to mind. I then started to consider my reasons for wanting to address this particular topic. And this is how I would like to start this talk: sharing my reflections with you.

## THE REASONS AND THE CONTEXT

There are some **more immediate reasons**. The transformation of impulsive and affective energies is a topic that has always interested me greatly and that I have been exploring in depth for quite some time. This interest stems, above all, from personal experience. I am a very passionate woman and because of that, life has provided me with plenty of material to work with... and every day brings new opportunities!

I am also interested in the subject for professional reasons, of course. As a psychotherapist, I often accompany people who have difficulty managing their impulses, expressing themselves assertively and effectively, or self-regulating particularly intense and painful emotional states.

However, as I reflected further on this – and especially as I reread what Assagioli wrote on the subject – I realised that there is a much broader reason why this issue (which should really be a daily practice, and a regular disposition) is so fundamental. This is especially true at this historical conjuncture; with everything we have been facing for the past year as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

To get to the heart of this broader motivation, I would like to start with what Roberto Assagioli himself wrote in two lectures entitled *La trasformazione delle energie psichiche* (Transformation of Psychic Energies) (1963) and *La trasmutazione delle energie combattive* (Transmutation of Combative Energies) (1965)<sup>[1]</sup>.

Let us look in particular at how he opens and closes these two writings, how he “frames” them.

The first paragraph of the 1963 lecture reads as follows:

*“The topic I will discuss today is one of the most important, given its usefulness, indeed the urgent need for its practical application, both individually and collectively, and also given its importance for the psycho-spiritual evolution of humankind. (...)”*

While the last paragraph concludes:

*‘The field is immense, the opportunities for utilising individual and collective energies are innumerable. Everyone, to some extent, can participate in this great mobilisation of the dynamic energies of humanity for con-*

*structive and creative purposes. In this way, and only in this way, can we prevent those powerful forces from exploding into wars or destructive social struggles. That mobilisation, on the other hand, can achieve the intended aim (...) of uniting everyone in a harmonious planetary organism, to create a world synthesis, to bring about a new and higher truly human civilisation, safer and quicker.*

The 1965 lecture, on the other hand, opens with these words:

*"I spoke in a previous lecture about interindividual psychosynthesis as a necessary basis for cooperation. Today I will begin to develop this broad theme, focusing in particular on one of the major obstacles to psychosynthesis and cooperation: combativeness and aggression. The two most effective ways to eliminate these obstacles are: first, the transmutation and sublimation of combative energies; second, their neutralisation through the evocation of energies opposed to them, such as benevolence, solidarity and love."*

And in the last paragraph of the same writing, Assagioli concludes by reiterating the importance of evoking energies, complementary to the impulsive and combative ones (i.e. benevolence, love, solidarity, etc.), which can:

*'[raise] us to the luminous and largely unexplored regions of the superconscious, to the summit of our being, to the Self (...) which is the most powerful energy for creating communion between human beings, the Psychosynthesis of Humanity.'*

Assagioli makes it very clear that the ultimate goal of the work of transmuting bio-psychic energies is to create a "harmonious planetary organism", a "world synthesis", that "Psychosynthesis of Humanity" which is the final goal of interpersonal, relational psychosynthesis.

#### **"A COMMUNITY OF DESTINY FOR ALL HUMANITY"**

Assagioli wrote these words almost 60 years ago, but, as I said before, this work has never been so relevant, so "important, necessary and urgent" as in this particular historical period. Why is this? What truly characterises this historical period?

Over the last year, I have had the opportunity to reflect on this question during several international psychosynthesis meetings (Psychosynthesis Coaching Symposium and World Day of Psychosynthesis) and also while writing an article entitled [\*A bold vision for a better World\*](#). In these situations, I found myself emphasising that what seems most salient in our era is not so much the various wars (economic and otherwise), profound social and gender inequalities, accelerating climate change, mass migration, epidemics, etc. After all, if we think about it, wars, inequalities, migration and epidemics have always been part of human history. What really seems to characterise our time is the global impact these events have had. In fact, they no longer involve only individual groups of human beings or limited geographical areas but affect the entire planet and all living beings that inhabit it.

In truth, experts have been talking about the process of globalisation and the progressive increase in interconnectivity for several decades now: first and foremost at the level of economy and trade, at a technological level, but also, inevitably, at an environmental, ecological and health-care level, at a social, cultural and political level, etc.

As we all know very well, however, something has happened in the last year that has triggered a difficult and, in many ways, traumatic collective awareness of this process. I am referring, of course, to the pandemic. Over the last year, the reality of the process of globalisation and the resulting deepening of interconnection at a planetary level, from a somewhat abstract subject—mainly the preserve of economists, scientists and philosophers—has suddenly become an everyday experience that none of us can escape.

And, having also become aware of its traumatic connotations (think of the loss of loved ones in extremely painful circumstances, the obstacles to contact and relationship, the limitations in our freedom of movement, the fear of contagion, the serious economic repercussions, etc.), very intense instinctive and emotional responses are inevitably triggered, both individually and collectively. This brings me back to the theme of our evening.



However, this pandemic can also be an extraordinary opportunity to realise that – beyond our different affiliations, local, regional and national identities, etc., which must be respected and valued – there is now what Edgar Morin calls “*a community of destiny for all humanity*”. We can therefore use this pandemic to become aware that, again quoting Morin, “*we are children and citizens of the same Earth-Homeland*”. And to actively collaborate with this state of affairs.

## THE ONGOING LABOUR AND THE NEED FOR OUR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

The image that came to my mind is that of labour:

—from *a collective point of view*, we are witnessing the birth of that increasingly interconnected “planetary organism” that Assagioli spoke of in his writings on the transformation of bio-psychic energies;

—on *an individual level*, we are witnessing the labour that the awareness of this state of affairs generates in each of us.

As we all know, labour is an intense, painful and delicate period, which can herald wonderful opportunities and the birth of something new, but which also involves great risks. It is a period of light and shadow. We hope that everything will go well, but we cannot be sure... and we might at times want an epidural. Understandably so. Instead, it is important that each of us commits to doing our part. As Assagioli reminds us:

*‘Everyone, to some extent, can participate in this great mobilisation (...) which will make the success of the attempt (...) to unite everyone in a harmonious planetary organism to implement a new and higher truly human civilisation safer and faster.’*

In fact, another thing that has struck me about this last year is precisely the responsibility that each of us has been called upon to assume in the global pandemic scenario. We are constantly reminded that our behaviour, our movements, our actions have a precise effect on the spread of infection.

Again, I am not really saying anything new. Every choice we make has specific effects. It has always been so. But what is new is that this pandemic has emphasised our direct responsibility, our power, the cause-and-effect relationship between the actions of individuals and the global situation.

## CONCLUSIONS

This is what I wish to emphasize: when we work on transforming our bio-psychic energies, let us remember that we are not only concerned with our own healing, well-being and personal development (which are of course very important), or with the well-being of the small groups to which we belong (which is equally important), but that we are also actively contributing to the well-being and development of the entire human community, and not only that, but to all living beings inhabiting this planet. We are actively participating in this ongoing labour: a task that is more “important, necessary and urgent” than ever at this stage, when the contractions seem to be getting closer and closer.

This global perspective can help us, I hope, to give a broader meaning and significance to the transformation of energies that we are trying to achieve in our small inner laboratory. It can help us understand the immense value that this process also has for the community, even more so in this particular historical period in which we are constantly reminded of the importance of physical disinfection. Should we not, perhaps, pay the same attention, or even more attention, to psychological disinfection?

[1] R. Assagioli, *Trasformazione delle energie psichiche (Transformation of Psychic Energies)*, Istituto di Psicosintesi, Florence, 1963 and R. Assagioli “*Trasmutazione delle energie combattive*” (*Transmutation of Combative Energies*), Istituto di Psicosintesi, Florence, 1965.

## BOOKS BY PETRA GUGGISBERG NOCELLI

2022 – “[La Vía de la Psicosisíntesis](#) – Una guía completa de los orígenes, conceptos y las experiencias fundamentales de la Psicosisíntesis con una biografía de Roberto Assagioli” (Psychosynthesis Books)

2022 – “[Know, Love, Transform yourself \(Vol II\)](#) – Theory, techniques and new developments in Psychosynthesis” (Psychosynthesis Books)

2021 – “[Know, Love, Transform yourself \(Vol I\)](#) – Theory, techniques and new developments in Psychosynthesis” (Psychosynthesis Books)

2020 – “[La Voie de la Psychosynthèse](#) – Un guide complet des origines, des concepts et des expériences de la Psychosynthèse accompagné d’une biographie de Roberto Assagioli” (Ericlea PS)

2018 – “[The Way of Psychosynthesis](#) – A complete guide to origins, concepts, and the fundamental experiences with a biography of Roberto Assagioli” (Synthesis Insights).

2017 – “[La Via della Psicointesi](#) – Una guida completa alle origini, ai concetti e alle esperienze della Psicointesi con una biografia di Roberto Assagioli” (Xenia, riedizione)

2016 – “[Conosci, Possiedi, Trasforma te stesso](#) – Una raccolta di strumenti pratici per l’armonia interiore, lo sviluppo del potenziale e la Psicointesi personale e transpersonale” (Xenia)

2011 – “[La Via della Psicointesi](#) – Una guida completa alle origini, ai concetti e alle esperienze della Psicointesi con una biografia di Roberto Assagioli” (L’Uomo)



Petra Guggisberg Nocelli is a psychosynthesis psychotherapist living in Switzerland. She will be a keynote speaker at the Psychosynthesis Summit and Festival at Garrison, speaking on the theme of Bio-psycho-spiritual Alchemy and the Psychosynthesis of Humanity. Her specialities as a psychosynthesis psychotherapist include self-esteem, burnout prevention and creative uses of aggressive energy, among others. She has written a number of books on psychosynthesis that collate ideas and research by many prominent contributors to the field. For a list of books by Petra, please click on the link below:

[Books by Petra Guggisberg Nocelli](#)

# Guidance from a Tree: A Return to the Feminine by Amy Spalding-Fecher

It's early morning, before "busy" has gotten ahold of me. The sun has yet to rise above the treetops, its gentle yellow light silently slides between the trees to dance upon the grass. I hear no human noises yet, only the symphony of bird calls and the croaking of the frogs in the stream.

Come, walk with me a while, preferably shoeless. As we step out of the wooden porch, our feet feel the cool, damp stone of the terrace. When we reach the grass, the fresh dew seeps between our toes as the soles of our feet make contact with the earth. Take a moment to pause and feel that wonderful electromagnetic grounding in rich soil.

We walk past the flowering weeds in the garden bed. They don't know they are weeds, this is a classification we have given them. Let us appreciate their beauty, free of designation, free of identification. They are vibrant or delicate or wild expressions of life living itself. We all are.

We pass the old barn, its reassuring presence accompanying us as we head towards the trees. As we go, we slowly unfold our senses, taking in more of our surroundings. We stay open to an invitation to connect with one of the surrounding trees.

I approach a stately red maple behind the silent barn, offering its shade and solidity to this pocket of serenity so close at hand. At its base are a few delicate ferns, some moss, a few pebbles. I am welcomed by its presence. It feels like a grandfather tree, even though it may not even be as old as I am.



Leaning into its gnarly trunk, I feel the deep relief of connecting with ecological time and space. My weight descends into the ground beneath me, my roots intertwining with those of the tree and the ferns and the mycelium network going who knows where. My hands touch and appreciate the intricacy of the bark, my head resting upon its coarse surface, knowing it may be home to countless microscopic beings.

After a time, I ask this tree what it has to say, and it gives me these words that you are reading right now, starting

with “come, walk with me a while.”

This is the ever-present invitation of nature, of the ecological world we live in, depend on, which sustains us, and without which we would perish. No, it is not our phones, our cars, the degrees we have, our Instagram likes or our material possessions, not even our brilliance, that sustain us, at least not in a holistic, interconnected, life-affirming way. The source and sustenance of life is the great mother earth and all of her creation, of which we are a vital element.

Yet somehow, we have developed into a very “advanced” and “intelligent” civilization, creating all sorts of interesting and useful things and, in many ways, making life better (antibiotics for instance). Yet we are currently in the process of threatening our very existence, causing extinction at an alarming rate. We are so proud of our growth, our technology, the social and political systems that either repress or elevate us. Does nature care about any of that?

Nature is a creative force, she will keep on creating and responding to whatever we throw at her. By nature I refer to what we once called Gaia, or Mother Earth. She is the consciousness and energy of all nature. She is a living entity, a vital energy that lives in all of us; we embody one another. She is our sacred home. Thousands of years ago, this consciousness was the core of our worldview, and we worshipped her as the source of all life.

Then we gradually pushed this powerful force into darkness and forgot about half of divine creation – the feminine aspect of our inherent nature. Or if not forgot about her, forgot how to truly honor her, embody her, and live in balance with the masculine principle. We lost sight of how to be in relationship with her. Increasingly, the very distorted expression of the masculine principle currently visible in world affairs not only dismisses but actively scorns (and is probably afraid of) the strength, wisdom, and sustainability embodied in the feminine energy that dwells in all of us regardless of gender. But slowly she is arising, and is letting her power and significance be known.

Assagioli talked about the balance and synthesis of opposites. He said that we needed both the masculine and feminine. For the two to work in harmony, in a true weaving together and integration of the masculine and feminine, both need to be in balance and both need to be valued to create a synthetic whole.

Reclaiming the feminine, and bringing the deep wisdom, the empathic, life-giving, holistic, interconnected creative energy out of the shadows into empowered presence permeating our values, intentions and actions, is the task of our times.

So come, take a walk with me. Let us connect to “Gaia-Sophia”, the universal wisdom of the Great Mother Earth, and see what we learn. Let us sit at the base of a tree, and be in relation to the wisdom inherent in evolution. Join me in bringing your own feminine energy out of the shadows, and see how your life begins to align with the movement of sacred creation.

PS if you are still with your tree, it’s time to return! Infuse yourself with its wisdom, return to wherever you are, and take this deep knowing into your world, making each step a return to balance and wholeness.



Amy Spalding-Fecher, M.Arch, BCC, is Director and Lead Instructor at Synthesis Northeast. Amy is a passionate advocate for Psychosynthesis and conscious evolution. Her love for Psychosynthesis stems from a deep belief that addressing the challenges we face in the world, including climate change and our relationship to the Earth’s resources, begins with our inner relationship to ourselves and to others. She is a board certified coach and trainer.

