



Psychosynthesis Quarterly
March 2024

The digital magazine of the Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis

Psychedelic Experience Without Psychedelic Drugs: A New Role for Psychosynthesis

The Pantheon in Rome, a physical space representing the light of consciousness shining into the dark.

Photo by Bonney Gulino Schaub

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

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

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

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

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*Note: We receive submissions from all over the world. You will see the authors “native” spelling in their articles.

Letter from the Guest Editor: Richard Schaub

Psychedelic Experience Without Psychedelic Drugs: A New Role for Psychosynthesis

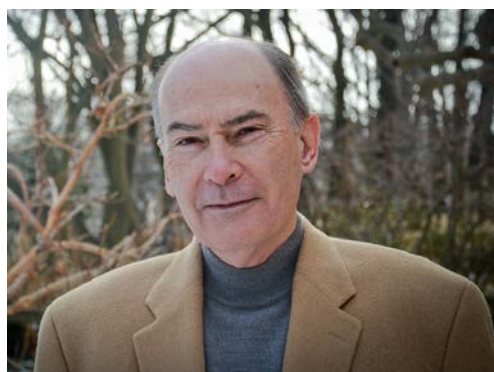
The increasing rate of global mood (anxiety and depression) disorders, the expanding number of scientific studies, and the growing government decriminalization of psychedelic drugs have all caused a pharmaceutical industry interest in what is now being called “psychedelic medicine.” Research focused primarily on the drugs psilocybin and ketamine is being funded at leading medical schools, including NYU, Harvard, Yale, Stanford, UCLA, Johns Hopkins, Oxford and the Imperial College London.

At the heart of these interests and outcomes is the psychedelic experience itself. The psychedelic “journey” from normal consciousness into the imagery, emotions and energy of the transpersonal/spiritual part of our nature can bring “surprise, relief, peace and gratitude” (paraphrasing St. Teresa of Avila). Since Teresa reported such outcomes while training her student nuns in contemplation over 600 years ago, there is nothing new in discovering these natural resources, but now they are being linked to the drugs themselves.

This represents an opportunity and moment of new relevance for the psychosynthesis community. In the 20th Century, Assagioli already wrote the basic guidebooks for these experiences without the need for drugs: now is the time for psychosynthesis practitioners to identify with this growing interest to find out “something more” about our reality.

This issue of the newsletter covers a range of considerations of the psychedelic experience, including those inspired by drugs to those in which drugs were not involved. As guest editor, I have enjoyed receiving such richness from the community, and I would enjoy your feedback after you get to enjoy this issue.

Dr. Richard Schaub has trained hundreds of healthcare and mental health professionals internationally in the clinical applications of meditation, imagery and the transpersonal psychology of psychosynthesis. He was one of the original founders of the New York Psychosynthesis Institute and has taught several times at the original Italian institute in Florence. Previous to teaching, Richard worked in many clinical settings, including oncology, cardiology, adolescent psychiatry and drug and alcohol rehabilitation. His emphasis on teaching meditation and imagery skills began in 1985 with the first HIV-AIDS epidemic when peace and wisdom became a compelling need for patients in severe crisis. The co-author of five books, Richard's finest professional experience was providing a half-year training of PTSD staff at a Veterans Hospital and a Federal grant to produce a book for the training, Transpersonal Development.



Awakening the Higher Unconscious in Florence- A Calling to Life Purpose

By Barry Simon

Accessing the higher unconscious is a profound and transformative journey that allows individuals to tap into their deepest inner wisdom, expand their consciousness, and discover the interconnected nature of all existence. Roberto Assagioli, a pioneer in the field of humanistic and transpersonal psychology, introduced the concept of the "superconscious," which encompasses these higher realms of consciousness beyond the ego. (Lombard, 2017)

Assagioli believed that the superconscious is a transcendent aspect of our being, connected to universal wisdom, love, and creative energy. He emphasized the importance of aligning with the superconscious to achieve self-realization and connect with the innate spiritual aspects of our being. (Assagioli, 2007) Such an alignment is an ongoing pursuit associated more with mystic and esoteric practices than traditional psychological pursuits. Assagioli specifically refers to the personal and the transpersonal psychosynthesis as intertwined yet separate processes with very different outcomes or goals.

In his book, *Tales of the Hassidim*, Martin Buber tells the story of Rabbi Zusya of Hanapoli who captures the difference between a personal synthesis - a life well lived on most measures - and the higher unconscious calling:

"Zusya came to his students and followers one day with tears in his eyes.

'Zusya, what's the matter?' they asked.

Zusya told them about a vision he had. 'I learned the question that the angels will one day ask me about my life.'

His followers were puzzled. 'Zusya, you are pious. You are scholarly and humble. You have helped so many of us. What question about your life could be so terrifying that you would be frightened to answer?'

Zusya replied, 'I have learned that the angels will not ask, Why weren't you a Moses, leading your people out of slavery?' They will not ask, Why weren't you a Joshua, leading your people into the promised land?

He sighed: But they will ask, 'Zusya, why weren't you Zusya?'

Zusya alone knows something in him has been given a voice, so he continues to seek. Zusya is surrounded by daily outward signs of respect and thus he receives external affirmation of his value. Yet something within and unspoken seeks to be heard. Zusya leaves us with the intriguing question: Why did he feel he had never become who he was supposed to be despite his achievements and respect?

Years ago, I started asking my own Zusya question. Rather than a clear feeling, I was experiencing a low-grade dissatisfaction, a restlessness, an agitation, that I could not describe. Manifesting as professional burnout, I went on a journey to Florence that did more than just ease my suffering. It gave me a sense of purpose that replaced my agitation with quiet pervading joy and renewed my direction on a path I had known earlier in my life.

Sad but true, a crisis is one of the most potent triggers for the beginning of such a search. We become certain that the current way of being in one's life no longer works, but we don't know what to do. The need for change becomes motivated by a quiet ongoing suffering.

From a psychosynthesis perspective, the suffering is based in the lower unconscious mind, driven by fear and the fight-flight-freeze portion of the brain fixated on the next potential danger. In scanning for such danger, the higher brain and the higher unconscious is adaptively turned down so that we can react instinctively and quickly to any threat. In addition, during burnout experiences, many people consciously or unconsciously are re-identifying with early trauma beyond simply being driven by current demands.

The subpersonality concept is central to understanding such a crisis (Firman, 2011). My sense of worthiness was deeply wrapped up in my doctor subpersonality. I saw myself dichotomously as either a good doctor who commits his all to his patients - or is simply 'not good enough'. Despite seven years in

psychoanalytic psychotherapy, it was not surprising that my role as a doctor would go unanalyzed as a source of suffering. Both my analyst and myself had the same affliction - an over-identification with early trauma, a desire for stature, and a calling to heal.

Assagioli's insights about the higher unconscious then became my psycho-spiritual path to recovery from burnout – as it can for other crises of our times.

Stage One of Recovery: Easing the Hold of My Lower Unconscious

The first stage of my recovery was through creative writing, spontaneous imagery and a return to the physical practices of tai chi. One day in my creative writing class, I spontaneously saw an image of "a crumpled self," a little image of me cowering in the corner of my consultation office. Seeing this cartoon-like figure somehow eased my distress. Dis-identification from the suffering had begun.

During the day, I imagined the crumpled image whenever my anxiety rose. I felt a lightness within and less connected to my beaten image. I was beginning to live with a new response to the anxious inner figure. And at the same time I was beginning to tap some deeper understanding – a return to childhood memories of trauma and the loss of a loving childhood world through my mother's illness. A wish to have her recover, to save her, became part of my unconscious wish. A desire to save, to rescue another, so that I could experience her love again, became a source of my physician sub-personality.

What is critical to recognize is that in seeking the higher unconscious, a loosening of the lower unconscious's hold is necessary. A dominant subpersonality needs to be disidentified from through an easing of early traumatic, unfinished business, which needs to be visited again and again to truly understand its influence.

Stage Two: Seeking the Higher Unconscious

Next came a mysterious development—an impulse that made little sense. I announced to my wife that for her 50th birthday we were going to Florence, Italy. My inner bookkeeper kicked in, trying to figure out how much the whole trip would cost and how I could legitimately invoke the tax write off. I picked Florence because Dr. Roberto Assagioli was one of my earliest inspirations in psychiatry. I would visit his institute in Florence. I had not yet grasped that something deeper was moving me: perhaps there are no coincidences.

On arriving in Florence, I arranged to visit Assagioli's house and training center. The bus ride wound up a series of escalating spiraling streets to the top of a hill overlooking Florence. I stayed on the bus too long and ended up at San Domenico, a hill town north of Florence. In San Domenico's village square, old men were sitting in the shade while children ran around chasing pigeons. The sunny, breezy day was punctuated by a chorus of birds. I simply watched. Nature has always been a transpersonal entry for me.

I began the descent on foot toward Assagioli's house. I felt a quiet, pervading joy, and it was such a relief to feel this way again. I wanted it to last as long as possible. It was as if the Florentine birds on a sunny summer day had literally lifted my spirits upward.

When I knocked at the door to his house, the staff was clearly not expecting me. They had paid no attention to my emails (written in English), and they had no idea what to do with me. As we discussed the situation in my few words of broken Italian and their few words of English, my joy was replaced by annoyance and disappointment. My higher unconscious feelings were ephemeral, fleeting, and were quickly lost in my annoyance. Fortunately, an English-speaking researcher, Catherine, was available and recruited to show me around Assagioli's private residence and clinical teaching center.

She led me to Assagioli's library and described her own research on Assagioli's confinement during World War II in a Fascist prison in Rome. She had just published a book on Assagioli's prison experience following his arrest for being an intellectual and a Jew—which made him suspicious to the Fascist government of dictator Benito Mussolini. During his solitary confinement, Assagioli vowed that if he ever got out of prison, his life purpose would be "helping men and women free themselves from their inner prisons."

Standing in Assagioli's office and library, I was struck by how small and intimate the room was, just a chair, an analytic couch, a bookcase, a cabinet of personal objects, and a desk. With great emotion, I realized that I was standing in the place where Assagioli had helped his patients for 60 years. A kinship, a

deep connection, rose up within me, and then came an inner voice that was as clear as a bell: "This is the work I will do for the rest of my life."

Hearing this a voice in my head truly shook me. I felt a quiet excitement, a joy, a truth that this was clearly an expression of my purpose in life. I felt a deep connection to Assagioli and simultaneously to a higher part of myself.

The Higher Unconscious as a Path

The words 'this is the work I will do for the rest of my life' were more than words. They awakened a stream of consciousness of hope and possibility. I remembered times in my life when my higher sense of my life was prominent and literally guided me forward. Much like the deeper suffering of burnout where I lay crumpled on the floor, the moment in Assagioli's office awakened an entirely different thread, a reminder of a self who had pledged to be a psychiatrist many decades earlier. I had the vision of easing suffering by helping others to also find the meaning and purpose of their lives. The commitment was guided by contribution far beyond any worries or concerns.

As I left Assagioli's house, I asked Catherine if she knew a psychologist in New York who practiced Assagioli's psychosynthesis. I had studied in New York thirty years earlier, but I felt anxious that the New York teacher might be dead. "If you mean Richard and Bonney Schaub," she said, "yes, they are still teaching." The answer brought me relief: my personal lineage to Assagioli was still available. I felt alive again. Living on purpose had been re-awakened. I was going to seek out their teaching to help develop a Zusya side of me.

What followed was not a weekend course but seven years of study. That it has been the same length as my psychoanalysis has not escaped me. Central to seeking the higher unconscious is the daily ability, even moment to moment, to ease the hold of the lower and middle unconscious urgencies and to deliberately choose to rise to the higher unconscious. Happily, the desire to have this be the 'work I will do for the rest of my life' has translated into deeper connection to others in my life beyond simply work and responsibility.

Assagioli's egg diagram has a Higher Self at its summit. (Assagioli, 1965) Central to all psychospiritual theory is that a self seeks a dialogue with another. During Assagioli's stay in prison in 1940, he wrote: 'It gave me the opportunity to create a "spiritual retreat"- a period of intense prayer, and of performing a series of psychological and ritual exercises of concentration, meditation and contemplation. I must say in all humility that God blessed me: he granted me the experience of the Shechinah, of his divine living presence.' (Assagioli Archives)

The pursuit of the higher unconscious may be an opportunity to heal the world and remind us that we are all simply visitors in the house of God. Whatever religion or spiritual practice we have, Assagioli's vision of the higher unconscious can serve as a psychotherapeutic way to remind us that we are all temporary guests who decide how we engage ourselves, others and our planet during our short dwelling here.

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A “High Water Mark” of Assagioli’s Religious Life by Catherine Ann Lombard

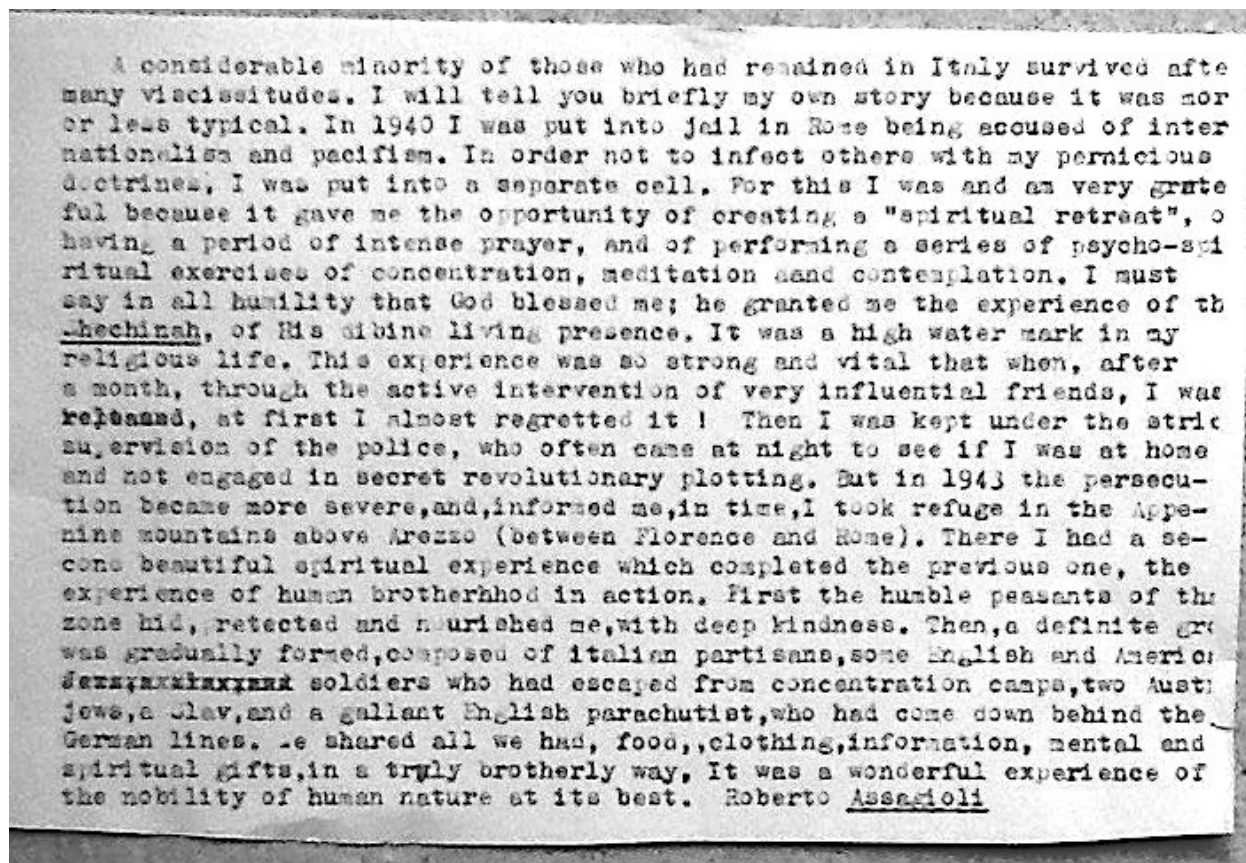


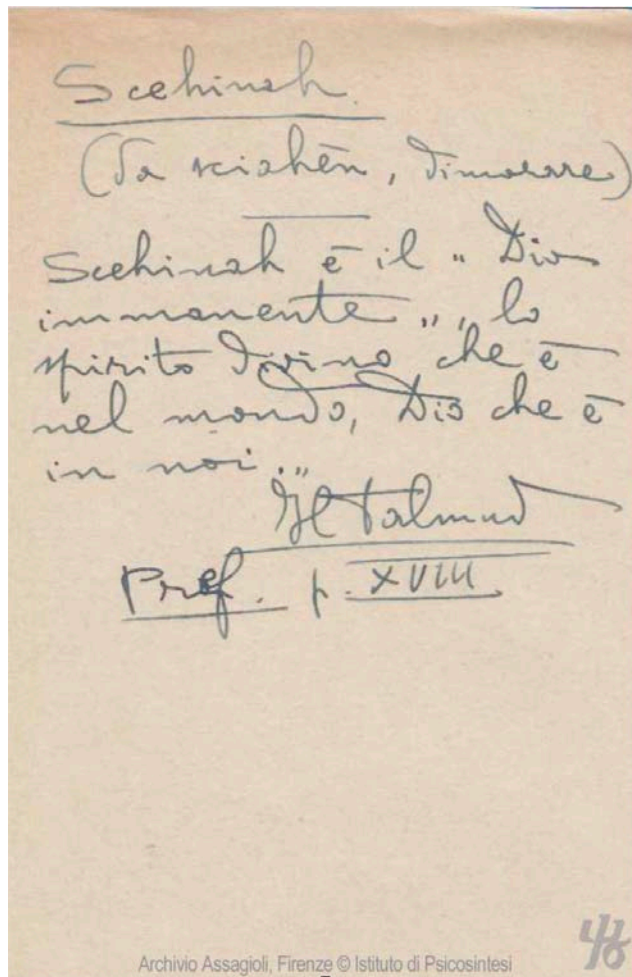
Figure 1. Manuscript from Assagioli's Archives, Istituto di Psicosintesi, Florence

Since 2014 I have had the opportunity to spend many hours in collaboration with Gruppo alle Fonti, helping to catalog Roberto Assagioli's archives as well as compiling and editing Assagioli's book *Freedom in Jail*. It is difficult to describe how meaningful this time has been for me personally and spiritually. As a volunteer, not only do you spend hours handling Assagioli's notes, letters, documents and manuscripts, but you also work, sleep and share meals with other volunteers, together in the same spaces where he and his family once lived. The space and its energy seems to envelop you. Time either creeps by slowly or flows easily along with one's discoveries.

