



AAP News

The Newsletter of the Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis

May

2010

CHICAGO CONFERENCE JUNE 25 to 27, 2010

By Audrey McMorrow

Summer is just around the corner, which means our 2010 AAP Conference is fast approaching. It will be held at the beautiful Techny Towers in Chicago from June 25 to 27. The theme for this year's conference, "Co-Creating the World We Want," will be explored through a



variety of presentations that will offer a wide range of applications such as organizational development, life coaching, research and development, and clinical, social, and personal psychosynthesis. Two new programs will provide formal opportunities for participants to network:

"Communities of Practice" (see below) and the "Me-to-We Tool Kit," a series of 15-minute sessions in which participants can demonstrate an innovative practice related to psychosynthesis.

The Professional Development Committee will kick off the conference with an exciting two-day workshop on June 24 and 25 entitled "Re-envisioning Psychosynthesis Training in North America." This workshop will focus primarily on training delivery methods such as center training, graduate and undergraduate programs, distance, e-learning programs, and others.

Traditional as well as new models of training will be discussed as will the application of new e-technologies and distance learning.

We are offering two additional 6-hour preconference workshops on Friday, June 25:

"The Deep River Within," presented by Abby Seixas, MEd, LMHC. This workshop will introduce the principles and practices of the Deep River Process as detailed in Abby's book, *The Deep River Within*.

"Transforming Families through Psychosynthesis," presented by Ilene Val Essen, PhD. Ilene will share an innovative three-step process that helps parents remain centered in difficult situations.

The process is included in her new book, *Bring Out the Best in your Child and your Self*.

Friday evening's festivities will begin with dinner, followed by our keynote presentation by Tom Yeomans, PhD, "The Soul of Psychosynthesis: 100 years on Planet Earth." Tom will reflect on the past, present, and future of psychosynthesis and the challenges we face today in the midst of a planetary crisis. Tom's presentation will be followed by an Awards Ceremony, hosted by Jean Guenther.

On Saturday morning Molly Brown will facilitate a panel discussion on "Psychosynthesis for the Great Turning." Molly will speak of the global crises we face, the possibility of a Great Turning to a life-sustaining society, and ways in

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Abby Seixas, Tom Yeomans, and Jon Schottland lead the closing at the 9th Annual Presenters Conference, April 17, 2010, Synthesis Center, Amherst, MA.

AAP News

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Send Ideas, Art, Photos,

and letters; tell what has helped your life and work; send poems, book reviews, articles. Show psychosynthesis theory in action. We request **Goings On** notes be 75 words or less and **articles** 500 words or less. Send to

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Submission Deadlines:

Mar. 15, **June 15**, Sept. 15, Dec. 15

The Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis:

Founded in 1995, AAP is a non-profit association with tax exemption in the United States. It is dedicated to advocating on behalf of psychosynthesis and conducting psychosynthesis educational programs. Donations are tax deductible.

AAP membership is \$75 (US) per year, with a sliding-scale fee of \$45 to \$75 for those who need it. Go to <http://www.aap-psychosynthesis.org/renew.htm> or contact us at (646) 320-3914 or info@aap-psychosynthesis.org.

Views expressed in *AAP News* are not necessarily those of the editors or of AAP. We may edit submissions for grammar, syntax, and length.■

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which psychosynthesis can help move us towards world synthesis.

On Saturday evening we will gather together to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the first written articulation of the concepts of psychosynthesis as expressed in Assagioli's 1910 dissertation.

This year for the first time, we are offering "Communities of Practice," a program intended to facilitate the cocreation of best practices, techniques and innovations in the various applications of psychosynthesis. Trained facilitators will assist small groups of participants in defining a common vision and purpose and planning

for continued collaboration.

In addition to programs and workshops, the conference will also offer a Resource Room, bookstore, and exhibit space in which participants can showcase their own innovations and ideas. There will be meditation areas available and many opportunities for participants to network, rekindle old friendships, and build new ones.

You can register for the conference on either the AAP Web site or by completing the form in the conference brochure mailed earlier. If you have questions, please contact Audrey McMorro at audrey@vasthorizons.com or (401) 284-1839. ■

GOINGS ON

Meditation Retreat: The Classic Steps of the Spiritual Journey

Join authors, therapists and meditation teachers Bonney and Richard Schaub in a one-day intensive to experience the classic steps to spiritual discovery.

Newcomers to meditation as well as long-time students can learn how to expand their innate spirituality in the course of daily life.

Limited to twenty people; you must pre-register as soon as possible.