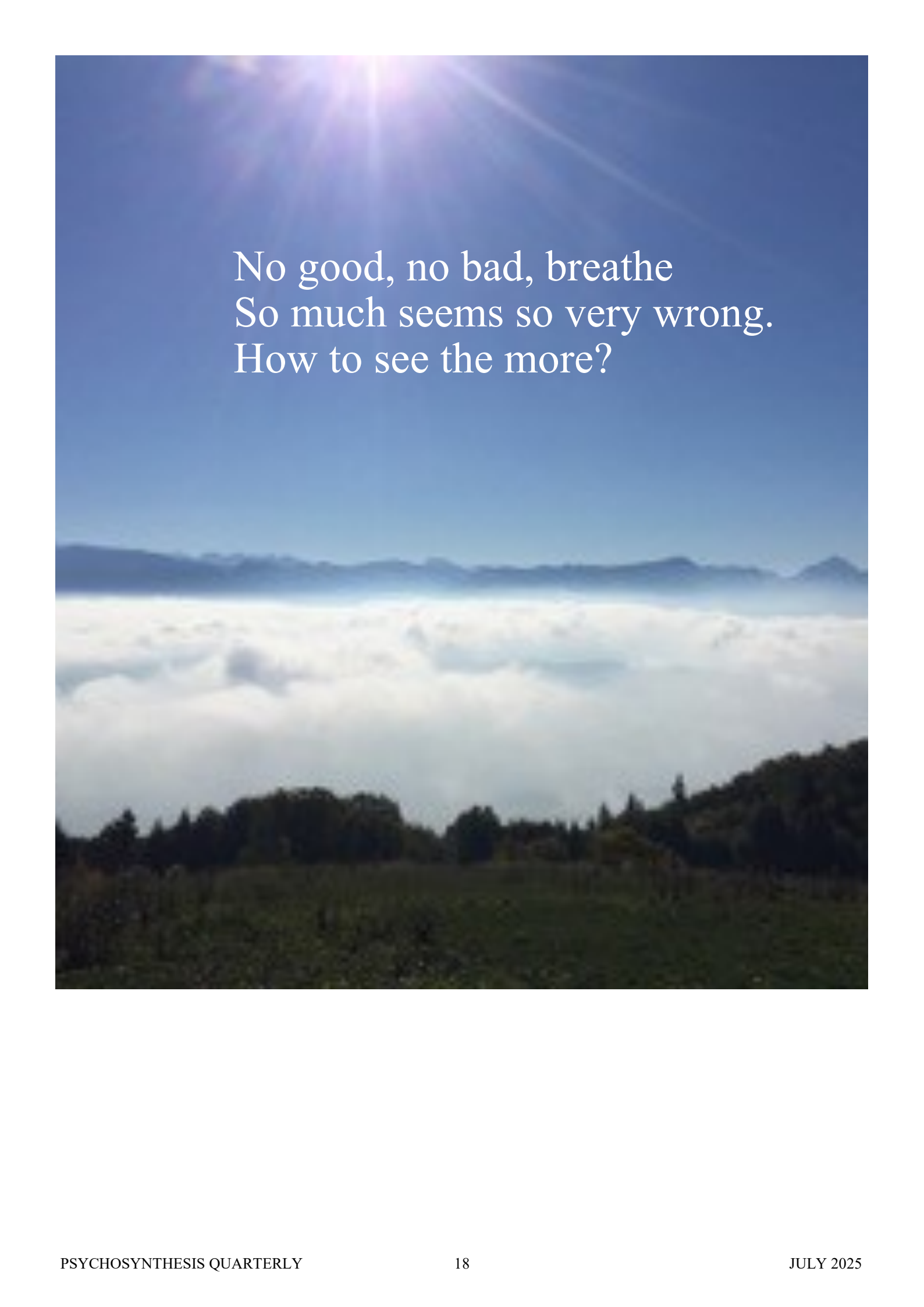


# Haikus

## By Didi Firman

A photograph of a stone path winding through a lush green forest. The path is made of light-colored stone slabs and curves gently to the right. The surrounding vegetation is dense and vibrant green, with some trees visible in the background. The lighting is soft, suggesting a shaded forest environment.

It must be enough  
To carry on, good people,  
Eyes ahead, feet firm

A landscape photograph showing a valley with a sea of clouds. In the foreground, there are dark, silhouetted trees and a field. The middle ground is filled with a thick layer of white clouds. In the background, there are blue mountains under a clear blue sky. A bright sun is visible in the upper left corner, creating a lens flare effect.

No good, no bad, breathe  
So much seems so very wrong.  
How to see the more?



Dr. Dorothy Firman (really, just Didi) has been practicing and teaching psychosynthesis for nearly 50 years.

She is the author of many books, the editor of what may be the first book on psychosynthesis coaching: *The Call of Self: Psychosynthesis Life Coaching*, with chapters from psychosynthesis coaches around the world.

She is the founder of the Synthesis Center and is currently teaching through Synthesis Center San Francisco, offering Board Certified and Psychosynthesis Life Coaching.

She is a retired professor of psychology; a martial artist, and grandmother to five amazing souls, devoting this life, day by day, to helping create a better future for all children.



# Psychosynthesis and Movement

## By Val Gilman

Overlaying psychosynthesis and authentic movement in service of deeper knowing and paradigmatic change in this time of climate change and ecological devastation

What does it mean to be part of the living skin of this earth?

I have been dwelling with that question for a long time. It is at the core of a radical paradigmatic shift that I hope we have the wisdom to embrace.

If we can know ourselves as part of a living organism, a complex and beautiful web of ecosystems, and we can tap into the greater (whole earth) transpersonal will towards balance and health, towards a full expression of the collective Self, then our ways of living will shift from being selfish and destructive to being part of a greater flow and cycle of life.

In the dominant western culture, we see ourselves, humans, as separate from and superior to all other beings and the natural world at large. This has allowed us to use and abuse the landscape, the ecosystems, the animals, plants, microbes, fungi, and even other humans who we (white male dominated culture) have deemed as “lesser” — or more animal than human.

We are facing ecological devastation caused by human industrial abuses of the planet as well as all the related painful cultural ramifications, like the ever-increasing divide between rich and poor and horrific wars. These wars are, at the core, about control of natural resources and mineral rights, so that western culture can continue to stay in denial and develop and live with the luxuries to which we have become accustomed.

We are having a hard time facing the truth of climate change, being present with the pain of the losses and making changes that would allow us to slow or reverse the damage.

I agree with Joanna Macy who argues that for the most part it is not callous disregard or intentional meanness that keeps us from facing the damage that we are creating. Rather it is denial born of fear of pain.

How could anyone really live with themselves if they fully understood that their privilege (mine and yours) is causing so much pain and devastation?

I know I am not alone in not being willing to listen to the news every day. It is just too damn painful. It feels like an assault on my nervous system. The problems are massive and horrendous and it feels like there is no way to ever make a difference. So many of the people around me who are trying to stay aware and awake find themselves depressed and in a constant state of fear and anxiety.

I do not think the depression, fear and anxiety helps.

What does help is community-based grief work so that we can pull out of denial in the context of love and



awareness.

What does help is mourning- public expressions of the pain of loss, and the subsequent adjustment to how we live.

What does help is tapping into our deepest knowing through the creative process. And bringing what we find there to our human cultures so that we can be a part of the healing.

When we choose to face the grief and be with it with openness, compassion and non-judgment we can learn from it, and adjust our understandings and actions.

We can choose to challenge the current paradigms of separation from the natural world and each other that allow us to close our eyes to the damage that our capitalist system, our hierarchical beliefs and our denial is causing.

Psychosynthesis teaches that there is wholeness in each of us and in all of us together, by which I do not mean just human, I mean all of the earth. We are part of this beautiful earth and we are also individual beings. And even as we are wounded, we are whole in both ways.

Psychosynthesis teaches that we all have an inherent urge towards health and balance, and towards a fullness of expression of Self.

Psychosynthesis teaches that we all have subpersonalities and when they are attended to and cared for by the compassionate, open and non-judgmental Self, they will point us to the very transpersonal qualities that we need to bring ourselves back to balance and health.

Psychosynthesis teaches that we have access always to these transpersonal qualities- we can call them in and live them.

Authentic movement, or contemplative dance as it is also known, is a form that works very well within psychosynthesis. I have found over the last two decades of practicing it, that it is a beautiful way of accessing our deeper truths. It is a way to explore our subpersonalities, engage and embody transpersonal qualities and feel into our collective unconscious.

Authentic movement is a body-based awareness practice grounded in a relationship between awareness and will, or witness and mover, as they are named in authentic movement. It provides a safe container to be ok in the not-knowing and to listen to what is emerging. In this practice we are invited to follow the impulse to move or be still and notice what we notice.

In this way we are giving ourselves a chance to let go of what the thinking mind is clinging to, and using the psychological functions of impulse/desire, physical and emotional sensations and imagination, and intuition, we express directly from our creative unconscious.

It is while sharing what we experienced in a movement session that we bring our new understanding to a fully conscious and articulated state, which we can then bring into the world.

At the Summit and Festival in July, I will be introducing a practice of “moving the question” in authentic movement.

We will name the questions that we are grappling with, like how can I be of best service in this time of change, or how can I better understand what is happening? And then we will actively let go of the ques-

tions and let ourselves play in the not knowing and see what emerges.

Each of us has a particular way that we will be able to help in the healing of our planet and our cultures. There are so many possibilities, and it can be extremely difficult to know what is right for you and to not try to do it all and not let yourself become completely overwhelmed by all that needs done.

Over the last two decades of practicing authentic movement, as well as being a psychosynthesis creativity coach for artists and an artist myself, I have found that accessing the creative unconscious with a sense of openness, compassion and non-judgment, is a great way to know your call of Self and to access your deeper knowing. It teaches a comfort with the not-knowing and a trust in the emergence.

This is an essential skill to foster in the work of awareness and healing that we are all called to do in this time of climate change, ecological devastation and cultural reckoning. Let us feel into what it means to be part of the living skin of the earth.



Val Gilman is a psychosynthesis creativity coach, artist and teacher. She lives with her teenage daughter and cat in the hills of Western Massachusettes. She will be presenting a workshop titled “Moving the Question: Playing in Active Imagination to Access Our Deeper knowing” at the Psychosynthesis Summit and Festival in July at the Garrison Institute. To see more about her visit

[www.taprootartsinsight.com](http://www.taprootartsinsight.com)

# Traumas everywhere, who you gonna call?

By Cliff Ishigaki

Many will gather in New York for a conference that holds promise of all that Psychosynthesis embodies: body, mind and spirit in a changing world. Because we are in a time of deep uncertainty and threats at all levels it is timely we can bring Psychosynthesis to help.

The world is reflecting our most primal fears of each other. The world of our ancestors did have very real fears and three million years ago nature provided us with the 'reptile brain' to aid us in survival. This is our earliest brain and is represented by the amygdala and hippocampus at the base of our modern brain. Its role was to provide instant reactions to any threat posed by nature or other humans.

As we evolved another layer was added to the reptile brain and this, we call the mammal brain, much more in line with what we view as the Personal Self in Psychosynthesis. The Higher Self certainly became evident over time, and this too is represented in the frontal regions of our modern brain.

Our history is vital to our perspective. Our homo sapiens ancestors originated in Africa more than three hundred thousand years ago. The first wave of migrants left some two hundred seventy thousand years ago expanding their habitat to the west and north in Africa. They learned to adapt to different environments and temperatures and geology. They were evolving the brain.

In the past seventy thousand years humans have demonstrated their ecological flexibility and trekked across the globe and into very different habitats. The major movement of humans began fifty thousand years ago when the earth was no longer seen experienced as limiting. The horizon was not an edge but a portal.

This movement was not the result of some pivotal evolutionary breakthrough or a stunning technological development. It was the summation and continuous integration of experience as well as contacts with other groups that led to higher levels of creative innovations. The brain was evolving and was much more than the reptile brain. We are continuing that journey. The world's environment still has the same range of distinct ecological systems and temperature zones as our ancestors encountered.

Can we cultivate the same generalist and creative approaches they utilized in their journey and apply it to our times?

In today's world the unfortunate environment that we all must face in addition to the ecological is the reality of threats and uncertainty. Our ancestors had their own share of threats but in their expansion into the world threats became challenges and our ancestors responded to challenges rather than threats. Their creative and cooperative work paved the way for evolution of mind and spirit. This meant their brains evolved.

Whether our ancestors knew it or not they used two ways to evolve:

1) All change requires a brain to change- new neural connections are established and reinforced. There are no

immediate changes possible because of the necessity of time so modern efforts to promise weekend transformations are misleading at best.

- 2) A stressed brain cannot change- under stress the body releases a hormone called 'cortisol' which interferes with neural connections and often activates the brain's most primal region called the 'reptile' brain. It is our instinct. If this reaction is chronic or overwhelming, it is experienced as trauma.

Psychosynthesis can use the precious research done over the past decades to stabilize the powerful forces of instinct in our reactions to threat. Since threat and uncertainty are rampant in so many dimensions of our lives now, we are not conscious of the overwhelming role of instincts in our behavior with ourselves and others.

In Psychosynthesis this takes us straight to our subpersonality world. In the past, subpersonalities were primarily associated with psychological needs and working with our subpersonalities involved forms of dialogue and coordination of needs they represented.

The understanding of trauma in our lives now necessitates a pause. What if some of our subpersonalities are not born of psychological needs? What if some of our 'subpersonalities' are biological? What if the reptile brain becomes our only recourse even in daily encounters with our environment and relationships? Safety is our priority.

The reptile brain only gives us three ways to find safety when we face a threat: running, freezing or fighting. This reaction completely takes over the autonomic nervous system. You can feel each of these reactions inside your body.

Our bodies then took these options into actions that either escaped the threat or destroyed the threat.

Because these instincts are based on the physical need for safety, our reptile brain cannot tell the difference between physical safety, psychological safety or spiritual safety.

These three instincts become powerful 'sub-survivors' in our world. They become the 'loner,' pleaser' and 'controller' in our behavior with others.

When we examine the frequency of these survivor instincts in our daily life and then observe them in our relationships and then the workplace and then our political arenas, we are struck by how limiting our reactions can be.

The traumas that we carry and that are reinforced daily through first- and second-hand exposure to threats, injury, suffering, deprivation and anxiety can be addressed by Psychosynthesis.

Trauma is not the outcome only of war and natural disasters. It appears from our childhood onwards regardless of culture and traditions. Trauma appears where there is: neglect (physical, emotional, mental), abuse (emotional, sexual, physical, mental), parental separation, adoption, substance abuse, domestic violence, incarceration, mental illness, racism, prejudice, bigotry and natural disasters.

The understanding of the brain's triune nature and the distinction between a subpersonality and a 'subsurvivor' is a necessity. The ability to provide heartfelt comfort in the space of the black and white world of life and death that the reptile brain projects is a gift from the Higher Self. The ability to create a 'stabilized' zone with tools practiced can shift the energy from the reptile brain back to the personal self. The practiced repetition of stabilizing activities and schedules promotes a 'contrast' to the body's reptile reactions when faced with a safety threat. The reconnection to the personal self and the use of the healthy will is more than possible as an option to the reptile's life or death fears. The reconnection to the Higher Self becomes a natural step towards reconnecting to creativity and collaboration with others. Premature transcendence is avoided in the recovery process which is often undertaken by those unfamiliar with the structure of trauma recovery. The ability to disidentify and identify with the personal self is a true tool that synthesis works makes possible.

People dealing with trauma or severe stress are often given 'resilience' as a positive goal. However, resilience is a way of surviving trauma. It is a way to 'resist' trauma. What we hope to do is go past surviving and move into 'redoing' our choices when faced with trauma. This is a necessity, or the world will feel impossible, because we only live at the reptile brain's level. We are meant to move into the 'soul infused personality' to deal with our pri-



mal world of fear rather than repeat the ‘subsurvivor’ path of reacting and continuing traumas.

Our world may be fixated by ‘reptile’ thinking in many arenas and, because of that, polarized thinking is highlighted: life and death thinking on all topics, right or wrong, good or bad, strong or weak, are all examples of the black and white world of the reptile’s perception that views surviving at all costs.

When applied to daily life and our work and relationships, this perception leads to intense dramas that seem to have no solutions. And yet we can go higher — to the mammal brain and the Higher Self, to view less the drama and more the solutions of participation and collaboration.

I look forward to going deeper into this recovery world during my workshop at the upcoming Conference.

