Personal Transformation
with Heart-Centered Therapies

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Abstract: In psychotherapy, we basically retrieve traumatic memories, bring unconscious material into consciousness, express the attached emotions, and release the trauma. In the process, traumas are resolved, we overcome debilitations and return to normality, free of symptoms. In healing, we expand the goal of our intervention from symptom relief to system optimization. The process of transformation, or transpersonal development, consists of becoming aware of the limitations of normality and recognizing the possibilities of further growth; preparing for and realizing these potentials through effective practices/techniques; and making these growth changes permanent in ourselves. In transformation, we begin with a remedial, regressive phase of emotional healing and continue into the progressive psychospiritual realm, overcoming normality and returning to wholeness. Achieving wholeness means incorporating the shadow and the luminous into a new, spontaneous, multi-faceted whole self. As transformational healers, we must orchestrate the development of the ego so that it becomes so strong and healthy that it is willing to surrender itself to a higher purpose than its own self-promotion. Personal transformation is analogous to the shamanic journey. We present a transformation schema incorporating Kundalini psychophysiological transmutation, ego and psychosocial development, and psychospiritual unfolding. The Personal Transformation Intensive™ (PTI) is a journey of transformation utilizing Heart-Centered Therapies for navigating the journey successfully. The role of healthy community and supportive network cannot be overlooked in personal transformation.

Introduction

When historians look back on the twentieth century, they may find that two of the most important breakthroughs in Western psychology were not discoveries of new knowledge but recognitions of old wisdom.

First, psychological maturation can continue far beyond our arbitrary, culture-bound definitions of normality. There exist further developmental possibilities latent within us all. As William James pointed out, "Most people live, whether physically, intellectually or morally, in a very restricted circle of their potential being. They make use of a very small portion of their consciousness. . . . We all have reservoirs of life to draw upon, of which we do not dream."

Second, techniques exist for realizing transpersonal potentials (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993, p. 47).

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Abraham Maslow (1968, pp. 71-72) said, "What we call normality in psychology is really a psychopathology of the average, so undramatic and so widely spread that we don't even notice it." People who have excelled at normality without choosing to go further, Maslow (1971) called *nontranscending self-actualizers*. Walsh and Vaughan (1993, p. 110) refer to normality as "a form of arrested development," that is, stopping the developmental process prematurely at a level of incompleteness.

Many people now see development beyond normality as the logical culmination of human development.

> In the first phase [of life], which normally lasts from childhood to middle adulthood, we are becoming individuals, in the sense of learning the ways of the world and involving ourselves in the demands of family, work, and society. In the second phase, which begins, according to Jung, with the midlife crisis, when we may find ourselves, like Dante, 'lost in the middle of a dark forest,' we begin the process of individuation, which involves a turning inward, to reconnect with the Self, the center of our being. One could say in the first phase you build and develop your ego and in the second phase you transcend it (Metzner, 1998, p. 258).

> The eighth developmental stage is focused on generativity vs. stagnation, creating meaning in one's life through relationships, contribution to the community, self-actualization, and spirituality. We must develop spiritually *and* emotionally in balance to experience true transformation. . . .
> Ultimately, we must all face death. Those who have lived fully, fulfilling their dreams and accepting themselves in totality have achieved wisdom, ego integrity, and self-actualization (Zimberoff & Hartman, 1998, p. 42).

The process of transformation, or transpersonal development, the last psychosocial developmental stage of adulthood and maturity, consists of becoming aware of the limitations of normality and recognizing the possibilities of further growth; preparing for and realizing these potentials through effective practices/techniques; and making these growth changes permanent in ourselves, living the principles for the benefit of all humankind.

Becoming aware

What must we become aware of? First we discover the truth about who we are and who we want to be. Through moments of transcendence, we experience ourselves through an egoless lens. This can be an experience induced by religious ritual, a peak

experience, hallucinogenic drug, meditation, near-death experience, or many other means. This experience provides a "glimpse" of the vast possibilities beyond normal everyday consciousness. We begin to discover, perhaps through psychotherapy or meditation, that there is a lot more to us than we ever suspected. We will examine at length the process of becoming aware.

Preparing and realizing

Transformation almost always requires preparation. For one, we heal the emotional and psychological wounds that have kept us stuck in the limitations of neurotic patterns. We use the technology of deep experiential, transpersonal therapy to heal.

As transformational healers, we orchestrate the development of the client's ego so that it becomes so strong and healthy that it disidentifies from the myriad of fragmented selves and surrenders itself to a higher purpose than its own self-promotion. That requires carefully completing each of the required developmental stages, most easily accomplished in regressed ego states utilizing hypnotic trance, and enough spiritually transcendent experience to assure the ego that it is safe, even advisable, to release control. It is also vitally important to do the shame release work so that the ego no longer needs to hide, defend or promote itself.

> The ego in midlife ideally has become strong enough to reverse the focus on autonomy, to initiate a return (Jung's *enantiodromia*) to its underlying source in the collective unconscious. The undoing of the ego's grip on independence and control requires undoing the primal repression and embracing that which has been repressed (the shadow side). The ego must surrender to enter the final stage of development, but of course the ego fights tooth and nail to maintain its sense of independence and control. Surrender is actually accomplished through the release of shame and fear, the 'glue' of repression, allowing for a redemptive return to innocence, wonderment, awe, mystical and spiritual experience, and sensuality (Zimberoff & Hartman, 1998, p. 42).

> The aim, then, is not so much the dissolution of the ego as the dissolution of the false view of the ego; and what is to be achieved is an openness to all possibilities that present themselves, and above all, a realization that we are infinitely more than we believe we are when *identified* with our concrete little ego. We have limitless potentials, once we are free from the bondage of our egocentric world (Moacanin, 1986, p. 83) (italics added).

We strengthen and consolidate the soul by retrieving any fragments that were separated at moments of trauma or unbearable pain (in this life or past lives). Jung said his task was the "cure of souls" (1961, p. 124). This surpasses the healing of pathology and aims at the fulfillment of individual wholeness. Thomas Moore (1992) notes the profound responsibility for cure of souls, *cura animarum*, assigned to each parish priest in the Catholic Church, and suggests that each of us, as inner priest, can be the curate of our own soul (pp. xiv-xv).

We strengthen the body and its subtle energy field, gaining the skill of sensitivity to, and management of, our own energy and that of all beings with whom we come into contact. We activate the spiritual energy that exists as a potential within each of us.

We prepare through spiritual practices such as meditation, worship, and service. We prepare through shamanic training, learning to navigate nonordinary reality, to harness the power and versatility of the dream state, and to enlist the help of spirits and guides. And we prepare through developing mindfulness, living fully present in each moment.

We will study the process of transformation from several vantage points. First is the ***physical***, in which we actually begin to change the structure and functioning of our bodies. We begin to understand the subtle energy that we are composed of, and learn to manage it for optimal health and growth. We gain conscious influence over many of the processes once believed to be autonomic, such as our sleep cycle, recovery from injury and illness, the functioning of the immune system, and ultimately the process of dying. A second vantage point is that of the ***emotional/psychological***, in which we heal the wounds of unresolved trauma and grow into self-actualization (Maslow's term) or individuation (Jung's term). This healing must take place on the deepest of levels, in the developmental state in which it was left unresolved. It necessarily involves incorporating the full expression of ourselves, embracing the repressed shadow, the imperfection, the unworthiness as well as the wisdom and the transcendence. Another vantage point is the ***spiritual***, in which we surrender the ego to that which is greater than itself ("Thy will, not mine, be done"), find our highest purpose in life and begin to express it in every action, and thus

live each moment prepared for a conscious death. This involves reclaiming all the fragments of the Soul that have been dissociated or lost through identification with a narrow, too-limited self-concept. Another vantage point is the **social context** within which transformation occurs, in which we create healthy community to support our highest level of functioning. Most of us require the crucible of relationships within which to accomplish these transformations. We create an identity and strengthen the resulting ego in relationships. We create and face our deepest fears and greatest challenges in relationships. We create safety and trust through heart-centered unconditional love. We create and use the encouragement and support of healthy community needed to persevere in this path of transformation.

We will use several metaphoric paradigms to look at each of these vantage points: the chakra system of the human energy field; the developmental stages of the ego; and the shamanic journey. Each paradigm is intricately interrelated.

We make these transformational changes permanent in our lives and in our relationships when we:

1. Avoid dissociation and instead are fully, spontaneously present in every moment.
2. Maintain clarity, basing our daily choices on our intuitive knowledge, wisdom and love, rather than fear.
3. Learn to identify and use positive energy and not "take on" negative energy.
4. Exist in full integrity.
5. Practice spiritual manifestation of what is in our highest interest.
6. Accept ourselves for who we are, acknowledging the continued growth we desire.
7. Heal and resolve our unhealthy relationships and begin attracting healthy ones.
8. Freely express our emotions spontaneously through healthy release.
9. Live current and complete, not unfinished, in every interaction of every relationship.
10. Live life prepared for a conscious death, no matter how unexpectedly it may come.

