Seed Thoughts on Transpersonal Healing

Don Chipley

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.ciis.edu/ijts-transpersonalstudies

Part of the Philosophy Commons, Psychology Commons, and the Religion Commons

Recommended Citation

Transpersonal psychotherapy, like transpersonal psychology, is an area that is still emerging. Because of this, it is often difficult for those interested in this area to arrive at any clear sense of what it is. The seed thoughts presented below, although drawn from a diversity of sources, offer a means for evolving one unified working perspective. Each seed contains a special insight which can be related to form a foundation web of psychotherapy-focussed transpersonal understandings. With this in mind, let us begin!

Instead of being whole, most of the time we are in pieces. No matter how much the world shatters us to 'pieces', we carry inside us a vision of wholeness that we sense is our true home and that beckons us. It is what the book of Genesis means, I think, by saying that we are made in the image of God.

Frederick Buechner
Theology Today (January, 1991)

I'M DYSFUNCTIONAL, YOU'RE DYSFUNCTIONAL.

Wendy Kaminer Title
of her Book (1993)

Only subjective [ego] consciousness is isolated; when it relates to its center it is integrated into wholeness...if you can see and understand your suffering without being subjectively involved, then because of your altered standpoint you also understand "how not to suffer".

C. G. Jung Psychological Reflections (1971)

Over and over, we are pulled back to the world "in here," which our culture has not properly understood in so many ways...I recently heard from one cancer patient whose disease had metastasized to her bones causing intense pain. This woman also happened to be mired in a bad marriage, and one day, utterly weary of the constant conflict with her husband, she decided once and for all that their relationship had come to an end. The day after she asked him for a separation her bone pain inexplicably disappeared. "Suddenly the phrase 'weary to the bone' came to mind," she says "and I saw in a flash that my disease was my body's way of expressing the same concept." Having released some of her bottled-up weariness, this woman relieved herself of the pain that was its literal double. Now she wonders, as I do, if the cancer will be forced to retreat. Was her entire illness just a metaphor?

Our culture chooses to believe that disease is basically created on the material level. After you inhale it an asbestos fiber can lodge in the smallest crevices of your lung tissue, and over time there is a definite small probability that it can cause a specific form of lung cancer. But by the same token, cancer rates have been found to increase among newly widowed men. Grief, too, lodges deep inside a person, and even though a molecule of asbestos from "out there" is not at all like a grief-stricken mood "in here" at some deep level of the self, they can be identical. We nourish our bodies with every impulse of trust and love, we poison them with
distrust and hate.

Deepak Chopra Unconditional Life (1991) pp. 15-16

Describing his work with patients of diverse backgrounds, Swiss psychologist Carl Jung stated that the one essential element for healing and wholeness is a direct connection to truth within oneself. In his own therapeutic process and work with patients, he drew extensively on exploration of the unconscious through work with dreams and active imagination, as well as calling on mystical symbols, rituals and philosophies of the spiritual traditions of the East to gain access to deeper states of consciousness.

Having worked as both meditation teacher and therapist in India, U.S. and Australia...I have joined many therapists in ascribing to the view of Transpersonal Psychology: that no one model for awareness, be it psychotherapy or meditation, body work or martial arts, can provide solutions to all our human problems. There is a tool for every level of development: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual, and a wholistic approach requires a synthesis of a wide range of approaches.

Karen Schaefer "Psychology or Meditation" Southern Crossings (Jan/Feb 1991) pp. 17

Just as we can consciously release physical tensions through our awareness of the body and its postures, we can also release emotional tensions by recognizing them. As with physical tensions, our emotional tensions have greater power over us the more they are unconscious. Bringing our attention fully and willingly to emotional contractions and blockages has a transformative power. The validity of the current psychological technique known as focusing is based in the self-healing power of voluntary attention. In fact much of the effectiveness of any psychotherapy, independent of the models and beliefs of the therapist, is the quality of therapeutic attention that is realized together by the therapist and client. It may be the most important contribution of the therapist to teach another how to attend to inner emotional states and processes.