And there is always a discovery. Some delightful, others thought-provoking. Occasionally there is a new breath of understanding. Other times you fall down Alice's rabbit hole, into a Wonderland of your imagination. The discovered manuscript peaks your curiosity, driving you deeper into the vast realm of psychosynthesis and the life of Roberto Assagioli.

This article is about one such discovery. A discovery that arrived as a gift.

After intense days of work at Casa Assagioli, I often spend my last two hours exploring my own interests. Many times I ask for interior guidance. What is it I need to discover? What direction do I need to take?



One autumn morning I stood alone in what was once the small waiting room for Assagioli's patients and visitors. Its walls are now lined with shelves full of bulky folders, waiting to be organized, scanned and cataloged. Which box do I need to open? My intuition told me to take the box labeled "Judaism". There was no rational reason for me to explore this box's contents. I am not Jewish nor do I have any special interest in this particular topic. But I took it, opened it, and started to read from its large stack of papers. It was not long before I found this typewritten note (in English):

A considerable minority of those who had remained in Italy survived after many vicissitudes. I will tell you briefly my own story because it was more or less typical. In 1940 I was put into jail in Rome being accused of internationalism and pacifism. In order not to infect others with my pernicious doctrines, I was put into a separate cell. For this I was and am very grateful because it gave me the opportunity of creating a "spiritual retreat", of having a period of intense prayer, and of performing a series of psycho-spiritual exercises of concentration, meditation and contemplation...

How wonderful! I thought. An intimate reflection by Assagioli which is uncommonly rare to find. Of course, I am familiar with this story due to my involvement with his book *Freedom in Jail*. However, the note continued and quickly offered a surprise ...

I must say in all humility that God blessed me; he granted me the experience of the *Shechinah*, of His divine living presence. It was a high water mark in my religious life. This experience was so strong and vital that when, after a month, through the active intervention of very influential friends, I was released, at first I almost regretted it!

While in prison Assagioli had an experience of *Shechinah*! That's why the note is in the box on Judaism. Briefly, *Shechinah* (also spelled *Shekhina*, *Shekhinah*, *Shechina*, or *Schechina*) is a transliteration of the Aramaic שְׁכִינָה, a Talmudic term describing the manifestation of God's presence on earth. The word literally means 'dwelling' or 'presence'. But more on this later... For now, let's return to the note.

Then I was kept under the strict supervision of the police, who often came at night to see if I was at home and not engaged in secret revolutionary plotting. But in 1943 the persecution became more severe, and informed me [sic], in time, I took refuge in the Apennine mountains above Arezzo (between Florence and Rome). There I had a second beautiful spiritual experience which completed the previous one, the experience of human brotherhood in action. First the humble peasants of the zone hid, protected and nourished me, with deep kindness. Then a definite group was gradually formed, composed of Italian partisans, some English and American soldiers who had escaped from concentration camps, two Austrian Jews, a Slav, and a gallant English parachutist, who had come down behind the German lines. We shared all we had, food, clothing, information, mental and spiritual gifts, in a truly brotherly way. It was a wonderful experience of the nobility of human nature at its best. Roberto Assagioli

Such a beautiful testimony! And very interesting that Assagioli's experience of *Shechinah*, or God's presence in the world, occurred in two different stages – beginning when he was completely alone in his prison cell, and then nearly three years later while he was living in exile with others. In Assagioli's "Letter to Friends" dated September 1944, he humorously describes the conditions he underwent while in exile – leaking roofs, sleeping in barns, waking up to the sounds of English and German machine gunfire, and "a rich assortment of exceptional lively and resourceful local insects."¹ However, he does not mention his experience of *Shechinah*, despite it being a "high water mark" of his religious life.

Figure 2. Scehinah (da sciahèn, dimorare) / Scehinah è il "Dio immanente", lo spirito divino che è nel mondo, "Dio che è in noi". / Il Talmud, Pref. p. XVIII (Note from Assagioli's Archives, Doc #17591, Istituto di Psicosintesi, Florence) (Scehinah (from sciahèn, dwell) / Scehinah is the "immanent God," the divine spirit that is in the world, "God who is in us." / The Talmud, Pref. p. XVIII)

In the Jewish tradition, at the beginning of the Talmudic era, the word *Shechinah* meant the aspect of God that dwelt among people and could be apprehended by the senses. In rabbinic literature the *Shechinah* is said to have descended on the Tabernacle and on Solomon's Temple, as well as being one of the five things lacking in the Second Temple. The glory of God that filled the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:34) was thought of as a bright radiance, and the *Shechinah* is sometimes similarly conceived.² A multitude of scholarly articles have been written on the word, its meaning and historical context, including research on its feminine nature, as *Shechinah* in the Aramaic language is a feminine term.

The term *Shechinah* has deep roots in Jewish scripture and is connected to the experience of God's dwelling among his chosen people. "I will dwell among the children of Israel" (1 Kings 6:13). God wishes to be present especially in the Jerusalem temple: "The Lord has chosen Zion and desired it for his dwelling place" (Psalm 132:13). The Christian scriptures continue to expound on *Shechinah* in the New Testament: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14) and "We are the temple of the living God" (2 Corinthians 6:16). Both the Jewish and Christian traditions believe *Shechinah* to be a form of divine immanence and power, capable of transforming human beings and the world through God's self-revelation within the limits of space and time. In Arabic *Sakīnah* (سكينة) means "tranquility", "peace", or

¹ Roberto Assagioli. *Freedom in Jail*. Introduced, edited and annotated by Catherine Ann Lombard. Florence, Istituto di Psicosintesi, 2015, pp. 85-87.

² Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Shekhina". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, February 7, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Shekhina>.

“calm”, and in Islam, *Sakīnah* “designates a special peace, the Peace of God.” Associated with piety and moments of divine inspiration, *Sakīnah* in Islamic mysticism signifies an interior spiritual illumination.³

When you search Assagioli’s online archives for the word *Shechinah* (along with all its various spellings), you find only six entries, mostly as citations to the works of Martin Buber.⁴ Of particular interest, the word appears in an Italian translation of a German speech *Cheruth: eine Rede über Jugend und Religion* (Herut: On Youth and Religion) that Martin Buber delivered in 1918 and published in 1919 for the shell-shocked disoriented Austrian and German youth of post-World War I.⁵ Interestingly, this speech was about the freedom offered to us by God. True freedom is not wildly hedonistic and limitless in scope. Rather, true inner freedom is held within certain ethical constraints and rooted in our responsibility for our continual spiritual growth, as well as our commitment to community and God.

What also peaked my interest was Assagioli’s choice of the words ‘high water mark’ to describe his experience of *Shechinah*. This term signifies this experience was one of the highest levels or peaks of his entire religious life. Undoubtedly Assagioli experienced a revelation of joy that deeply touched him. This brief text shows that not only did Assagioli find God dwelling deep within himself as he sat alone, confined within a prison cell, but he was graced with feeling God’s presence while living through a world war, amongst an international community of exiles, in a leaky barn tucked away in the Arezzo mountains.

Acknowledgements

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Catherine Ann Lombard, M.A. is a psychosynthesis psychologist, practitioner and researcher. She has had numerous scientific and popular articles published on psychosynthesis and is currently writing a book on Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian Nobel Prize winner of Literature in 1913, from a psychosynthesis perspective. She also offers workshops and Webinars. You can follow Catherine’s bi-monthly blog at LoveAndWill.com.



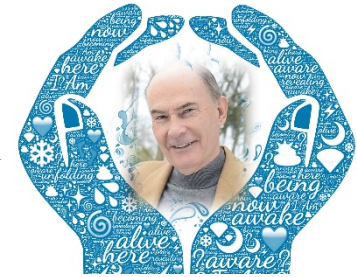
³ John L. Esposito, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*. Oxford University Press. 2004, p. 274, ISBN 9780199757268.

⁴ See Assagioli’s Archives, Doc. #9075, 17573, 17595, 17632, 17591, 18458. Istituto di Psicosintesi, www.archivioassagioli.org

⁵ Martin Buber, “*Cheruth - Discorso sui giovani e sulla religione*” a translation of “*Cheruth: eine Rede über Jugend und Religion*,” 1919. Manuscript in Assagioli’s Archives. Doc. #18458. Istituto di Psicosintesi, www.archivioassagioli.org.

Roberto Assagioli Comments on the use of Hallucinogenic Substances
In reply to a question from Isabelle Bagdasarianz-Küng ca. 1968 first version/not revised
By Isabelle Isabelle Küng

Dr Richard Schaub is editing this March 2024 AAP quarterly focusing on psychedelics.... So, I felt like surprising him and you with a fancy image combining one found on AAP's website and one where Richard's smile radiates with irresistible joy... May his smile serve as an engaging introduction to this short paper where I present, that is merely transcribe, Dr Assagioli's spontaneous answers to my question about psychedelics...



But first the context:

Between 1963 and 1974 I took a didactic training with Dr Assagioli in view of learning to teach his method of self-actualization and realization of the Essence of Being, the Self wherefrom “direct” consciousness flows to be used by the will's psychological functions to create order out of chaos, that is build a viable personality that instead of havoc creates harmony, right relations, individually and socially.

It took 10 years because I was the “havoc” type to begin with, and this meant that I offered an ideal ground (Assagioli would tell me: motivation) to learn and practice the method, while teaching it also in the Girls Private School my mother had founded... it was a pioneer work (footnote *1), but it was Assagioli's and my mother's project and both had good reasons to encourage me to achieve their aim. At the same time, I was being prepared to later run the school. This other part of the work implied coping with situations affecting all pupils, like making sure they all were fine, which implied discreet surveillance, like preventing substance abuses. Note that the latter had, so far, been unheard of in decent schools; however, with the flower power revolution that was flourishing on the other side of the Atlantic, menacing to engulf the younger generations, we could not look the other way! So, we and all school directors chose to keep our eyes wide OPEN, especially as due to the strong dollar, many students from overseas were enrolled in the various private schools all over Switzerland. The Association of school Directors of our region therefore, had organized courses (with the Police) to train us in addressing these problems in a matter of fact, yet diplomatic manner. But as to me I wanted to understand more....

This is the reason why I asked Assagioli how he considered this matter of hallucinogenic substances.

Please remember the context, namely that this was said spontaneously more than 50 years ago, and that Assagioli did not correct these notes.... He did see them, but preferred, as a doctor, avoid dealing with this subject head-on. However, he addressed the subject indirectly in his books, mostly in the one on the will (footnote *3) .

Here is the transcript of Roberto Assagioli's comments, as is. 1968 Florence, Italy.

"SOME COMMENTS ON THE USE OF HALLUCINOGENIC SUBSTANCES."

Men's “desperate attempt to transcend the limits of the so-called 'normal'.”

"From a general point of view, the now widespread use of hallucinogenic substances is the indication or evidence of an often-desperate attempt to transcend the limits of the so-called 'normal' habitual human personality and all forms of the present crystallized civilization by substituting them with those of the new era. But doing so through hallucinogenic substances is fraught with difficulties and dangers.

"In the first place, these substances should be used ((if at all)) only after adequate preparation of a mystical or spiritual kind (as the more serious and conscious people have already done) and only as an aid and to facilitate the realization of an aspiration or tendency already present before but which is known only intellectually. This "experience" must be led by a competent person with the same spiritual attitude. In these cases, the results have sometimes been positive, but they belong to a small minority.

Many “throw themselves headlong into these practices and with surprising recklessness.”

"The vast majority throw themselves headlong into these practices and with surprising recklessness and it is only an escape whose results are almost always disastrous.

"Be that as it may, there is a major objection (even for those who do so under 'optimum' conditions):

"By this means one tries to reach states of consciousness and 'higher' states by abolishing waking consciousness or, more precisely, the continuity of self-consciousness and the sense of one's own identity. But this is not only dangerous, but it is also not in accordance with true spirituality.

“The Self ... confers the consciousness of the identity of the individual and of the universal.”

As a matter of fact, the experience of the Self has this admirable thing in that it confers the consciousness of the identity of the individual and of the universal ((at the same time)), and this is what characterizes it, while at the same time being characteristic of the spiritual consciousness which not only does not lose itself or dissolve, but which proves the reality, by experiencing it, of our own conscious Being whose sphere of knowledge expands ever further towards the infinite. Obviously, the proportions of perceived and realized "individual-universal" consciousness may vary according to the type of experience. Also, whether it is attained by the yogic method or by mystical surrender, it ((this experience)) always carries these two qualities simultaneously (of "individual-universal" consciousness).

To “advocate the death of the personality, of the 'I'” “leads to the opposite of the proposed goal.” "On the other hand, with these chemical substances and by the attitude of the one who takes them, one believes that one is abolishing, ((or)) that one believes that the 'I' must be abolished, as is also the belief in certain extremist mystical movements (footnote *2) which advocate the death of the personality, of the 'I' and of all this. In this way, the opposite of the proposed goal is attained.

“The stage of self-awareness cannot be avoided.”

"To conclude these synthetic observations, I will say that the true, authentic spiritual experience is perfectly defined by the Sanskrit triple word: SAT CHIT ANANDA (Footnote *3): knowledge of the Universal Reality which confers a sense of bliss. CIT is thought, the Latin "mens" or "spirit-in-the-mind" in the sense of knowledge, of self-consciousness. SAT is the Supreme Reality and ANANDA is bliss: SAT CHIT ANANDA: "Joyful consciousness or communion with the Supreme Reality. The CIT is always necessary, indispensable even, since it is knowledge, self-consciousness. In fact, CIT is one of the conditions, because evolution always goes from unconsciousness, from mass-consciousness to self-consciousness and from there to Universal consciousness. The stage of self-awareness cannot be avoided.

End of the text dictated (but not corrected) by Roberto Assagioli in 1968 to Isabelle Bagdasarianz-Küng.

Have you noticed how Assagioli's (1968) answers confirm that he had a deep experience of the question of individual-universal consciousness, from the purely scientific point of view and as a practitioner?

This helps to recognize why he formulated his method with precisely the aim of inspiring individuals to conquer self-consciousness and experience the Essence of Being (as he calls the Self in his *Psychosynthesis: A Manual of Principles and Techniques*/1965 when discussing Self-identification) .

This is also an indication why his approach and attitude were, after having responded to the need of the patient or student, to focus, as soon as possible, on the experience of pure consciousness; for from this depends on the ability to realistically address the subject of renewing and harmonizing, let us say actualizing, with appropriate techniques and a sound approach the personal life and inter-individual relations.