11. Recognize the karmic patterns being fulfilled and stop creating new karma (accept that "I am 100% responsible for my experience of my life").

The authors have developed several methods of personal transformation work which consistently produce the desired results. The foundation of this work is based on understanding, eliciting, and managing the trance state. We use Heart-Centered Hypnotherapy, which accesses deep, transpersonal levels of the unconscious. The heart-centered aspect of this therapy refers to the energy of unconditional love, which must be present in order for people to feel trusting and safe enough to recover deep trauma.

Through Heart-Centered Breath Therapy, people access their birth experiences, age-regressed states, past lives, and the metaconscious state which includes the life review and decision process between lives (Whitton & Fisher, 1986). Breath therapy is directed less by the therapist and more by the body itself. It is the most direct and powerful tool for accessing and healing birth trauma.

Energetic Psychodrama is a highly complex modality incorporating aspects of both hypnotherapy and breath therapy, utilizing the trance state and the supportive environment of a group. Through this type of psychodrama, the client externalizes and resolves what has been previously internalized (Zimberoff & Hartman, 1999).

Kundalini meditation is another integral part of this transformational work. As we meditate and breath life into each chakra, we unblock any previously closed energies. Opening the chakras is an important aspect of transformational work in that the chakras hold the energy key to each area of the body. When the chakras are closed, it is like trying to live without electricity in your home or office. Without it, nothing would have the power it needs to perform properly.

Another important aspect of the Kundalini meditation is opening up the *heart center*, the place of unconditional love. Any successful transformational system is built on a foundation of unconditional love. If the heart center is closed, the love doesn't flow and the power of the work is lost. Through this meditation,

the practitioner learns to quiet the conscious thoughts and move into the flow of profound love for all human beings.

The combination of Heart-Centered Therapies (hypnotherapy, breath therapy, and psychodrama) and Kundalini meditation brings Personal Transformation within the reach of anyone willing to do the personal work. The Personal Transformation Intensive™ (PTI) is a vehicle for navigating this transformational journey of healing successfully. In a group setting of mutual support, people feel safe to explore and assimilate every aspect of themselves.

Now let us locate the transformation process within a continuum of therapy and healing.

The Continuum of Therapy, Healing, and Transformation

In **psychotherapy**, we basically follow the prescription discovered by Freud of retrieving traumatic memories, bringing unconscious material into consciousness, expressing the attached emotions, and releasing the trauma (Breuer & Freud, 1895/1955). In the process, traumas are resolved, pain is released, we overcome debilitations and return to the normality of social adaptation, free of symptoms. The process is clinical, relying on known therapeutic techniques. We may use the breath and other physical activities to diagnose emotional states and to reduce the tendency to dissociate from experiencing emotion. We observe and analyze the behavior patterns in our life, and deal with neurotic (i.e., secondary and insatiable) needs. We may access early traumatic memories and "safe" elements of unconscious material. Our goal is a well-adapted life with a sense of personal power and healthy relationships, and the highest expression of ourselves comes in the contribution of service to our community. The ultimate goal is a happy life.

In **healing**, we expand the goal of our intervention from symptom relief to system optimization. It might be seen as the difference between medicine and naturopathy. We also bring into the process spiritual connection (the client's and the healer's), accessed through intuition and experienced as the grace of God. We release the effects of trauma and the "early decisions" made by the individual for survival reasons in abusive and threatening circumstances. The neurotic (secondary) needs

have been displaced by their underlying basic needs, and therefore can begin to be satisfied. We use more powerful techniques to access deeper levels of the unconscious, bringing forgiveness and acceptance. We work directly on the physical body, and on the birth and *en utero* issues. Our goals are self-actualization, the expression of unconditional love in healthy community, and service to others without regard to acknowledgement or reward (*seva*). The ultimate goal is a harmonious, balanced life.

In **transformation**, we begin by following the same therapeutic process. We might call this phase of transformation *regressive*, going to the source of lessened capacity and healing it. We don't stop there, however. We continue the healing into the psychospiritual realm, overcoming *normality* and achieving (returning to) *wholeness*. We might call this phase of transformation *progressive*, evolutionary growth into *self-actualization*, a term used in humanistic and existential psychology implying bringing into actuality what has been only a potentiality. We are dealing now with a new set of needs, the meta-needs that propel us toward transcendence. Here the work is acknowledged to be God's work, directly accessing the Soul through intuitive psychic powers. We transcend the limitations of generally accepted ordinary reality. We release the attachments to people and things that keep us captive and limited, and work toward existential, karmic liberation. We access and embrace the deepest levels of the unconscious, of intuitive certainty, and of the Soul itself. Our goals are spiritual liberation from existential limitations, clarity of psychic vision (listening to and following the quiet, infallible inner voice), and reaching the highest expression of love in the surrender of the ego to the will of God (*Karma Yoga*). The ultimate goal is a life of moments so balanced and conscious that one maintains equanimity, composure and spiritual focus even at the moment of death.

Table 1 summarizes the progressive differences between therapy, healing, and transformation. This applies on the level of treating the body or the psyche.

Table 1. The Continuum of Therapy, Healing, and
Transformation

Therapy	Healing	Transformation
The hierarchical needs (Maslow)		
Neurotic needs	Basic needs	Meta-needs
The source		
Therapist and client	Therapist, client and God	God
The energies		
Intellectual	Intellectual	Intellectual
Emotional	Emotional	Emotional
Physical (symptomatic)	Physical (wellness)	Physical (transcendence)
-	Intuitive (psychic)	Intuitive (shamanic)
-	Spiritual (grace from God)	Spiritual (the soul)
Release work		
Emotional (pain)	Emotional (trauma)	Emotional (attachment)
Patterns (neurotic)	Patterns (early decisions)	Patterns (karmic)
Access to		
Unconscious (drives)	Unconscious (shadow)	Unconscious (collective)
Consciousness (ordinary)	Consciousness (nonordinary)	Consciousness (metaconsciousness)
The tools		
Breath (not dissociating)	Breath (receiving life)	Breath (*pranayama*)
Insight (analysis)	Insight (acceptance)	Insight (clarity)
Regression (early trauma)	Regression (pre- and perinatal)	Regression (soul)
Preparation for		
Well-adapted life	Self-actualization	Spiritual realization
Healthy relationships	Healthy community	Contribution
Service	*Seva*	*Karma Yoga*
Personal Power	Unconditional love	Clarity
Ultimate goal		
A happy life	A harmonious life	A conscious death

People usually seek therapy because they have a particular problem needing solution, a pain needing relief. Perhaps they have an addiction or anxiety or a relationship issue which they know they need to address. In traditional therapy, we address that issue and hopefully achieve improvement. Perhaps we refer them to a doctor for drugs such as Prozac to relieve the symptoms, putting a band-aid over a huge wound. Symptomatic treatment often results in symptom replacement.

Therapy, especially "brief therapy," involves quick solutions to immediate problems. Healing, on the other hand, requires an in-depth look at what life is about, the purpose and meaning of existence, and how to more fully express oneself in this lifetime.

It requires looking at the whole picture rather than just a small portion of it.

In healing work, we recognize the interconnectedness of the whole person. We go deeper to the level of early trauma and resolve what was left unresolved. We know that true healing clears up the problem, symptom <u>and</u> cause, leaving the person healthy and prepared to fight off future infections, be they physical or emotional.

In transformational work, we see the symptom as *a clue* to the deeper spiritual issue with which the person is involved. The symptom can actually lead through the deeper emotional work, clearing out ego issues that block spiritual connection. For example, a person who is continually upset with his/her relationship partner becomes so preoccupied that there is no awareness of the source of the projections. This preoccupation may also be preventing him/her from looking deeper at the real source of the hurt and anger.

In transformational work, we understand that the source of most fear and rage comes from being separated from God. That early separation is what most people need to heal and what many people go through life projecting onto their partners in the form of fear of abandonment and separation rage. We don't want to discount the actual abandonment issues that clients experience from their early childhood and we encourage full expression of those experiences, but in transformational therapy we go back even further to the source, which may be very primal anger at God.

As children we were taught that we weren't supposed to be angry at God and therefore most people do not even allow for that possibility. Since God is the ultimate authority figure, most people who have anger towards authority may actually have this anger at God. Sometimes this anger stems from the perceived separation from God at birth. As soon as the soul realizes that it has once again chosen to come into human form, there may be feelings of resistance and desire to "go back." When the realization comes that *there is no turning back,* the person comes into this life kicking and screaming with rage and resentment about "having to do it all alone." Life on earth is experienced as exile, banishment, or expulsion from paradise.

Personal Transformation

Transformation may be abrupt or gradual. Zen Buddhism speaks of the moment of satori, which changes everything and nothing. This is the ultimate paradox. After enlightenment, the Zen masters tell us, we go back to chopping wood and carrying water. This moment of satori usually comes, however, after painstaking work, preparation and step-by-step changes. These changes often come from the commitment to deep personal work and the resultant transformational experiences.