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Cliff Ishigaki is a trauma and addictions recovery specialist in Orange County, California. Cliff served as a Captain in the US Marine Corps during the Vietnam war. He led Marines in combat and was diagnosed with PTSD several years after his tours of duty. He was a Co-Director with Vivian King of the Pasadena Psychosynthesis Center. He was Ordained as an Inter-Faith Minister in 1996 and established interfaith dialogues in his region. He has practiced the martial art of Aikido for the past 50 years and serves as a senior instructor. He serves also as a consultant to government and non-profit organizations and maintains a private practice currently.

# Between disintegration and becoming: Psychosynthesis as a path to inner humanity

By Birgit Haus

The world is changing - faster, more profoundly, with more uncertainty. We are experiencing geopolitical crises and ecological tipping points. Collective exhaustion is shaping our everyday lives. In the midst of this external turbulence, we are faced with a silent but crucial question: How can we remain whole inside? What helps us not to become brutal or despair, but to remain compassionate, connected and able to act?

Psychosynthesis - as a holistic view of the human being with methods to strengthen self-efficacy - offers answers to these questions.

Not only as a method in the classical sense, but as an attitude: an inner compass that teaches us not to deny the ruptures in our lives, but to make them the starting point for development. Psychosynthesis does not see us as "problem carriers", but as souls with a history, potential and their very own path. It invites us to reconnect in the midst of inner and outer chaos - to ourselves, to others, to life as a whole.

## The synthesis begins within

**"A person is a soul and has a personality,"** says Roberto Assagioli. These words have remained with me for decades. They remind me that our identity is more than our wounds. Especially in times of crisis, it is important to define ourselves, not only through our wounds, but also by our ability to develop and transform ourselves.

Psychosynthesis means holding the opposites within us without resolving them prematurely and learning to control them. Living through strong feelings and integrating them. Not "breathing away" fear but listening to it and responding to it. Not to "regulate" anger, but to recognize it at its core, as the power to stand up for oneself, the power of manifestation.

In a world that is calling increasingly for solutions, we must remember that healing is a process. It develops through relationship within and without ourselves.

## Inner child work: relationship with method

At the heart of my work is "inner child psychology". This is a practicable technique for everyone. It creates a basis for the deepest encounter with ourselves. It even allows us to reach developmental traumas, such as the earliest injuries from pre-linguistic times, which are stored in the implicit memory.

Many people believe that they have already worked with their inner child because they have read a book or reflected on their childhood. But real work with the inner child means meeting the child within in the imagination, talking to it and not talking "about" it, but responding to its elementary needs for **connection** and **being seen**.

This attitude is the key to the future of psychosynthesis: it is about dialogical mindfulness to the signals inside and outside in the service of the self- and you-relationship.

Because the wounds of our time, such as alienation, isolation and violence, are attachment traumas. They do not heal through 'tools' alone, but through human presence, mindful encounters and connection. The establishment of a controlling I-consciousness that takes responsibility for its own condition, such as loneliness, is particularly helpful.

### Dreams as the voice of the soul

Dreams play a key role in my work on the path to individuation. At a time when facts dominate and the unconscious has little space, dreams appear like the **last messengers from a forgotten depth**. They show what the daily consciousness overlooks - often in symbolic and sometimes painful images.

I remember a woman who dreamt that a baby was sitting alone in a cot in the dark. When we investigated the image, it became clear that it was the **abandoned child** inside her. This dream did not "need a method", but rather **attention** to this child - and the **courage** to go to a place that she had avoided all her life.

Here, a split-off life calls for help.

Working with dreams is **radically realistic**. It touches and describes a person's **innermost reality** - often before they can express it with words.

### Synthesis as a global task

I deeply believe that working on inner wholeness is not navel-gazing. It is an act of responsibility. Because only those who can hold themselves can hold others. And only those who have learned to placate their inner wars (shadow work) can create peace outwardly.

At a time when the world is burning at the edges, what is needed is not more optimization, but more integration. Not more control, but more contact and relationship with one's own soul, one's self. The great challenge of our age is not to perfect ourselves further - but to become human again.

Psychosynthesis can be a compass on this inward journey. It reminds us that we are more than our fear. And that there is a longing in each of us to become whole - not perfect, but real and authentic.

### A personal outlook

I would like to see a psychosynthesis that stands even more courageously in the gap between what was and what wants to become. It embodies both method and attitude and dares to be uncomfortable because it does not want to simplify people. Instead, it strives to establish a center in the midst of the abundance in every human being—the I-self-axis.

And I wish for communities that carry this spirit: places of genuine encounter where it is not performance that counts but love and liveliness. Where we remind each other: you are more than your story. And you are not alone.

May the upcoming Summit and Festival at Garrison be such a place. A place of appreciation, connection and vision for the future - for a psychosynthesis that does not flee the world, but flourishes in it!



**Birgit Haus** is a psychosynthesis therapist, seminar leader and author. Birgit graduated in Romance languages, literature, history and education. Her psychotherapeutic training began in 1990 and includes Psychosynthesis, Psychoenergetics, Ritual drama, Gestalt Therapy (adults with Paul Rebillot, children and adolescents), Trauma therapy (NARM), DARE, Resilience Training (SHB).

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**Birgit Haus has written two books in German:**

Birgit Haus, *Lieben ohne Leiden - Wie du zu tiefer Verbindung mit dir selbst und einer erfüllten Partnerschaft findest*“, Wien, Goldegg-Verlag, 2023.

(“Love without suffering – how to find deep connection with yourself and a fulfilling partnership.”)

Birgit Haus, *Der unerfüllte Kinderwunsch im Spiegel der Seele. Deine Sehnsucht verstehen, Blockaden lösen und zu neuer Gelassenheit finden*“, München, Kösel-Verlag, Penguin Random House, 2024.

(“The unfulfilled desire to have children through the lens of the soul. Understanding your deep longing, releasing blockages and finding new serenity.”)

Cologne, 29. June 2025



# Psychosynthesis and the Reduction of Suffering in Medical Patients

By Richard Schaub and Bonney Gulino Schaub

Each of us without exception is vulnerable to change and loss. This normal state of vulnerability is aggravated when we become ill. The 1994 inclusion of physical illness as a potential traumatic stressor in the fourth Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders has led to studies of PTSD in medical patients.

Loizzo, Charlson and Peterson (2009) point out, however, that the viewpoint which classifies the traumatic reaction to illness as a disorder demonstrates a bias: "...the bias cognitive-behavioral and psychodynamic therapies share with our medical system as a whole. That is, the failure to acknowledge illness, aging and death as existential features of the human condition, rather than...intrusions to be eliminated, avoided, or denied". To address the existential anxiety aspect of illness, Loizzo et al offer a contemplative program based on "Indo-Tibetan" practices to help cancer patients to feel "...empowered to face the enormity of the challenge".

Loizzo, Charlson and Peterson's work extends earlier blends of Eastern spiritual practices with Western healthcare. Examples include: the neurologist and psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli's integration (psychosynthesis) of Buddhist insight meditation and visualization meditation with psychotherapy; the cardiologist Herbert Benson's distillation of Indian mantra meditation (Transcendental Meditation) to evoke the parasympathetic "relaxation response"; the microbiologist Jon Kabat-Zinn's focusing of Buddhist mindfulness meditation on pain management and stress reduction, now referred to as MBSR - mindfulness-based stress reduction. These pioneers have been instrumental in encouraging further uses of spiritual practices in healthcare.

This article builds on these medical-spiritual integrations:

- Greater awareness of the existential anxiety present in each patient's experience - which we term vulnerability;
- The use of specific transpersonal practices derived from Assagioli's psychosynthesis for alleviating the degree of a patient's vulnerability-anxiety as he or she goes through treatment and recovery;
- Case studies that illustrate the effects of these practices;
- The need for a psychosynthesis-trained specialist on every treatment team.

## Greater Awareness of Vulnerability

Professionals are consulted everyday by patients hoping to heal the crisis of illness. In addition to the anxiety of a sudden change in health, struggling with symptoms, going through diagnostic testing, deciding on the best treatment, dealing with the side effects of treatment, and the course of post-treatment recovery, the patient has anxiety about an uncertain future that may include pain, disability, dying, and the end of hope.

Compassionate professional responses to a patient include reassurance, cautious optimism for a good treatment outcome, possible referral to a hospital social worker or chaplain and, if necessary, medication. This article adds the reality of an existential aspect to the patient's clinical picture: illness forces us to face the fact that change and loss are an inevitable part of life. This fact of vulnerability is an underlying source of anxiety, which is typically ignored in the treatment of illness. Referred to by philosophers East and West as the "human condition" or the "truth of impermanence," vulnerability-anxiety is ultimately linked to the awareness that our life is temporary. Serious illness exposes us to our underlying vulnerability-anxiety. As one example, Bruce, Schreiber, Petrovskaya and Boston (2011) chose the term "groundlessness" as a way to summarize the vulnerability-anxiety statements from patients

at their medical center. Bruce et al. further reported that a severe form of groundlessness can occur in patients who thought they had a religious faith but lost it when they became seriously ill.

This article advocates that we include this deeper anxiety and suffering in our assessment of a patient's experience and learn how to respond to it to enhance recovery. The outlook and skills of psychosynthesis give us one proven way to respond.

## **Transpersonal Resources**

The ego-based personality has no answer for "the human condition" and the "truth of impermanence" since the ego-based personality itself is impermanent. The vulnerability-anxiety aspect of the medical crisis calls upon us to go beyond our personality (i.e., transpersonal) and to awaken our transpersonal resources of peace, wisdom, purpose and oneness. Though we haven't been typically educated about these transpersonal resources, they objectively exist in dormancy in each person without exception. As is demonstrated in the case studies, these resources can be awakened within a single meeting with a patient. Recent publicity reported on the profound effects of the hallucinogenic drug, psilocybin, to reduce anxiety by increasing transpersonal experiences in patients with cancer at the NYU Medical Center (Ross, Bossis, Guss et al, 2016). This article reinforces the importance of such experiences but focuses on non-drug interventions—psychosynthesis skills—that guide patients into their transpersonal nature.

## **The First Step: Moving from Fear to Choice**

Insights from neuroscience (Hoelzel, Carmody, Vangel et al., 2011) and Assagioli indicate that there is an observing aspect of the brain-mind which notices and is conscious of thoughts, feelings and body sensations but is distinct from those thoughts, feelings and sensations. Hanson (2009) refers to this observing consciousness as "the executive center of the brain," and Assagioli refers to it as "the observing self or 'I.'" Hanson describes this observing consciousness as part of the brain. Assagioli believes our brain participates in this consciousness and utilizes it but that its source is universal. In either case, this observing consciousness, in its executive brain function, is capable of both noticing thoughts, feelings and sensations and deciding if it will engage with any of them - or not engage. Assagioli referred to this as identifying with or disidentifying from with an inner experience.

The act of not engaging (disidentification) appears to be the most therapeutic effect of mindfulness practice (Lacaille, Ly et al, 2014). The repetitive act of noticing thoughts, feelings and sensations and choosing to disidentify from them is now thought to actually grow new neurons in the executive center of our brain, which in turn makes our brain more capable of managing the productions of the fear productions of our lower brain. A practice of disidentification is described in the case study in this section.

In teaching disidentification to patients, it is important for the health professional to appreciate that it does not mean the suppression of vulnerability-anxiety thoughts, feelings and sensations. Instead, acceptance of the fact of vulnerability is encouraged and can be reinforced by two neuroscientific insights:

- We all have a healthy, normal and active fear center in our brain which is trying to help us to survive and sends signals of anxiety when it perceives threat;
- Our normal brain is biased in favor of paying attention to anything negative in order to survive.

These insights normalize our vulnerability-anxiety as a natural emotion. Disidentification, rather than suppression, is the act of:

- First turning toward our thoughts, feelings and sensations;
- Noting the nature of them (e.g. worry);
- Consciously and deliberately deciding to turn attention away from them.

This distinction matters greatly because identification with thoughts, feelings, and sensations gives them more energy. Disidentifying from them reduces their energy.

## **Disidentification: Larry**

Larry, a 35-year-old with a diagnosis of HIV positive, was referred by his physician to the psychosynthesis institute because of displays of extreme fear and anger in the hospital clinic.

He had refused medication for his fearful and angry episodes, rightly asserting he was having extreme feelings because of the extreme situation he was in. He was first trained to follow his breathing and to say out loud anything that was coming into his awareness from moment to moment. After several minutes of this, he was instructed to verbalize internally whatever he was noticing.

The technique was then shortened to:

- Following his breathing;
- Noting internally with a single word whatever he was experiencing;
- Returning to his breathing.

The point of this mindfulness-based training was to strengthen his observing self. The movement from center to off-center and back to center was taught as the normal flow of attention. No attempt was made to stay fixedly focused on the center. In this way, Larry was establishing a base of relaxation in his breathing and at the same time not denying whatever experiences were present.

As mentioned earlier, the central understanding in disidentification and mindfulness is that thoughts, feelings and sensations are, at one level, just coming and going, if we do not engage with them. Larry noticed, in meditation, an array of experiences—some pleasant, some unpleasant, some new, some depressingly familiar, all coming and going, coming and going. He could either engage with them or let them go. Letting his thoughts, feelings and sensations come and go did not magically make them disappear, but his act of disidentifying from them took some energy out of them. In time, the ability to choose whether to identify with or disidentify from a thought, feeling or sensation became stronger.

The gains made by Larry were bringing him to the threshold of inner peace. At times, he felt completely at ease, his mind quiet. No thoughts or feelings or body sensations distracted him. The sense of time blurred, even disappeared. Assagioli called this the state of “consciousness without content.”

After such a meditation, Larry would experience a light pervading joy. Everything seemed brighter, more vibrant. The experiences themselves were intriguing, but even more important was the sense of inner freedom that was developing in him. He was no longer at the mercy of his fear or anger. He had new possibilities for coping with his illness. He could choose to go into the fear and anger, or he could keep cultivating his newfound peace. Larry understood he had a choice.

Assagioli, who pioneered the skill of disidentification in psychotherapy decades before mindfulness was recognized in Western psychology, knew first-hand about the need to cultivate the freedom of inner choice under painful conditions. Arrested and placed in solitary confinement by the Italian Fascist government at the start of World War Two, Assagioli said this about inner choice: “I realized I was free to take one or another attitude toward the situation...I could rebel, I could submit passively, vegetating. Or I could indulge in the pleasure of self-pity and assume the martyr’s role. Or I could take the situation with a sense of humor, or I could make it a rest cure, or I could submit myself to psychological experiments on myself. Or, finally, I could make it a spiritual retreat—at last away from the world. There was no doubt in my mind. I was responsible” (Schaub & Schaub, 1994).

In order to capitalize on disidentification practice, patients are taught a second step: how to cultivate a replacement thought, feeling or sensation to turn toward. For the religious person, turning toward prayer and prayerful thoughts and feelings would be the replacement. For the secular patient, and for the increasing percentage of patients with no connection to religion, the transpersonal practices of inner peace and inner wisdom can be the replacement.

### **Case Study in Inner Wisdom: Catherine**

At 57 years old, Catherine was referred because of a refusal to seek treatment for a recurrence of cancer. In the assessment, it was noted that she described herself as a devout Catholic. She said she had too much anxiety to even consider going back for more testing, possible surgery, and follow-up chemotherapy. She felt like the anxiety was ripping her whole sense of self apart. But she was also refusing anti-anxiety medication, saying that she wasn’t “crazy” and wouldn’t take pills to solve her problems.