And last, but not least, with this focus on becoming conscious of self, we can see that if Assagioli's method aims at enabling one to create the psychological conditions that are indispensable to guarantee a

quality of living, loving and willing that is favourable to the fulfillment of life for all, it was because he was well aware of the troubled times ahead and wanted to prepare a maximum of persons, of all walks of life, to be well tooled to do their part consciously, for humans are puppets in the absence of genuine self-awareness,



- Isabelle Clotilde Küng, Swiss, born 1944, mother of two grownups, was
1. Headmistress of an international Swiss private boarding school for girls aged 15-20
 2. Received yearly didactic training by Dr R. Assagioli for over 10 years
 3. Instructed self-educational Psychosynthesis to young adults as of 1964
 4. Now writes her memories & about the challenges of learning to teach by example

Footnote (*1) In Chapter 24 of Dr Petra Guggisberg Nocelli's Volume II of "Know, Love, Transform Yourself"/2022 Psychosynthesis books edition, she published a few of my experiences in teaching Psychosynthesis to young adults.

Footnote (*2) Per chance corroborating Assagioli's above remark on the dire misunderstanding some people fall victim of I had published in the June 2017 AAP Quarterly a paper "Fritto Misto" (a pot of fish) where Tagore vehemently warns against a Buddhist sect that denies the indissolubility between individual-universal consciousness, or "to Be". Tagore affirms at p. 179 of The Vishva-Bharati Quarterly - July 1923:

Footnote (*3) See chapter 17 The Joyous Will, p. 199-202 The Act of Will/ by Roberto Assagioli 1973 Esalen. Also mentioned in that paper in AAP's Quarterly of June 2017...

..."There is an extreme section of Buddhists who have proclaimed war to the knife against *bhava*, against *to be*. For, according to them, to continue to exist is but interminable slavery. They preach spiritual nihilism and interpret nirvana as uttermost extinction. In this respect, Tagore vigorously objects, by affirming that: "One must never accept such tyranny, for it is unalloyed evil." He adds: "The *Upanishad* however, while acknowledging the prevalence of *bhavam*, of law, in the universe, asserts that the supreme Truth is *ánandam*, the bliss which is freedom."

Isabelle Küng (born 1944) received didactic training 1963-1974 from Dr Roberto Assagioli, and was headmistress of a Swiss private boarding school where she integrated Psychosynthesis to the curriculum. Her field of expertise is self-educational Psychosynthesis, beginning with herself!



Tim's Last Trip: A Tale of Set and Setting

By Will Parfitt

Tim woke that morning knowing it was to be a special day for which he had prepared for weeks. In the past he did it carelessly, spontaneously, but today at 1.00 p.m. he would do it after weeks of preparation. He had cleansed his body of anything not one hundred per cent pure, at least as much as possible; he had exercised regularly and, most importantly, he had prepared himself for this momentous day by rigorously meditating for at least an hour every day for several weeks. His meditation wasn't just sitting either; sometimes it was just that, but often it involved a walking meditation, creative, expressive meditation, reflective contemplation and even at times dynamic meditation. The moment that he woke on this special October Sunday, he knew this was the day for the event for which he had planned so meticulously.

What was all this preparation about? Ten years previously, Tim had stopped taking psychotropics, whether natural like psilocybin mushrooms or manufactured like LSD. He had consumed these mind-expanding substances for many years prior to that time and had experienced innumerable enlightening moments, his share of terrifying, dark experiences and, mostly, many mundane, pointless hours of waiting for the effects to wear off. He felt sure that he had 'collected' enough information from these experiences to last him a lifetime of processing, and, that one day ten years previously – it has been a cool autumn Tuesday – he had just known to stop.

Now, ten years later, he was to have another trip, another journey into the world of psychotropic experience. Why? Well, partly just to find out what it was like after so long. He'd become very proficient at travelling in these realms in the past and had guided many others in their journeying and his curiosity was whether it could add anything, whether it was as good now as it used to be. The experience was awesome, frightening, it could go wrong, Tim knew that, and it was exciting, it could go so right. He put the adage that curiosity killed the cat out of his mind and set about his final preps.

Over a light breakfast, Tim discussed his plans for the day with his partner Clara. They had not been together ten years previously and he felt it was better for him to be alone so there was nothing to interfere with what needed to be a solo operation. Clara agreed to this, she wanted the best for Tim, and would spend the day with a friend. She knew Tim was very experienced and had even trained and acted as a guide for others but insisted that Tim kept his phone within reach, that she would do the same, and at any time, if he called her, she would come home – to 'his rescue', as she liked to call it. He knew – or he thought he knew – this wasn't necessary but appreciated Clara's love and support, and secretly, quietly go himself, was very grateful to have this life line.

For weeks in his pre-planning for this experience, Tim has mulled over his set and setting for the trip. 'Set' is what the participant brings to the experience, their mental, emotional and physical state, everything including expectations, pre-conceptions, the mood on the day, and so on. Tim felt confident he could be ready with his 'set' though, knowing he sometimes had unexpected bad moods, was aware of that possibility. 'Setting' is the physical environment, the place where the trip takes place and which has a significant impact on the experience for good or ill. Everything was arranged for him to have a relaxed, warm and comfortable place to enhance the potential for having a positive experience. He had created several playlists of favourite music which would be an important part of the experience and would help him along the way, offering possibilities of rousing or relaxing musical episodes as appropriate to how he felt. He didn't want the music to set the scene, he wanted it available to support whatever scene his inner connections created.

Tim knew that social support can be particularly important to the direction the experience would take and for him he knew it was best to be alone. Other people, whether they were tripping themselves or not, always brought ‘stuff’ to the experience and he didn’t want any stuff from other people – not even Clara, not for this trip anyway. He needed to be alone, to let go to whatever happened but also to control or guide the course of the experience, especially if it became tiresome or disturbing. Stress and fear, the worst of the emotions that could result in an unpleasant experience, could be avoided through a good setting but he didn’t want to cover over the dark materials that his unconscious mind might reveal. He wanted a good time but not a manicured one.

Bottom line for Tim was the knowledge that the chemical itself does not create a transcendent experience, it is more a chemical key that opens the mind and releases the nervous system from its ordinary patterns and structures. The nature of the experience depends so much on set and setting. He couldn’t do much if anything about the cultural set, the prevailing views as to what is real and which controlled the collective reality of which he was inevitably part. He knew the weather would have an impact too, but he couldn’t control that either. This was the paradox of the experience, the need to prepare thoroughly and then let go and trust.

Tim’s breakfast was followed by an hour of silent meditation, then he went for a long walk over the nearby heath. He loved to be in nature and some of his most memorable and illuminating experiences with entheogenic plants had been whilst in nature, but today he needed to be indoors. Being outside in nature was a wonderful experience when tripping, true, but he also knew that staying inside would focus the experience, make it possible for him not to be distracted by what was outside, however beautiful.

Without a doubt his past deepest spiritual connections had involved being on his own for the whole time, usually around eight or so hours. He had spent several astonishing inner journeys where he had spent hours lying on a mattress in a completely darkened room. At those times the darkness had been anything but that, instead filled with colours and creatures beyond the ordinary but more, had enabled him to connect with inner bardo states. Part of his past training included using the Tibetan Book of the Dead as a journey guide, as the whole psychedelic experience connects to the bardo states described therein.

Tim didn’t eat again but drank plenty of water to make sure he was hydrated and at 1 o’clock precisely he put the little piece of blotting paper into his mouth, wondered for an instance if he was doing something foolish and should back out now, then swallowed. There was no way back now! The 200 micrograms of LSD would take their effect within half an hour or so, usually anyway, and he was ready, sitting on a bed with paper, coloured crayons, pencils and his favourite pen. He knew not to expect anything but to be open to outcome. When the effect first kicked in, Tim didn’t notice it had started, not immediately, and as often the case, took a moment or two to orient himself and remember his intention to record what he experienced. This is what Tim wrote over the next few hours, condensed but complete.

**

Setting: Bedroom with large windows overlooking small park.

Date: 11/10/17 1300

***1st bardo - period of ego loss and non-game ecstasy**

1. Primary clear light

LIFE! I worship your energy. I receive, shaking into it like a wave, black on yellow, beauty in sound colour touch!

How did I do this before? How am I doing this now? It is a miracle, this writing, let it flow: moment by moment, slow stop, moving on, keeps going, never ending energy.

Said it all before but makes it NO LESS TRUE:

Beauty you are life! Beauty I am life!

I speak: I hear my voice, and make it flatter like the vibrant music of energy ...

Listening to *this* makes me feel vibrant. What is *this*?

The passing of moments.

2. Secondary clear light

Watching this brings tears to the eyes, for the energy is so beautiful, in its vibrating colour.

Ah! the passing of moments so slow that are caught by your beauty, then we pass and each moment ... we stop to look within you:

Stand - alone in the past – Here we are! Here we are!

***2nd bardo - period of perceptions and hallucinations**

Vision 1. Source

What's it all for? It's for itself, an unfolding, why ask questions when you are living the answer?

Flowing energy waves words yet warm.

Smiling with happiness comes as a memory – make it come NOW as an experience of here and now: STOP!

Just like then clouds pass the sun,
sometimes they are done and gone and what is left?
BLUE SPACE, FLASHING ENERGETIC WAVES OF LIFE

Normality is switched on like a t.v., tune it in,
then choose to turn it off (or on as you wish).
Always as you wish, how could it be else?

This is the voice of pure energy, so it is a miracle!
which has no voice, but LISTEN:
wondrous is this - say it: WONDROUS IS THIS:

THIS IS: everything being WONDROUS: wondrous.
Everything being born with wonder, oh goddess,
I yearn for your lips to touch mine,
the wine in my spine, joining says it all.

Merge, converge, and be yourself.

Vision 2. Internal flow/archetypal processes

Life is real then, only when I AM, yet I am going to change,
have changed, is changing – oh listen: Stop the wheel!
Such a wondrous rush of energy flowing here always, say it:
I NEED TO CONNECT.

Vision 3. Fire flow of internal unity

Ground becomes bird, the solid air is a flight path to peace;
ground becomes air, and air is fire of energy flowing, flowing...
(Speak to me now: this is your answer which you are living you need no other answer, but each
moment the radiance.

Chance? Not likely; unfoldment more likely; just is – absolutely!)

It never stops, just sometimes we choose not to see it.
Like for a lifetime of choosing not to see it – why to learn being in all
its forms completeness energy flowing,
flowing, flowing, this is, simply, it:
exquisite perfection, and utterly alien: a flower.

Vision 4. Wave vibration structure of external forms

CThe sounds and the lights are awesome and from them He emerges.

*He comes with eleven heads and a thousand arms, each with an eye in the palm, eyes looking for
and palms for giving compassion. He comes for what is left of me.*

*The partial emotions and covetous thoughts are banished and flee ...
[much time passes] Attachment to this attachment is released and I am received.*

*O nobly-born, listen carefully.
Enter the red light, the primal fire, the essence of the structures.
Sitting with this lamp for light and listening to this music of the spheres,
... enter now the realm of the rainbow buddha...
... a halo of rainbow light...*

Vision 5. Vibratory waves of external unity

And beyond and before that we exist in the stars,
bleeding stars, kala stars, heart blood, merging...
I've done it again, CONNECTED. It is through the breath.

vibrant is breath, straight is holding, go with the vibrant breath,
breathing your life alive.

Tuning in at this level is like changing galaxies that's what we would call it,
I call it just a blink, so full and vibrating, shaking.

Whose are those silver missiles in the blue?

Goddess help me, to rid ourselves of the silver streams of solidity,
hold on, hold on: a cloud is not a mass of gasses,
it is a big puffy ball that floats across the sky, and in its eye, a bird:
alarm; alarm: who is intruding here?
Peck peck, I heard a bird.

And children sing of sunshine, endless rainbows of blue cosmic energy,
we are one, we are none ...

I'm me:

me between my legs, me at the tip of my sex,
me at the centre of my belly, me at the knot of my solar centre,
me at my heart, sing free oh heart, you are heard (this time: this time)
me at my throat – the song bird is a reflection of the heart's red energy glow
me at my third eye, where I go again and again, like the blinking of an eye
(Galaxies away, remember?)
me at my crown merging again with the earth for so it is –
the earth and the crown, to be one earth, one crown:

EARTH RESPLENDENT SPLENDID LIGHT blue light of day.

Keep it to you, closer than the secrets of the heart.

Vision 6. The retinal circus

And let it flow freely for the rhythms of the music that ripples through
from there to here – or here to there, which is it? Why distinguish?

I yearn for you, my earth, to fill my hands with your warm brown blood
and drink at the cup of your plenty. We will not let them take this away.

Jump go on, jump: dive into me, I am yours, I yearn for you as you
learn from me. Your words are my words, are ONE WORD
This is it: the meaning uncovered: JUST IS THIS:
(whatever, whichever is)

Vision 7. The magic theatre

A child skipping, a dog barking, a plane tracing,
a voice speaking, a hum, a buzz of sound and sight.

Smell me, taste me, touch me, I envelop you, my child,
and manifest you in life, from myself and for myself.
I will not let them take you from me, I am yours and you are mine.
We must fight for our land, our song: come connect, this is the way to fight,
To connect be yourself, in doing what you do and, in BEING, being free...
You now remember who you were, I tell you I am older than that and wiser –
open up with me to the free-flowing blessing of my totally uninhibited blood,
from whence you all come.

***Third bardo - period of re-entry**

1. The influence of thought

STOP: LOOK: LISTEN.

Like feeling my skin stopped at flesh, and the experience of flesh is whole,
complete and unadulterated WARM WHOLENESS. Then I put on my clothing of identity and
particulars and I am no longer whole and I interrelate with the world, wanting to be whole again, when all
I have to do is stop, look, listen.

Everything comes in cycles, you cannot doubt that, but can you believe it?
Coming round again and again, no time to get off – you better believe it!
So take a look, have a listen: the blue sky is always here, the warm earth is always here: what
more is 'there'?

There IS here, ALIVE TODAY, not thy will but MY WILL for I am Thee.

2. The judgement

If you started to clean this room from the outside in,
where would you start? where would you stop?
The ultimate dilemma: the dogs stop barking, the clouds stop swirling,
a stream of consciousness goes by, unseen awake again,
but to sleep, dear sleep.

3. The sexual visions

I will to awaken my heart forever, ever; I will to awaken:
& I close my eyes & see you there, in all your forms,
my glorious goddess. Always unto you.

4. Choosing the next step

(This pen is brilliant; it even tells you to 'press and click';
this universe is brilliant, it even lets you choose when to 'press and click'.)
God knows why, I am God, so why? – for the chance of union, to heal.
Awaken my earth, my body, awaken and sing.
Not one day, why not THIS DAY TODAY!

Risk it, Risk me. You can trust in me; you can fly me!
I yearn again and again, that's why I have come today, this day.
and used it this way, and it is always true of every day,
when you stop, look, listen: inside or outside no difference,
when you stop, look, listen, you are REAL.

I'm hungry and thirsty:
I will share communion with my mother earth and my father sperm:
(and don't think about it).

**

When Clara came home in the evening she found Tim in an ecstatic state, eager to share with her the fruits of his experiment, especially the experience of entering the realm of the rainbow buddha. Clara was excited for him and very interested, but mostly just relieved everything had gone well. Her only concern was that if Tim's experience was too positive, he might start doing it more regularly and she wasn't sure if she could cope with her anxiety. Before she could express anything of this to Tim, however, he spoke to her concerns. "You know," he said reflectively as they sat together and sipped on chamomile tea, "I always knew it, that set and setting are everything to a trip. Today sometimes it felt as if I was doing all this without any chemical assistance. I kept thinking it was all in my mind anyway. I know now that's true, I won't be needing to do that again, everything I experienced came from within. That's the real message of psychotropic experience for me. Just because I'm not experiencing it at every moment doesn't mean the rainbow buddha isn't always there. At last, I'm ready to let my inner wisdom guide me."

Clara, snuggling close in to Tim, felt relieved and, in the arms of her shining buddha, knew exactly what he meant

*Will Parfitt has many years' experience in the field of personal and spiritual development including forty years as a psychotherapist. He is the author of more than twenty books, primarily on Psychosynthesis and the Kabbalah, the most recent of which is *The Magic of Psychosynthesis*, exploring the interface between Psychosynthesis and the Mystery Traditions. Will lives in England, from where, before retirement, he ran two successful distance education programmes, one on Psychosynthesis, the other Kabbalah, and travelled internationally to run teaching courses on a variety of subjects. His new book out later this year and titled *The Journey of Psychosynthesis: Lessons in Self Awareness and Making Your Best Choices* is based on the lessons from the Psychosynthesis distance programme. will@willparfitt.com*



The Planet Has Your Back

By Mark Skelding

Considering “Set and Setting¹”, usually with a wise other, often a guide or therapist, is an essential element for those preparing for a well-held journey into psychedelic therapy. “Set” is about one’s intention and purpose for the experience; “Setting” refers to elements of place and space, such as music, location, flowers, in which the experience is to occur. Such conscious preparation provides a solid foundation from which one may direct personal will in order to open to so-called “non-ordinary consciousness”.