Transformation may be temporary or lasting. The temporary transformation we call an "altered state of consciousness." It might be a dream state, a hypnotic trance, meditation, absorption in creative activity, or transcendence. Transcendence is traveling beyond, leaving the existing system in place, only to come back to it eventually. These momentary experiences are valuable because they give us a "glimpse" of the possibilities. But the real work of transformation is to extend *peak experiences* into a *plateau experience* (Maslow, 1971), making the extraordinary ordinary, making a transitory altered *state* into an enduring altered *trait* (Goleman, 1993, p. 20). Personal transformation strives to fundamentally change the reality of one's life permanently, replacing the old "normal" state of consciousness with a newly altered "normal" state.

Transformation may be externally or internally induced. External examples would be a guru or spiritual teacher providing a spiritual experience, e.g. a baptism in Christianity or a transmission of spiritual power called *shaktipat* in the Hindu tradition. A hypnotic induction and age regression, a sweat lodge, or a rebirthing experience are external inductions to transcendent states of consciousness.

Examples of transformational experiences that are more internally induced include a near-death experience (NDE), where a person's life is suddenly transformed by seeing God and knowing he/she is here on earth for a purpose, or a spontaneous, ecstatic, visionary experience such as Paul had on the road to Damascus.

Transformation usually follows a predictable pattern of transitions: an ending, then an intermediate zone, then a new beginning. At times of new beginnings, we often feel uncertain

or anxious about choice and commitment. In the intermediate zone, we feel confused and ungrounded. When something ends, we are afraid of loss, separation and death (Bridges, 1980). The intermediate, transitional moments provide unique opportunities for immediate dramatic change. We draw here an analogy between the bardos of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* or *Bardo Thodol* (Sogyal Rinpoche, 1993), and moments of transcendence. "These are borderline states; they are times of crisis, when the tension is at its peak, but which are also most pregnant psychologically, since they are times when change can most readily occur. Inherent in such states is the opportunity for transformation. In the crack between two worlds - of the living and the dead, of death and rebirth - lies the supreme opportunity" (Moacanin, 1986, p. 67). This crack appears whenever we expand our experience of who we are, embracing parts previously suppressed, or disidentifying from limited self-definitions. These moments occur in experiential transpersonal psychotherapy, in shamanic work, in soul retrievals, in meditative states, in ritual rites and other spiritual ecstasies. And the most pregnant of all is the moment of death, so perennial wisdom has it, when the mind is capable of attaining ultimate liberation.

The transformation we seek, becoming whole, means expanding into all aspects of ourselves, ego and shadow, conscious and unconscious, incorporating rather than renouncing or overcoming any one part. It also means transcending our limitations to higher levels of functioning. Psychologist Radmila Moacanin summarizes:

> The process of individuation, or psychological development, leads progressively further away from the ego to the Self, from the unconscious to consciousness, from the personal to the transpersonal, the holy, the realization that the macrocosm is being mirrored in the microcosm of the human psyche (Moacanin, 1986, p. 65).

> Indeed, according to Jung, the ego, full of distortions and projections, needs to be dissolved before the Self can emerge. The Self, however, which is the totality of the psyche, includes the ego. In the process of individuation one does not destroy the ego, rather one places it in subordinate relation to the Self. The ego is no longer the center of the personality; the Self, the mandala, which unites all opposites, is its center. What is dissolved is the inflated, concrete ego, pursuing its exclusive selfish purposes, just following its own impulses. . . .
> For Jung, transformation is the goal of psychotherapy, and the disappearance of egohood is the only criterion of change. But he maintains

that frequently for Westerners "a conscious ego and a cultivated understanding must first be produced through analysis before one can even think about abolishing egohood (Jung, 1978, p. 154)" (Moacanin, 1986, p. 83-84).

The actual steps we take in this journey, following Ralph Metzner's terminology (1998), we might call *digressive* transformational experiences, that is temporary states of consciousness that act as transport between the past and future, between trauma and incorporation, between fragmentation and wholeness. This is what the shamans call the intermediate world, where it is possible to move between the lower world and the upper world. These include, for example, visions and dreams, hypnotic trance states, meditation, or various transcendent states. Also included are physical alterations that provide transport, such as yoga, bioenergetics, and conscious breathing.

To be truly helpful facilitators of this transformational process, we must understand these worlds, and how to navigate between them. We must also understand the natural obstacles to the process. There are guardians at the thresholds of these worlds to protect ill-advised trespassing, but also to assist those who know how to work with them. These guardians include, for example, unwillingness to surrender ego control, basic self-concepts of unworthiness, fears, and attachments. Buddhists (Sogyal Rinpoche, 1993, p. 112) identify six main negative emotions that cause the six realms of existence: pride (realm of the gods); jealousy (realm of the demigods); desire (realm of the humans); ignorance (realm of the animals); greed (realm of the hungry ghosts); and anger (realm of the hells). The guardians are always projections of the traveler. They can stop the journey before it even begins, or they can be recruited into service for the daunting task of breaking through the barriers between what seems to be and what is.

One of the primary obstacles to successful transformation is the tunnel-vision belief that no change is needed, the denial of any limitation. This is as common among therapists as it is in the community at large. In our work training therapists, we have discovered how important it is for therapists to experience their own healing/transformational process. Many therapists are "wounded healers," hungry for the transformational experience, since in many cases it was their own search for personal

transformation which lead them into the field in the first place. As their own healing and transformation occurs, they are then so much more qualified to facilitate this process for those who seek help from them.

Soul Work in Transformation

An important part of personal transformation work has to do with recognizing the *soul* of each individual and understanding when people have *soul issues*. Thomas Moore (1992, p. xi) says, "The great malady of the twentieth century, implicated in all of our troubles and affecting us individually and socially, is 'loss of soul'."

We have discovered during the course of doing trauma work that people often have a splitting or fragmentation of the soul. Just as the personality can split off when trauma occurs, so too does the soul. It appears that pieces of the soul may split off or fragment (Modi, 1997, p. 368), also called *soul-mind fragmentation* (Baldwin, 1992, p. 75), during different experiences. If the trauma is extreme enough, the entire soul may actually separate from the body. This fragmentation produces an individual who seems disconnected, dissociated and spaced out. There are many terms in our language which indicate this condition, such as referring to someone as "a lost soul."

Jung refers to the diminution of the personality known in primitive psychology as 'loss of soul' (1959, p. 119). He states that we label the similar experience in our civilized culture as an "abaissement du niveau mental," and describes it as "a slackening of the tensity of consciousness, which might be compared to a low barometric reading, presaging bad weather. The tonus has given way, and this is felt subjectively as listlessness, moroseness, and depression" (p. 119). The condition can go so far that the individual parts of the personality become independent and thus escape from the control of the conscious mind, a phenomena known as hysterical loss of function. The condition results from physical and mental fatigue, bodily illness, violent emotions, traumatic shock (p. 120), and dissociation and suppression of consciousness (p. 281). We have learned from shamanic sources how to retrieve and integrate the "lost soul."

Francis

Francis came in with a weight problem and through hypnotherapy work realized that she ate to fill up an extreme feeling of emptiness inside. She described the emptiness as pervasive and something she had experienced all throughout her life. In fact, she couldn't remember not having it. She had tried to fill the emptiness with food, sex, drugs and relationships, none of which had worked. Francis was very dissociated from her emotions and often "spaced-out."

In hypnotherapy, Francis regressed back to the source of this pervasive feeling of emptiness. She reported being a small child who is being told that her mother has died. At the age of 18 months, she has no concept of what has happened to her mother, especially because the adults around her do not know what to tell her. They are trying to pretend that nothing has happened and that her mother will be back. But even as a small child, she can feel the pain and isolation of abandonment with the loss of her mother.

The next scenes in her hypnotic regression had to do with being placed in an institutional orphanage with no contact, warmth or physical affection. She felt herself disappearing and dissociating as her pain increased and the love dissolved from her life. I asked her, "Where is your soul?" "It's gone," she replied. "It's not here." I instructed her to go and find her soul wherever it was. She reported that she could see it up there hovering around, but it was definitely disconnected from her body. I instructed her to go and retrieve it and bring it back into her body. As she did this, I worked energetically at the same time to help reconnect the soul with the body. Soon she began to feel a warmth move into her feet and legs. A smile came across her face as she experienced her soul filling her up. This was a whole new experience for her and she could even feel the energy moving into her fingertips!

After her session, she was amazed and ecstatic as she finally put the pieces together of her shattered life. The reconnection with her soul took months to fully realize. It was a whole new way of experiencing the life from which she had previously been so disconnected. Francis began to forgive God and found a spiritual path that filled the enormous longing she had for

reconnection with God. The substitutes were no longer even tempting. Through her own transformation process, she became dedicated to teach others how to reclaim the lost parts of themselves.

This is analogous to the shamanic journey into the lower world to get necessary knowledge or retrieve something valuable and bring it back to this, the ordinary world. This experience is "akin to the shamanic concept that we must learn to master both ordinary and nonordinary reality, that we must be able to see and to 'see', to perceive both the obstructed and the unobstructed reality" (Metzner, 1998, p. 44). Here the healer facilitating personal transformation is shaman.