Catherine was first trained in mindfulness meditation because of its extensive documentation of effectiveness in reducing stress. After several tries, she interpreted the mindfulness process as trying to flatten and deny her emotions, and she wasn't motivated to practice it further. Utilizing the information that Catherine was a devout Catholic, she was next guided into a scene in her imagination in which she would meet a Catholic sacred figure. Inwardly, she chose to meet the Blessed Mother (Mary) and told the image about her anxiety. She at first softly sobbed but then began to smile, opening her eyes a few moments later with the excited declaration that "the Blessed Mother held me." Catherine proceeded with her medical treatment, utilizing this inner image as a source of courage whenever she felt anxious and afraid. In the words of this article, she had found the replacement for her vulnerability-anxiety.

## **Perspective**

Commenting on such psychosynthesis-based imagery methods, the pioneering physician Larry Dossey made this point:

"...it is clear that the transpersonal view is not a philosophical plaything, but a perspective that is required by both widespread human experience and empirical findings, and which has the potential to revolutionize the dismal, modern view of our origins and destiny. This recognition is timely. As part of a larger consciousness, we have access to all possible wisdom and creativity, which we sorely need if we are to confront the many challenges we face as humans on a fragile planet."

## **The Role of the Psychosynthesis Specialist**

With the scientific validation of meditation, imagery and spirituality as approaches to help patients, the time is right for a new role in healthcare - a specialist who understands the human resources that are being tapped by these practices. We recommend that a professional with such knowledge—a psychosynthesis-trained professional—should be available in every unit of a hospital, in every business wellness service, in every clinic, school, house of worship, and in the private practices of various specialties (Schaub, R. & Schaub, B, 2013). There are many professionals who are drawn to meditation, spirituality, holistic and integrative medicine, visualization, energy practices, religious and mystical study who could train in psychosynthesis and fill this role. They would be serving a double purpose—to help patients and perhaps to help their fellow professionals.

## **Cautions**

As with any health intervention, objective observation of the intervention's effectiveness is the first responsibility. Does the specific practice reduce the patient's vulnerability-anxiety? This is in the spirit of the three-step process of the scientific method itself – observe phenomena, form a hypothesis about what you observe, test out through an experiment if the hypothesis is correct or not. Such thinking guides every approach to healthcare and mental health, and psychosynthesis-based transpersonal practices are no exception.

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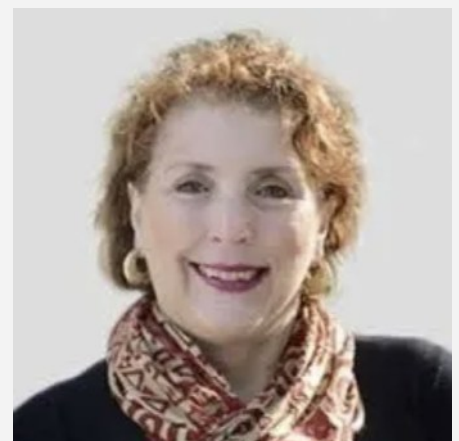
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# Mandalas

## By Bryony Smith

Attached are photos of my handmade mandalas (made during the pandemic and my Psychosynthesis coaching training with Synthesis Northeast). Creating mandalas from a regulated nervous system brings symmetry and surprise. The image unfolds organically, without any agenda, and the Higher Self leads the way, with open-hearted wisdom. The act of creating and the resulting images are both healing. Viewing them brings a sense of calm to the heart-mind.

The first image (yellow background) has a watercolor base. The mandala is made with spontaneous gel pen marks (nothing ever pre-planned).

Second image: 10" diameter, spontaneous gel pen marks on poster paper (the center is a traced circle), hundreds of dots.

The third image: 10" diameter, spontaneous gel pen marks on blue poster paper (the center is a traced circle).

The fourth image: 10" Vibrancy Mandala, spontaneous gel pen marks, inspired by a Tom Yeomans' meditation with our Psychosynthesis cohort.











Bryony Smith (she/her) is a second generation holistic psychotherapist and Psychosynthesis trained coach. She is a licensed therapist in Massachusetts and a Board Certified Coach who works with clients all over the world. Subpersonality parts work and Internal Family Systems are her jam. Besides bringing more freedom and ease into her own system, using parts work and guided imagery, her clients regularly report transformative shifts and deep healing.

Her website is: [heartmindhealing.net](http://heartmindhealing.net)

# A Perspective on the Collective

By Sabu Bhugobaun

Psychosynthesis leads to the door but stops there [Assagioli, 1993], but are we approaching the door and seeing a collective reaction to an underlying spiritual movement? What is mankind really faced with in these troubled times? And can Psychosynthesis help?

"Behold I stand at the door and knock." [Rev 3:20]



Psychosynthesis helps us work through our psychological issues with a view to Self connection. It has been a good and deep aid to many and has the potential to be a service to humanity. Its depth and breadth has the scope to embrace all aspects of the psyche. Assagioli [1993] maps the higher, middle and the lower unconscious all as part of the collective field. I believe the collective is not limited to just those we see, but also includes those we do not see, whether they are awake or not, and wherever and however they may be on their journey.

Collectively, Psychosynthesis is a much needed psycho-spiritual psychology for today's world. Its philosophical and spiritual elements provide a context for living an authentic life, which is much easier said than done, for there is a part of the psyche that is invested in dishonesty for the purpose of psychological survival. This is why much of the psyche remains unconscious.

Its theorists and practitioners are mindful that the modality is not confused with the Self - the spirit, as this will lend itself towards narcissism - 'my will, not Thine be done.' Some religious organisations have made this mistake, where the philosophy or doctrine - a belief system - becomes the deity, and is identified with to the extent where a threat to the doctrine is experienced existentially. This exposes the use of theoretical knowledge as an identification to help protect us from the void.



At the collective level, considering the unity of the Self [Assagioli, 1993], we can propose that due to collective inner growth, that which does not serve the Self will necessarily experience an undoing or dismantling of some kind. I have wondered, if in our current changing times, organisations have been challenged by their mindsets of how things should work if they are struggling to uphold their normal way of operating. Organisations of various kinds have experienced changes and challenges both from within and without.

If these challenges are the result of an underlying collective movement, then the effort used to resist the dismantling will constitute a resistance to evolutionary change, and will likely lead to further division. I find it helpful to bear in mind that while I am not awake, I experience a divided self and my experience of will is also unavoidably divided. It is therefore conflicted and cannot help but manifest in my experience, for I see nothing outside of my awareness, which is dependent upon the eyes with which I look - my inner division.

As a psychology of love and will, Psychosynthesis can provide context, education and a perspective for curiosity. What is the 'bigger picture'? which, generally speaking, we will have no idea about unless we are truly in touch with the still small voice of the spirit within. This Inner Guidance is only as clear as our willingness to connect with it. The wholeness of the still small voice of the Self is in need of no defence and is therefore singular. Incapable of collusion, it is what is truly helpful and will only reveal what is appropriate for us to know at a given time so that we do not inappropriately take control. We realise, then, that what things look like is secondary to spiritual connection; that the experience of communion, in which we feel profoundly loved and therefore safe, is the point of fulfilment and where healing lies; and will therefore be the determiner of what things are to look like. This becomes clearer due to shifts in consciousness as the ego's projections are dismantled, revealing the manifestations of the Self.

Nonetheless, every manifestation has its source, and to some degree our ego survival structures will be involved. As a result of collective inner growth and the lessening of defensive survival structures, that which our survival structures had manifested will not have the same energy - personal will - to hold it up. For example, if an economy is largely driven by ego structures, then as these structures begin to loosen their grip, the economy will likely experience a downturn of some kind as part of the process of shifting motivation. The ego always wants the upper hand, and so the shift to equality will entail a collapse of what does not truly serve it.

Because of the belief that we are causative, it is worth remembering that the 'I' as a self-existent entity has no autonomous substantiality [Assagioli, 1993]. I believe that Redfield's [1993] suggestion, that "where attention goes, energy flows," although highly regarded in the coaching world, needs further clarification; energy does not necessarily flow where attention goes. We are depleted, not energised when attention is misplaced. Our lived experience of body and world provide ample feedback for both the appropriate use and the misuse of attention and energy.

If there is a lack of conscious context for spiritual will and the bigger picture, a crisis can be experienced, and a wilful, even violent, but futile reaction can occur. In the form of increased defence spending, what are the preparations for war that are going on right now, really pointing to? A necessary precaution? Or a reactive and externalised collective attempt to keep together ego survival structures. Psychosynthesis has the potential to sow great seeds for those who are looking for another way. There is a great need for bold and sharp education to be gently delivered, but that cuts to the chase and causes us to stop, look and listen to what is going on inside ourselves, and come out of the 'fix' mentality.

We are in a world today where despite apparent good intentions, human life is not valued enough. Again, considering that the Self is one [Assagioli, 1993] and we see nothing outside of our awareness; with the lens of an inner division, when we consider anyone of a lesser value, that's the value we will place on ourselves and the whole. In the extreme, the defensive effort of part of the collective to resist the dismantling, leads to death and destruction. It only serves to repeat violent history, and is in the end, futile. "All the king's horses and all the king's men, couldn't put Humpty together again." There needs to be a deep ground to hold the existential struggle so that we might avoid an externalised reaction to an inner overwhelm. If *will* is a fact, then nothing is neutral. The part of the collective unable as yet to find its voice and object will be just as impactful, as we are currently witnessing.

If there is any real choice at all, it is the choice to be in the moment - present - with all that it brings to our awareness. Whilst it seems natural to fear the unknown, it is learnt and a projection of the ego to engage us in fear of the future for the purpose of pulling us out of the here and now - the doorway to the eternal. We could surmise that fear of the future is analogous to the fear of death. But if something is truly unknown, we cannot know it is fearful. We therefore fear what we know - the Self, along with what we've hidden at the door that we ourselves have put in place and keep shut by continuing to misplace our attention in the form of distraction; and thereby deplete our energy.

Humanity needs psychologies that hold both the shadow and the Light. These are very difficult times which highlight that despite our best attempts, at the conscious level, we do not know who we are. This is the real issue. Whilst in true abundance our Being lacks nothing, the lack of valuing life takes many forms and goes much deeper than the external acting out of our defensive structures. It is the refusal to enter deep into the shadow side of the human psyche and see the depth of our own destructive intent and its myriad of disguises. This is understandable, and I believe, accounts for the libidinal aspect of Freud's death drive [2003] but as a form of psychological survival, for there is also an equally destructive internal acting out which is largely unconscious.

### **The Wish to Die**

The non dual Self is incapable of death, and the 'I' has no autonomous substantiality [Assagioli, 1993]. Our experience through the lens of ego identification maintains and reinforces the spirit/matter split of the dualistic mind. This is the door's approach, and where Psychosynthesis as a psycho-spiritual psychology can provide education, context and holding, to help work through the shadow side of the human psyche, to whatever extent a person can safely allow, so that the existential dilemmas may safely surface to consciousness. Only then, will there be no need to externalise it, or seek not to unconsciously act it out on ourselves as we walk the path of greater awareness. Then the call to integrate and awaken will be apparent.

We are always held in the arms of the Self, but are seldom aware of it. Without meaning to sound disrespectful or lacking in compassion to those who wish to die, with or without assistance, because of excruciating and unbearable suffering, who indeed have every right to be comfortable, we do need a collective movement towards understanding both our eternal/immortal *nature* and our temporal/mortal *experience*. The questions: how is this so? of who's making? and for what purpose? are essential to explore in order to understand where the responsibility lies, and differentiate the Self from the superego. This is necessary to alleviate fear of the Self. It is where the empowerment lies. "Physician, heal thyself." [Luke: 4.23] The distinction between physical and psychological death needs to be fully explored and understood, as does the distinction between dissociation and dis-identification, which in my view, at an experiential level, were perfectly understood by Christ.



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Sabu Bhugobaun trained at the Institute of Psychosynthesis, London, UK. He was drawn to psychosynthesis because of a number of spiritual experiences and existential concerns. He says: "Psychosynthesis helped to uncover and process my traumas in a psycho-spiritual context, which I found to be very Soul connecting - moving from a place of feeling like a victim to ownership and empowerment - an ongoing journey. I am happy to help others own and embody more of who they are".

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# What is Psychosynthesis?

## By Shamaï Gabbay

Psychosynthesis is said to be a psychological approach developed by Italian psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli that focuses on personal growth and development, emphasizing the integration of the individual's various aspects – physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual – to achieve self-realization and a meaningful life. It's a holistic and transpersonal approach, meaning it includes the spiritual dimension of human experience.

What Psychosynthesis really is, is a living, breathing entity that envelopes and guides our lives. It opens pathways to consciousness, allowing us to work at higher levels of ability, while keeping us true to our very existence.

Psychosynthesis is a window in and through consciousness that allows us to know ourselves, both in the mundane as well as the esoteric world. Psychosynthesis is the gateway to better living, with mutual commune, communication, and community. It allows us to move from the hidden to the known, from the covert to the authentic, from the confusion to the clarity of truth.

To live Psychosynthesis is to move through the pain of the unconscious, to grow through the awareness, and to become that which we were meant to be.

To not have Psychosynthesis is to stagnate in the quagmire of untruth, to get lost in the patterns of the past, and to hide from our true selves.

Once touched by Psychosynthesis our lives become fuller, enriched with the knowing that we can surmount any obstacles, understand truth at its deepest level, become aware of our higher knowing and trust in that which is unseen.

As people of Psychosynthesis, we can guide others in their lives as they strive to achieve all there is to experience. We can be a light, guiding others to a better world in which love has a big space, and humans can differentiate between that which is and what is an illusion.

Psychosynthesis is not a place of leisure. It is a centering, grounding, and moving experience that takes us from the unknown to the known, from the hidden to the conscious awareness of self, from the finite to the infinite. To be a Psychosynthesist is to live in that space, unfamiliar to most, that shows us the way to a better life, to a better world. As conscious beings we can take charge of our lives, with the ability to 'let go' when needed, trusting that there are higher energies guiding our path.

Psychosynthesis gives us hope for the future, healing for the past, and the ability to live in the present. It helps us to center our being, disidentify from that which will hinder our growth, and identify with parts of ourselves that nurture and care about who and what we are. It gives us the capacity to reorient our lives and redirect our interests to a more enriched and fulfilling purpose.

Psychosynthesis embraces wholeness of the self while recognising the unfolding potential inherent in that, giving us a sense of connection and responsibility for a greater whole.



Shamaï Gabbay, PhD, lives in Karmiel, Israel. She is a graduate of Psychosynthesis Pathways of Montreal and has served for many years, in many varied positions, on the Steering Committee of the Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis. She is a retired psychotherapist, educator, and educational consultant and has done volunteer work in hospice and home care services, prisons, and senior's residences and has presented at numerous conferences, been published in many peer review journals, and is the author of *Meaghan's Story*. Shamaï expresses her creativity through all the senses.



# Psychosynthesis in Poland— One Person's Vision and Growth Dedicated to the World

**By Ewa Danuta Bialek**

Psychosynthesis is me, it is my development, my academic speeches, my books and articles, it is a “new birth” at the turn of life. Its creation amplifies its significance in a country enslaved for centuries, and until my mid-life, “behind the Iron Curtain,” it was isolated from global progress, including psychosynthesis.

My vision of psychosynthesis developed over the years as time passed, and my consciousness expanded.