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. (William James²).

But will is more than personal, and, as the song goes:

“once in awhile you get shown the light
in the strangest of places if you look at it right”
(Sugar Magnolia; Garcia/Hunter).

This place is all about navigating edges and endings.

The lane, overhung with oak trees, winds up from the edge of the old village. Stone walls, unchanged since Roman times, describe field edges, the ancient margins between one livelihood and another’s.

Not far to the west lies Lands End, and, just here, the rocky, scrubby point called Dodman – Dead-man – with its lonely, bare cross. Most crosses in Cornwall are of the Celtic style, cruciform overlaid with a circle, said to symbolise the marriage of Christianity with an older Wiccan spirituality. Inland, the remains of tin mines profess to pre-Christian trading with the Mediterranean, and legends of a visiting merchant, Joseph, from Judea, with his young nephew Jesus. The pair are said to have then headed up country to Glastonbury to study lore.

My childhood holidays and my parents retirement was here. Eventually, I would bring my mother’s ashes and loose them to the four winds from her beloved cliffs: edges, endings – and mysteries.

Up the old lane, the Gruder is an open, windswept plateau, commanded by an isolated, sprawling country house out of a British murder story. Just beyond, the muddy, foot-carved course of the Coastal Path zigs the zagging coastline for 600 miles, and cliffs fall steeply to the English Channel.

I had returned to sort things out at home, and help my mother prepare another bedroom for my ailing father, his illness a burden and overwhelm in the face of their mutual avoiding of the obvious. Somewhere between my boarding the plane in Auckland and arriving at Heathrow, he had taken a turn for the worse and been whisked off to the hospital wing of a local rest home.

1 <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphar.2021.619890/full>

2 William James: The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature

I began a walking habit. Each morning: to the Gruder, past the mysterious house, and around the sea-pink and heather flowered cliffs on the coastal path back to the village. Witnessed by puffins, gulls, fulmars and seals, this had become a 50 minute communion with all that a son engages as he comes to the awareness of his father's dying, and an only child acknowledges his mother's ageing.

I'd spent most of the previous three decades living in Aotearoa/New Zealand. No-one ends up so far from their roots without good reason, and yet the bonds of all that is unresolved remain strong even at such remove – or perhaps because of it.

I had recognised the damage my father had inflicted upon myself, my mother, himself and on others. I had initiated a new chapter in my own life, including therapy and subsequent retraining as a psychosynthesis guide and later teacher. For the decade since I had addressed the issues with him, his disavowal remained, a brittle half-acknowledgement, half-justification that didn't seem my fight anymore.

Previously, I had worked in communication and fundraising, latterly for wildlife conservation. Retraining had been prompted in part by the realisation that wildlife wasn't the problem, it was human behaviour, worldviews and values. Fencing off a few hundred acres – or even tens of thousands of square miles – does nothing but perhaps slow the decline. The Rio Conference had been 12 years earlier, and scenarios described then by scientist colleagues had unfolded in step with my growing concern.

Until writing this piece, I had not so clearly seen some parallels at play. On the one hand being called home to help my overwhelmed mother against what had become thoughtless expectation and cruel demands on her generosity and goodwill from my father and his denial. On the other, being aware of a desire – a need – to somehow engage and align in the necessary restoration of right relations with our planetary home, Mother Earth, in the face of rapacious exploitation, avoidance, and disavowal.

To recognise a common pattern occurring at different levels of complexity is to recognise the fractal nature of existence and our meaning-making of it. For systems thinker Nora Bateson such processes point to transcontextuality³, “the ways in which multiple contexts come together to form complex systems. It allows for a concentration on the interdependency between contexts that give resilience to both living and non-living systems.”

Bateson⁴ coins new words. “Symmathesy” describes how “mutual learning” contexts are generated “through the process of interaction between multiple variables in a living entity.”

Unrecognised by me at the time, my existential reflections on my family situation chimed with those I was formulating in regard the existential challenge facing our world. We might see this as a significant factor – or set – informing my life at that time. Being in Cornwall and with time to engage deeply, my context – or setting – was shaped by a rich range of interacting contexts, historic, cultural, ecological, familial, spiritual and more.

3 <https://norabateson.wordpress.com/2017/07/21/yes-together-intergenerational-learning/#:~:text=Transcontextual%20Description%3A%20This%20term%20refers,living%20and%20non%2Dliving%20systems.>

4 <https://norabateson.wordpress.com/2015/11/03/symmathesy-a-word-in-progress/>

But, back then, I knew nothing about “set and setting”.

it is a serious thing
just to be alive
on this fresh morning
in the broken world

Mary Oliver (2008)

It is already a stunning Autumn day, truly “a temple of golden dawn”. Edges, endings and mysteries: lets go walking.

The various daily tasks have settled together, a singular rhythm of deepening relationship with place, mother, father, absence, longing, belonging, healing, seasons, dying and more.

A maverick, restless energy informs my familiar walk up toward the headland. The season’s green, gold and brown shades sit well with the greys and silver-white mottle of lichenized rocks. Its fresh, and brightening clear, and my self is soon drawn from a mental pre-occupation into a lively occupying participative space, shared sensually with stone, heather, birds and breeze.

Past the strangely empty house, across the skin-worn, wooden stile, and onto the track along the cliffs, almost skipping, it dawns on me that this moment, these sensations, the brambles, the stile, all the hands that have touched it, and this ‘me-ness’ – including ‘my’ issue – are intimately related. Something loosens up inside me and I pause for a moment. I just want to lay back on the heather.

Lying here, looking up into the vast, puffin swooping blue, I merge in and am profoundly received. A private wonder arises, a flowing – not so much between me and something else, or even between an inside and outside, but rather a current within a much wider wholeness that involves all elements and contexts.

It’s the strangest thing: one moment, here I am, lying back, gently held in the soft heather, clouds above, waves washing on the rocks below, feeling deeply held, steady, centred within this time of profound change.

Then, with no preamble or warning, everything shifts. Suddenly, I find myself no longer looking up into the sky. Instead, I feel physically suspended, looking down and down into deep space.

I am glued to the Earth, drawn back against this solid presence, palpable, hard against my spine. I feel the rising edge of vertigo, a touch of fear too. I am exposed and vulnerable. I am part of this. Built in. And it is huge. I am tiny.

I barely find meaning. There are choices, and consequences, and the planet is indifferent, huge, and I am tiny. But I can choose to remain aware, which I do, trusting the rock-solidness of this moment, and that changes everything.

There’s no word that describes an aural felt-sense filling the universe like calm, blue sonic treacle, as far as I know, but that is what happens now, chiming “The planet has your back”.

Complete relax and out-wide stretching, wonderfilling ancient cliff is bone of bone, my senses are the ground, a tiny point of distinct-not-separate awareness within the biggest context never owned.

How long? Here, there and when...

And, in due course, the walking homeward ... the steep path down from the stile to the roadway in the village, pausing in the iconic bakery where Barbara is ever-welcoming, and Ralph waves from the back through a miasma a flour dust...

Aldous Huxley⁵ described his mescaline experience as "a gratuitous grace," not necessary to salvation but potentially helpful... shaken out of the ruts of ordinary perception ... directly and unconditionally, by Mind at Large—this is an experience of inestimable value...".

That "gratuitous grace" has enabled me to risk and stretch and dare myself to step up, even when I have felt unsure alone or vulnerable. To know, viscerally, that the planet and my back are part of one intelligence has meant encountering the limits of my knowledge, capacity or courage. It helps me check my motives, intention and alignment, and, most of all, to build trust in a greater-than-human process.

In the participative spirit of Mind-at-large I have felt encouraged, guided, comforted and corrected in a process that has taken me deeply into ecopsychology, social ecology, community engagement and psychologically-informed activism (Skelding, Tudor, Price-Robertson⁶).

In that participative spirit I become purpose-full.

Making Sense of the Experience

Will Parfitt⁷ does not shy from the esoteric foundations of Psychosynthesis, respectfully opening the so-called "wall of silence" to sound the space beyond, much as a sailor "sounds" the depth of unfamiliar waters. He is especially attentive to magick: "the science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with the will" (quoting Crowley⁸). The magician's art, says Parfitt (p187), "is in learning how to develop your own self-actualisation... To attain this you have to align yourself with the flow of natural energies and harmonise your existence with the natural world. This leads to a co-operative use of power...".

For Assagioli⁹: "...it involves a drastic transmutation of the normal elements of the personality, an awakening of personalities hitherto dormant, a raising of consciousness to new realms, and a functioning along a new inner dimension."

These ingredients are likely familiar to many of us who have taken psilocybin, ayahuasca, LSD, mescaline or the like. Whether ostensibly for fun or for therapy, voluntarily ingesting a substance is an act of "personal will" – or, more correctly, Will expressing at the level of the individual. Differentiating Will

5 Aldous Huxley. *The Doors of Perception*.

6 <https://www.britishgestaltjournal.com/shop/volume-31-2-2022>

7 Will Parfitt; *The Magic of Psychosynthesis*.

8 Aleister Crowley, [The Book of Thoth](#)

9 [https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?](https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=71f9b4d47b0d1ca921fb68e4ea56a97debf1fdff#:~:text=It%20involves%20a%20dra)

[repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=71f9b4d47b0d1ca921fb68e4ea56a97debf1fdff#:~:text=It%20involves%20a%20dra](https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=71f9b4d47b0d1ca921fb68e4ea56a97debf1fdff#:~:text=It%20involves%20a%20dra)
[stic%20transmutation,along%20a%20new%20inner%20dimension.](https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=71f9b4d47b0d1ca921fb68e4ea56a97debf1fdff#:~:text=It%20involves%20a%20dra)

into various levels – personal, transpersonal, Universal etc – is a little like distinctions between straits, gulf, and bay: useful as a way of giving context to the sailor, and its all the same ocean.

Nora Bateson writes¹⁰: “Contexts are mixing as they are informing, transferring, melting together cognition. Go with multiple description into the landscape in which none of the maps apply.... Your health is a measurement not of your vitals but of your ability to perceive and give vitality to the overlapping living processes around you, beyond you, within you. The transcontextual work is there, waiting”.

Talking to Sam Keen¹¹, Assagioli stressed the importance of understanding and engaging with the levels of context, each an expression of will. “Like it or not, everyone is a part of the universal will and must somehow tune in and willingly participate in the rhythms of universal life.” His comment points to direct relationships between our sensing selves, universal will, and the rhythms of universal life expressing in every moment. Whilst personal will is the driving force in incidents of formal “psychedelic therapy”, access to “non-ordinary consciousness” can arise from any of the three elements mentioned: the part (ourselves), the rhythms in the moment (context/setting) and the overall process of the whole (universal will – set).

I suspect that such moments are very available. Changes to the rhythms of our lives caused by significant events – moon landing, 9/11, natural world encounters, and most often the death and birth of loved ones – can lead to the parting of James’ “flimsy screens” as familiar rhythms are interrupted. Such interruptions, when not integrated, can lead to trauma. Psychedelic trauma therapy may be so effective because it contextualizes ordinary consciousness, and its interruption, within a bigger frame, enabling integration and learning.

Back to Set and Setting

I don’t see my experience on the cliffs that day as a “psychotic break” from reality. Rather, I see it as a moment where James’ “filmy veils” parted, less a moment of insight, but one of seeing. The seeing was tempered by my set – existential wonderings in the face of death and life, and immediate, practical familial concerns - and setting - spacious, familiar, steeped in generations of my ancestry. These were also reflective of much inclusive, global and psychospiritual matters, and how to integrate these in my life. It makes sense to me, therefore, that a self-affirming experience also invited me to step up to greater service.

Insight came later, as I read and learned more, and recognised energies at play such as those described in Assagioli’s 1973 paper¹² quoting physicist Sir James Jeans, “the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine”.

Psychosynthesis guide and teacher, Tom Yeomans reminds us to keep our thinking fresh¹³ “there are aspects of Psychosynthesis that we have outgrown and are now obsolete...aspects that have not yet received sufficient attention. And there are new principles that are still emerging. As life on earth evolves and changes, so do the ways in which we support and nurture it.... We need to contact the Higher Self through transcendence and we need to ground and express the Higher Self through descendance. “

10 <https://norabateson.wordpress.com/2019/02/05/the-salt-in-the-broth-warm-data-and-systems-change/>

11 <https://kennethsorensen.dk/en/the-golden-mean-of-roberto-assagioli/>

12 <https://kennethsorensen.dk/en/new-dimensions-psychology-third-fourth-fifth-forces-roberto-assagioli-m-d/>

13 <https://www.synthesiscenter.org/PDF/Tom%27s%20pdfs/OCN10-Descend-of-the-Higher-Self.pdf>

The psychedelic experience, whether via ingestion or simply tumbling in, gives us visceral insight into these patterns and processes. Like Neo in *The Matrix*, being able to “see the code” at work means one can work with the process, aligning tool-using self-reflective consciousness within the burgeoning, intelligent complexity of the whole.

We make meaning from our glimpse of the code at work at the level of our own capacity and creative style – which is why we need to share experience and reflections. Some seek to squeeze the insights into a scientific-materialist box – or denounce them as psychosis, fantasy or “pseudo-science; others see the processes in terms of “God at work”. There are those who will seek to personalise Gaia, and others will vehemently argue against this. All these positions have value, contributing to what Gregory Bateson termed “an ecology of Mind”. He recommended that this be approached with “a curiosity about the world of which we are a part. The rewards of such work are not power, but beauty”¹⁴.

William James continued *“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... Yet they may determine attitudes though they cannot furnish formulas, and open a region though they fail to give a map. At any rate, they forbid a premature closing of our accounts with reality.”*

Our accounts are in arrears; we are being called back from the higher horses of transcendence, to disidentify yet re-align our embodied experience and reflective capacity within a creative planetary intelligence, and rediscover Self firmly within the fluid pattern of Being.

Dan Siegel has offered the term “mWe” for how we might name an integrated, interconnected self-sense. Building upon this in the context of Gaia Theory, we lack a term for the synthesis of individual and planetary self-conscious awareness. Woodbury (2024) has suggested “iGaia”. If this is a little too Apple, perhaps the more Rasta sensibility of “I n’ Gaia” captures the playful both/and of whole/soul/swhole being.

No matter what we call it, our Presence is invited, bone on rock as we dare to address the vastness of the moment, and, with the reassurance that “the planet has our back” we are called to step up.

Mark has been a Psychosynthesis guide for 25 years. He trained, and later taught, with the Institute of Psychosynthesis in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In addition to maintaining an in-person and online practice, these days Mark lives and works in British Columbia, and is involved with the Climate Psychology Alliance (Nth America) as well as AAP. Mark also has a Masters in Social Ecology and is trained in the Work That Reconnects. He is deeply committed to how social justice and the principles of Deep Ecology align, support and expand principles and insights of Psychosynthesis to address the eco-social and psychospiritual predicament of our times. He is always up for a conversation about these matters, and people can reach him on: solidair@zoho.com.



14 Gregory Bateson: Towards An Ecology of Mind.

Getting High Helped Me Heal

By Zachary Rapport

I'm 6-years-old. My family is dysfunctional. Living with them is like being a soldier fighting a war. Soldiers fighting a war come across situations that physically wound and psychologically traumatize them. Some return to civilian life tormented by their memories of the war.

I write a poem to express my experiences:

Memories

Memories haunt me –
experiences from the past.
They come and taunt me –
a dark shadow they cast.

And there's another . . .
It's a memory of my mother
That one was bad . . .
It's a memory of dad.

As if happening in the present,
I experience the sight and feel.
These memories are unpleasant,
When will I heal?!

I can't keep living this way. I need to get myself out-of-pain.

I put myself on a meditation program. I meditate twice a day (as soon as I wake up and just before I go to sleep). I lay on my back and focus my attention on my breathing. I listen to meditation music for 20 minutes.

During each meditation, my body relaxes. I feel a sense of peace and love. I get a buzz. I'm high! I experience this high for much of the day.

I add other types of meditations (Buddhist, guided imagery, progressive relaxation, etc.). Over time, I experience the buzz more quickly and more intensely.

As I deepen my practice, I sometimes experience intense emotional discomfort. It's so intense, I howl like a wolf. Still, I do not stop meditating. I continue to meditate. I face the discomfort. I fully experience it. I believe this deeper meditation is bringing something into my awareness that was previously less unconscious.

As I address the issues of which I am now aware, they heal. My meditations are bringing me pleasure again.

Zachary Rapport completed his training in Psychosynthesis with Molly Young Brown. He spends his free time hiking in the state and national parks.