As human beings we change most when we are related to with understanding and love. The same is true of the sub-personalities. The same is true of those parts of us that are negatively valenced. There is a bumper sticker that one sees on cars in California. It reads as follows: "EVEN DIRTY OLD MEN NEED LOVING." We think of this whenever we are working with a strong Critic. The bumper sticker we would write would read: "EVEN DIRTY OLD CRITICS NEED LOVING."

If instead of worrying about solving anything or subduing anyone, we, the therapists, simply engage the sub-personality in a Dialogue, helping it to unfold as though we had discovered a plant or a flower that needed caring, a very different kind of result takes place. As psychotherapists and healers, we are gardeners of the soul. The opening and unfolding of sub-personalities is a process, and it is the awakening to this that is our goal.


At one point in my life, I was coming off a great personal failure, with two disastrous marriages. I had gotten into psychotherapy. After a very successful period in my therapy,
I told my therapist that I needed a teacher because I didn’t know what to do with my life. I needed new goals and vision. She thought about this for awhile and said, “You will be your own teacher.” I said, “No, no, no, impossible. No one can be his or her own teacher.” She listened to me and repeated, “You will be your own teacher.”

Edie Weinstein-Moser
“Interview: Daniel Quinn”
Visions (March 1993) pp. 7

Learning to listen to ourselves is a way of learning to love ourselves, just as listening to other people is a powerful form of love. [Respectful listening is a first step in the direction of learning to love self and others unconditionally.]

Joan Borysenko Guilt is
the Teacher (1990) pp. 78-80

To grow and become what we dream and cherish, we must expand beyond the insubstantial constraints of one’s individual self and experience the roomy ambience of the Higher Self. The Higher Self is not a mysterious ghost or an alien master or a fictitious character. It is us, the real us, the human essence, the vital force perpetually and miraculously flowing from the infinite source, seeding and flourishing in every one of us, re-creating, reproducing, echoing notes to the likes of which we toil, wonder, rise or fall.

M. A. Fadali Coping and
Beyond (1990) pp. 86

When a person rediscovers that his deepest nature is one with the All, he is relieved of the burdens of time, of anxiety, of worry; he is released from the chains of alienation and separate-self existence. Seeing that self and other are one, he is released from the fear of life; seeing that being and non-being are one he is delivered from the fear of death. Thus when one rediscovers the ultimate Wholeness, one transcends—but does not obliterate—every imaginable sort of boundary, and therefore transcends all types of battles. It is a conflict-free awareness, whole, blissful. But this does not mean one loses all egoic consciousness, all temporal awareness... (for) wholeness is not the opposite of egoic individuality, it is simply its ground, and the discovery of the ground does not annihilate the figure of the ego. On the contrary, it simply reconnects it with the rest of nature, cosmos and divinity.

Ken Wilbur Up from Eden:
A Transpersonal View of Human

WHAT WE LOVE WE WILL BECOME.

Kabir Edmund Helminski
Living Presence (1992) pp. 136

What then are some of the things one can learn from contemplating notions such as these? Among the insights which surfaced for me are the following: 1) sickness and pain often stem from the separation, fragmentation and alienation we experience as an outcome of being members of broken circles of relatedness with ourselves, others and the Great Life Spirit of the Universe; 2) it is helpful to seek the guidance of therapists who have mastered the use of various approaches/techniques designed to involve us in working on holistic ways of transformative seeing and healing, but it is ultimately we, ourselves, who must accept responsibility for healing our wounds; and 3) healing is realised as we learn how to listen to
and lovingly accept the essential connective nature of the physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual dimensions both of our own and others' being, as well as that of the Great Life Spirit of the Universe, as attentively and fully as possible. In short we can become vigorously authentic beings in light of the extent to which we can discover and journey on the 'path that has heart'.