I first encountered psychosynthesis at a class of managers at the Center for Creative Leaders in Poland in 1994/95 after experiencing professional burnout. It occurred after 25 years of academic work in medicine. I realized I was wasting my time with this, because I didn't find a prescription for my health there. Psychosynthesis came “just in time,” as it were. It was an education of the self and, in fact, an education on how to manage oneself. It offered a deep insight into myself, the discovery of many blockages and buried wounds, a root insight and a wedge experience, and the discovery that I have power over myself. I then discovered the need to heal the traumatic experiences of my childhood. It was not to be just therapy for me. There was a need to create an “education to broad health” program, such that years later it would not only treat physical but also mental and emotional wounds.

My vision emerged in the late 1990s, right after attending the San Diego conference “Psychosynthesis for the Next Century”. I expanded it to include many scientific fields. I also took part in scientific pedagogical conferences and submitted seven entries on psychosynthesis for the 21st Century Pedagogical Encyclopedia.

Over these years, I established the Association known as “Education for the Future”, organizing many workshops for teachers, but also publishing the first books: self-education guides.

Because I have always been a passionate scientist, I used my authoring programs presented at the “Education for the Future Association” to practice them with teachers and parents, and later with children. I was creating the framework for the scientific study of psychosynthesis and the “language of self-expression.” It was my vision to bring psychosynthesis to the academic level for preparing teachers for “education about the self.”

It was also the time in Poland of the 1997-2004 school reforms, when the Ministry of National Education was preparing educational programs for schools. As a result, I received 11 grants and, most importantly, gathered a substantial evaluation file from the workshops. It later became the main canvas of my book “Psychosynthesis in Education”.

In 2004, I founded the Psychosynthesis Institute in WARSAW, which has become an educational and publishing center for many books, both mine and translations into Polish of Vivian King's publications, based on “inner theater.” Psychosynthesis is based on the experiential establishment of the personal self, and it allows constant access to the Higher Self. In my case, the established Self within me became the soul's guide in my journey of reading the vision of psychosynthesis and creating the next steps in many areas of life and science, and describing it in books. So I created programs for kindergarten, elementary school, and finally the academic sector, and collected student evaluations. I will expand on this topic below.

Because of traumatic childhood experiences related to my father's arrest as a political prisoner when I was 2 years old and the consequences of this on my health, psychosynthesis became a testing ground in my healing, based on getting to the “first cause” and working with the inner child. As a body immunologist, over the following years, I explored the effects of my childhood traumas, with consequent psychosomatic effects, and it revealed to me in-

creasingly understandable causes of autoimmune diseases. I confirmed these discoveries “on myself” by consulting dozens of people coming to me with autoimmune diseases. These very aspects, based on psychosynthesis, have made me aware of the many consequences of upbringing and education, which, years later, solidify the physical effects in the body, forming the standard forms of autoimmune disease. Psychosynthesis, introduced early in upbringing as an “education about the self,” helps prevent these problems by promoting resilience at the soul level. We now know that autoimmune diseases overlap because of a childhood lack of focus on their root causes.

Over the years, psychosynthesis has allowed me to fix myself in the personal and transpersonal center and continually follow my development, and intuition has become my essential guidepost in working with patients. The people I worked with increasingly confirmed my discoveries. Over the years, I have received a lot of invitations to foreign conferences on integrated/personalized medicine. Thus, the psychosynthesis approach from my vision kept expanding the circle of interest, like adding another type of flower to the bouquet.

Since my path began with the need for therapy and being a patient of various medical specialists, my aspiration over the years of my life has been to move beyond the realm of “diseases” into that of prevention and, above all, education. Psychosynthesis, which came to me in the middle of my professional life, appeared to me at every stage of education, starting in kindergarten (where I conducted workshops for kindergarten teachers), through school education, and finally in academia as a necessity to create a “model of education about oneself, leading to health.” When I came across the books for children and adolescents prepared by Vivian King, an entire picture formed for me of filling in just these stages of development. Working with children in school-based inner theater made me realize that this is an extremely important model missing in “education about the self.”

Psychosynthesis, experienced over the years by myself and my clients, has shown me its multilevel nature. It combines horizontal and spatial dimensions (psychic functions) as well as the vertical dimension (transpersonal growth). Based on the personal center, it allows for expansion, building concentric circles of application of it in all areas of life, but also in science (as in my case), realizing that psychosynthesis has no boundaries. Thus, it realizes Roberto Assagioli’s vision of “Supreme Synthesis,” connecting everything to everything. In my talk at the 2012 psychosynthesis conference in Rome, later published in *Psicosintesi* and the AAP Newsletter, I presented psychosynthesis as a path to planetary consciousness.

Psychosynthesis showed me the need to create a language of self-expression. Viewed from the perspective of spiritual development, this language transcends matter and thus enters the realm of spiritual experience. This corresponds to Assagioli’s notion of *psychoenergetics*.

Being involved in science-medicine 50 years ago, as well as following diagnostic devices based on the discoveries of the new physics, we are consistently approaching not only Assagioli’s vision of the next stage of the so-called fifth force in psychology, but also the realization that *matter is just another form of energy*. The word “e-motion” reflects this quality (measurable frequency), because it carries energy. Therefore, such terms as disease, treatment, therapy carry different (lower) frequencies (vibrations) than health, healing, goodness, beauty, harmony, which are universal values from the superconscious level. The latter concepts come from the field of Oneness, the essence of being, the soul. Thus, an urgent need arises to “elevate words” to a higher level of expressing the essence of the processes we are aiming at to regain inner harmony or wellbeing.

Over the years, practicing psychosynthesis on myself and in my work with clients, I have noticed this collective need to express inner experiences. Many of the people I’ve talked to describe these experiences as mystical. Until now, the language to describe these adequately has been lacking.

Thus, when working with collective traumas, for example, we discover their deep anchoring at the level of the World Soul, but we can get their healing from that level.

My years of involvement in science, and subsequent years in practicing psychosynthesis, not only allowed me to discover the essence of psychosynthesis and understand better the message of Assagioli’s “Supreme Synthesis,” but also to put it into words and find, after Gregory Bateson, “the link that connects,” and hence the spiritual aspect of life, beyond matter. Thus, I am proud that, having explored psychosynthesis for almost 30 years, I was at the forefront of the Polish pioneers of integrated medicine, realizing the motto of one of them, which was:

*...The spiritual aspect of human experience will unite not only in the “medicine of tomorrow” but also in the tech-*

Nearly 8 years ago, as I was looking through a folder of Assagioli's notes on planetary consciousness in the Archives at the Istituto di Psicosintesi, I realized I had just embraced the wide space marked out by the creator of Psychosynthesis, and that I had been incorporating its various elements over the years. I had a feeling that I was following in his footsteps.

True education is a science of synthesizing all human parts and their connection with the environment, creating an actual relationship with both spirit and matter, the individual parts, and wholeness. In psychosynthesis, every human realizes his synthesis, bringing each part together, connecting himself with his family, society, and the world. Psychosynthetic work raises consciousness to a higher level (Higher Self, new consciousness, transpersonal reality), expressing one's true nature, and is comparable to the theory of cosmogenesis and the energetic conception of a human and the world introduced by quantum physics, similar to ancient and traditional systems of healing.

In 2023, I unexpectedly received a certificate<sup>[1]</sup> naming me Most Devoted Coach, from the international organization Life Coach Code. I was very touched, as it was an unexpected gift from the world, especially since it came from an independent and unknown background to me. The dedication inscribed in it reflects what I have indeed dedicated my time and resources to over the years.

I am proud of my achievements over the years; however, full of humility and gratitude that with the psychosynthesis I received from my teachers, I trusted my inner guidance because I knew it was to serve not me, but the world.

[1] Julian Aleksandrowicz, Hary Duda, U progu medycyny jutra, Ston, Radom, 1988.

[2] To Dr. Ewa Danuta Bialek: Award given to the coach who is absolutely devoted to an idea, who did countless researches, scientific experiments, and publications over a long period of time to prove and develop its validity.

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Dr. Ewa Danuta Bialek — a lifelong scientist in medicine, completed postgraduate studies in psychology and has Psychosynthesis training. In 1997, she founded the Association, Education for the Future, and in 2004, the Institute of Psychosynthesis in Warsaw, Poland. She has written 52 books and over 60 articles in scientific journals. Most of her books are now on Amazon in English: <https://www.amazon.com/author/dr.ewa-danuta-bialek1> Topics include raising children to be healthy; the causes of autoimmune diseases and the possibilities of their healing; increasing women's consciousness; entrepreneurship with a soul; transpersonal coaching; models of education and a new paradigm in science, all seen through the eyes of psychosynthesis. Ewa educates people about well-being and creates comprehensive methods to meet the need for health education at every life stage. Her work, in person and her writing, has had a powerful positive effect on many people throughout the world. <https://psychosynteza.pl> and [ewa.bialek@psychosynteza.pl](mailto:ewa.bialek@psychosynteza.pl)

# My View on the Future of Psychosynthesis

By Jan Taal

The core of Psychosynthesis is, in my opinion, that there are qualities, strengthening, healing sources and spiritual energy in everyone which can be compared to the roots and trunk of a tree from which branches, leaves, flowers and fruits continue to grow if they are given the chance. I see it as the future of psychosynthesis to apply this fundamental truth and develop adaptations in more and more aspects of life, society and culture.

In the last decade I perceive a tendency to make psychosynthesis into a kind of philosophy, a philosophy that in itself may be very interesting but that also tends to have excessively cognitive aspects at the expense of the application of psychosynthesis' essence in the often unruly practice of life. I believe we owe it to psychosynthesis founder Roberto Assagioli to implement his teachings in the different fields of practical life, now and in the future.

Being connected with psychosynthesis for almost 5 decades I have seen in quite a few instances of the misuse of power by trainers and directors in the field of psychosynthesis. In the future I believe it is a great task for those who are in charge and for those who train psychosynthesis students to deal with the subject of power more deeply. The connection that psychosynthesis has with the spiritual makes the power issue even more necessary to tackle.



Jan Taal (1949) has been active in the development of psychosynthesis based imagery since 1978. He has a practice for psychotherapy and coaching in Amsterdam to this day. He has led the Amsterdam School for Imagery since its founding in 1985. In order to make the possibilities of imagery and creativity accessible to persons with cancer, other chronic diseases and crises, Jan developed the Imagery Toolbox.

His last publication is Imagery in Therapy, Counselling and Coaching, available from: <https://www.imaginatie.nl/en/articles>.

More about Jan: <https://www.imaginatie.nl/en/jan-taal>



# A Call for Humankind: Normalizing Our Double Nature, Ego and Soul

By Neal Klein

"If James's ideas [William James, the father of American Psychology] were fully accepted along with their implications, they would revolutionize the field of psychology and the nature of psychotherapy. Psychology would have to study the realm of the sacred, and therapeutic training would have to include the spiritual dimension of human experience. Never again would the psychology profession be able to separate psyche from soul and psychology from spirituality. It is unfortunate that modern psychology has ignored the spiritual domain and thus failed to explore what may be the most important dimension of the human mind." David N. Elkins, *Beyond Religion*

"As a rule, Essence is not recognized in psychology and psychotherapy. So alienation from Essence is not seen. It is seen that people are not in touch with their emotions and their sensations. It is seen that people are controlled by complex structures of unconscious beliefs, fears, defenses. But that extra dimension, the existence of the true being, is not generally seen or taken into consideration in psychological theory." John Davis, *The Diamond Approach*

An essential aspect of Psychosynthesis is recognizing and harmonizing our two magnetic grounding points, our ego/personality and our Transpersonal Self/Soul. Although this concept of synthesizing these two essential dimensions of our being has been written about for thousands of years, it most likely has been experienced for all of our human existence. Furthermore, this relationship may be a vital part of our evolution. This balancing task may be the call of our species.

Roberto Assagioli clearly addresses this issue as being a foundational aspect of his work, and there are thousands, perhaps well over ten thousand, Psychosynthesists who have focused on this practice over the past one hundred years. Kudos to us all.

Carl Jung speaks about the transpersonal function and this concept is also central to all of his work. One of his students, Edward F. Edinger, clearly states, "The Self is the ordering and unifying center of the total psyche (conscious and unconscious) just as the ego is the center of the conscious personality" (Edinger, 1972). He also writes, "One of the features of the experience of the Self is that it opens one up to the awareness that there are two centers in the psyche... the ego is one and the Self is the other" (Edinger, 2002).

William James (previously mentioned as the father of American psychology) stated that, "our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it parted from it by the filmiest of screens there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different." He continues with, "No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other

forms of consciousness quite disregarded. How to regard them is the question – for they are quite discontinuous with ordinary consciousness” (James, 1902).

Ken Wilber, considered by many to be one of the foremost writers in the modern study of consciousness, also acknowledges this as essential. His understanding of the development of consciousness includes the egoic level (persona and shadow), the somatic level (mind and body), the transpersonal level (organism and beyond), and unity consciousness. Consequently, there are, “many levels of identity available to an individual... In psychological jargon, different ‘symptoms’ originate from different levels” (Wilber, 1979). He clearly acknowledges Psychosynthesis as one of the current therapies that include the transpersonal bands of this “Spectrum of Consciousness.”

Aldous Huxley, a rousing and inspiring writer and philosopher from the mid-1900s, has written about The Perennial Philosophy as he states; “More than twenty-five centuries have passed since that which has been called the Perennial Philosophy was first committed to writing... At the core of the Perennial Philosophy we find four fundamental doctrines.” He further states the third one as, “man possesses a double nature, a phenomenal ego and an eternal Self, which is the inner man, the spirit, the spark of divinity within the soul” (Huxley, 1945).

There continues to be a large assortment of names when referring to this eternal Self. In *Holy Fire: The Process of Soul Awakening* (2020), Thomas Yeomans writes, “I have come to use the word ‘soul’ to express the experience of the core of consciousness in each of us that holds the potential and pattern of our fully, unique, maturity... Synonyms might be ‘essence’, ‘true nature’, ‘core being’, ‘Self’ or ‘Higher Self.’”

Ken Wilber adds to this list of possible names as he states that in contrast to the major religions of the Western world, the major religions and philosophies of the East all believe in direct communication between “our ‘innermost’ consciousness... and the absolute and ultimate reality of the universe known variously as Brahman, Tao, Dharmakaya, Allah, the Godhead – to name just a few” (Wilber, 1993).

It's easy to find terms for this luminous and requisite experience from every continent where humans reside. As previously mentioned, it is the Perennial Philosophy.

Is there anything that Psychosynthesis could focus on that's more important than normalizing this double nature that we all possess? Unfortunately, many humans are not nourishing their connection with their Soul/essential Self. Isn't it especially vital during these confusing and ungrounding times that we create harmony within our personal and transpersonal development? This is my hope for Synthesis for a Changing World: A Vision for the Future of Psychosynthesis.

As Roberto Assagioli knew, and as Thomas Yeomans reminds us in *Holy Fire*...

**We must learn to live as souls on Earth.**

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Dr. Neal Klein, Ed.D, is Associate Professor of Psychology at Lesley University in Cambridge, MA. He has taught at Lesley for the past 40 years, offering classes in cutting edge psychology, counseling, holistic health and wellness, and cross-cultural psychology. He is the author of *A New Operating Manual for Being Human*, and his most recent publication *Me, Myself, and Mindfulness: The Arithmetic of Consciousness*. This publication was written with the intent of teaching basic psychological skills to children and their families in hopes of making their lives easier, and creating manageable psychological skill sets from a much earlier age.