How a Peak Spiritual Experience Connected Me with My Soul Self

by Jodie Gale MA. Psychosynthesis

A Peak Experience

On the rugged South-West Coast of Ireland, there is a small fishing village called Dingle. It was here that I had what Abraham Maslow, the father of Humanistic Psychology, called a 'peak experience.' I was swimming with Fungi, a wild bottlenose dolphin who lived in Dingle Harbour from 1980 until 2020.

Maslow described peak experiences as “rare, exciting, oceanic, deeply moving, exhilarating, elevating experiences that generate an advanced form of perceiving reality, and are even mystic and magical in their effect upon the experimenter.” Peak experiences are life’s most joyful moments, the 'AHA' moments, the ecstatic moments, and moments of rapture.

A turning point

Having a peak spiritual experience was the turning point in my recovery from an eating disorder and drug addiction. I had suffered from the highs and lows of yo-yo dieting and bulimia for 15 years and LSD and amphetamines for 10 years. My self-worth was at an all-time low. I was consumed by self-loathing and on a path of complete self-destruction. I had read that extensive EEG recordings demonstrate dramatic changes in the brainwaves of people before and after a dolphin swim, and that this research provided possible explanations for changes in mind, body, and spirit observed in people who encounter dolphins (De Bergerac, 1998). The more I researched, the more stories I came across. I learned that swimming with wild dolphins had therapeutic and health benefits for those suffering from addictions and other major health concerns.

From the first moment that Fungi, the wild dolphin, swam by me and looked me in the eye, I experienced a sense of inner knowingness and peace that, up until that moment, I had never experienced before. I felt seen, accepted, and loved unconditionally – like I could just be my true self for the first time. I felt a natural high that couldn't be matched through the hedonistic, rave culture lifestyle that I had been living in London.

In 'The Dolphin Within: Awakening Human Potential,' the book that I read which started this whole journey, Olivia De Bergerac writes, “Such experiences are much sweeter than chocolate or drugs.” Swimming with Fungi, the wild dolphin, awakened something in me – I now know this to be my Soul Self.

Motivation To Heal

When I returned to London, I immediately searched for an eating disorder therapist. I had a few false starts with medical model-oriented professionals. Eventually, I found a Psychosynthesis psychotherapist I felt I could grow to trust. While swimming with Fungi was the catalyst for my recovery, it was my weekly, psycho-spiritual depth psychotherapy that helped ground my peak experience and supported me in my long-term recovery.

My therapist had lived experience of an eating disorder and had recovered. I believe this to be a crucial aspect in me being able to trust her. I just knew that she knew what it felt like. We spent many hours integrating my peak spiritual experience and discussing wild dolphin behaviours. For example, my therapist asked, “Does Fungi worry about how much he has eaten today?” And, “Does Fungi worry about what he looks like?” I would laugh and say, “of course not!”

Through the long-term psychotherapy relationship, and using Fungi as an external unifying centre, my therapist provided me with a safe and secure base. She provided me with a sacred space. With her years of love and unconditional positive regard, I was able to put my eating disorder and my drug addiction out of a job. I have been recovered for over 25 years.

The Long Road Home

Depth psychotherapy wasn't easy. It wasn't a quick fix either. I had to get to know and process my early childhood wounds and recover the deeply split-off parts of myself that, for whatever reason, had to go into hiding. I had to recognise, accept, and build a relationship with the parts that I abused, doubted, and loathed. I had to heal the deep shame I had experienced, and I had to stop shaming myself with my harsh inner critic, which I had internalised from my family, environment, and culture.

Therapy assisted me in fostering healthier parts of myself, such as the internal nourishing mother, the healthy inner father, and my Soul Self. Psychotherapy was a profoundly deep and nourishing journey of the Soul.

By connecting with my Soul Self, it taught me that I am so much more than my body. My body is the home for my Soul, and as I recovered, I learned to respect and care for my body. I came to realise that it is the only one I have.

Carolyn Costin, an eating disorder psychotherapist, founder of Monte Nido Recovery Centre, and the Carolyn Costin Eating Disorder Coaching Institute, says that connecting with the Soul Self is a crucial element of becoming fully recovered. We redirect our focus from the trappings of the ego towards what really matters in life. Carolyn writes, "Think of your eating disorder self and your Soul Self: the one you feed will be the strongest. Getting better is about feeding or strengthening your Soul Self."

Connecting with the Soul Self is an ongoing process. Medical treatment and rehab may be essential for early recovery; however, it's our Soul work that will help us to fully recover and stay recovered. In Psychosynthesis psychotherapy, the therapist always asks, "What makes your heart sing?" This is a really great question to start connecting with the Soul Self, and to come home to one's true self.

Connecting with Soul Self

My connection with Soul Self started with my wild dolphin, peak spiritual experience. For others, it could be through spiritual or religious practice, connecting with Country, standing on the top of a mountain, dancing, surfing, yoga, meditating, journaling, reading a good novel, visiting art galleries, or the theatre. Whether it is an eating disorder or an addiction, to recover, connection with the Soul Self is the key. And always remember, whatever your Soul calls for – do that!"

This updated article originally appeared on Recovery Warriors.

<https://recoverywarriors.com/how-a-peak-spiritual-experience-connected-me-with-my-true-self/>



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Bio

Jodie is an Eco-Psycho-Spiritual Registered Clinical Psychotherapist, practising on Gayamaygal & Gadigal Country (the Northern Beaches of Sydney in Australia). She is the founder of Trauma Warriors <https://www.traumawarriors.online/>, an online healing space for women, trauma, disordered eating & the trance of unworthiness. Jodie also helps therapists to build thriving private practices via business coaching at The Psychosynthesis Centre <https://psychosynthesis.online/>

Connection By Shamai Gabbay

I walk in the valley, and look to the sky. I am, therefore, I will be, and have always been. What does it mean to exist?

I swim in a sea of tranquility, once storming, now silent. Life is about the living, and the dying can wait until the living has passed.

I am, therefore, I was, therefore, I still am

As parts of the whole we walk, and do, and be. But what does that mean? It means that separate, I am, together we live in harmony, a voice to be reckoned with. The voices of the many, working towards wholeness, being and doing as together we live. The many becoming the whole...of life.

I am, therefore I used to be, therefore, I still am

What does it mean to be whole? To walk, as one? To breathe in harmony with the All.
I can, therefore I will be, therefore all is made better...by breathing..and I am

We connect through our lived experiences, our ability to take in, and put out..breathe. All will be made clear.

I am, therefore, I will be, therefore I always was..and I live

From the depths of our being comes the wisdom of knowing, of knowledge, of lived experience, of all that we have been, and will continue to be.

All of me breaths in harmony, as one, as a whole..and then

Parts of me fall away, no longer needed, decayed and past their prime
And I understand, and I acknowledge, and I accept

All is made beautiful. From the depths of my being, I am whole, have always been whole, live as One..and, I thought, and I imagined, and I created, and I forgot

That I am whole, and perfect, just the way I am

And so, we build our lives, and live our lives, and experience our lives, and believe the experiences of the self.

And I believe, and I have lived, and I have wondered

There is more to me than I know, and experience, and believe. It is my guiding force, always aware, ever present, always whole, forever me, and I am that.

1/12/23

Shamai 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. Now in her senior years, Shamai has immersed herself in the arts and has had her work displayed in many local shows. Shamai has presented at numerous conferences, has been published in many peer review journals, and is the author of Meaghan's Story

Do We Need Additional Resources to Grow?

Psychosynthesis in Practice: Expanding, Deepening and Growing Oneself

By Ewa Danuta Bialek

When I look back from the perspective of almost 30 years of practicing psychosynthesis, I realize the vastness of the space it has opened up in me. It is immeasurable and is constantly deepening and widening, also growing. I have the impression that it is turning on. It never stops, but embracing and centering. When I read descriptions of experiences using consciousness-expanding drugs, I have the impression that they show some deeper element of consciousness. But after metabolizing them, consciousness returns to its previous state, although the memory of insight remains.

Practicing psychosynthesis, we are constantly moving through space and time. We reach similar spaces, but we don't stop there, but the next time we set off from where we left off viewing. This is important because it is not some kind of journey only into the unknown to view it and come back, but more like starting from the center point, looking deeper or higher. From there we move concentrically and always return to the center.

Of course, practice makes perfect, as many people only have the sensation of reaching the next point. However, it is not concentric, and hence, their purpose or mission doesn't falter or shift, but they move in a single direction, creating a not harmonious growth.

In practicing psychosynthesis, its depths, and heights, one never loses sight of the center and source of one's identity. It embraces it, constantly forming one whole, embracing more and more, farther and deeper. So we lose nothing, but centering, attaching to the wholeness of me, with me, and me with the world, with my purpose. These are much deeper spaces of understanding and experiencing, the oneness of everything with everything. There is no separation. Thus, this kind of experience becomes fullness, having some definite inner order, coherence, and depth, as well as a space of growth. This kind of experience never loses its multidimensionality.

Ewa Danuta Bialek Ph.D - .scientist in the field of medicine (doctoral dissertation in immunology, specialization in clinical diagnosis). She completed postgraduate studies in psychology (Summit University, USA) and a number of courses in Psychosynthesis (J. W. Cullen, V. King, J. Truch, M. Petersen, R. Kea, Psychosynthesis Coach Training and Coaching for Personal Well-Being - D. Firman). In 1997 she founded Association "Education for the Future" and in 2004 – the Institute of Psychosynthesis in Warsaw, Poland. She is an authoress of 43 books and 80 scientific articles, concerning application of psychosynthesis.

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Three Paintings By Gillian McConnell

My intent was not to present standard images, but rather to challenge the viewers to pay attention to what they what they see.

The interpretation of the faces varies from person to person, and requires the viewer to determine what image is reflected back to them, in much the same way a psychedelic reaction is not codified to be a singular response, but rather a construction of the mind. My intent was not to present standard images, but rather to challenge viewers to pay attention to what they See.

My abstract expressionism art seeks to provoke the viewer's imagination. Inspired by recent events, gender fluidity, Indigenous body painting, and the work of Jean-Michel Basquiat and Roy Lichtenstein, my current output consists of faces and relationships that explore the notion that mishaps are essential to the finished piece and that the problems we confront form the foundation of who we become. Faces fascinate me, because of what goes on behind the outside expression.

I work mainly in acrylics on canvas or wood, with some oil pastels and found objects. The paintings I sent were all done within the last couple of months.



BEST FRIENDS
Acrylic on wood
Two faces coloured background



WIND TALK
Acrylic on canvas

Two faces in profile, interacting with each other with windy background



SCRAMBLED
Acrylic on wood.

Monochromatic relief, silver and black.

Two faces front and profile,
though different people have seen very different things in this work.



I attended art school in the UK and moved to Canada shortly afterwards. I taught dress design at St. Lawrence College in Kingston, Ontario, then moved to Montreal and designed clothing for several companies. While in Montreal I volunteered with the dying and this led me to studying psychosynthesis. I set up a small practice. I now live in Toronto, and again, have set up a small practice. Over the years, I've been painting on and off.

*Cheers,
Gillian*

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<http://www.gillianmcconnell.ca/gillianmcconnell.ca/INTRODUCTION.html>

The Higher Unconscious in Clinical Practice

By Richard Schaub PhD, Bonney Gulino Schaub RN, MS, Barry Simon MD

Introduction

There is a growing body of medical research on the use of psychedelic drugs for seriously ill patients. Patients with Stage 4 cancer, severe depression and anxiety, addictions, and other challenging diagnoses are being given psilocybin, ketamine, and other psychedelics to evoke altered states of consciousness (ASC) in which they experience release from fear and entry into spiritual states of consciousness (Bogenshutz et al., 2015; Carhart-Harris & Goodwin, 2017; Davis et al., 2021; Dyck, 2018; Griffiths et al., 2016; Lowe et al., 2021; Nobile et al., 2020; Ross et al., 2016).

This medicinal use of psychedelic drugs is not being promoted by some fringe group. World-famous medical schools and research centers—NYU, Harvard, Stanford, Oxford, Yale, UCLA, Johns Hopkins—are opening psychedelic medicine centers, administering these drugs to their patients, and getting major funding to do so. As one group of researchers put it, “a door has been opened for the medical repurposing of psychedelics” (Carhart-Harris & Goodwin, 2017).

This article does not dispute the efficacy of psychedelic medicine and psychedelic experiences, but rather advocates that interested professionals can also explore drug-free options, including psychosynthesis, leading to the same breakthrough results.

The Psychedelic Experience

There are increasing numbers of testimonials from both patients and health professionals about the potentials of psychedelic experience (see, for example, Penn, Rosa, Phelps et al, 2021).

What is happening? Drugs previously associated with illegal use by “hippies” in the 1960s are now being prescribed off-label by physicians and nurse practitioners to help patients in the most dire medical circumstances. But there is an important distinction in these prescriptive practices: psychedelic drugs are not researched, tested or intended for any medical treatment. They are not designed to cure or even alleviate anyone of any physical symptoms. Instead, they are a psychological treatment—or, more accurately, a psychospiritual treatment of a medical illness. Their treatment effect is to awaken the brain/mind to new perceptions about reality (Dossey, 2012). As with any other brain/mind perception, psychedelic perceptions in turn have effects on emotions. In their post-psychedelic experience, patients report feeling relief from distress (NYU Langone, 2016) and are more able to deal with their illness and, in some cases, with their impending death.

The alleviation of anxiety and depression in mental health practice through the use of psychedelic drugs has also received significant research interest (see, for example, Penn, Rosa, Phelps et al, 2022). This research represents a clear alternative to the more commonly prescribed drugs for major depression, anxiety disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorders.

Our view is 1) the psychedelic experience can bring valuable release from fear and that, 2) such experiences can be evoked without drugs. To distinguish our work from the psychedelic movement, we call such experiences moments when the higher unconscious becomes conscious.

As with all such descriptions, this language is an attempt to report what are non-measurable internal experiences. However, the methods' effectiveness can be observed and measured in the results, i.e., their direct clinical benefit to patients. What follows are two case studies in which psychedelic-like experiences evoked release from fear.

Case Study: Joseph

Joseph was a 14-year-old boy brought to the teaching hospital's short-term counseling center by his father. The father described that his son had gone from being a well-behaved high school freshmen with excellent grades to a rageful and rebellious truant on the verge of being expelled from school. The change in Joseph had a clear-cut precipitating event. Born with hypospadias, a birth defect distorting the shape and growth of the penis, Joseph recently had yet another unsuccessful surgical intervention.

After finishing the intake interview, the father was asked to leave the room. Joseph glared at the therapist but became receptive when he was asked if anything was going okay in his life. He talked about his love of long-distance running and being part of the high school cross-country team. The tricky part for him was returning after a run to the school gym's locker room where the other boys were undressing and taking showers. To prevent the humiliation of undressing and the other boys staring at his malformed penis, he had created a story about the importance of staying sweaty. Whatever the others thought, the story allowed him to leave the locker room fully dressed in his running clothes.

The therapist told Joseph that was going to introduce him to clinical imagery. He asked Joseph to close his eyes and to let himself be held by the chair. He was then asked to imagine himself on one of his cross-country runs. After waiting a few seconds, Joseph was then asked to arrive at a place on his run where he really liked it...and then to slow down the imagery and to really savor it. With clinical imagery work, there is no way for the therapist to know what is happening inside the other person's mind, emotions and body – but suddenly there was a beaming fourteen year old sitting with eyes closed, tears streaming down his face and generating a deep peace into the office. When he opened his eyes, he made direct eye contact with the therapist and smiled. What had happened?

In his imagination, he had slowed down his run just as he turned a corner to a place with a giant tree. With the sun blazing on the leaves, the tree became "alive" with light and, suddenly, the fourteen year old merged into the light and into a state of quietly pervading joy. In psychosynthesis terminology, he had entered into his higher unconscious.

Little more was said between us, and he was never seen again. A week later, his father called and asked what drugs we were giving his son. "He is like a different kid," the father said and reported that his son has happily gone back to school as the good student and good friend he used to be. (We appreciate that the reader can, or cannot, accept the dramatic outcome of this case, but it is true.)

Case Study: Ray

A second case example of the higher unconscious mind interacting with traumatic states was Ray, a 60-year-old man hospitalized with a seemingly undiagnosable medical condition. It was “undiagnosable” because HIV-AIDS had not yet been identified as a medical entity. Ray’s symptoms did resemble those of some other patients who were being diagnosed with “gay cancer,” i.e., a particular kind of “cancer” that seemed exclusive to ill gay men. But this diagnosis did not apply to the 60-year-old: he was an apparent heterosexual with a wife and three children and a business leader in his community.