- **Total Fee: \$95.**
- **Date: June 12, 2010, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**
- **Location: Huntington Village, Long Island, NY**
- **To Register, contact us: brschaub@optonline.com or 631.673.0293.** ■

Clinical Meditation and Imagery Certification Program Beginning October 2, 2010

Bonney and Richard Schaub say **Registration is now open**. For full details, log on to www.huntingtonmeditation.com and go to the Professional Development page. ■

"Bonney and Richard Schaub offer a path that can lead to personal transformation and serenity."

—**Larry Dossey, MD**, author of *Healing Beyond the Body*, *Reinventing Medicine*, and *Healing Words*

"In Bonney and Richard's work, you may have just taken the first step toward finding peace of mind."

—**Oprah's O Magazine**

FROM OUR COCHAIRS

Immediate Need for Service

Janet Messer and Sharon Mandt

AAP is a member-run organization and only pays for publishing, bookkeeping, and collection services. All outreach and member services are provided by approximately one-third of our members. We need at least ten more members to volunteer.

Currently many of the members who are serving on various committees are overloaded. There is a critical need for help with specific tasks. We are appealing to you to consider volunteering and sharing the load.

Immediate needs:

- Copy editing
- Writing
- Book reviews
- Welcoming and assisting new members
- Internet skills
- Mentors

At the June conference in Chicago, we need:

- Continuing Education proctors
- Photographers
- Hosts for our international guests
- Registration assistants
- Book store assistants
- Video/Tape recording workshop assistants
- Hospitality team

If you are motivated to serve and have a specific gift or passion not on the list, please, let us hear from you. Together we can make a huge difference.■



AAP Cochairs Sharon Mandt and Janet Messer

GOOD ACTS ARE CONTAGIOUS

From "Pay It Forward" Pays Off, by Inga Kiderra www.ucsdnews.ucsd.edu

For all those dismayed by scenes of looting in disaster-struck zones, whether Haiti or Chile or elsewhere, take heart: Good acts—acts of kindness, generosity, and cooperation—spread just as easily as bad. And it takes only a handful of individuals to really make a difference.

In a study published in the March 8, 2010, early online edition of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, researchers from the University of California at San Diego and Harvard University provide the first laboratory evidence that cooperative behavior is contagious and that it spreads from person to person to person. When people benefit from kindness, they “pay it forward” by helping others who were not originally involved, and this creates a cascade of cooperation that influences dozens more in a social network.

In the current study, professors James Fowler and Nicholas Christakis (also coauthors of

Connected: The Surprising Power of our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives) show that when one person gives money to help others in a “public-goods game,” where people have the opportunity to cooperate with each other, the recipients are more likely to give their own money away to other people in future games. This creates a domino effect in which one person’s generosity spreads first to three people and then to the nine people that those three people interact with in the future, and then to still other individuals in subsequent waves of the experiment.

The effect persists, Fowler said: “You don’t go back to being your ‘old selfish self.’” As a result, the money [which] a person gives in the first round of the experiment is ultimately tripled by others who are subsequently (directly or indirectly) influenced to give more. “The network functions like a matching grant,” Christakis said. ■

FROM OUR COCHAIRS

On Chicago Interest Groups, Steering Committee Who's Who, Help Wanted

Dear AAP Members,

We are looking forward to gathering with all of you at the 2010 Annual Conference and Annual Membership Meeting.

The 2010 Conference promises to be an exceptional event and one you will not want to miss. The focus is on inclusion, with many opportunities for it offered throughout the conference. Everyone will be asked to choose an interest group with which to meet. These are referred to as “communities of practice” to encourage sharing and community-building at the conference. In addition, a resource area will be available to explore various technological options for marketing and networking.

The Annual Membership Meeting will focus on services to members as well as inclusive opportunities for members to become involved and more connected with AAP activities.

Following the conference the Steering Committee will say a grateful farewell to several members who are rotating off the Steering Committee and a hello to three new members. Completing two terms (six years) will be John Parks and Janet Messer. Richard Martin will complete the two-year vacancy he filled for Cynthia Bost. Eileen Stephens, Secretary, will complete her three-year term. Eileen has graciously offered to complete the Procedures Manual project. Gwin Stewart is resigning, having served two full years as Membership Committee Chair and directing the annual renewal process.

John will continue to chair the Archives Committee, as well as the Endowment Committee. Janet will continue to serve on both the Professional Development and the Continuing Education Committees.

We welcome the new members of the Steering Committee, Judi White, Heather Perkins, and Judith Bach. It is always exciting to have new members enter the orientation process. For both those leaving and the new ones joining, we are grateful.