Achieving wholeness means more than just bringing back to consciousness that lower world, the traumatic past, the shadow side. It means incorporating it into a new, multi-faceted, more all-encompassing whole self. "Jung's term *individuation* refers on the one hand to developing individual consciousness, as distinct from mass consciousness, and on the other hand to becoming 'un-divided', or whole" (Metzner, 1998, p. 3).

Taking transformation a step beyond healing (see Table 1) is to begin discovering our karmic patterns and what we are here on earth to learn.

Bonnie

Bonnie is a young woman who had difficulty with her sexual identity as well as deep feelings of hatred for her mother and intense fear of her father. Many sessions of hypnotherapy ended up with Bonnie taking the "energy release" hose and pulling it around her own neck as if to strangle herself. This seemed to be a *repetition compulsion* of something in the past, which she could not quite find. It felt as if she were trying to strangle herself in some way. At one point, after a powerful *temazcal* (Mayan Sweat Lodge ritual) experience, Bonnie began to experience a past life where she was a young Mayan boy who had been sacrificed to a rival tribe and killed by them. He had been scalped, strangled, and then his body was thrown down an embankment and he drowned in a river.

As the memory came to her, she again grabbed the hose and began choking herself. Now it became clear that this was a reenactment of the choking, drowning death which she

experienced at the hands of the rival tribe. There were several men who participated in her murder. I asked her to look at the people and sense their energy. "Now see if there is anyone there among your murderers who you know in this lifetime." She immediately recognized her mother, who in that lifetime was one of the men who choked and killed her.

In a water breath therapy session the next day, Bonnie returned to her death of drowning in the river. She realized that she had left part of her soul there at her death. As that young boy, her death had been so violent and so unexpected that her soul did not catch up with her body. Her soul separated and was confused and frightened about what happened. Because of this her soul remained in the river and from the trance state she could see it there. She was instructed to bring it back to herself, which she was successfully able to do. Afterward, she felt more complete than ever before.

In a subsequent breath therapy session, Bonnie returned to her death in that lifetime and discovered that she had made the choice to come back in this lifetime with the man who had been her murderer in that life. It was unclear to her why she had chosen her killer to be her mother in this lifetime. Perhaps it was a need to get revenge or the strong feelings of hate and fear which drew them back together. When people have strong feelings toward each other they are said to be karmically connected. These feelings do not have to be positive; *any* strong feelings, positive or negative, can draw you together. Unresolved feelings, or *unfinished business* in Fritz Perls' terminology, draw people to reincarnate together in another lifetime.

In the water, Bonnie began experiencing the feeling again of choking and being strangled. It turned out that she was born to this mother with the umbilical cord wrapped around her neck and had to be delivered by Caesarian section in order to save her life. It was as if the mother who had killed her through strangulation in her past life, was still continuing to strangle her in this life. That was certainly Bonnie's psychological experience of her mother.

This past life experience and then rebirth with the cord wrapped around her neck explained a lot about why Bonnie had hated her mother so violently. They were bonded in rivalry and murder, not love. Bonnie hated when her mother said to her, "I

just want to be your friend." Whenever her mother said those words, Bonnie would go into a frenzy of reaction. She would scream at her, "You're not my friend! Don't even pretend to be my friend. You don't even know what a friend is." After discovering the past life connection with her mother, it made sense to Bonnie why she reacted so strongly to the idea of friendship with her mother.

Bonnie is very clear that she does not want to continue this karmic connection with her mother/murderer. In order to complete the karmic connection, there are several more steps she will need to finish. She may need to discover any other lifetimes where they were connected. There may be a lifetime where Bonnie did some act of violence to her mother, which precipitated the murder in the remembered lifetime. What is needed to release the karmic pattern is understanding and then forgiveness. The forgiveness needs to come from the Soul, not just from the personality. When full understanding of the karmic pattern is complete, forgiveness comes naturally. It is then and only then that the karmic Soul connection can be released. Transformation work involves completing these karmic cycles. So we are working from the personality level, to the past life level and then to the karmic level (see Table 1).

Development and Strengthening of the Ego

The Jungian perspective on the development of the ego is especially useful in this work. Let us quickly review that perspective, utilizing the work of Edward Edinger. There exist two autonomous centers of psychic being: the ego and the Self. The ego is the seat of the conscious personality, of subjective identity. The Self is the central archetype of wholeness, the unifying center of the total psyche (conscious and unconscious)."It is generally accepted among analytical psychologists that the task of the first half of life involves ego development with progressive separation between ego and Self; whereas the second half of life requires a surrender or at least a relativization of the ego as it experiences and relates to the Self" (Edinger, 1972, p. 5). The child is born experiencing itself to be literally the center of the universe; that is, the ego is totally identified with the Self. Healthy parenting eagerly meets every

need, thus reinforcing the child's basic sense of worthiness and trust. Jung called this *ego inflation*. Soon enough, however, the world (and the parents) begin selectively meeting demands and rejecting others. A child whose ego inflation continues unchecked by boundaries and limits becomes "spoiled," and grows into an adult who exhibits ego inflation through grandiosity, demands for control, and selfishness. Adults can also exhibit negative inflation, that is unworthiness, guilt, ambiguity about one's existence, and the need to suffer. This occurs when the child experiences abusive parental rejection, which is rejection stemming from the projection of the parent's shadow onto the child, and the child identifying with it.

A child's experience that it is not the center of the universe leads to an estrangement between the ego and Self. The ego is chastened and humbled. Initially, this is experienced as alienation, but a loving environment keeps the ego from being damaged in the process. That is, the ego disidentifies from the Self while maintaining connection, which is desirable for healthy continued development. If, however, the child does not experience a loving environment, the ego's connection to Self is severed and serious damage results. The ego is disconnected from its origin, its inner resources. The person is not whole and integrated. Healing that wound requires restoring connection with the natural inner resources of strength and acceptance (Self), without returning to the narcissism of identification with it (inflated ego). That state is referred to as the *individuated ego*, and the process of realizing it is *individuation*.

The process of individuation begins with recognition of the shadow. "Thus the ego must sacrifice its goals and values if it is to submit to the orientation of the Self. This sacrifice is brought about by the recognition of the shadow" (Humbert, 1988, p. 64). Then come transcendent experiences, in which the ego discovers its subordinate place to a greater reality, a transpersonal center of which it is only a small part: the Self, the totality of conscious, individual unconscious and collective unconscious reality. The mature, individuated ego is capable of surrender, at least to the next experience that challenges its autonomy. "Individuation is a process, not a realized goal. Each new level of integration must submit to further transformation if development is to proceed" (Edinger, 1972, p. 96). The ego that has surrendered its

predominance lives consciously by the code "not my will but thine be done." Edinger calls this stage of development the *Self-oriented ego*, that is "the individuated ego which is conscious of being directed by the Self" (1972, p. 146).

Jung envisioned "the transformation of personality through the blending and fusion of the noble with the base … of the conscious with the unconscious" (1972, p. 220). Before transformation can occur, the ego must be a unified, complete conscious state. That is accomplished through incorporation of repressed unconscious material, through successful completion of the developmental stages, and through the unification of all the fragmented parts of a person's psyche.

Judy

Judy came into our program kicking and screaming. She was excessively negative and angry concerning nearly every experience. Her constant complaints and negativity pushed people away and tended to keep her isolated and alone in the group as well as in her life. She had a firm belief in victimization which permeated every aspect of her life. She had few relationships in her life and was in such extreme poverty that she had to move in with her father in order to have a place to live, even though she was a professional therapist.

Her ego was extremely fragmented, to the point that she openly stated that she hated herself. Her overt self-destructive behavior confirmed this: she was quite overweight, she smoked cigarettes heavily, and she picked sores until they bled all over her body. She was literally the image of self-hatred and powerlessness.

As we began doing the Heart-Centered Hypnotherapy with Judy, she regressed back to several situations where her father was extremely critical of her and was "always picking on her." When she was very young, her mother died and literally left her alone and unprotected with her critical, abusive father. We always ask during age regressions, "What conclusion about yourself did you draw at this time?" Her response was, "Everyone I love always leaves me," and, "Even God is not there for me." Another conclusion was, "I deserve to be picked on," which is the underlying belief that caused her to pick sores all over her body for most of her life.

At the end of each age regression, we had Judy approach that hurt and abandoned inner child to give her the love she needed. These child parts were the ego fragments. We had her change the self-limiting beliefs to "There is always plenty of love for me." It was difficult for her to accept at first. Sometimes she could barely even say the new words because they felt so foreign to her.

Judy's fragmented ego affected every aspect of her life. Her relationships were the most dysfunctional part of her life. She did not possess a basic trust in the Universe and especially in other people. She had deep fears about not having enough money, even though she had a Masters degree in Social Work and a good job.

Judy deeply longed for a loving relationship with a man and to have children. In her life, the few relationships she attracted were with men who were unavailable (married) and who reflected back to her the self-hatred which she projected. They were often abusive both physically and emotionally. She often remained in these relationships because she was lonely and feared she couldn't do (didn't deserve) any better.