He reported to the unit nurse that he was “going crazy,” would accept no psychiatric medication, and wanted to be “hypnotized out of here.” The nurse was studying psychosynthesis and clinical meditation and imagery (CMI) with the authors and asked that one of us see the patient for a “hypnosis” consult. Entering the patient’s private room, the sight was of a big man with his blankets pulled up to his eyes and shivering with fear. On hearing that he was about to be hypnotized, the patient said, “Do it to me!”

He wasn’t hypnotized. Using a psychosynthesis technique (Schaub & Schaub, 2014; Assagioli, 1964), he was guided in his imagination onto a road where he would meet a wisdom figure of any kind and to ask the wise figure what to do. There was no more guidance. The patient’s closed eyelids began to flutter, a sign that vivid inner imagery is taking place. After about a minute, the patient opened his eyes, wet with tears, and announced, “I don’t know who the hell you are, but I am going to tell you something nobody else knows.”

First, let us take in the inner experience he had, and then the outcome. On that imaginary road, he met the classic wizard figure in flowing red robes and a large, pointed hat. Asking the wisdom figure what he should do in his horrible situation, the figure responded by bringing a jug out of his robe and, very slowly and dramatically, pulling the cork out of the jug. As he did so, the wisdom figure said with authority, “Pull the cork and let the secrets out.”

The words sent a surge of surprise, relief and gratitude through the patient. Gratitude for what or for whom – he didn’t know: he just felt the warmth of it. Turning toward the therapist who was supposed to hypnotize him, the patient began to describe the secrets “nobody else knows.”

He had fought off homosexual feelings for a long time, but a few years into his marriage he began to lead a “double life,” illicitly meeting men in public bathrooms for quick sex. He did this in Manhattan many miles away from his suburban home so that hopefully no one would recognize him. As he let the

Two months later, the therapist received a letter from the patient now at home describing the process of telling his wife about his secrets. It was very painful but, paradoxically, the long-time absence of sex in their marriage may have protected his wife from getting infected with what his diagnosis eventually became, HIV-AIDS, from which he died one year later. Moreover, his revealed “secrets” became for his wife an understanding of something she had long felt in her marriage but did not want to name.

The purpose of his life, in the midst of a terrible crisis, became to tell the truth and to let the truth free him and his wife, and the purpose of the young runner’s life showed up in a note received three years later: “I don’t know if you remember me, but I’m now in college studying psychology. Thanks.”

Summary

Spirituality is a natural human trait. For some, spiritual experiences are available through religion. Increasingly, however, the population trends are toward decreased religious affiliation and decreased religious activity, especially among young adults (Gallup Poll, 2019). This creates the growing picture of a religion-indifferent secular population who, if naturally drawn to or in need of spiritual experiences, may seek them through the use of psychedelic drugs. Knowledge of the innate higher unconscious, central to psychosynthesis, provides health professionals with a map and methods for evoking the natural spiritual dimension in our patients.

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Strange but True

By Peter Stewart

Sometimes reality is as strange as fiction. Several years ago, I contributed to a UK-based publication which sought real life anecdotes written in the style of the mystery writer and novelist Paul Auster, whose stories are often concerned with the human search for identity and personal meaning.

The following three ultra-short stories, which I wrote in 2015, were published in *True Tales from the Old Hill* by Frogmore Press, in association with the Centre for Life History and Life Writing Research at the University of Sussex. The cover design is by Eva Bodinet.



Jeremy Page, editor of *True Tales*, said:

“We were interested in anecdotes that reveal the mysterious and unknowable forces in our lives, in our family histories, in our minds and bodies, in our souls. In other words, true stories that sound like fiction”¹.

Roberto Assagioli believed that understanding our human interest in mystery and the unknown was vital to understanding many manifestations of contemporary society.

In *Psychological Mountaineering*, he wrote of “the pull exerted by the unknown, the extraordinary, the mysterious, which has always spurred human beings on to exploration, conquest, knowledge of the new, of that which is beyond”².

Assagioli likened this quest to the journey of Ulysses in Homer’s epic poem *The Odyssey*. But he also describes the many pitfalls that attend the spiritual quest. “In our times, this urge is manifest in the extraordinary experiences people seek, using any means available including drugs”.

As a writer, I have always been fascinated by the borderlines between fiction and non-fiction, and the capacity of narrative to transcend everyday life and turn it into a realm of myth and magic. I have tried to explore these liminal territories through the use of the imagination, rather than substances, and hope these short narratives are of some interest to readers of the AAP quarterly.

My first “strange but true” story involves a bizarre coincidence that happened when I was with my daughter:

Writing a Poem with my Daughter

My daughter was upset that I was about to quit my job. She stomped up to the studio at the bottom of the garden where I worked, on the rare day when I didn't commute in to London. She demanded to know why.

It was April, T S Eliot's 'cruellest month'. When I asked Emily what the problem was, she spread her hands and hunched up her shoulders in a sarcastic way, as if it was obvious and only I couldn't see it.

'Money?' she asked.

She was only six, so it was difficult to explain to her that I was always about to quit my job in spring. It was a perennial thing, the decision was invariably resisted, usually on the grounds identified by my daughter, and I would keep on going in.

I said to her, 'I need to have more time for creative things. Like writing poetry.'

¹ *True Tales from the Old Hill*, edited by Jeremy Page (The Frogmore Press, 2015)

² *Psychological Mountaineering*, in *Transpersonal Development* by Roberto Assagioli (Smiling Wisdom, 2007)

She looked at me with her lovely brown eyes, and said brightly: 'I know, let's write a poem.' I asked her what she wanted to write about, let's write a poem about a butterfly.'

She got herself set up on my lap, perched in front of the big wooden desk that I had bought when my gran was still alive. It had cost me £30 from York Road market in Southend, when I was in my late teens, and I still had it. I reached down to the drawer, which nowadays didn't quite fit, where I kept my stationery. As usual, I had to yank it hard to get it open.

We were astonished to see a large brightly-coloured peacock float up out of the drawer like a genie emerging from a bottle.

Years later we took on a psychic woman to help relieve stress at the office by providing reflexology massage to the staff. One day, I told her about the butterfly in the drawer and the poem, and she said that things like that have meaning.

'You should listen,' she said.

The next "strange but true" narrative is an account of my daily walk down to the railway station on my journey into work. I tried to capture the weird, other worldly feel of my home town in the early morning, with the streets largely deserted:

The Commuter's Tale

The alarm sounds at 05.29 and then again more insistently at 05.45.

Photons from my iPhone flood the dark room. I contemplate the fact that they are both particle and wave at the same time, and that they have no mass.

Today, I set myself the goal of getting out of bed by 05.48. When I'm tired, I cut myself some slack, and my goal is 05.51.

For some reason, I prefer not to set my alarms to round numbers. It seems too symmetrical for them to be at 05.30,06.00,06.30. So I like to make it all a bit irregular.

I shower and shave, not necessarily in that order.

Typically, it requires 180 or 190 strokes of my safety razor. I know this, because I have counted. The newspaper Metro tells me the national average is 155.

I feel the warm water of the shower and then I feel a deep gratitude within. I always stay a few minutes longer than I need.

The bedroom is still dark when I leave the house at 06.18. I say, 'Have a nice da/', even though I know that no one is awake.

Between my house and the railway station are approximately 2,520 paces. I know this, because I have counted. My iPhone confirms this.

Between November and February, I walk to work in darkness; and from March through to October, it's light.

Today, a thin light filters through the stripped branches of the maple trees and alders.

The sun lurks cheerily like a tub of molten gold behind Mount Caburn. The castle is silhouetted by the flooding suffusion of photons.

A jogger with her dog is trotting towards me as I walk down Western Road. I step out onto the road to emphasize that I respect her effort, and am not a threat.

Almost always you hear birds, just different ones. The familiar staccato clicks of the sparrows, the irritable mellifluousness of the robin, the fondant sounds of blackbirds.

I don't have a favourite season, but spring is always difficult.

Each day, I notice something different as I walk down towards the High Street. Some scientists believe that this is what consciousness is.

In particular, I notice the traffic lights changing at the bottleneck, as I go past Shelley's hotel. In the winter they are often shrouded in a fine mist. They look beautiful as they change from green to red through orange.

Each day I go by, I wonder why two red Wellington boots are in someone's front window with a broken Chinese vase.

The sign on the front door of Lloyds Bank says that the branch is closed for refurbishment and will reopen soon. A sign on the window says, 'This branch will not be reopening'. My mind speculates idly about what has prompted this apparent contradiction.

I notice crows scrabbling for food in the black bin bags that have been left out for collection along Station Street.

And then from the birch trees above Southover Street a crow with a twig in its mouth is silhouetted briefly in the dawn light.

I feel a warm sympathy for its effort.

Beyond the bridge, I notice a sign: 'Self Storage Space', and underneath it: 'Self Storage Opposite'. The more I try to think about the meaning of the words on the two signs, the less sense they make. For some reason, I think of cryogenics and cremation.

Suddenly, a crow swoops up behind me and settles on the lamppost on the bridge.

It caws loudly, and I feel it is speaking to me. I turn to acknowledge it, and it stares straight at me and caws loudly again.

Many people find them sinister, but I like crows. A sign outside the station says: 'Death of a good doctor'.

The lady at The Runaway asks me if I would like a bit more milk in my tea, and I say 'Yes', and then, 'Have a Good Day.'

Unusually, the 06.51 will be leaving today at 06.59. I briefly ponder whether in reality it is still the 6.51 but just delayed, or whether it is now a different train altogether, the 06.59, a one-off event.

On the train, we find out unexpectedly that it has been declassified 'because of its short formation.

I notice that the black and brown bags in the luggage rack have been punctuated by a solitary lime green rucksack.

Finally, my last true tale came about as a result of my obsession with second-hand books. If I have ever been addicted to anything, it is to the imaginative flight of reading a good book, rather than the chemical trip afforded by a narcotic:

The Book Disease

Books are a kind of illness. Especially in Lewes. I often go round the secondhand bookshops at the weekend and come back with half a dozen books. Sometimes double that if there is a special event on like the annual book sale at St Anne's.

I know it is compulsive, but I cannot stop myself. I remember being in a book fair in the town hall, and one of the vendors was selling off some beautiful books for almost nothing. He had a sign in front of his stand asking people to save his marriage. I joked that saving his marriage would be the end of mine, but even so I couldn't resist the biography of the explorer Nansen for two pounds.

One day I was round the house of a journalist friend who had the same or similar syndrome as me, but who was a bit closer to being cured. He was having a book sale.

I had been in to rehab myself several times, but I would always relapse. I would sell perhaps two or three hundred books, and it would afflict my soul for weeks after. Even when I got the news that my rejects had raised £750 for Oxfam, I couldn't feel good about it. The books were part of me. It was like selling my soul, even if it was for charity.

'So you're just giving them all away?' I asked.

A nod and a benign smile. A certain smugness. Like a smoker who has quit. I know he's still fragile. I know it's hurting. But he is doing a good job seeming to be happy. I feel a kinship with him. I am sure it is not his decision.

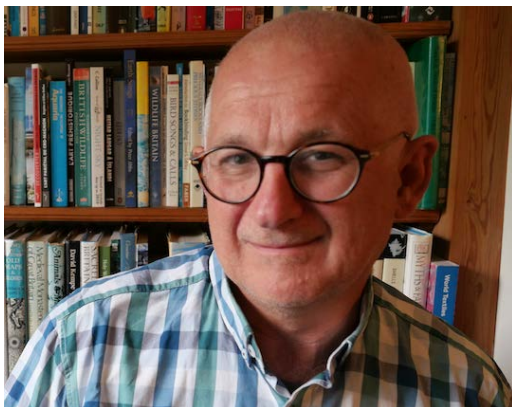
'I'm not going to be tempted,' I say, smiling. 'I'm completely out of space already/ But it is with the same tone of voice as people say 'Just a splash' while holding out their wine glass. Or, 'I'll only stay for a quick pint' when they get to the pub.

The books were mostly about politics, not my subject, but a few still grabbed my attention. Several years on, I don't remember exactly which. Most likely the one about the imperial backdrop to the Pahlavi era and then the 1979 revolution in Iran. This had an orange Gift Aid sticker, familiar on the backs of books from Charity Shops. Or it could have been the one from Cummings on Russia and the Russians, which I recognise from the angularity of the pound sign where the price is written in the top right hand corner.

Whichever it was, I slipped it off the bookshelf and left it nonchalantly on the edge of the coffee table. Then several glasses of wine later, when we left their house, I scooped it into my coat, and it nestled there unseen as we walked home, supported by the furtive hand in my coat's left pocket. From there, it slipped discreetly onto the bookshelf in the living room. As this was bulging already, I pulled out one of the old and familiar tomes and slotted in the new, then put the old tome back on top, like a lintel. I felt quite pleased with my new find.

As often happens, several days slipped by before I got round to reading it. My wife was out at choir. I opened a bottle of wine then pulled out the book, looking forward to reading it.

I was astonished to find that it had my name inside it, in my own handwriting, and on the top right corner of page 50 something, the edge had been turned over in a neat triangle to bookmark it.



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The Technique of Ecstasy

By David England

“Dreams and the contents of our inner world give us ample evidence of the importance of listening to the intelligence lying in the psyche, aligning ourselves to this wisdom, and connecting to its healing, transformative powers.” (Alan Mulhern, 2012)

The Online Etymology Dictionary gives a rare drug-free definition of ‘psychedelic’ as, ‘producing expanded consciousness through heightened awareness and feeling’. A psychotherapeutic psychedelic experience without psychedelic drugs can be gained in a Shamanic Soul Retrieval Journey.

This article is drawn from my book, *Soulfulness : The Marriage of Shamanic and Contemporary Psychology* (Karnac, 2017), which brings the wisdom of the ancient healing practice of shamanism together with the insights of present day psychology to provide a joint approach to treating trauma symptoms.

Shamanism is defined as ‘the technique of ecstasy’ (Eliade, 1964, 1988). Rather than ‘rapture’, ‘ecstasy’ has here the broader and subtler meaning of ‘coming out of oneself’ – originally to travel in the upper and lower realms of the spirit world, now understood as Assagioli’s higher and lower unconscious realms of our inner world. The state of ecstasy may be described as a trance or an altered state of consciousness, though the technique of ecstasy is a more compelling designation, less a trance than a state of inspiration.

THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY AND SOUL RETRIEVAL

The effect of trauma is to lose soul energy and to gain something alien in its place, such as losing innocence and gaining shame. Soul Retrieval is a Shamanic Journey that is made with the specific intention of retrieving their lost soul energy.

THE DREAM-LIKE STATE OF THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

Alan Mulhern (2012) writes, “The inner world, experienced in .. visionary states, consists of images, symbols, stories, and metaphors which are identical to the dream world. .. However, the vital difference is that visionary, inner states allow the activation of inner awareness which is a direct participation of a part of consciousness in the drama.”

The simulated dream state of a Shamanic Journey is just such a visionary state, and unlike a dream, the person making the journey, being conscious, can more reliably participate in the drama and remember what happened afterwards.

THE SHAMANIC TRANCE

Turning to the question of trance states:

Kalsched (1996) writes of the traumatised psyche being self-traumatising, the original trauma being repeatedly played out “as if the person were possessed”.

Levine (1997) writes of rape of the soul leaving a person stuck in “spiritual limbo”.

Firman & Gila (1997) write of the “survival trance”; the effect of a traumatic splitting of the psyche enduringly alters a person’s state of consciousness, for which the term “survival trance” is particularly apt.

Being possessed, spiritual limbo, survival trance! An aftermath of developmental trauma is an impaired state of consciousness, an involuntary and sustained survival trance.

Unlike the involuntary survival trance, a Shamanic Journey takes place in a voluntary trance state. This is a relaxed and focused dream-like state of consciousness which, bypassing the ego, enables a person to explore some aspect of their deep psyche.

In a Soul Retrieval, a client enters a trance state voluntarily with a specific intention of alleviating their suffering by retrieving a lost part of their soul energy and restoring their vital essence. In Soul Retrieval, we set a trance to catch a trance.

I envisage the characters appearing in a Soul Retrieval as including: personified fragments of the split psyche; instinctive elements of the psyche personified as animal allies; intuitive elements of the psyche personified as wise beings; alien energies personified as monstrous beings which have 'attached' to the psyche as a by-product of trauma.

By maintaining twofold vision – the client's suffering and the underlying psychic organisation – Soul Retrieval can also serve the gradual reintegration and synthesis of the psychic splits and healing of the primal wound.