Continuing members on the Steering Committee are Audrey McMorrow, Dori Smith, Nancy Rowe, and Sharon Mandt.

Have you ever considered serving on the Steering Committee? Currently, we are also looking for people to serve on the Nomination Committee which selects Steering Committee candidates. If you are interested in serving on either, please contact us.

Most often, when we ask for volunteers, we do not get a response for one reason or another. In a separate article, this is explored in depth due to a critical need for volunteers to continue to fulfill the hopes we have for the future of AAP.

—*Janet Messer and Sharon Mandt*

Why New Englanders Packed April Presenters Conference

By Walter Polt

The Amherst, MA, Presenters Conference in April drew a record number of 17 presenters and at least 60 participants. Few seemed new to the conference or the venue, the homelike, welcoming Synthesis Center, with its bright, attractive rooms. This conference is a more-than-decade-long springtime tradition.

Center leader Didi Firman opened the conference with “a word from our sponsor” (Assagioli)—messages startlingly contemporary.

Here's a glimpse of workshop events I witnessed: A therapist and actively involved family member described a person's recovery (still continuing) from debilitating traumas. Central to this process were the respect and support found in psychosynthesis and EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique). Kate Wylie had participants compare experiences they've had facing the challenge of stopping work as a psychotherapist. Celia Hilson (she was masterful at creating safety) asked for stories about “the first time you realized you were different.” Participants gave stunning accounts of concerns about being excluded. In another workshop participants revisited their relationships with (the rest of) nature and then composed poetry while crimson-purple fruit-tree blossoms peeked in the window.

Other attendees also had exciting workshop stories to tell. And at lunchtime, Mark Horowitz talked about the psychosynthesis community's need for two core transpersonal qualities, Love and Power.

At the closing, Tom Yeomans led the singing, bolstered by fellow guitarists Abby Seixas, and Jon Schottland (see photo p. 1). Jon is a trainer at the Center. Upcoming TSC events, some free, are at: <http://www.synthesiscenter.org>. ■

Reviews

Bring Out the Best in Your Child and Yourself

Book and Review by Ilene Val-Essen, PhD

That first moment when I felt a new life stirring inside my body, I made a promise to myself—that I would become the very best parent I could be so that my child could become a strong and confident adult.

Then came reality: Derek was a joy, but he was a real child. He fussed and whined at times; often he tested my patience.

On the worst days, I'd sometimes "lose it" and threaten or yell at little Derek. Later, I'd feel so ashamed. "I won't ever do that again," I would tell myself. And then I'd lose my cool once again and find myself wondering, "Why is it so difficult? Do I even have what it takes to be a good mother?"

—From the Introduction to *Bring Out the Best in Your Child and Yourself*.

As it turned out, these questions set in motion a journey that became the greatest adventure of my life. It initiated an intellectual and spiritual search that led me to become a parent educator and a psychotherapist, earn a PhD, develop the *Quality Parenting* program (which has been translated into several languages), and write this book.

Bring Out the Best in Your Child and Yourself offers a step-by-step guide that empowers parents of toddlers through teens to create an environment that brings out the best in everyone: a family based on mutual respect. In this proven approach, parents grow along

with their children—and families are transformed.

In the early chapters, parents learn to see their children through new eyes, and come to understand that even when their children's behavior is challenging and they resist and test their parents, there is nonetheless an innate yearning within them to grow and mature. At the core, all children:

1. Want to become their best;
2. Don't like their difficult behavior any more than their parents do;
3. Depend on their parents to help them become their best.

But children can't do this alone; they need their parents' help. Yet we can't help our children unless we ourselves are centered. The book's Three-Step Process shows readers how to do this. In step one, parents discover a liberating truth: We're not alone. All parents "lose it" at times. To get back on track, we first need to recognize when we're off course. Step two provides two powerful exercises that help us make the transition to becoming calm and centered. Parents learn that they actually have a choice about how to act, feel and think. In step three, parents learn skills and attitudes to help them model mutual respect more consistently.

Surely no journey in life can be more rewarding, or more worthwhile, than the journey towards mutual respect between parent and child. In the grateful words of one parent: "I have developed a new level of respect for my children. In a sense, I have fallen in love with them all over again." ■

KINDNESS MATTERS

Sharon Mandt tells us Eileen val Essen's husband, Ed, had a stroke recently.

Ed has been a key part of Eileen's book publishing process and he takes great conference photos! We are sincerely grateful for all he does.

Please send cards and all good wishes to them both.■

The Gift . . . of Life!