During the first year of the group, which met once every three months, Judy did some very powerful hypnotherapy work in confronting the deep-seated fears and reclaiming and integrating the lost ego parts. But it was during the second year when we began doing the Heart-Centered Energetic Psychodrama that Judy really began to integrate, to project and confront her very deepest of abandonment issues. When another group member played Judy's mother who had died, Judy got in touch with the profoundly deep grief that the small child had previously been unable to express.

It was at this point that her anger at God came out. How could a child ever trust God when that God had taken her mother away from her, leaving her unprotected? It was from this point that the importance of the group connection came into play. Over the two years, Judy had bonded with the group members. They had consistently been there for her through her anger, her fears, and her many attempts to push them away. She began to realize that God had brought her to this group and to these people who loved her. A whole new sense of purpose came over her. She knew that she was on this earth for a reason and that her

existence was not a mistake or a punishment, as she had previously felt.

The final integration in the transformation process is the spiritual one. In this work with Judy, she experienced that not only had her ego fragmented, but her Soul had too. She lost a big part of her Soul when her mother died, and then her soul continued to fragment and split off during the abusive times with her father. Once she was able to go back and reclaim her Soul, the spiritual transformation could take place.

As a result, Judy's life changed. She stopped trying to kill herself by smoking and was very proud to give up that behavior. She stopped "picking on herself" and began healing the sores which had previously scarred her entire body. She began getting in better physical shape and was very proud of being able to complete a triathalon race held in her city. Another powerful transformation was that Judy no longer embraced the victim consciousness. She now feels the power in her life. She has turned around her financial situation, moved out of her father's home, and purchased a home of her own. She is open to attracting a loving healthy man into her life so that she can create her own loving family.

This is the power of personal transformation. It involves integrating the ego fragments as well as the soul fragments. It involves going down to the very deepest hidden corners of the individual's psyche and facing the deepest shadow parts. It involves expressing the most powerful depth of pain, grief, fear, rage, loneliness and abandonment. And when this work is done in a group, the individual can share that pain with others. When our pain is witnessed and validated by loving friends, it can then be fully released. This witnessing brings trust, intimacy and a deep bonding that most people have never experienced in their lives. As a result of this process, personal transformation takes place.

Disidentification: Unifying the Fragments

To unify a fragmented psyche, first the individual must acknowledge that he/she is fragmented. Most people do not understand that. In the words of the Russian Sufi mystic Gurdjieff:

> Man has no permanent and unchangeable I. Every thought, every mood, every desire, every sensation, says 'I'. . . . There are hundreds and thousands of small I's, very often entirely unknown to one another, mutually exclusive and incompatible. Each moment, each minute, man is thinking of saying 'I'. And each time the 'I' is different. Just now it was a thought, now it is a desire, now a sensation, now another thought, and so on, endlessly (Ouspensky, 1949, p. 59).

Psychologist Ram Dass (1980) observed the same thing, referring to our momentary, and usually mutually exclusive, *identities*:

> You have at this moment many constellations of thought, each composing an identity: sexual, social, cultural, educational, economic, intellectual, philosophical, spiritual, among others. One or another of these identities takes over as the situation demands. Usually you are lost into that identity when it dominates your thoughts. At the moment of being a mother, a father, a student, or a lover, the rest are lost (p. 138).

Jung saw most people as identified almost entirely with certain acceptable aspects of themselves (the *persona*), having denied and repressed the unacceptable aspects (the *shadow*). In fact, Jung refers to this identification with the persona as an instance of *possession*, i.e., "identity of the ego-personality with a complex" (1959, p. 122). And the way out of this possession is through recognition of the dark side of our selves. "The experience of the shadow is for Jung the doorway to the real. The conflicts caused by the awareness of the shadow rip apart the ego's imaginary identifications" (Humbert, 1988, p. 50).

This philosophical point of view is verified by our experience with altered states of consciousness as well as by today's science. Brain researchers now document frequent lapses of consciousness in most people's daily existence, unknown to the individuals themselves.

> Several times during the night's sleep we approach waking, like an underwater swimmer coming up close to the surface; we dream and then descend once again to the lower depths of dreamless oblivion. The level of arousal, or wakefulness, varies continually, in regular cycles as well as in smaller, random fluctuations.
>
> For the waking state a similar situation holds. Using remote measuring devices, sleep researchers have recorded brain waves from subjects going about their daily routine. Thus they have discovered that most people frequently and repeatedly enter into short microsleep periods lasting from thirty seconds to three minutes, which are clearly indicated by their brain waves but of which they themselves are totally unaware. These findings

> regarding periodic, unaware brain sleep states provide interesting neurophysiological support to the Buddhist, Sufi, and Gnostic ideas concerning the unawakened consciousness of normal existence.
> We continually fall into sleep while apparently awake, just as we regularly almost awaken while apparently asleep (Metzner, 1998, pp.25-26).

Another way of describing this phenomenon is that one becomes *absorbed* in a particular state, for example watching a movie or reading a story or listening to a song. Absorption is a state of trance. If one becomes chronically absorbed in the identity of "dumb blonde" or "adaptive child" or "rageaholic," then one is locked into a highly limited repertoire of behaviors, and of identities or roles. John Bradshaw (1988) refers to a *family trance*, a hypnotic state of constricted identification or role forced on children by the culture of their family of origin. The child learns to accept and internalize the prescribed world view and role, repressing into unconsciousness important aspects of his/her own experience. John Firman and Ann Gila (1997, p. 170) assert, "The trance is ultimately the family demanding compliance rather than authenticity, demanding conformity rather than free will, and no small, vulnerable child has the ability to say 'No' to this." The individual is dissociated from his/her own experience, and lives out the posthypnotic suggestions implanted during childhood.

When we "snap out of" the state of absorption, that is experience ourselves self-consciously, we expand our consciousness of who we are to include a wider spectrum, allowing for new possibilities. Liberation from unconsciousness, waking up from the trance, arousing from the dissociation comes with *dis*identification from the momentary "I", with recognition of the shadow and of the "larger and greater personality maturing within us, whom we have already met as the inner friend of the soul" (Jung, 1959, p. 131). The ego-consciousness resists acknowledging the presence in the psyche of more than itself, however. It prefers "to be always 'I' and nothing else" (p. 131) and to "believe in its own supremacy" (p. 133).

Following is a discussion by Jung (1996) about the importance of expanding our experience of ourselves, loosening our identification with any one of those momentary "I"s and opening to the vastness of our true Self. He saw it as vital in the advancement toward individuation.

For instance, the anger which you feel for somebody or something, no matter how justified it is, is not caused by those external things. It is a phenomenon all by itself. That is what we call taking a thing on its subjective level. Say somebody has offended you, and you dream of that person and feel again the same anger in the dream. Then I say, 'That dream tells me just what the anger means, what it is in reality.' But you contend that the person had said such-and-such a thing, so you are perfectly justified in feeling such anger and assuming such an attitude toward him. Well I must admit all that to be perfectly true, and then I humbly say, 'Now, when you have had your anger and are reasonable again, let us consider this dream, for there is a subjective stage of interpretation. You consider that man to be your specific *bete noire* [dark beast], but he is really yourself. You project yourself into him, your shadow appears in him, and that makes you angry. Naturally one is not inclined to admit such a possibility, but after a while, when the process of analysis is effective, it dawns upon one that it is most probably true. We are perhaps identical even with our own worst enemy. In other words, our worst enemy is perhaps within ourselves.

When you have reached that stage, you . . . have succeeded in dissolving the absolute union of material external facts with internal or psychical facts. You begin to consider the game of the world as your game, the people that appear outside as exponents of your psychical condition. Whatever befalls you, whatever experience or adventure you have in the external world, is your own experience (pp. 49-50).

A child growing up in a dysfunctional, threatening environment must split the personality into a positive and a negative part. Roberto Assigioli (1971), developer of the therapeutic process psychosynthesis, spoke of the existence in the psyche of different, and sometimes conflicting, subpersonalities, positive and negative identities. We are identified with various subpersonalities at various times, similarly to the way Gurdjieff and Ram Dass described. Freud hypothesized this split as occurring when an instinctual drive within the child met with disapproval from authorities, forming what he called "the nuclear complex of a neurosis" (1981, p. 214). Melanie Klein calls this good-bad splitting *the primal split*, keeping the good apart from the bad (1975). D. W. Winnicott termed this split the *true self* and *false self* (1965). And Carl Jung described the repression of the unacceptable parts of oneself, the *shadow*, into unconsciousness and the identification with the acceptable parts, the *persona* (1959).

We begin to become aware of this situation through the process of experiencing multiple levels of consciousness simultaneously. For example, one objective part of us observes our "angry self" projecting onto others our own anger. In meditation we experience the "observer" watching the "monkey mind" of constant chattering thought. In hypnotic age regression,

we experience the "observer" watching the memory come alive in re-experiencing a traumatic moment at age three, for example.

Before doing transformational work, most people have limited awareness. Through talk therapy the awareness is expanded to the first level of consciousness. As the individual moves into hypnotherapy and exploring the unconscious mind, a much deeper level of consciousness comes to our awareness. Transformation is a process of continual movement into deeper and deeper levels of the unconscious. It is an awakening.