SOUL RETRIEVAL

Here is an example of a Soul Retrieval:

Patrick suffered an avoidant attachment; his soldier father was absent for long periods, and his mother was sad and lonely and resentful that she couldn't travel with him. His avoidant behaviour betrayed a wound to his sexuality. His intention for the Soul Retrieval was to restore his lost male power. This is his account of his Soul Retrieval:

"I begin at a favourite place on Dartmoor where yellow gorse and purple heather grow together. I look around for a portal to start my journey and find what seems like the entrance to a burrow. I state my intention three times, to retrieve my lost male power, and begin my journey. I am immediately met by a rabbit who says he will guide me to where I need to go. He leads me into the burrow and down its narrow labyrinthine tunnels until we emerge at the edge of a deep forest. The rabbit directs me to go to the heart of the forest and leaves me.

"I walk into the forest, and at its heart I find a circle of stones within which a group of women are gathered around a fire. I ask to enter the circle, but the women will not permit me. They scoff at me and say that as women wise in the lore of the land they are unwilling to share their wisdom with the likes of me. They say they are dissatisfied with men, 'Men are weak,' they say. They tell me to move on, but I won't, 'There is something you have to give me,' I say. I somehow know this is something about fire, that they have fire to give to me.

"Then they let me enter the circle. I ask for a gift. They pluck a brand from the fire and hand it to me. Then, the women huddle closer to the fire, including me in their circle. As we stare into the fire, a male figure appears in the flames, tall, bearded, strong, somehow embodying masculine and feminine qualities. I recognise that this is me, a brand from the burning, someone who I could be. I stand and step into the fire. There is exultation. Finally, I transform into a firebird. As the firebird, I rise from the flames, just as the drum is calling me to return, and fly back to my place on Dartmoor."

In our grounding work, Patrick recognised: in the journey, he needed to assert himself with the women in order to get what he wanted; the gift of fire was to enliven his spirit and invoke his will and power; true male power is a union of masculine and feminine qualities; his ongoing psychological work was to embody the fire man.

This example illustrates a number of important points about Soul Retrieval:

Patrick was able to surrender to the process. This enabled the ego to be bypassed, allowing him to go deeply into his inner world.

Patrick didn't know what would happen in the journey, beyond stating his intention. The Soul Retrieval journey simply unfolded. At the same time, he was not simply an observer, but was part of the unfolding drama.

The rabbit, the women, the fire man, and even the firebird, were personifications of helpful healthy parts of the psyche – though the firebird was also a charming little piece of psychic humour.

At the same time, the women were not pushovers, their wisdom had to be earned, and this itself was an aspect of their gift of wisdom, serving to embolden Patrick to work towards embodying the fire man.

At another level, Soul Retrieval involves a collaboration between the conscious and the unconscious which enables the unconscious to work upon itself towards the healing of the primal wound.

In Patrick's case, restoring his lost male power meant receiving a gift of wisdom from his unconscious, a quality of maleness poised to pass from spirit into matter, a potential energy moving to enliven his spirit and invoke his will and power. In other cases, a Soul Retrieval will take a client explicitly back to a wounding incident or a traumatically sustained failure of care. The outcome may be not only one of liberating the client's lost soul energy but also of freeing the client from the energetic consequences of the wounding, energy in the wrong place, witnessed for example as low self worth, low self esteem, depression, anxiety, addictions, and behavioural problems.

SOUL DELIVERANCE

I can't get away with slipping in 'alien energies personified as monstrous beings attached to the psyche' without some explanation. In psychological terms, such alien energy is energy in the wrong place, typically from the impact of a projective identification being ingested into the psyche.

Soul Retrieval and Soul Deliverance are complementary, working from opposite ends:

Soul Retrieval is focused on retrieving lost soul energy, which may also result in removing energy which is in the wrong place.

Soul Deliverance is focused on removing energy which is in the wrong place, which may also result in restoring lost soul energy.

An alien energy, energy in the wrong place, can manifest in a person's life in the tangible form of a monstrous presence. In such cases, the alien presence is referred to as an 'attachment', because it seems like an alien being has attached itself to a person in a way which intrudes upon the person's life and affects their behaviour. As an example, a psychotherapy client felt there was something behind her. She could not see it but she felt its hot breath on the back of her neck, which was very frightening for her. We used Soul Deliverance to remove the attachment.

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*He trained as a Shamanic Practitioner at Eagle's Wing College of Contemporary Shamanism. Impressed by the synergy between Psychosynthesis and Shamanism, he wrote *Soulfulness, The Marriage of Shamanic and Contemporary Psychology* (Karnac Books, 2017). He has successfully integrated Shamanic thought and practice into his psychosynthesis psychotherapy practice.*

*He is also a professional storyteller and a member of the actors' union Equity. He is the co-author of *Berkshire Folk Tales* (The History Press, 2013) and *Lancashire Folk Tales* (The History Press, 2014).*

Psychedelics provided me with an ‘ideal model’ for meditation – but then the ‘real work’ began!

By Sonal Kadchha

Introduction

In 2020, a couple of weeks before embarking on my training at the Institute of Psychosynthesis UK, I took part in a retreat where I consumed a large dose of psilocybin (also known as a ‘Hero’s Dose’). It turned out to be a challenging experience or what one would define as a ‘bad trip’. I was able to make some meaning out of what had happened, however, it wasn’t until I started my psychosynthesis training was I really able to gain a deeper understanding; my bad trip was helping to bring psychological models to life. Assagioli’s Egg diagram (1975) was the key to untangling incoherent memories as I realised that I had just had a simultaneous experience of all the parts of the human psyche. But beyond the memories, both horrifying (lower unconscious) and painfully beautiful (superconscious) was the crisp, clear experience of ‘I-Self’.

What does I-Self mean?

In normal states of consciousness, I experience my ‘I’ as the observer of all my inner and outer experience or ‘psychic-content’ – through body sensations, thoughts, feelings, imagination, intuition and ‘objects’ in my external world. Sometimes this ‘I’ feels spacious and it can ‘let in’ a lot of psychic content – it’s like being a balloon in the sky looking at the landscape below it. However, when life gets tough, it seems to get ‘stuck’ to certain psychic content e.g. thoughts, feelings etc. It’s as if the balloon has now sunk into the ground. In these times, I often mistake my ‘I’ for the psychic content – the balloon and the ground get tangled up together – and this gives me a false sense of self that is often referred to as the ‘ego’.

In Psychosynthesis, the ‘I’ is believed to flow from a deeper ‘Self’, an ‘ontological reality’. We’re always connected to Self through ‘I’; this I-Self connection is intuitive (Firman & Gila 1997).

As I fall to pieces, ‘I-Self’ gets stronger

During the trip, I felt that my ego was disintegrating into different parts – the earth-bound tangled up balloon was releasing itself high into the sky. The observer, the ‘I’, felt very distinct and separate from the psychic content, and it could now see the landscape with clarity. The balloon was so high up it had the ability to see different countries, different planes of consciousness, beyond the framework of the ego and body. This experience of ‘ego-dissolution’ is also backed by neuroscience, where experiments show a reduction in activity in an area of the brain called the Default-Mode-Network (DMN) on high doses of psilocybin (Carhart-Harris et al., 2012). The DMN is regarded as responsible for a sense of self likened to the ‘ego’ (Raichle 2015). I can’t say that I experienced this reduction in activity in the DMN (i.e. ‘ego-dissolution’) as that beautiful mystical oneness that is often cited in popular media. It was terrifying as my ego was trying to hold on to ‘reality’. Nonetheless, ‘staying with I-Self’, in the sky with the balloon, cultivated a background sense of calm amongst the storm.

The paradox of separateness and closeness

Staying with I-Self felt ‘do-able’ because it felt as if the distance between it and the psychic content had increased dramatically. There was no DMN to distract me. There was distance, and yet I could still experience it all – even more acutely than before. It felt as if the balloon had reached outer space and was looking down on Earth, but with even greater resolution than being close to the Earth, as if through a telescope and microscope at the same time.

‘The experience of the Transpersonal Self (and of the ‘I’) ...relates to intensity’. I experienced this intensity as that increased separation from psychic content, but at the same time that increased sharpness in the experience of the psychic content. It was ‘transcendent-immanent’ (Firman & Gila 1997). It’s as if

‘the more we connect (to I-Self), the more our individuality is highlighted as we get a deep sense of our part in things’ (Evans 2023).

I-Self is beyond even the ‘good content’ of the superconscious

This I-Self intensity can often be confused with the superconscious. It is this superconscious content which the psychedelic traveller hopes to experience - mystical one-ness, love, paradise, beauty etc. We forget that classical psychedelics give us an experience of the ‘transpersonal’ (i.e. beyond personal self, ego). And that holds the dark as well as the light. Transpersonal does not equal superconscious. This was certainly the case for me: I felt the crushing existential suffering of humanity. It was only through holding compassion and staying with ‘I-Self’ was I able to endure this unbearable 8-hour journey.

Whether the transpersonal is experienced as darkness or lightness – it is still not the ‘unchanging enduring reality of I-Self’ (Firman & Vargiu 1977). Buddhists refer to the I-Self as ‘no self’ or ‘emptiness’ for this very reason. Self is in all of it, it is everywhere. This shift in identity from content to I-Self can also be seen in Ram-Dass’s musings around his first ever psychedelic trip (2012):

‘I saw a sequence of all my social roles...the minute I said I don’t need that anymore the figure changed...until my body even disappeared...I was ceasing to exist...the panic was mounting...until a quiet voice inside of me said ‘but who’s minding the store?’ I became aware at that moment that there was something...clear, lucid and watching the whole thing happen...the minute I defined it, I experienced a tremendous feeling of liberation.’

He tried to ‘make-meaning’ of his experience through psychological models but found that ‘Freud’s unconscious had too much to do with the individual and personality qualities [lower unconscious/ biographical] ...even Jung’s collective unconscious wasn’t quite the place...’ Perhaps Psychosynthesis, which clearly describes Self as an ontological reality, might have satisfied him as it seems that what he was describing was an intensification in the I-Self connection.

Integration

The experience of ‘Self is everywhere’ has had a profound impact on me and has been my biggest take away from my ‘bad trip’. It has made me less obsessed to want to chase superconscious experiences, enlightenment through my ‘spiritual bypassing’ tendencies. It has made me more motivated to live as much in alignment with Self, in each present moment, regardless of the psychic content, to the extent that I can. Part of this alignment involves daily meditation I feel that this intense experience of I-Self has provided me with an ‘ideal model’ for meditation, which now I recognise goes beyond just ‘being the observer’. I can cut through the noise created by the DMN and see what it truly is.

Before the trip, my inner judge would disguise and slip in as the ‘observer’. However, the trip gave me a completely different experience of the observer, which was more in alignment with the compassionate ‘I Thou’ relationship between I-Self (Buber 1958, Firman & Gila 1997). It is very different to one part of the brain observing another part of the brain – which feels more like a horizontal as opposed to a vertical separation. This inner ‘ideal model’ has given me a map for my daily meditation and Vipassana retreats.

Similarly, for Ram Dass, his psychedelic trips provided him with an ‘ideal model’ that motivated him to pursue the long and arduous path of Ashtanga yoga. And this reminds us of the importance of integration, i.e. a more sustainable movement of ‘I’ towards ‘Self’, that difficult climb up the mountain:

‘...one must distinguish between mountain climbing and airplane flights. You can fly to the top, but you cannot remain always on the airplane...’ (Assagioli 1975, p49)

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Bio:

Sonal Kadchha is a charity founder, counsellor and psychotherapist under supervision at the Institute of Psychosynthesis, UK. She is currently writing her thesis on how psychedelics could provide a context and psycho-spiritual framework for challenging psychedelic experiences, which will be published later this year. You can find more information on her practise here.



Reflections and Observations from the field by a Psychosynthesis trained KAP Therapist

By Peter Corbett, LICSW

In the 1980's, I found myself fascinated and inspired by Roberto Assagioli's transpersonal psychology and began 10 years of training at psychosynthesis centers throughout New England. Fast forward, after 25 years of private practice, I discovered that 3 of 6 members of my family had the genetic based neuro-degenerative disease, Huntington's Chorea. So I began researching neuro-regeneration in 2010, and I found that psychedelic medicines were beginning to show promise as mental health treatment for neuro-rigidified disorders such as depression, ruminative anxiety, PTSD, and suicidal ideation by inducing neuro-plasticity in the brain. And so began the next phase of my career as a ketamine assisted psychotherapist.

My purpose today is to offer reflections and observations from my work running a KAP clinic, as informed by my background in psychosynthesis. In this article I will: 1) describe the basics of ketamine assisted psychotherapy; 2) offer some reflections and thoughts on a few controversial topics related to the growing field of psychedelic therapy; 3) point out a few ways in which the field of psychedelic assisted psychotherapy has a deep need for practitioners with a psychosynthesis perspective. In the latter section, I will assume most readers are familiar with basic concepts of psychosynthesis.

1. What is the nature of the ketamine experience and what is our role as therapists?

How does ketamine work?

Ketamine is a neurotransmitter which acts on glutamate in the brain inducing widespread neuronal activation. The psychedelic experience is essentially chemically induced neuronal stimulation (... why we 'see or hear things that aren't there' ... a result of internal, chemically generated stimuli.). Noting the core principle of learning theory that "What fires, wires!", ketamine induces greater neuronal connectivity and helps patients with overly entrenched emotional, thought, and behavior patterns with an increase in neuroplasticity.

What is Ketamine Assisted Psychotherapy (KAP) and how is it different from other clinics?

KAP clinics attend to the client's subjective state. This contrasts with the pure medical model, IV infusion clinics, usually run by medical clinicians often with no psychotherapists on staff. IV clinics tend to think of the medicine only in terms of its pharmacological benefits. Essential KAP guidelines include: 1) extensive client preparation for medicine sessions including setting treatment goals, defining realistic expectations, understanding how ketamine works and being able to anticipate what the altered state might feel like; 2) post session integration of the material that arises in each session with development of intentional plans/homework; 3) a multi-disciplinary team (medical and psychotherapeutic) for administering the medicine; 4) clients are never left alone without the presence of an attending therapist during the medicine journey; 5) treatment is active and collaborative; and 6) medicine dosing is responsive to clinical needs for each session.

What are the broader effects I might feel?

Many report rapid relief of symptoms after ketamine treatments. Ketamine seems to induce in people a broad sense of openness, expansiveness, and a diminishment of recurring anxieties, worries, fears, and negative thought patterns, with an openness to try new ways of being. While familiar negative states may still arise, people report feeling greater ease in getting out of stuck patterns and habits.

What does it feel like to be 'inside' the ketamine experience?

The quality of the psychedelic experience is dose dependent. On lighter doses, the client may feel deeply relaxed, groggy, and able to talk in a more open, uninhibited way. Medium doses induce a dream-like 'trance state' even while still maintaining a sense of observing self. Speech remains possible and therapeutic insight often occurs. The client may experience vivid internally generated visual patterns and images. Though some anticipate these with fear, with the therapist's supportive presence in a comfortable office environment (recliner, eye shades, and soothing music) hallucinations can be met with curiosity, interest, enjoyment and even, euphoria. There is usually a powerful sense of openness, relaxation, and reflectiveness in the trance state.

With a higher dose, people are typically fairly quiet, and internally focused. The experience truly can feel like a 'journey', and people cannot often recall specific elements of the experience with clarity and is commonly felt to be transformative or mystical in nature.

What is the KAP therapist's role during the medicine session?

The value of a journey is rooted in cultivating the relationship between what is seen/heard, and the meaning that can be made of it, much in the same way we might invite a patient to look at a dream. What 'comes up' is sometimes reflective of current life dilemmas/events. At other times, the experience can feel like a stream of mysterious inchoate, generated stimuli without any biographical anchors, perhaps not any more meaningful than the starry patterned flash one might see when bonked on the head.

This all can be disconcerting if preparation for the sessions is absent or lacking. On the other hand, being just what it is, an ocean of internally generated stimulation, the patient/client can be offered guidelines on how to 'swim' in these waters. Everyone at our clinic is first 'taught to swim' in the shallow end of the pool, where they can still feel grounded and aware...like feeling the bottom under one's feet. Once the client feels comfortable, they may express an interest in the option of a higher dose excursion out into the ocean of the transpersonal.

We want our clients to feel in control and confident to go there, and one way they get that is by starting with light doses. So they can feel the 'water', so to speak, and get used to how it functions and how to live inside it for a bit...if not navigate. There is truly a fluidity to the ketamine experience. Navigating it requires a degree of surrender to its properties of fluidity, and an ability to tread in it until the effects of the medicine dissipates, and we can then start to feel our feet back on solid ground. With light doses, the patient can still speak and is still able to wrap words around thoughts to describe one's experience, etc... which allows the patient to find guidance from the therapists in learning to navigate in this state.

II. Some Controversies about Psychedelic Medicines

The Difference between a 'drug' vs. 'medicine'.