By Olivia DeGage

When I hit my "breakthrough crisis" head-on in life, I felt destabilized, depressed, and in total despair with a deep fear that I was not equipped to go on living: I did not have the stamina, strength, or desire. I was confronted by the effects of destructive, unspeakable aspects of my life I had so long successfully pushed into oblivion. It was like being brought to the brink of death. I could not face where I was or what had happened and I had no idea how to go on.

Psychosynthesis became my gift of life! When I arrived at the Psychosynthesis and Education Trust (P.E.T.) in London in January, 2007, little did I know this was to be the beginning of my life! I was already 49 years of age and had just gone through a heart-shattering breakup with someone I thought was "the man of my life." I knew of psychosynthesis through my coaching work, and decided this life crisis was an opportunity to get a taste of its healing potential. I never expected it to be life changing or that it would be so life giving.

Psychosynthesis changed my life, and going to the Trust, founded by Dr. Assagioli himself, was like coming home. I embarked on what Joseph Campbell termed "the heroine's journey." My interior exploration started with the Trust's Essentials Course, a weeklong opportunity that offered

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enough safety, understanding and care to open a door shut tight to repressed pain and trauma. This program led me to more psychosynthesis training with Molly Young Brown, additional individual therapy, and the unexpected writing of my first book, entitled *L'Amour Déraisonné: Reclaiming Self, Transformational Teaching from Psychosynthesis and a Course in Miracles* (2010 Psychosynthesis Press, ISBN 9780961144470). Published under a pseudonym to protect family privacy, the book tells the story of how psychosynthesis and the teachings of *A Course in Miracles* allowed me to discover a part of myself beyond pain, guilt, and blame and to reclaim "Self."

Ann Gila and John Firman explain in their book *Psychosynthesis: A Psychology of the Spirit* (2002 SUNY) how growing up in a harshly

critical and abusive environment (what they call a non-empathic environment) often means that in order to survive we learn to internalize the abusive relationships and treatments we know so well. In this way, we remain loyal to our caregivers, but also continue life-draining behaviors. As I relate in my book, "I almost flipped out during my first intensive week with psychosynthesis, when I realized I had become the 'executioner' in my own life"! As I began to look at my adult life, I saw how critical and hard I was on myself. As an adult, I did exactly what I had done as a child: no matter what I did, however well I performed, or however hard I tried, it was never enough. I criticized myself for not doing something else or for not doing better. I did not know how to be kind and loving towards myself or towards others. I appeared to be friendly, outgoing and affable but beneath

the surface I was judgmental, exacting, and critical.

Thanks to psychosynthesis, I stopped, took a breath, and opened the forgotten door to my own unconscious. I looked at the debilitating power plays with my subpersonalities, their beliefs, and their needs. I began to explore and allow for the possibility of other beliefs about myself. Slowly, other events, reactions, and people began to manifest in my life. My book tells of trauma and repressed pain, but, most importantly, it also reveals a story of transformation, courage, perseverance, and acceptance, thanks to psychosynthesis and "Papa Assagioli," as I call him. It is a story of an interior journey that invites us all to open the neglected or forgotten doors in our minds, take that deep breath, and look within. Despite the pain and trauma of life's experiences, the journey to our own true Self is just beginning. It is one filled with adventure! ■

REMEMBERING MARGARET PRATT **Psychosynthesis Leader in the Northwest**

Raised in Clarkston, WA, Margaret F. Pratt moved to Seattle to attend the University of Washington, where she met her future husband, Harry Pratt. She spent many years studying meditation with the School for Esoteric Studies. That led her to understand and study psychosynthesis. In the early 1970s, after her friend Edith Stauffer began holding workshops in the Seattle area, Margaret was instrumental in establishing High Point Northwest.

In 1972 and 1973, she accompanied Edith to study with Dr. Roberto Assagioli in Italy. Following her conversations with Dr. Assagioli, she enrolled in the University of Washington School of Educational Psychology, where she earned her doctorate. During this time, she introduced psychosynthesis to the University of Washington faculty. Margaret then established a private practice, which included an ongoing meditation/training group, and became a much-loved teacher, therapist, and trainer.

She was a member of the Seattle Women's University Club, University Christian Church, and Seattle First Baptist Church. She was also a volunteer for many community organizations and active throughout her life in many national and international programs focused on serving humanity. She and her husband, Harry, were active in the Queen City Yacht Club, traveled extensively throughout the world, and visited all but one of the 50 United States.