We can fall into the same trap of identifying with one aspect of the *un*conscious at the expense of all others, and struggling to disidentify. Jung (1996) spoke about this: "That is one of the great difficulties in experiencing the unconscious – that one identifies with it and becomes a fool. You must not identify with the unconscious; you must keep outside, detached, and observe objectively what happens. . . . it is exceedingly difficult to accept such a thing, because we are so imbued with the fact that our unconscious is our own – my unconscious, his unconscious, her unconscious – and our prejudice is so strong that we have the greatest trouble disidentifying" (p. 28).

The positive and negative sectors of the personality are called the *higher unconscious* and the *lower unconscious* in Assagioli's model (1971). The individual's lower unconscious consists of all the psychologically damaging experiences of every developmental age, what Firman and Gila (1997) call the *primal wounds*. The lower unconscious also includes the collective lower unconscious, what Vaughan (1986) calls *transpersonal shadow*. The higher unconscious consists of the transpersonal qualities, what Maslow (1968, 1971) calls *peak experiences*. A repression barrier operates to keep these identities out of awareness, separated from the whole Self, protecting the self-interests of the ego (the identity of the moment). Serving to repress the lower unconscious are shame, fear, loneliness, unworthiness, pain, abandonment, and spiritual isolation. Serving to repress the higher unconscious are *transpersonal defenses* (Firman & Gila, 1997, p. 135), mainly the fear of letting go and trusting (surrender). Both higher unconscious defenses and lower unconscious defenses serve to maintain the split.

It is true, however, that "the more developed the lower unconscious, the more developed is its opposite - the higher unconscious" (Firman & Gila, 1997, p. 126). A wonderful illustration of this is a story told by Carl Jung (1996):

> I was once asked a philosophical question by a Hindu: "Does a man who loves God need more or fewer incarnations to reach his final salvation than a man who hates God?" Now, what would you answer? I gave it up, naturally. And he said, "A man who loves God will need seven incarnations to become perfect, and a man who hates God only needs three, because he certainly will think of him and cling to him very much more than the man who loves God." That, in a way, is true; hatred is a tremendous cement. . . . with us it would be fear and not hatred (pp. 5-6).

So people work toward and achieve personal growth by overcoming the barriers to the repressed lower unconscious (shame, fear, unworthiness, addictions), integrating aspects of it, and developing personal power. They are what Maslow (1971) called *nontranscending self-actualizers*. He described such people as "more essentially practical, realistic, mundane, capable, and secular people, living more in the here and now world . . . 'doers' rather than meditators or contemplators, effective and pragmatic rather than aesthetic, reality-testing and cognitive rather than emotional and experiencing" (p. 281). Assagioli called this *personal psychosynthesis*, the increasing ability to express a sense of unique, well-articulated individuality. A further step in that growth process is achieved by overcoming the barriers to the repressed higher unconscious (fear of letting go and surrendering) and embracing it, Assagioli's *transpersonal psychosynthesis* and Maslow's *transcending self-actualization.* This represents an increasing experience of higher, mystical, and spiritual states of consciousness.

Healing that split, which divided us into smaller, more constricted, more dissociated fractions of our real totality, is the process of integration, individuation, self-actualization, transformation. One integrates the subpersonalities into a harmonious multiplicity, retrieves and embraces the shadow, becomes more conscious. Disidentification, or non-attachment, with the limited ego states allows us to expand into both our lower (shadow) and higher (transpersonal) aspects. Balance is important. Expanding into the lower but not the higher leads one to become psychologically healthy but not spiritually fulfilled (a

nontranscending self-actualizer), and expanding into the higher but not the lower leads one to become a psychologically unhealthy spiritual seeker (the spiritual by-pass).

To complete the psychical tour, there exists also a *middle unconscious*, consisting of contents that are unconscious but not defensively repressed and therefore accessible in our normal functioning. Expanding this middle unconscious is to open ourselves to the conscious experience of who we really are, disidentifying with the limited range of identities and becoming mindfully aware of our truly expansive real Self. We might say that "ego rigidities" are dissolved in the encounter with the Self (Edinger, 1985).

One expression for the healthy developed ego is ego maturity. The mature ego is self-actualized, ready to allow its own transcendence. Psychiatrist William Vaillant (1993) has elaborated a detailed schema for understanding the continued development of the ego into adulthood, based on the evolution of ego defenses.

> Vaillant outlines four styles of defense ranging from psychotic to mature. *Psychotic* styles include delusional projection, psychotic denial, and distortion. *Immature* styles are projection, fantasy, hypochondriasis, passive aggression, acting out, and dissociation (neurotic denial). *Neurotic*, or *intermediate*, styles include displacement, isolation of affect (intellectualization), repression, and reaction formation. *Mature* styles of defense include altruism, sublimation, suppression, anticipation, and humor (Gagan, 1998, p. 165).

> Vaillant, upon investigating data from three studies that tracked more than 2,200 individuals over a fifty- to seventy-year period, found the most mature ego defenses among individuals who had attained the highest degrees of psychological adjustment. A secure sense of self, he noted, goes hand in hand with not taking oneself too seriously; being able to sublimate energy into creative endeavors; planning for the future; an ability to resolve conflicts through the postponement of gratification or an appropriate downplaying or rechanneling of impulses; and involvement in altruistic activities (cited in *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts*, ed. by Burness E. Moore and Bernard D. Fine, New Haven, CT: The American Psychoanalytic Association and Yale University Press, 1990, p. 32). (Gagan, 1998, p. 140).

> With ego maturity, we acquire a clear sense of self. Knowing where the self ends and the 'other' begins, we replace projection with empathy. When the self is contained and secure in its worth, we as individuals, far from being self-invested, accord the same respect to others as we do to ourselves. When the altruism of 'doing for others' is not motivated by a desire for return or secondary gain, who knows - we may well have arrived at ego transcendence (Gagan, 1998, p. 143-144).

Another way of approaching the disidentification with a limited ego-consciousness is through playfulness, creativity, innocence, and spontaneity. Psychiatrist Jacob Moreno, creator of psychodrama, considered *spontaneity* to be the central ingredient of healthy living, recognizing that

> there tends to be an element of surrender in spontaneity, as well as innocence, and this results in an expansion of consciousness. To do this in the present moment involves relinquishing excessive censorship in the mind's functioning, and it requires a corresponding opening to the inner impulses, intuitions, and inspirations. . . .
>
> Developing more spontaneity and creativity grows out of a basic relationship to the unconscious that is one of respect, openness, and delighted curiosity. The unconscious is not seen as a source of antisocial impulses but rather as a wellspring of insight, clues, hunches, images - in short, the reservoir of creativity (Blatner & Blatner, 1988, pp. 64-65).

Shamanic Work

In shamanism, the altered states of consciousness the healer goes through are symbolized as journeys into the lower world or to the upper world. During these journeys, the shaman obtains necessary knowledge or retrieves something valuable and brings it back to this world (the middle world provides access to both). The shamanic concept is that we must learn to master both ordinary and nonordinary reality. The shaman may induce the altered state with hallucinogenic plants, hypnotically rhythmic dance or drumming, meditation, or ritual such as sweat lodge (North America) or throwing bones (Africa). The shaman then travels down into the profound depths of hidden reality, the lower world, or the realm of the lower unconscious. Or he/she may journey up through layers of reality to a perspective of great lucidity, exhilaration, clairvoyant perception, and prophetic visions, the upper world, the realm of the higher unconscious. Importantly, the shaman stays awake and conscious for the journey, adroitly balancing the altered state of consciousness necessary for the journey with a continued conscious awareness (Harner, 1980, pp. 20-39).

The healer facilitating personal transformation is shaman, carrying the "initiate"/client into the depths and heights of new levels of consciousness, into the archetypal collective unconscious. Jungians use active imagination and dreamwork.

We use hypnotherapy, breath therapy, psychodrama, meditation, and subtle energy work. It can all be seen as shamanic.

> Jung's psychological-philosophical terminology helps describe the impact of shamanic phenomena on the psyche. The collective unconscious, as it is birthed from the 'dark confines of the earth,' erupts into healing expression through shamanic movement. That is, *the spirit world encountered in journeying is none other than the landscape of this collective unconscious illuminated by the release of archetypal energy long bound to its internal matrix*. . . .
>   Archetypal reconnection can be accomplished in a number of ways. Among them, active imagination and dreamwork are perhaps the most well-known modalities. The original route, however, is the shamanic path. The psychotherapeutic incorporation of shamanic ideas and images - which Jung cited as 'illuminating' examples of natural archetypal motifs - links us with a healing power traceable to our ancient roots (Jung, 1980, p. 253). (Gagan, 1998, p. 132).

Nancy

Nancy's case is an example of this principle of going down to the underworld as a means of transformation. She did regress before she could progress because she was raised by a mother who was mentally ill. It was not until she began this work that she could see just how disturbed her mother was. Children who are raised by mothers who have Borderline Personality Disorder (DSM IV 301.83) grow up with deep feelings that something is wrong with *them*, and Nancy was no exception. Her mother had convinced Nancy that she was the problem in the family.