Neal has over 30 years of experience as a practicing psychotherapist. One of his life quests has been to help expand the current prevailing paradigm that we as human beings and psychologists use to formulate our beliefs regarding what is humanly possible—emphasizing the nature of consciousness and human potential. Neal was a former member of the steering committee of the Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis.



He has taught swing and ballroom dance for over 40 years. He was the owner of Dancing Feats Swing and Ballroom, co-owner of Swingin' New England Dance Festival; currently the co-owner of The Dancing Fools. He teaches swing dancing at Lesley University and frequently highlights the focus on non-verbal communication in partner dancing as the essence of any lead/follow dance which demands paying attention to visual and tactile clues.

Neal's Youtube Channel Trace-Ending Times:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYIJ8RPDbe\\_xfiH-0PQF8Uw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYIJ8RPDbe_xfiH-0PQF8Uw)

Website: <http://www.trance-endingtimes.com>

# Some Ideas via Email

## By Elisabeth Contadino

Elisabeth Contadino has been helping the Portal Group with organizing the Psychosynthesis Summit and Festival at Garrison. Below is an email she sent round on July 4th with some ideas about how delegates could prepare for the event. I thought the email was beautiful, and well worth reproducing this in the current Quarterly. (PS)

Hi All,

I have some thoughts about how to help participants feel welcomed and settled after checking in. Rather than focus on setting aside thoughts about their busy lives back at home, I would be more interested in helping participants focus on the trip that they began as soon as they walked out of their home. Their arrival at the conference actually began as they completed their packing and other travel preparations.

Last night before falling asleep, I was recalling some of my previous trips by car and by plane. In all cases, I had a defining feeling of being on my way. Two years ago, when I was driving to Philadelphia and had crossed over from Ohio to West Virginia, I detoured off the highway a couple of miles to enjoy the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. This was after about five hours of driving. I found a place in the bend of a country road between a farm on one side and woods on the other. With open windows, I closed my eyes, listened attentively and then dropped into meditation. After about 15 minutes, I slowly opened my eyes but continued to meditate. It felt magical with the patterns of birds swooping, tree branches swaying, clouds drifting, light shifting, numerous and varied sounds orchestrating, while my body merged with it all. After another 45 minutes or so, I was back on the road with a very different attitude and appreciation of the event that I was on my way to attend.

Earlier that same year, I accompanied my then year-old father on a trip to Florida, not a place that I would have chosen if I had been alone. While at an airport where we were changing flights, my father needed to use the restroom. As I waited with the guy driving us in an airport transport cart from one terminal to another, I began a conversation with him. We tried to make small talk. He appeared to speak very little English so I asked him where he had moved from. I think that he said "Somalia" and asked me if I knew of it. I looked directly at him and quietly said, "war". His whole demeanor changed. He responded by opening up and struggled to talk to me in broken English about the injustices and horrors he had lived with. One of the most difficult things was that he had not been allowed to speak in his tribal language. It was forbidden. Another was that he still had family back in his country who were suffering. I was very attentive to everything about him and became aware of the depth of his pain and sense of isolation in a country where few people had any idea of what he had gone through and was still going through. When my father returned, this fellow realized what he had shared and became self-conscious. I took his hand and told him that I hoped that his life would be better. Having had that experience in the context of a trip with my father helped in a small way to make some things in our relationship a little easier for me. When I returned to my home, I drew a portrait of the man at the airport. Whenever I look at it, it helps me to get in touch with the qualities of compassion, strength, and hope.

Other experiences have opened up to me on my way from home journeying toward someplace new. Maybe it would be helpful to ask people to write a few lines on a card about something that touched them on their way to the conference. It might be something as simple as watching an exchange between two people at the airport or hearing a particular song on the radio - anything that comes to mind as meaningful and helpful that they would like to share with the rest of us. The cards could be pinned to a bulletin board. If Garrison Center does not have one, I have a large one that I could bring if we want to do this or something like this.

Peace,  
Elisabeth



# The Peace Bell: A Psychosynthesis Song for the Future.

By Catherine Ann Lombard



The Peace Bell is symbolic of the promise of psychosynthesis, not only for the future, but for today. Nestled in the *Bosco di San Francesco* (The Forest of St. Francis) outside of the old walls of the medieval town of Assisi, Italy, the Peace Bell is not far from the 13<sup>th</sup> century Basilica of San Francesco.

It is supported by four granite columns, each representing a different religion: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism. Designed by German artist Gerhard Kadletz, the bell is named *Regina Pacis* (Queen of Peace), and it is meant to unite the four religions to announce peace with one voice.

The Peace Bell's official song is "*Numquam renascantur vis bellum terror*" (Never again violence, war, terror). This declaration is inscribed on the lower edge of the bell (which was dedicated in 2007) along with the signatures of four religious leaders: Cardinal Ratzinger, who later became Pope Benedict XVI; His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama; Ali Gomaa, then Grand Mufti of Egypt; and Jona Metzger, then Chief Rabbi of Israel.

I have always loved visiting the bell, pulling its rope, and sending its rich full sound from the City of Peace into the world. However, one morning about three years ago, upon arriving at the bell, I discovered there was no longer any rope to pull. Even more alarming, there was no longer any clapper to strike the bell! The Peace Bell, held in the heart of Italy in Saint Francis' City of Peace, was silent. Unringable. Still.

Looking up at the empty bell, I felt utterly despondent. This hollow Peace Bell felt so symbolic of our times. I became determined to find out why the Peace Bell had fallen silent. This search brought me on a long journey that ended with me meeting the Peace Bell artist and ringing the bell alongside him. United in our love for the Peace Bell and our mutual campaign to hear it ring again, Mr. Kadletz and I both rejoiced in pulling the cord to have the clapper once more strike the bell. Its sweet song rang over the town and floated out into the world.

This sound sings of my vision for the future of psychosynthesis.



**Catherine Ann Lombard** is a psychosynthesis psychologist, counselor, writer, and teacher from California who has lived in Japan, Egypt, Ireland, Germany, and now Italy. She is a published writer of first-person essays, poetry, and scientific articles. Lombard is the author of the book *Rabindranath Tagore: A Psychosynthesis Perspective*, currently under review by Routledge India.

To read about her spiritual journey to ring the Peace Bell, visit [LoveAndWill.com](http://LoveAndWill.com)



# The Future of Psychosynthesis — A Perfect Disappearing Act

By Will Parfitt

Psychosynthesis in the future? It doesn't exist per se, except in history books detailing the emergence of a new world order. Sub-headings in the historical document refer, en passant, to ecopsychosynthesis, biopsychosynthesis, integrative psychosynthesis, psychosynthesis psychotherapy, counselling, coaching, guiding and mentoring.

But psychosynthesis on its own doesn't make sense in a world that has integrated the essence of its vision, the depth of its values and the humanity in its approach to individual and collective beings. Every person is a star in a heaven of stars, each following its own course and, at the same time, each in relationship with and part of the collective galaxy and universe it exists within.

How do we get there? Well, to trust in the unfolding process is a good starting point; then don't push the river, flow with it – and utilise your understanding of and connection to Psychosynthesis to 'spread the good word', as it were, with as little bias and as much clarity as can be mustered.

More, how do we get there? Not by teaching Psychosynthesis as a discrete discipline as such, not through stressing it as a separate thing, but rather as something that can be applied to everything.

On courses I ran for more than 40 years, I always taught that Psychosynthesis can be applied in every area of life. In my very first Psychosynthesis book, *The Elements of Psychosynthesis*, there was an appendix with quotes from many different people briefly describing how they applied Psychosynthesis in their lives with topics ranging from education to parenting.

A Psychosynthesis 'training', whether self-directed or in a training setting, is to learn the basics — especially how to disidentify, self-identify and then choose to re-identify. Graduates then work with this in their life, which inevitably involves their job; it might be a therapist or coach who applies it, or why not a salesperson, or a bar-tender, an accountant or bus driver... everyone can learn the basics. This means not just the 'motto' [it's either got you or you have got it], but how to make this a central core to your life so you bring more awareness and choice into whatever work, play, relationships, etc. you engage with in life.

The most important 'entry point' for learning Psychosynthesis will be through education, teaching it to children and young adults to set them up for life with a sense of their own awareness and the unique meaning of this for them: their sense of having choice and a true will for what they want their life to be; a way of being that brings awareness and will into the world; and an ability to come into and enjoy right relationship as appropriate to different circumstances.

Psychosynthesis is pure magic, sometimes defined as making changes that you want, always informed and led by a vision that comes from deep within. Psychosynthesis gives you this potential and the tools to take this awareness into the world and make a difference, a positive contribution to society whilst being true to your own personal path of spirituality.

So what is this magic ingredient that will change the world? How could Psychosynthesis be the core of a new world order? How could its vision and values have been so deeply integrated? Simple [and, of course, equally not simple]: to stay true to the essential practice of Self-identification, not in a complex meditative form, but through holding to the awareness that it – whatever ‘it’ is – has either got you or you’ve got ‘it’.

Since my Psychosynthesis training with Diana Whitmore ended 44 years ago, I have practiced Psychosynthesis in many forms and worked extensively with countless individuals and groups and brought out several books on the subject.

Finally, I’ve found that last little attachment, identification, lurking somewhere deep in my individual and collective psyche; at last I’ve got Psychosynthesis, it hasn’t got me. May the vision and values of Psychosynthesis engender a world of peace based on willing love and loving will.



Will Parfitt has been retired from his psychotherapy practice for quite some years and also stopped running group-based courses which he enjoyed leading but which required a lot of energy, especially in travelling abroad. He has also closed the Psychosynthesis and Kabbalah distance courses he directed for many years.

If there’s the time and inclination, he might write more books, probably short stories in a similar vein to those in his most recent fiction book *Rose of Heaven* [PSA Books, 2022].

If you want to explore the world of Psychosynthesis and how to truly live its wisdom, his recent two books are quite comprehensive: *The Journey of Psychosynthesis* [Aeon Books, 2024] offers a straight forward course in the subject, and *The Magic of Psychosynthesis* [PSA Books, 2019] explores the depths to which Psychosynthesis can lead you and how to bring those deepest connections to earthly fruition.



# Non Finis Quarendi:

## My last meeting with Roberto Assagioli

### by Isabelle Clotilde Küng

Edited and adapted by Ivan Ordiner, Counselor in Psychosynthesis, Coach, Trainer, Music therapist, Editor-in-Chief of « Il Sé », the Bulletin of information and psychosynthetic culture of the International Institute of Educational Psychosynthesis (IIEP).

This is the story of how Assagioli prepared me to accept the fact that his body was not immortal and what happened the last time I saw him, forty days before he passed away.

If you have already read Sam Keene's [interview](#) "The Golden Mean of Roberto Assagioli", you will remember that he compared death to going on a holiday. You will probably concur this is a surprising, although profoundly practical, "technique" to substitute a gloomy and fear-inducing mind set — I mean the mindset the majority of those who imagine death as "The End" — with the image and idea of something pleasant to look forward to (at least when it comes at its natural "moment")!

Doesn't the idea of going on a holiday evoke joy, curiosity and opens the door to the "new", whilst the perspective of no future somehow robs us of it? Actually, it is basic psychology ! Why then does the bulk of humanity while knowing it, still ignores this. Why does it still fall prey to all the negative associations around the topic?

This kind of substitution of a dead-end mindset (based on a misinterpretation of the various layers of reality due to lack of conscious experience thereof) by another more attractive Idea, evoking hope and a continuation of striving, aptly illustrates one of the main characteristics of Assagioli's life and work: mindfulness, resilience and cooperation !

For life gave him many an opportunity to thoroughly master the "simple" Art of making appropriate use of 1) the mind's functions, 2) the laws of psychodynamics, and 3) precise mental exercises that work to really experience the innermost Being we are.

Read his posthumous *Fragments of an Autobiography and Freedom in Jail* (obtainable at <https://www.psicosintesi.it/books>). Assagioli walked the talk, and having persisted in line with his "highest" spiritual recognition, he felt the urge to share his knowledge, or rather wisdom, with whosoever is interested, ready and willing to enjoy a life that is worthwhile and even useful... for isn't "feeling truly useful" our primordial "need"?



**Roberto Assagioli 1967**  
Istituto di Psicosintesi, Florence  
– with «Egg» Diagram: indicative  
«map» of the human psyche.  
Foto I. Küng – PUBLIC DOMAIN

Yes, Assagioli tailored a method of turning our “finite” way of living into one that undogmatically reconciles the reality of our Eternal Now with our albeit necessary ground-zero life confinements – where after all we spend almost all our time. But unlike Alexander the Great “who would cut through the intricacies of a problem without a second thought, Assagioli preferred to address this “Gordian knot” problem in such a manner that the very issues that keep one stuck there are used as the “fuel and substance” needed to turn them into fulfilling achievements, by transmuting them. Let me repeat that: Assagioli’s method indicates how to use the very things that confine us, in such a manner that they help us free ourselves from their grip, and in the process, even to experience many of the innumerable meanings of freedom, yet in a joyously liberating way.

This implies endlessly creating new life habits, and when these have proved to be useful in a given context, to create new ones! Simply said, that approach to life circumstances is profitable because it encourages us to realistically use the obstacles that bother us most as stepping stones that ultimately bring us where what really matters is recognized. And THAT is a path without end... an invitation to never stop learning.

Yes the real lessons begin after graduation, as I found out 40 days after my last visit to Assagioli!

Please forgive me this relatively long introduction. It is meant to help lift the veil on why I chose the enigmatic title: *non finis quaerendi*. Because if, from one point of view, one can say there are those who acknowledge that there is no end to research, rare are those who mention the “quality”, the ethical, the morally uplifting side of this endless path. And Assagioli is one of them. He also recognized so many of the earnest “Students of Life” who like him had chosen to cooperate with life in a “syntropic” (neguentropy, centripetal, ascending) manner rather than the opposite (entropy, centrifugal, disorder) – see page 32, the Act of Will.

As to me, I found this concept summed up in three words, in a simple booklet by the Quabalist (Kabbalist) Haniel explaining the phases of the moon. Here, the last phase enters in that affirmation bridging the hazardous gap of about one day between the end of the lunar cycle, thus termed the “old” moon, and the beginning of the “new” cycle, when sun and moon effectively inaugurate the next cycle.

But this hermetic expression has also been transposed to human behaviour in a very matter of fact way that points at the endlessness of the human quest. Thus, the periphrase “Sit finis libri” needed to be added. The expression in that mundane form was used by Thomas Merton, an American Trappist monk and writer, at the end of his autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*: “Sit finis libri, non finis quaerendi” - this is the end of the book, but not the end of the search. The book closes, but the spiritual search goes on.

Under this title there are a couple of ideas: the first is that once the book of Assagioli's life closed, from that moment the work for all of us would earnestly begin. And this is good news. The second idea is that when we come to the end of the work of the book of our own life, what we have cultivated will serve as a spiritual vehicle for us to go further, and that the search, or work, truly never ends, even with the death of the physical body.

I am very happy to be able to share these memories, now that I am able to do so.

Let's start from the beginning of the story.



My mother, Dorette Faillettaz, had founded an international school, the Institut Bleu-Léman, in Villeneuve-Montreux, Switzerland, in 1954. It was a school for young girls and had the goal of giving them the best to be able to face life, relying as much as possible on themselves, depending neither on men, nor on their emotions, nor on limiting preconceptions and traditions. She wanted them to become fully human people with their own inner compass, and she was always looking for new effective methods to do this.