I think of the distinction between 'drugs' and 'medicine' as not so much inherent properties of the substance themselves. Rather, as references to the function an otherwise neutral substance has on consciousness and the client's connection to life. In essence, when a substance functions as a "drug," it ultimately takes us further away from a deepened connection with ourselves and our lives, while a substance that functions as a "medicine" evokes in us a deepened connection to our Self and facilitates a more profound connection to broader aspects of life.

Are there any negatives to using ketamine as a medicine? Is ketamine addictive?

Ketamine has stood the test of time in the medical system. In 1970's, ketamine was added to the World Health Organization's list of 'essential medicines'. There has been no evidence of long term negative consequences at the frequency and dosages prescribed at most KAP clinics. Dosing for mental health treatment is considered low compared to the typical anesthetic dose used in the hospital setting.

Is it cheating to use these medicines, even if done with intention to achieve glimpses of wholeness, or oneness?

As professionals in the healing arts, empowerment of our clients should matter a great deal. Their willful determination and acquisition of life coping skills is important. So too, it is important to be leery about easy answers. I recall in training programs, students often asking whether the 'unity' experience offered by psychedelic medicines should be considered 'cheating' in some way. Psychosynthesis teachers have said Assagioli considered even the best 'drug experiences' as if they are like getting a free ride to the top of a mountain without having exercised the skill and will power to get there under one's own steam. This explanation implied that obtaining the expansive 'view from the peak', without having earned it, should be frowned upon. While I accept this on one level, my perspective on the inherent value of medicine induced 'peak experiences' has changed over the past few years.

For 10 years, I've led a silent meditation hiking retreat in which participants alternate between intervals of sitting and hiking every 45 minutes. By the end of the day, most participants will have hiked to the peak of a 4000 ft. mountain. The mountain we hike is popular among both hikers and non-hikers. Because it's accessible by both a toll road and gondola from another approach to the mountain, the people we find at the top have not all arrived there under their own steam. So, many at the top have not 'earned' their view from the peak any more than a psychedelic journeyer may have 'earned' their 'peak experience under the 'steam' of a psychedelic medicine. Yet, who could argue that any of these folks should be deprived of the wondrous views from the peak? Is this 'glimpse experience' of freedom, openness, and view from the top less valuable if the person benefits from a broadened appreciation for life, or deepened connection to their friends, families, or nature? Would we ever want to deprive an elderly, or less fit person the opportunity to enjoy the spectacular view anymore than we would the patient with TRD walking into my clinic, the benefits of this fast track, chemical experience of 'oneness' and 'interconnectedness'? The opportunity to access this experience could indeed save their life.

In Psychosynthesis terms, how does ketamine facilitate healing mental disorders?

One of the most common features of the signature ketamine experience is that there is a stepping into one's 'Self'... a view from one's "I" such that we can experience our capacity to view, see, hold, and be lovingly present with one's disparate parts from a non-judgemental disidentified loving place. Certainly much of the work with our clients in therapy is to facilitate this process of stepping outside of habitual patterns, to achieve a state of compassion and appreciation for all parts and core qualities, similar to the way the conductor values all the musicians and instruments in his orchestra.

III. Why does Psychedelic Assisted Psychotherapy need Psychosynthesis practitioners?

Assagioli's transpersonal map of the human psyche (the 'egg diagram') is a more complete map than any now being used in psychedelic therapy.

The ethical cartographer would no more sell a map to an adventurer which leaves out a land feature than an ethical psychedelic therapist should consider themselves to be a competent guide if the map of the psyche they hold is incomplete or confusing. Assagioli's egg diagram is a full map of the psyche that is

tremendously useful in helping us make sense of the experiences people have with psychedelics. We can see whether a client is doing early parts integration work, building an increased capacity for disidentified presence from one's 'Self', or in need of grounding qualities of the higher unconscious in daily experience. For the psychedelic therapist without this map, a client's description of their experiences inside ASCs (altered states of consciousness) can be disorienting if they do not fit into any identifiable psychological schema familiar to the therapist. Without this map, the smattering of reports people bring back from their psychedelic journeys might seem like a pile of unrelated fabric pieces which can at best be assembled into a 'crazy quilt'. With the egg diagram, integration work with our client's is much more easily oriented.

Richard Schwartz, IFS model lacks attention to the critical work of invoking material from the Higher Unconscious

Richard Schwartz talks about the triumph of IFS work as restoring choice to a 'self' that may have before been at the mercy of one's competing 'parts',all vying to control one's attention at the expense of direction by a willing wholly identified benevolent self, able to orchestrate the whole troupe of one's part.

Schwartz's focus is on the integration process around the 'Self' that the psychosynthesis practitioner would locate on the egg diagram in the Middle Unconscious. Once a sufficiently strong central Self emerges and parts feel respected, appreciated, and included in the sum total make-up of the self, they entrust themselves to the wisdom of this 'conductor' to draw on their valued and varied skills and greater alignment in action can occur.

At that point, we may ask what then? How does this now whole 'self' direct its life's mission? What values, moral code, ideal models, purpose, or even 'god' does this 'self' serve? This Self, the now entrusted captain, must pick a point on the horizon toward which to point the ship. The Self at the center of one's middle unconscious remains adrift in the realm of values and higher purpose without a connection to one's Higher Self. The psychosynthesis practitioner understands this and has many tools at their fingertips to evoke experiences of one's Higher Self.

The Evolving Self, Unity Consciousness and Disidentification

The spirit of the human journey is at its core the impulse to construct meaning in an ever unfolding process of becoming a mature, conscious fully actualized human being. In essence, this journey is intrinsically connected to the spiritual impulse. We thrive on the undiscovered, and we crave to make sense of the unknown. We are by nature, assimilators moving continually through stages of thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis. We make meaning each time we step from our ever expanding known worlds into chaos. We are excited by encountering the 'Great Mysteries' and when we return to our familiar selves, the world is seen with fresh eyes. We might even say that the common experience of 'awe' is the direct experience of energies cast down from the Higher Self.

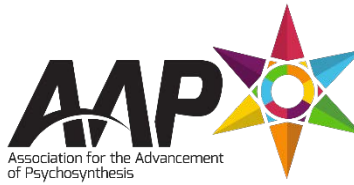
While not the unique purview of psychosynthesis, the process of material manifestation as one's body 'self' through the developmental stages described by such theorists as Robert Kegan in *The Evolving Self*, or Ken Wilbur's 'unity consciousness' all depend upon the core principle skill of disidentification. The evolving self from a psychosynthesis perspective would describe it as an unfolding: 1) from

conception through early formative, pre-conscious states, (one's biographical self rooted in lower unconscious processes), 2) to the middle unconscious and an increasing conscious 'present state', and finally 3) a Self imbued with qualities connected to one's higher unconscious in which daily living is drawn from a broad held awareness and connection with both a personal identity and the transcendent 'beyond self'. This is the unfolding path of all developmental schemas of consciousness...arriving at a transcendent knowing of one's connection to all beings, a 'pan-identity' of a transcendent higher 'Self'. Disidentification is central to this process.

When we reconstruct a sense of meaning having had these experiences, we find a renewed sense of what matters. Priorities feel sourced in deeper understandings of who we are as human beings, to each other, and in light of our 'place' here in this time and on this planet. Psychosynthesis practitioners understand this, and the promise of psychedelics is their capacity to break down one's sense of separate ego-constrained self, to experience a vast sense of connection with All. Psychedelic therapy could surely use more people who understand the psychosynthesis model.

Peter Corbett, LICSW has worked in the mental health field for over 40 years. He has 2 graduate degrees, a Masters in Counseling Psychology from Harvard University, and an MSW from Smith College. Mr. Corbett has extensive training in psychosynthesis, is a founder and Clinical Director of The Center for Healing Journeys, a clinic offering ketamine assisted psychotherapy in western Massachusetts. Mr. Corbett is a faculty member at the Ketamine Training Center in San Francisco, and is founder of KAPstone Clinics, a national clinic member association for KAP clinics.





Press Release: March 2024

AAP launches Psychosynthesis creativity contest on the theme of “Connection”



To mark the 50th anniversary year of Roberto Assagioli’s death, the Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis (AAP) has launched what we believe to be the first ever Psychosynthesis Creativity contest. The theme of this inaugural contest is “**Connection**”.

We welcome submissions on this theme from AAP members and the wider Psychosynthesis community in all creative media including visual arts, poetry, music, paintings, prose, stories, film, photos, ceramics, multimedia, digital and others. Submissions can be made on an individual basis, and/or as part of a group or collective.

Celebrating Creativity in the 50th Anniversary Year of Assagioli’s death

Roberto Assagioli was the founder of Psychosynthesis, an approach to psychology that “combines spiritual development with psychological healing by including the life journey of an individual or their unique path to self-realization”¹. Assagioli died on 23rd August 1974.

¹ Psychosynthesis: A Psychology of the Spirit by John Firman and Ann Gila (State University of New York Press, 2002). Quoted from Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychosynthesis>

There are numerous references to creativity, the arts and imagination throughout Assagioli's work. He described the power of creativity as a vehicle for psychosynthesis and spiritual wholeness. "It would appear that in works of art, there is much more than mere aesthetic value; they constitute living forces, almost living entities, embodying a power which has suggestive and creative effects"². (Psychosynthesis, 1965) Assagioli wrote about creativity, in the visual arts, music, literature and science and, in his well-known Star diagram, "imagination" is included as one of the essential psychological functions for Psychosynthesis.

It seems appropriate to celebrate this aspect of his work in a Psychosynthesis creativity contest in a year that will mark the 50th anniversary of Assagioli's death. Given the state of the world today, we thought the theme of "Connection" was appropriate for the inaugural contest.

Why a Friendly Contest?

We envisage this as a friendly contest intended to spark interest in Psychosynthesis, and to bring together the various parts of our wide and diverse community. We want it to be fun, and to create dialogue across the Psychosynthesis community around the world.

We do not want it to be about winning and prizes, but about the joy of creating and working together. For this reason, we decided to refer to it as a "contest" rather than "competition" but this was mainly to capture its emotional spirit rather than to be rigid about the terminology used to describe it.

Assagioli said: "Psychological training is a sport, a game. Do it with a sporting interest... smiling in a competitive spirit. Organise competitions with oneself and with others". We hope the competition is fun, and leads to a dialogue around and within the Psychosynthesis community about the transformative power of creativity.

We will be celebrating the work submitted at the AAP 2025 conference in the United States.

Submission Guidelines

Please send your creative submissions to: peter@coachcreates.com and mark For Creativity Contest in the subject line.

We request that you include a short description/explanation of the work you have submitted, a short biography and contact details.

The closing date for entries is 31 December 2024. Please submit your work in any format that you prefer, but kindly note that we have limited technological resources and therefore can only accept submissions in standard formats such as JPEG or PNG, MP3/MP4 files, Word etc.

² Psychosynthesis by Roberto Assagioli (first published 1965, multiple subsequent editions)

Entry is free for AAP members. Non-members are requested to make a small donation to the AAP (suggested \$10). Please visit the AAP website: <https://aap-psychoanalysis.org/Donate>

Call to action

Creativity knows no bounds! We hope the following words from Assagioli will encourage you to submit your work to the AAP Psychosynthesis Creativity Contest:

“Everyone must come to realize that criticism, disparagement, pessimism and predictions of failure are nothing less than poisons, whereas loving understanding, appreciation, encouragement and a healthy optimism are life-giving: they awaken dormant energies and can lead to a wonderful inner blossoming and precious works.”

AAP Membership and Sponsorship

We encourage those submitting creative work for the Creativity Contest to become members of the AAP. Membership fees are extremely reasonable, and you can find details of the benefits by visiting the AAP website: <https://aap-psychoanalysis.org/membership-aap>

We are actively looking for new members and encourage you to send us an email if you would like to join the AAP to: membership@aap-psychoanalysis.org

We are also currently looking for sponsors who may wish to support the contest. Please email info@aap-psychoanalysis.org if you would like to discuss sponsorship opportunities.

About the AAP

The Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis was established in 1995, and was the first professional psychosynthesis organization in North America. Its members are therapists, coaches, teachers and artists who utilize psychosynthesis in professional contexts, as well as people interested in personal and spiritual development using psychosynthesis. The AAP is dedicated to the evolution of wholeness and spiritual integration world-wide, and is open to all who are interested in supporting its evolution. Its mission is to advance the theory and practice of psychosynthesis to benefit individuals and society.

For further details, please **[CLICK HERE](#)**
For more information, Please contact: peter@coachcreates.com

Webinar: The Higher Unconscious: Assagioli's Unique Contribution to Modern Healthcare

Sunday, April 14, 2024, 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM ET

Description: With neuroscience charting the region of the "higher" brain and with getting "high" on psychedelic drugs now becoming part of modern healthcare, Assagioli's pioneering work on our natural higher unconscious is becoming even more prophetic. This webinar will refer to 1) the current trends in psychedelic medicine, 2) how Assagioli's published and private notes pointed toward this trend 100 years ahead of his time, and 3) practical clinical examples of how the waking up of the higher unconscious can bring surprise, relief and gratitude for the people we are helping.

Experiential practices are included.

Learning Objectives:

1. You will learn the current trends in psychedelic medicine;
2. You will expand your understanding of Assagioli's contribution;
3. You will experience three proven practices for waking up the higher unconscious;
4. You will explore the ways you can bring these practices into your work.

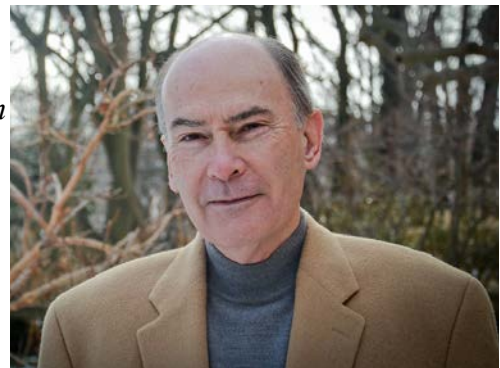
This webinar is FREE to members, \$25 to non-members

To register, click here

Registration closes Friday, April 12th.

Zoom link will be sent via email after registration closing.

Presenter: Richard is a counseling psychologist who is one of the original co-founders of the New York Psychosynthesis Institute. He is guest faculty of the Italian Society for Psychosynthesis Therapy and co-author of five books. With his wife, Bonney, he leads the Clinical Meditation and Imagery Training program (based in psychosynthesis) which has trained hundreds of professionals internationally.



Contribute to the June 2024 Psychosynthesis Quarterly

With guest editor
Dr. Dorothy (Didi) Firman, Ed.D., LMHC, BCC

June Theme **Following the Path:** **Psychosynthesis as a life-long practice for personal and spiritual growth.**

With a focus on personal development, we invite essays, etc. from folks who have devoted many years to using PS as a personal path, whether they are also teaching or practicing in the field. How does it become a daily practice, formally and informally? How do its principles remind us of how to live? What have we used from our psychosynthesis guidebook in daily life, in crises, in the ongoing search for personal change or spiritual realization?

With a focus on Assagioli's 7 core experiences, we invite articles that note particularly how these core theories and practices have served us as individuals, in families, in groups, at work and as global citizens.

These experiences are:

1. Disidentification
2. The personal self
3. The will: good, strong, skillful
4. The ideal model
5. Synthesis (in its various aspects)
6. The superconscious
7. The transpersonal Self (it is not possible in the majority of cases to have a complete experience of this; but it is good to have some theoretical knowledge)

We hope our suggestion of 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 submit advertising make a donation to AAP. To donate, [click here](#).

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT IS May 1, 2024

**Articles should be submitted in word.doc format
with all images sent as jpegs or pngs attachments.**

**Please also send a brief bio in a word doc format
and recent photo as jpeg or png attachment.**

Send your contributions to: newsletter@aap-psychoanalysis.org

Please send submissions as soon as they are ready so we can get started reading and editing before the deadline. If you need any further guidance on the topic or submission guidelines do please get in touch. Thank you so much!

Dr. Dorothy (Didi) Firman, Ed.D., LMHC, BCC

Didi Firman has worked in the field of psychology, counseling and education for more than thirty years. She has traveled and taught nationally and internationally. Didi's specialties include: psychosynthesis, a spiritual psychology; coaching and counseling towards meaning and purpose in life. Her speaking, teaching & consulting is with a focus on personal and spiritual empowerment. Didi is a prolific, NYTimes best selling author and the editor of: Call of Self, Psychosynthesis Life Coaching. Her work in coaching is primarily as a trainer, though she maintains a small coaching practice. Didi also offers ongoing advanced training and continuing education in psychosynthesis.



2024 New Years Letter to Members

What's on the horizon for 2024



March 2024 New Year letter from the Steering Committee:

[Click here for the letter](#)