In the hypnotherapy sessions, Nancy regressed to hours and hours of visiting very dark, evil experiences with her mother. She actually delved down into the twisted, rageful craziness that was in her mother's mind. She experienced the terror that she felt daily of her mother screaming at her, beating her and making all sorts of threats of abandonment. She revisited hiding in the closet at age two for hours at a time to try to escape her mother's madness. There was no father there to protect her. In fact, she became the protector of her younger siblings.

During one part of this painful work, Nancy truly regressed herself. She allowed herself to experience the deep depression that she had been fighting all her life with prescription drugs. She discontinued the use of anti-depressants in an effort to truly visit the underworld of her mother's mental illness and the effects it had on her. Many more memories came back to her during this time of the severe abuse she experienced at the hand

of this physically and psychologically abusive mother. Nancy knew that it was very important for her to see the truth and to face the demons.

Nancy began to experience that part of her mother's soul was attached to her and was choking her. Nancy also experienced that her own soul was very fragmented. She had lost fragments of her soul on a daily basis as a young child. Every traumatic moment caused pieces of her to shatter and disappear. This fragmentation is a process that occurs as a self-protection during dissociation when trauma happens to children. Just as shamans journey to the underworld to remove evil spirits and reclaim lost souls, Nancy was therapeutically guided to detach from her mother's soul and reclaim the disowned pieces of herself (Modi, 1997, and Baldwin, 1992).

The soul retrieval part of her work was the turning point for Nancy. Once she felt her soul inside of herself, she began to come up out of the underworld of madness and move into the world of spiritual transformation. She moved from regressive work with the lower unconscious battling shame, fear and isolation into progressive work with the higher unconscious battling mistrust and fear of surrender. She moved out of the depression and no longer needed the anti-depressants. An internal transformation was occurring.

Now the transformation process moved into the Energetic Psychodrama phase. During these sessions, Nancy was strong enough to act out her family scenes and reclaim her power from her mother. She was able, with her soul intact, to reclaim her voice and speak up to her mother. She was able to protect the little three-year-old and let her be a child instead of having to be an adult at such an early age.

Once her soul, her power and her voice had returned, Nancy moved from darkness into the light. She returned to work feeling more whole and complete. Nancy is a therapist herself and for the first time her own practice began to flourish. She no longer was struggling with fears of lack of money. Clients were seeking her out because her own light was beginning to attract them. This transformation moved Nancy from traditional therapist to healer.

Who Are the Modern Shamans?

Who is there in our culture to do the spiritual/psychological/physical healing that so many people require? In the past century, we have divided the human up by leaving treatment of the body to the doctors, treatment of the emotions to the psychiatrists and treatment of the Spirit/Soul to the ministers & priests. In the past, and in other cultures such as China and India, natural healers and shamans treat the whole person including the mind, body and spirit. Western medicine and medieval Christianity outlawed, publicly shamed, jailed and burned at the stake many of our traditional healers. This has caused them to disappear or to go so far underground that they are difficult to find. Much of their ancient wisdom has been lost and what has not been lost has been held secret from "non-natives."

Western medicine utilizes and teaches science and research. But in the name of science, many practitioners have become cold, impersonal and unresponsive to the needs of the humans they are supposed to be treating. In order to remain "scientific" they have lost the spiritual component of the shamans.

An important aspect of healing is learning to integrate the fragmented pieces of the soul which have split off due to trauma and shock. Soul retrieval work has traditionally been done by native shamans and traditional indigenous healers. The disappearance of these healers has left a large gap in our culture. This has created a vacuum which is now being filled by the many people who are rediscovering these ancient healing practices. Today, according to Michael Harner (1980) and others, there is a worldwide revival of shamanic practices:

> Shamanism, as a system embodying much of this ancient knowledge, is gaining increasing attention from those seeking new solutions to health problems. Specific techniques long used in shamanism such as change in states of consciousness, stress reduction, visualization, positive thinking and assistance from nonordinary sources are some of the approaches now widely employed in holistic practices (p. xiii).

Not only have we lost our healers to science, we have lost our spiritual guides to religion. For many people, something major is missing in their experience with the Church and organized religion. What is often missing is a true spiritual connection, the *experience* of God as opposed to an intellectual exercise. What is missing is the Soul retrieval work and the

psychological and physical healing that Jesus did, the casting out of demons and unclean spirits written about in the Bible. Who do we turn to when this type of healing work needs to be done?

When doctors and ministers can no longer help their people, they often send them to psychiatrists, psychologists or counselors. Here they are often pathologized, given a label and a prescription, and then analyzed out of their feelings.

We have discovered that many people in the field of psychology, social work, counseling and nursing are natural healers. They have the instinct, intuition and drive to bring healing to their patients. What they lack are the skills and access to the ancient wisdom. As we began training people in working with trance states, we discovered that these natural healers were hungry to learn the methodology of healing. We began moving people from the category of therapist or nurse to that of healer. As our process developed and we were given access to ancient shamanic techniques, we watched the therapists we trained becoming *transformational* healers.

The trend for the future appears to be healers reclaiming their shamanic roots. A practical knowledge is emerging, blending the ancient wisdom of shamanic traditions and spiritual principles with the best science of psychotherapy and medicine.

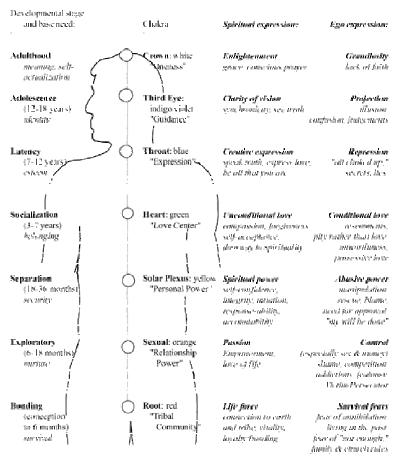## Transformation: Spiritual Developmental

Personal transformation is depicted in Figure 1, which describes the process on four scales. The chakra scale describes the body's subtle energy. The developmental stage scale describes the psychological stages of growth. The ego scale describes which ego issues need to be resolved and released in order to move into the spiritual levels, the fourth scale.

There are seven levels of transformation in the system offered here. In the Personal Transformation process, we assist people to identify the different developmental stages and chakras where they have deep unresolved emotional and spiritual issues that need to be addressed. Through the different methods we use, participants can move through the ego conflicts and into the spiritual flow that is naturally intended in that area. We will describe these levels and how people can move through the

psychological   conflicts   into   personal   and   spiritual transformation.

How does one know in which areas or on which levels they need to work? During age regressions, the person may often regress to a particular developmental stage. For example, people may often regress to their birth experience and may be very involved in working through their birth issues. Or they may have many fears of abandonment, which tells us they have work to do in the root chakra area. Another way to diagnose is looking at where in the body the person has dis-ease or illness.

Figure 1. The Four Scales of Personal Transformation

The first level is the first or root chakra (*muladhara*), located at the base of the spine. The color of this chakra is red and it represents our connection to the earth, to the tribe, community or family we have chosen. The life force energy is stored in this chakra. Some teachings refer to this energy as chi, ki or kundalini energy. The corresponding developmental stage is conception through birth to six months of age and has to do with bonding with the mother. When children do not have proper bonding during this time, they grow up with an attachment disorder, having difficulty connecting with people. The spiritual issues to be worked out here have to do with choosing to be here on earth and choosing life. The ego issue here is fear. There are often deep fears concerning needs not being met and abandonment. People who have ego issues on this level often deal with suicidal tendencies, physical hardships, or the existential issues of "Why am I here?" There is often a conflicted dilemma between feeling unwanted or suffocated in the womb, and not wanting what lies ahead after birth either, "between a rock and a hard place." Jung discussed such people:

> There are plenty of people who are not yet born. They seem to be all here, they walk about – but as a matter of fact, they are not yet born, because they are behind a glass wall, they are in the womb. They are in the world only on parole and are soon to be returned to the pleroma where they started originally. They have not formed a connection with this world; they are suspended in the air; they are neurotic, living the provisional life. They say, 'I am now living on such-and-such a condition. If my parents behave according to my wishes, I stay. But if it should happen that they do something I don't like, I pop off.' You see, that is the provisional life, a conditioned life, the life of somebody who is still connected by an umbilical cord as thick as a ship's rope to the pleroma, the archetypal world of splendor. Now, it is most important that you should be born; you ought to come into this world – otherwise you cannot realize the self, and the purpose of this world has been missed. Then you must simply be thrown back into the melting pot and be born again (1996, p. 28-29).