Fortunately, my mother met Assagioli, who came to Bleu-Léman to do an International Week of Psychosyn-

thesis in 1960 during the school holidays. I was sixteen, and was helping out — washing the dishes, attending table service and so on. As the meetings of the Psychosynthesis week proceeded, my mother came to believe that psychosynthesis was the practical, all-round, free-will based method that she was looking for to help her students learn to direct their own lives.

She asked Assagioli to come and teach it to her girls, but he declined saying to her: "Excuse me madam, but I am very busy".

Assagioli presided over two more international weeks of Psychosynthesis hosted by my mother at the Bleu-Léman in 1961 and 1965. In the meantime my mother decided, without asking my opinion, to send me to Florence to study with Dr. Assagioli, hoping that he would harmonize my temper, and also hoping that I would learn psychosynthesis in order to be able to teach it to the students of her boarding school for girls.

So it was: after the first stay of five months in 1963 hosted by various "respectable" Florentine families, I returned every year for a month to Florence, always as a guest of Assagioli, in order to learn psychosynthesis with him.

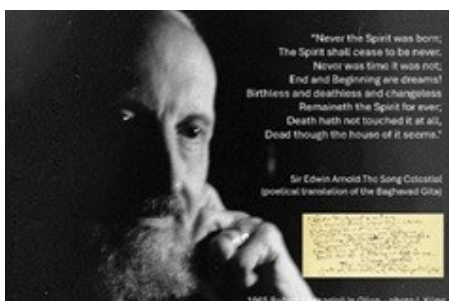
At the time, I wasn't aware of how lucky I was! Shortly thereafter I would start teaching courses in educational psychosynthesis at my mother's school. The topics were, among others: the psychophysical constitution of the human being, the psychological laws, will, exercises and techniques for the transformation of oneself.

Dr. Assagioli issued me a certificate for the Swiss authorities, dated February 27, 1970, in which he certified my didactic training with him and my skills in the educational field and specifically in the application of exercises to form the personality of the students.

As well as to Assagioli, I was deeply attached, also to Nella <sup>(1)</sup> and Ida <sup>(2)</sup> — they were almost like a family for me, as my mother was very busy managing her school and had little time to devote to me.

Assagioli had a particular intuition because, without me asking him anything, he answered what my problems were. At that time I had thoughts about the afterlife and had many questions about death. Dr. Assagioli was very important to me. I sensed that he could help me put my head back on my shoulders and that I would need this if I wanted to have a life worth living. But I was afraid that he could pass away.

So one day, it was the year 1964 and I was already a guest at number 14 Via San Domenico, he suddenly handed me a note. It was a poetic interpretation, The Song Celestial, written by Sir Edwin Arnold <sup>(3)</sup> from a passage in the Baghavad Gita:



"Never the Spirit was born;  
The Spirit shall cease to be never.  
Never was time it was not;  
End and Beginning are dreams!  
Birthless and deathless and changeless  
Remaineth the Spirit forever;  
Death hath not touched it at all,  
Dead though the house of it seems."

With this message he wanted to explain to me that death does not really exist, that death is an illusion. At the time, I couldn't understand. Inside I thought: "But death exists, and how!".

So he explained to me that it is only the body that dies because it is part of matter, but the being that we are, our essence, on the other hand, continues its journey. His words were convincing, even if at that moment I was not yet ready to fully understand them.



However, he added: **"Don't worry Isabelle, I'll warn you before I leave."**

Assagioli had this great gift, when he explained something to you, even if at the time you didn't seem to fully understand, his words remained inside you and slowly matured until you arrived perhaps much later at a full understanding of the message.



Later, Assagioli gave me out of the blue a postcard reproduction of Beato Angelico's fresco of the Three Marys (also called Resurrection). He explained to me that the Three Marys were so preoccupied with searching for their Master in the tomb that they turned their backs on the One they were looking for — the Risen Christ. So much so, that they did not even pay attention to the angel who showed them where to look. He pointed humorously at the irony hidden in the scene depicted by Beato Angelico... namely that focusing exclusively on one level of reality (the tomb) could make us blind to the signs showing where to look, so that we might end up being unaware of the subtle reality standing right next to us.

He gave me the card to keep. The meaning was clear: our real, living part, our true being, is not what the three Marys are looking for in the grave.

And later on, as I observed the details of the painting, I noticed the little devout monk kneeling at the tomb with expectancy... did he see the angel? And the Risen One?

I liked this fresco so much that, the next day, I went to visit the San Marco museum where the painting was located. I also learned that the same day there was an organ concert of compositions by César Franck (1822-1890), a very subtle and spiritual composer, which I went to hear. The next day Assagioli asked me about the concert. He was just at that moment writing a new version of his article on the effects of music. He liked my enthusiastic report of the concert very much. He gladly acknowledged that this so harmonious and almost celestial music had been "instrumental" in inducing in me a state of bliss. He was delighted that my experience would unequivocally illustrate the beneficial effects of (harmonious) music.

The quotation from Edwin Arnold and the reproduction of Fra Angelico's Three Marys were the first two ways in which Assagioli prepared me to better understand the misunderstandings and illusions that govern our perception of death.

A few years later, he showed me this postcard of the Last Supper by the surrealist painter Salvador Dalí (1904-1989); at the time I didn't have a great opinion of Dalí. He seemed crazy to me, but Assagioli explained very seriously that Dalí had had fabulous intuitions. In the painting we see Jesus pointing upwards with his finger towards a bare-chested human figure representing Christ, all inside a dodecahedron, a symbol for Plato of a superior and perfect reality, of the ether, which unites and pervades the whole universe. (Assagioli did not tell me this, but he let me discover it for myself).



The Last Supper by Salvador Dalí where the Higher Plane of Spirit is shown as a dodecahedron with an all embracing torso-arms overshadowing the officiant, here Jesus (and those participating in this holy sharing in the upper room). Note how the officiant of this mystical communion points at this Higher inspiring Power, that is dimension...

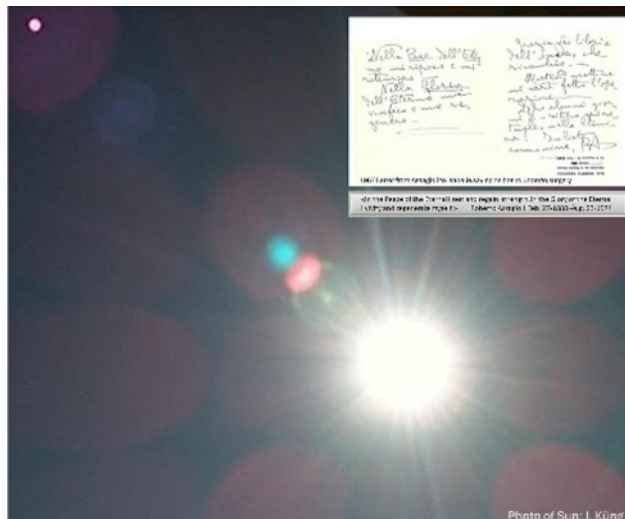
It would be interesting to make a collection of all those paintings, and there are still many, where there is someone who shows the sky, that is, the spiritual world, with his finger. Assagioli explained to me that the figure of Christ does not represent so much a physical man, but a manifestation of universal spiritual energy, accessible to all those who, like Jesus, realize their spiritual potential. Jesus was infused with the energy of Christ like all the other disciples, but he, unlike the others, did look upwards.

I was amazed at this explanation. It healed me of my rebellion against religion. I had always thought that Jesus was



a human being like everyone else, but he had fully realized his spiritual nature and had become able to transmit spiritual light.

This ties in very much with psychosynthesis, which describes the process of self-realization and union with the divine in us, so that we function as truly human beings, dedicated to collaborating in humanity's self-realization. After explaining to me that even eccentrics can have great and useful insights, he also told me: "please, be cautious when talking about it", because he knew that certain things (about spirituality) could not be said at that time.



A few years later, in 1967, Assagioli informed me that he would have to undergo surgery. He wrote to me: "On Tuesday morning I will have the operation, after a few days of "spiritual retreat" in the clinic! In happy communion, RA".

In the same letter, on another page, he added: "Nella Pace dell'Eterno mi riposo e mi ritempro. Nella Gloria dell'Eterno mi vivifico e mi rigenero" that is, depending on the translation: "In the Peace of the Eternal I rest and renew myself. In the glory of the Eternal I am quickened and regenerated."

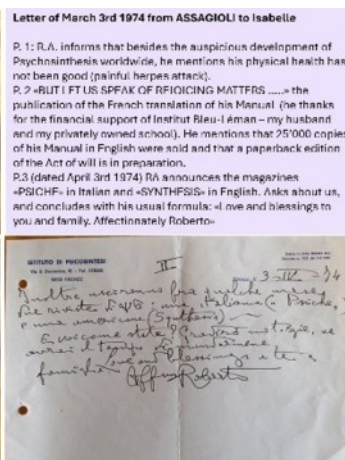
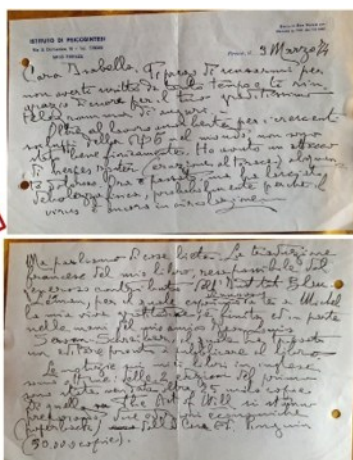
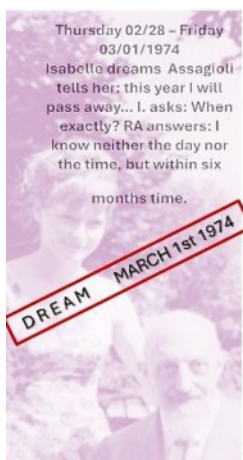
At the time, receiving this letter alarmed me. I said to myself: "Dr. Assagioli is warning me that he is about to die!". But then the workload at the school, and my own children, quickly called for my attention, so that I didn't think about it anymore.

The surgery went well and, when I went to visit him, he welcomed me with a huge smile and said: "mi hanno bocciato" meaning "They gave me an F!" (literally, "they failed me!")

He looked amused by the analogy he had come up with to describe the situation!

Seeing that I didn't understand, he explained what he meant. "They" had sent him back to work on Earth because he still had things to do, even though he would have liked to stay "over there". What I didn't know, and what he didn't tell me, was that he still had to write his book on the will (The Act of Will, first published in English in 1973 by Esalen Publishing Program, edited by Stuart Miller at Viking Press). For me, the main point was that Assagioli was still with us: I knew I had so much to learn from him.

Another seven years passed, I continued to teach psychosynthesis in the school that, in the meantime, had become mine. Suddenly, on the night between Thursday 28 February and Friday 1 March 1974, I dreamed of Assagioli. I had never dreamed of him before.



In that dream (was it really a "dream" or rather a telepathic contact?) Assagioli appeared to me and without the slightest emotion said: "this year I will pass away". Always brazen as I was, even in the dream, I asked him: "When exactly?" And he answered me by quoting from the Bible (Matt. 25:13) in a vague tone of voice: "I know neither the day nor the hour." But then, with assurance he added: "But within six months".

Then arrived a letter from him dated 3 March, 1974. The coming events would confirm that the timing he had indicated was correct: Assagioli would pass away on Friday, 23 August at 5:15 in the morning in Capolona in the province of Arezzo, exactly within the six months period, just seven days before the deadline he had announced to me in the "dream".

I had taken the information received in that dream very seriously, and this aroused in me a feeling of urgency and the determination to see Assagioli without delay... knowing it would be the last time. So I called Ida Palombi, his assistant, to “tell” her I needed to come to see her and Assagioli immediately. I did this under the pretext of having them sign the constitution papers for the “Centre de Psychosynthèse Educative Bleu-Léman”.

That Centre had been unofficially active since 1968, and I was delaying the official creation thereof due to being much too busy facing things as they happened, rather than addressing official issues! Assagioli had already approved a year earlier about this officialization... but I addressed these issues wearing my “short-term glasses”... tomorrow was ever another day!

On the phone with Ida I didn't tell her anything about my dream, but she felt my sense of urgency and passed the message on to Assagioli, who instructed her to write me back (see letter 13 June, 1974) that I should plan my visit before 20 August because after that date the doctor “has a series of meetings already scheduled for some time”.

This probably referred to an appointment with American doctors who were supposed to come for the second time and then obviously did not come, but it could also have a double meaning in the light of my dream.



Around 7 July, I travelled to Capolona with a Dr Carmel Goldwater, who was active in humanitarian work in Kampuchea. Hearing that I was going to see Assagioli, she had insisted on accompanying me, and the visit was agreed upon. We were both hosted at Villa La Nussa in Ida's apartment.

During that week I had Assagioli and Ida sign the deeds of incorporation, as honorary president and honorary member.

My feeling in those days was that I knew that he would pass away soon, and I felt that he knew that I knew. But we never talked about this explicitly. It was not necessary; it was as if a telepathic relationship had been established between us.

I was there for a week, and while I did two or three administrative things for him, Dr Carmel Goldwater visited the region.

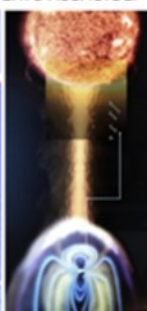
On 14 July, the day I and that providential chaperone were leaving with the night train (I say “chaperone” because what happened in the return train proved her to be of real help) I went to see Assagioli at around noon. He dictated a message to me for my husband, then proposed that we sit in silence for ten minutes.

This silent communication was a practice he promoted with all his students, so it was something I had learned to appreciate. With Assagioli it was always awesome to experience ten minutes of silence. In Florence these privileged moments were accompanied by the tick-tock of his kitchen timer, but not in Capolona. When it seemed to me that

the ten minutes had passed, I opened my eyes, but Assagioli was still in deep meditation.

#### ISABELLE'S JULY 14th 1974 LAST MEETING WITH ROBERTO ASSAGIOLI

**Microcosm:** image of Isabelle's vision of sun above head of her Psychology Teacher 07/14/1974, she interprets it as 'the Innermost Spirit, linked to the person via a caduceus-like soul bridge.'



**Macrocosm:** rendering of Sun linked to earth by a magnetic cord (see David Sibeck)

That is when I saw above his head a shining sun, supported by a crescent moon open upwards, silvery and as if transparent. Between the sun and the top of his skull there was a kind of umbilical cord that acted as a vivid connection, resembling a caduceus<sup>[4]</sup> in which energy was moving up and down in each channel (blue-white-red). The sun was like vibrant liquid gold. Today I would describe it as a toroid shape in which a living, liquid shining golden light was moving omnidirectionally from the periphery to the centre and vice-versa, the centre where it turned into that kind of

umbilical cord that was conveying the energy down to and into the skull, and from there back up to the centre of that living golden sun!<sup>[8]</sup> But Everything was bathed in light, all vibrant with life, immersed in an atmosphere of incredible joy.

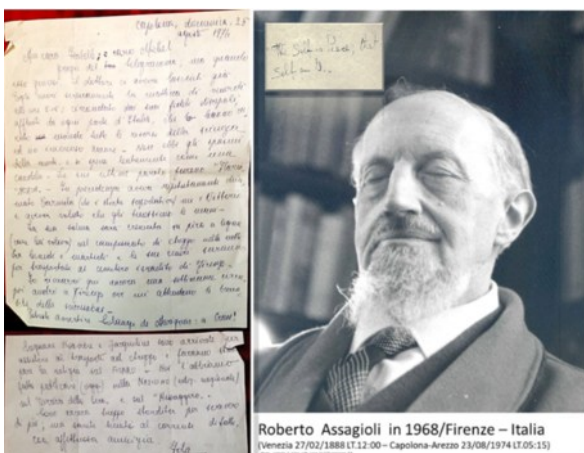
I began to wonder what all this meant, and the moment my intellectual mind was set in motion, the vision vanished. When Assagioli opened his eyes, I told him what I had seen and he told me, as if nothing had happened: "Don't pay attention to it".