Margaret passed away suddenly at age 88 on March 13, 2010, at her residence, Horizon House, in Seattle, Washington. She is survived by her husband of 68 years, their children, Susan and Larry, three grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. A celebration of her life was held at Horizon House, Seattle, on April 7, 2010. Remembrances are requested for the Horizon House Assistance Fund, 900 University Street, Seattle, WA, 98101. ■

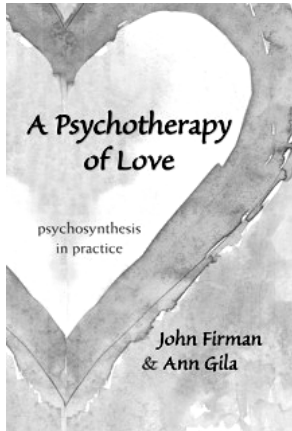
Review

Hot off SUNY Press: Firman & Gila Book

A Psychotherapy of Love: Psychosynthesis in Practice

Review by Didi Firman, EdD

Just the title makes me stop and take a breath. What a powerful concept. Is this what we do, we psychosynthesists? The invitation in the book is clear. Our work as psychosynthesis therapists is about love: about spiritual empathy, agape, empathic love. Language drawn from Firman and Gila's own extensive work and from kindred spirits in the field and in related fields builds a compelling case for an old idea: the real healing in psychotherapy is in the relationship, not in the techniques or strategies or theories that underpin the therapist's work.



The ideas promoted here are familiar to most of us: that, as therapists, we need to be authentic unifying centers to our clients. The woundedness that each client presents can only be healed in an empathic relation, or in a "special kind of love" . . . "a love that can see a psychotherapy client beyond our wish to cure or control, teach or advise" (p. 3).

While this may seem relatively clear, this book elaborates the many pitfalls for the therapist, notably the therapist's own wounding, which may easily get in the way. And it does us the service of looking at wounding not only through the lens of family of origin, but also of culture. Likewise, it looks at authentic unifying centers not only as the good parent or therapist but as anything and everything that may offer human beings a resonance with *Self*.

And so the invitation is even larger, because clearly there is a mandate to be deeply involved in our own work, at all levels, so that we can be the *Thou* to our client's *I*, the *I* to our client's *Thou*. And, in the end, since this ability to love is not a role or a strategy, it is a life's work. "This is not a love that can be turned on within the therapeutic setting and then turned off while living life in the wider world. This is a personal stance, a lifestyle, a life journey. In order to love in this way, therapists need to be committed to a path of love in their personal lives, a path that will continuously touch and transform them and their world" (p. 146).

In this important addition to the field of psychosynthesis, we are invited not only into the idea of love as the very basis for our work, but we are treated to a book that elaborates and draws on all of Assagioli's work in offering a developmental theory, a personality theory, and a clinical perspective on the stages of psychosynthesis psychotherapy. It is a pleasure to read a book, coming from an academic press, that is full of Assagioli as he is mirrored in other great minds in the field, past and present. Everyone will not agree with all that John and Ann present, nor would total agreement be a good thing. Growth of theory and practice, growth in the field of psychosynthesis depends on work like this—and our response to it.

My thanks to Ann and John for what they have given to the field and my request to all who study psychosynthesis: Take it into the world, write articles and books, teach classes, run training programs, offer psychotherapy. Live this love.

Firman, J. & Gila, A. (2010). *A psychotherapy of love: psychosynthesis in practice*. NY: SUNY Press. ■

AAP MEMBERSHIP MEETING **Saturday evening, June 26**

All members are invited to attend the Annual AAP Membership Meeting to be held at the Chicago 2010 conference at 6:30 p.m. after dinner, in the dining hall.

The meeting is scheduled to last one hour.■



AAP
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Explore This Issue:

- ◆ *Information on the Chicago Conference*
- ◆ *Invitation to Volunteer*
- ◆ *Tribute to Poldi Orlando*
- ◆ *New book by Firman and Gila Reviewed*
- ◆ *New book by Eileen val Essen reviewed*
- ◆ *Goings On at psychosynthesis centers & Web sites*

. . . AND MUCH MORE . . .

TRIBUTE TO POLDI ORLANDO

By Ursula Herrman

Light pastel waves
softer than rose petals
and transparent
beautifully flowing in front of my mind's eye
. . . a whole sea of veil-like petals

Embracing you, me, and all of humanity
All inclusive, All embracing, All welcoming

From defense to vulnerability
the tenderness of love arises, awakening within me the richness of life
The darkness and The light
Riding the infinite waves of life force

I am filled with infinite gratitude for the privilege to know you
to be with you
to share with you
to learn with you

THANK YOU FOR BEING POLDI

Poldi Orlando, much respected and valued leader of the Synthesis Institute of Miami, FL, passed away on July 9, 2009, see November 2009, AAP News.