That was the last time we saw each other. I knew it would be the last time, and I have the feeling that he knew it too, and that he also knew that I knew. With a smile full of infinite compassion, he gave me a note that said "Addio" which is "Farewell". We said goodbye and, as I closed the door, I saw Assagioli already looking away from the window open on the plain of the Arno valley.

In the evening, Diana B. who was staying in Capolona offered to give me a ride to the night train in Arezzo to return to Switzerland. Around 4 in the morning in Milan, I had my bag stolen. As well as the "Addio" note from Assagioli, it had all my things: tickets, money, passport, keys... everything. This is where the presence of Dr Carmel Goldwater proved so valuable. She stood by me and helped make a declaration to the local police. And then it was all fine, and my train journey to Switzerland could go on. Carmel went on to her duties in the humanitarian field and I to mine in the educational domain.

On 20 August, I received a note from Ida telling me that the doctor was really sick. But I was already used to the idea, I knew the issue and we had implicitly said goodbye in a spiritual sense. Therefore, I sent a telegram and chose to attend to my duty as co-headmistress of our school, trusting Assagioli's passage would proceed in perfect harmony.

A few days later I received Ida's letter in which she informed my husband and me how Assagioli had passed away and his last two words.



"Capolona, Sunday 25 August 1974

My dear Isabelle, and dear Michel,  
Thank you for the telegram, but when it arrived the doctor had already left us. He died peacefully on Friday morning at 5:15 a.m.; surrounded by his faithful disciples who flocked from all parts of Italy, who cured him using all the resources of science and an immense love – He did not have the spasms of death and slowly went out like a candle. His last words were "Ilario"<sup>(5)</sup>, "Moria"<sup>(6)</sup>". Previously, he had repeatedly called Carmela (who was superb) Vittorio and me and wanted us to hold his hands. His body will be cremated on a wood-burning pyre (as he wanted) in the cemetery of Arezzo on the night between Monday and Tuesday and his ashes will then be transported to the Israelite cemetery in Florence - I

will stay here for another week or so, then I will go to Florence where the storms of the succession await me. You might warn Solange de Marignac: in Crans! Suzanne Nouvion and Jacqueline have arrived to assist in the transport to Arezzo and will have the news printed in the Figaro – We have had it published (today) in "La Nazione" (national edition), in the "Corriere della Sera" and in the "Messaggero".

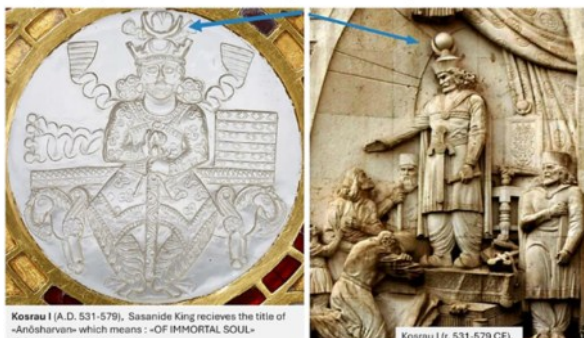
I'm still too stunned to write more; but you will be kept informed of everything. With affectionate friendship.  
Ida »

This is the end of the story of my last meeting with Assagioli, but there is still something to say. When I told Assagioli what I had just seen on his head, he replied not to pay attention to it. But if Assagioli tells you "don't pay attention to it" it typically means that it is up to you to search and find an answer. So then I searched.

The image I saw above Assagioli's head for me was further proof that the Spirit exists, that it is something real. So, I searched the culture for images of people portrayed with a sun above their heads and I found many of them.



cord » ever been testified for before I saw it, unexpectedly, with my own eyes? Oh yes... so many: on sculptures, in frescos, even on money! So if it is on money, that is a serious evidence!



For example, Kosrau I, a Persian ruler who received the title of AnosharVan which means according to the British Encyclopaedias <sup>(7)</sup> "immortal soul", often represented with a crown surmounted by a sphere, an iconographic element typical of Sassanid art, which perhaps represents the divine authority of the sovereign, very similar to what I saw on the head of Assagioli. But then again: Confucius, Buddha Śākyamuni, St. Dominic (although in the form of a star not yet nested in the aura) and Lao Tzu.

The great oriental sages are represented with a flame above their skull, which characterizes their super-humanity. The same element is found in some depictions of Egyptian deities, such as Isis and Osiris or of deities of Zoroastrianism, such as Ahura Mazda's embodiment of Bountiful Power (Khshathra Vairya) and other deities of other cultures. And as you will see on the image where I have assembled some of these powerful figures of outstanding morality, you find this symbol (sun/moon crescent on top of skull or crown) even on money... and that is certainly a solid evidence that it was not a myth....

Being able to bear witness to this is very important to me; I feel that it is time to convey this confidence in the fact that we are eternal beings who "have" a body. An experience that can only be achieved in consciousness... therefore an experience no one can transmit to someone else! And I am grateful that psychosynthesis encourages awareness of this in a safe manner.

Let us admit that it was daring and courageous for Assagioli to unwaveringly affirm: "we are the innermost Self that has a personality", we are not a personality that has a soul up there somewhere. And Assagioli also said, with C.G. Jung whom he had long talks with in 1909-10 when he was studying with Eugen Bleuler at Burghölzli/ZH, that neglecting spiritual energies was much worse, as a danger to health, than neglecting sexual energies. Not using our spiritual energies is a waste and can be the cause of great frustration, so let's give ourselves the permission and joy to recognize these dimensions more and more.

I hope you enjoyed reading this narrative of my understanding of the process of "death" and Assagioli's significant role in guiding my quest...

Confucius, Sakyamuni Buddha, Bodhisattva, Lao Tzeu, Isis, San Domenico, and most of the Wise, illumined beings in the Orient, and kings are represented with a Flame or Star (sun) above their head, to mark spiritual status, or superhuman authority. And on money: in Kushanshah Peroz II Kushanshah's (r. 303-330) reign.





## REFERENCES

- (1) Nella Ciapetti (1893 – 1973), wife of Roberto Assagioli, theosophist like her husband.
- (2) Ida Palombi, Assagioli's secretary and close collaborator, was the first President of the Institute after his death, from 1974 to 1981
- (3) Sir Edwin Arnold, The Song Celestial
- (4) Symbol consisting of a stick with two snakes symmetrically intertwined and equipped with two wings open at the top.
- (5) Ilario Assagioli (1923 – 1951), the only son of Roberto and Nella, died in Twenty-eight years after a long illness.
- (6) Master Morya, one of the spiritual masters of theosophy.
- (7) Encyclopaedia Britannica Volume 29, page 1084
- (8) Microcosm – Macrocosm image : years later after experiencing the vision of the connection of some vivid toroid shape above the skull of RA, and a cord from it into the skull, I came across information (October 2007) from a then NASA physicist Dr David Sibeck, of the existence between the sun and the earth of a magnetic channel where Flux Transfer Events [FTE] had been observed... might that be analogous to the connection between soul and person?

## Isabelle Küng



Educationalist, Isabelle Küng completed her didactic training in Educational Psychosynthesis from 1963 to 1970 with Dr Roberto Assagioli at the Institute of Psychosynthesis in Florence, Italy, carrying out the practical part in the International College "Institut Bleu-Léman" founded by Dorette Faillettaz, in Villeneuve, Switzerland, with the task of teaching it as a course included in the general curriculum for all students from the age of 13 onwards. A pioneering work at that time!

## Ivan Ordiner



Graduated in philosophy, music therapist with twenty years of experience in the fields of disability and in the preventive-scholastic field, musician, music teacher. He was a teacher for 15 years at the three-year training course in music therapy in Udine. Counselor and coach with training in psychosynthesis and humanistic NLP, trainer, expert in group management, he has been holding courses and conferences in the field of personal growth for 10 years. <http://www.psicosintesiudine.it/chi-sono/>

# Synthesis for a Changing World

## A Summit and Festival of Psychosynthesis

**Garrison Institute, NY**  
**July 24-27, 2025**



## Latest Program and Workshop Schedule

### **Thursday, July 24th:**

Afternoon from 3.00 PM onwards: Arrival and welcome

Evening session

5.00 pm Welcome

6.00 pm Dinner followed by "A Brief History of Psychosynthesis in North America" with Thomas Yeomans

7.30 pm Opening Ceremony led by the Portal Group and AAP Steering Committee followed by fireside conversations

8.30 pm Fireside Chats

## Friday, July 25th:

Morning Session from 9.00 AM

### Keynote Speaker

Ken Sørensen on The Soul of Psychosynthesis and Times of Polarisation

### Workshops

Morning Session 11.30 AM Offerings

- Trauma and Subpersonalities — A Needed Revision with Cliff Ishigaki
- A Call for Humankind: Normalizing Mystical Moments, The Self in Transcendence with Neal Klein
- Moving the question: Playing in active imagination to access our deeper knowing with Val Gilman
- 'Psychedelic Mountaineering': a psycho-spiritual context and framework for intense psychedelic experiences

Afternoon Session 2:15 PM Offerings

- A Psychosynthesis Approach to Healing with Ground & Rise® Tarot with Sam Starr
- Grief as Sacred Teacher: Honoring the Dark Night of the Soul and Returning to Compassion with Ami Ji
- Opening the Portal: Psychosynthesis Revelations with Jon Schottland
- The Living Practice of Psychosynthesis with Didi Firman et al.

Home Groups: Integration and Grounding 4.00 PM

Conversations with Elders 5.00 PM

Dinner 6.00 PM

Before and after dinner (details to follow):

Emergent Offerings including Qi Gong; Conversations with Molly Young Brown and Tom Yeomans; Women's Healing Circle; Purposeful Play; Who's in the Driver's Seat?; Power of Radiance; Anne Yeomans Poetry; Integrative Body Work; Authentic Movement; Songwriter's Circle; DJ and Music

Festival Celebrations 8.30 PM onwards

## Saturday, July 26th:

Morning Session from 9.00 AM

### Keynote Speaker

Petra Guggisberg Nocelli on Bio-psycho-spiritual Alchemy and the Psychosynthesis of Humanity

## Workshops

### Morning Session 11.30 AM Offerings

- NeuroSoma Psychosynthesis with Brianna Nicholas and Breanna Miles
- Embodied Being: Back to Bios with Mark Skelding and Scott Thompson
- Reclaiming the Feminine Principle: Restoring Balance in a World Gone Mad with Amy Spalding-Fecher
- The Inner Cosmos: Understanding Spiritual Anatomy and Awakening the Higher Self with Terry Audate and Wendell Eusebio-Edwards

### Afternoon Session 2:15 PM Offerings

- Awakening the Will to Meaning: Psychosynthesis in Healthcare and Healing with Dr Barry Simon
- Willing to Love: The Couple's Journey as a Path to Transformation — Book Panel with Anne Yeomans et al
- A Council of All Beings with Val Silidker and Molly Brown
- A Trauma-Informed Approach to Working with Sub-Personalities with Dolma Beresford

Home Groups: Integration and Grounding 4.00 PM

Conversations with Elders 5.00 PM

Dinner 6.00 PM

Before and after dinner (details to follow):

Saturday's Emergent Offerings include: 5 Body Yoga; Conversations with Tom Yeomans; Unity Through Art; Women's Healing Circle; Playback Theater; Psychosynthesis of the Ages: Intergenerational Panel; Fire Circle; DJ and ecstatic dance; Fireside chat and dancing

Psychosynthesis through the Ages — Multigenerational conversations 7.30 PM

Festival Celebrations 8.30 PM onwards

## Sunday, July 27th

Morning Session from 9.00 AM

### Guest Speaker

Piero Ferrucci (who will be joining us online from Italy)

### Discussion and Reflection

AAP Portal Group and Steering Committee -- The Future in Our Hands: Reflections, Affirmations, Integration and Next Steps

### Building ongoing Connections

Taking Psychosynthesis into the World

### Closing Ceremony and Ritual



# Synthesis for a Changing World STILL TIME....REGISTRATION

**Garrison Institute, New York  
July 24-27, 2025**



*"Like it or not, everyone is a part of the universal and we must somehow tune in and willingly participate in the rhythms of universal life."- Roberto Assagioli*

**The Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis (AAP) is delighted to convene this international gathering to be held July 24-27, 2025 at the Garrison Institute in New York state.**

The world is facing significant changes, and we stand at a threshold.

In this moment, we are called to remember our deep belonging—to each other, to the Earth, to the Great Mystery of life. It is essential that we come together to forge powerful pathways of resilience, courage, and kinship; to explore soulful ways to navigate these uncertain times, weaving our shared practices in creativity, wisdom and will towards an emerging vision of a more connected and whole world.

Inspired by the work of [Roberto Assagioli](#), founder of Psychosynthesis, Synthesis for a Changing World invites us to move beyond the familiar patterns and silos of our thinking, training and disciplines. With guests from the sciences, other transpersonal modalities and the wider psychological and psycho-social communities, it is deeply aligned with the three-fold vision of Garrison.

To Register, please click on the link below:

<https://www.garrisoninstitute.org/event/synthesis-for-a-changing-world-a-summit-festival-of-synthesis/>



## WHAT TO EXPECT

### This Summit is designed to identify and address essential questions:

- What is being asked of us now, at this critical time, both individually and collectively?
- What does the future hold, and how can we help shape it?
- What new collaborations may be required in these times, and how do we best support these?

### You Will Experience:

- International Presenters & Experiential Workshops
- Psychosynthesis Emerging Offerings, Dialogue Groups & Conversation Circles
- Festival, Arts, Music, Ceremony, and Nature related activities

*"As long as self is defined as a singular noun, the planet is cooked". [Dr. Daniel J. Siegel](#), Garrison, 2011*



Graphic by Clare Goodwin

## DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE

"Various discounts are available for members, students and other professional groups. You will have received an access code. Please make your selection below as displayed: you will be asked to enter the code on the next screen, and the payable costs will be adjusted then. The Synthesis Fund may be able to assist beyond what a person can afford. For information please email: [conference@aap-psychosynthesis.org](mailto:conference@aap-psychosynthesis.org).

## WHAT IS INCLUDED?

**Meals:** Vegetarian meals are prepared daily and served in the main dining room. (Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)

**Accommodation On and Offsite:** There are Single, Double and Dorm rooms available. If you wish to stay off-site, please register as a [commuter](#). All prices shown below, are per person rates.

**Please note:** Garrison Institute does not have a guest elevator and all rooms are accessible by stairs only. Dorm rooms are on the fourth floor.

**Program Fee:** The AAP's program fee of \$290 is included in the overall pricing.

**Early Bird Pricing:** Sign up before **April 27, 2025** and receive the early bird rates outlined below!

To Register, please click on the link below:

<https://www.garrisoninstitute.org/event/synthesis-for-a-changing-world-a-summit-festival-of-synthesis/>

The AAP proposes to hold an open meeting in May (provisionally Sunday, 4th May) for AAP members and anyone interested to attend the PS Summit and Festival. This will be an opportunity to meet members of the new AAP Steering Committee as well as those involved in the Portal Group organizing the event. Details to follow.