As these issues are worked through, the individual begins to move into the spiritual experience of connecting with the full vitality of the life force energy flowing from this chakra. Jung saw this chakra representing the conscious world of ordinary reality, our earthly personal existence. We are entangled in the roots of our personal lives, of the ever-demanding ego identities. But awaiting an awakening is the Kundalini, the "divine urge,"

"that which makes you go on the greatest adventures." "The anima is the Kundalini" (Jung, 1996, p. 22). "As long as the ego is identified with consciousness, it is caught up in this world, the world of *muladhara* cakra [sic]. But we see that it is so only when we have an experience and achieve a standpoint that transcends consciousness. Only when we have become acquainted with the wide extent of the psyche, and no longer remain inside the confines of the conscious alone, can we know that our consciousness is entangled in *muladhara*" (Jung, 1996, pp. 66-67).

The next level is the second or sexual chakra (*svadhisthana*), which represents the developmental stage of 6 to 18 months of age. This is the exploratory stage where the child must have the freedom and encouragement to fully explore his environment. If this does not happen, the person will experience the ego issues of shame, fear and trying to control people and situations. As people work through these issues, releasing the fear and shame, they move into the spiritual stage of fully experiencing their sexuality and passion for life. The second chakra represents the unconscious. Jung says, "The way out of our *muladhara* existence leads into the water" (Jung, 1996, p. 16), that is into the unconscious, and "we ascend when we go into the unconscious, because it frees us from everyday consciousness. In the state of ordinary consciousness, we are actually down below, entangled, rooted in the earth under a spell of illusions, dependent" (Jung, 1996, p. 67). With the entry into the unconscious, "desire, passion, the whole emotional world breaks loose. Sex, power, and every devil in our nature gets loose when we become acquainted with the unconscious. Then you will suddenly see a new picture of yourself" (Jung, 1996, p. 33).

Next is the third chakra (*manipura*), the place of power and emotion. It is the developmental stage of 18 to 36 months where security is established and where the child learns separation and individuation. If the child is shamed or punished for attempting to become independent or for expressing emotions, then powerlessness develops. This is the source of the victim struggle where the child becomes needy instead of independent, and overly adaptive in an attempt not to be rejected. The child sells his/her soul for approval and may attract abusive, codependent relationships. As the individual works through and releases these

ego issues, he/she will open up the spiritual expression of self-confidence, response-ability and personal power. Jung (1996) summarizes, "This chakra is the center of the identification with the god, where one becomes part of the divine substance, having an immortal soul" (p. 31).

> It is the fire of which Buddha speaks in his sermon in Benares where he says, The whole world is in flames, your ears, your eyes, everywhere you pour out the fire of desire, and that is the fire of illusion because you desire things which are futile. Yet there is the great treasure of the released emotional energy.
>
> So when people become acquainted with the unconscious they often get into an extraordinary state – they flare up, they explode, old buried emotions come up, they begin to weep about things which happened forty years ago. That simply means that they were prematurely detached from that stage of life; they have forgotten that there are buried fires still burning (Jung, 1996, p. 35-36).

The fourth chakra (*anahata*) is the heart center. This is the socialization stage where the child from 3 to 7 years of age is looking for belonging and acceptance by the peer group. If this doesn't occur, then the child begins to feel unworthy, left out and resentful about being rejected. These feelings will often close the heart center and disconnect the individual from love. The person will often confuse love with pity and love with performance, never having experienced true unconditional love. As these issues are worked through and the resentment released, the individual will begin to experience the spiritual love within. He/she will begin to feel compassion and with that comes forgiveness. Here Jung suggests that one disidentifies from desires, contracts or withdraws from emotions, and thus begins the individuation process.

> Individuation is not that you become an ego - you would then become an individualist. You know, an individualist is a man who did not succeed in individuating; he is a philosophically distilled egotist. Individuation is becoming that thing which is not the ego, and that is very strange. Therefore nobody understands what the self is, because the self is just the thing which you are not, which is not the ego. The ego discovers itself as being a mere appendix of the self in a sort of loose connection. For the ego is always far down in *muladhara* and suddenly becomes aware of something up above in the fourth story, in *anahara*, and that is the self (Jung, 1996, p. 39-40).

Notice that each of the first four chakras is representative of an element: *muladhara*, earth; *svadhisthana*, water; *manipura*, fire; and *anahata*, air. This shows a transformation of elements

from gross to subtle. The next chakra is representative of the ether element.

The next level or fifth chakra (*visuddha*) is the latency stage of 7 to 12 years of age. This is where the child needs to learn how to discover who he/she is and to express that true self. This is often impossible, especially in families where the *parents* want to decide who the child should be instead of discovering who *the child* is. This conflict often causes the child to adapt and to repress the true self. This involves repressing emotions, thoughts and creative expression. The individual who hasn't worked through these issues often experiences being "an imposter" and never feeling real. As the issues are worked through, the person begins speaking the truth, expressing feelings and discovering the creative expression within. The voice opens up and the individual is free to truly express who he/she is. It is a beautiful process, like watching a flower unfold. In the fifth chakra, the basis of reality is experienced as energy, as thought, where "the world itself becomes a reflection of the psyche," an "airless space, where there is no earthly chance for the ordinary individual to breathe" (Jung, 1996, p. 50).

The sixth level is the sixth chakra (*ajna*) or third eye, involving the adolescent years from age 12 to 18. This is where the child is exploring identity vs. roles. The ego issue to be worked through here is the projection of our own illusion onto others. If the adolescent is not clear about his/her identity, the confusion sets in and the projections turn into intense judgments. When the individual is able to work through these issues at a deep transformational level, the person begins to see the truth. The truth about who he/she really is and the beginning of God-Consciousness. Once the third eye opens up, the individual can see clearly not only on the interpersonal level, but also on the spiritual level. Jung asserts that "the God that has been dormant in *muladhara* is here fully awake, the only reality" (Jung, 1996, p. 57).

The final level is the seventh chakra (*sahasrara*) or the crown. In the developmental model, the person becomes an adult, making clear and wise decisions. If the individual hasn't successfully completed all the developmental stages, he/she may become fixated at one of the stages and not be able to truly become an adult. Thus the individual will remain "an

adult/child." If the individual hasn't progressed into adulthood, his/her lack of self-confidence has by now turned into grandiosity, ego inflation. It often resembles the over-zealous self-importance of the three-year-old.

As the individual works through the relevant developmental stages, the uncompleted tasks can be completed through a re-parenting process. It is important to do this work in trance because of state-dependent learning. We know that issues must be healed in the same state in which they were originally unresolved and stored (Rossi, 1986; Janov, 1996; Pert, 1997). All developmental learning takes place on the unconscious level. And trance is the means to return to each developmental stage for healing of any unresolved issues and completion of developmental tasks.

In transformational work, we regress the client to the developmental stages where the trauma exists and/or where the developmental tasks were derailed. By installing a loving, healthy, nurturing parent into the unconscious, the developmental tasks can be rehearsed and replayed until completed. As these stages are healed, the individual moves out of the ego issues (see Figure 1) and into spiritual expression. The root and sexual chakras open and the person experiences the life force energy and passion opening up within. He/she has released the fears and shame that block these vital energy channels.

As the individual doing transformational work releases the codependency, powerlessness and victimization of the third chakra, he/she begins to experience power coming from within. This is not the abusive power that comes from overpowering, but the gentle power which comes from a deep level of self-confidence and accountability.
As this lower chakra work is being completed, the heart chakra opens and the love begins to pour forth. This comes from valuing the true self and feeling a deep sense of worthiness within.

There is a strong connection between the third chakra and the fifth. As seekers claim their power in the solar plexus, and discover the unconditional love in the heart, they can then release the repression and fully express the self through the throat chakra. They begin to speak their truth without feeling shame, sing more clearly, and/or write the words that flow from

within. The fifth chakra opens up to allow the individual to be transformed through creative expression.

The sixth chakra energy opens up when the transformational seeker is willing to see clearly, when the conscious choice is made to lift the veils of illusion and to invite the spiritual presence to be fully viewed. Often the individual will experience a visit from Jesus, Divine Mother, Guru, Buddha, Great Spirit, Angels and other spiritual guides and helpers. The intuition opens up and the person begins to truly trust his inner knowing.

The seventh chakra is the crown and opens up as the individual grows into self-actualization or God-Realization. This does not happen until the lower chakra work is well on its way to completion. The lower chakras are portals to the upper ones. Each door that is opened, opens the door to the next. They don't always open in order; they open according to urgency. The Personal Transformation techniques of hypnotherapy, breath therapy, psychodrama, Kundalini meditation, and interpersonal clearings all work together to move the energy which has been blocked and open the chakras.

The Personal Transformation Intensive (PTI®)

The Personal Transformation Intensive is a powerful five-month long program of transformational healing and growth, incorporating hypnotherapy, breath therapy, psychodrama, meditation, soul energy work, and powerful group processes. It is facilitated by therapists specially trained in these healing methods. This transformational work involves healing patterns from this life and past lives, drawing the lessons from those lives and bringing those karmic lessons into conscious choice, free will, in this lifetime. It means seeing the big picture of the soul's purpose on this planet rather than just focusing on the day-to-day details of mundane existence.

Following are descriptions of several individuals' profound experiences utilizing these transformational healing modalities in a two-year professional training group.

Anna
Anna was a beautiful young mother of four who came into the group depressed and with extremely low self-esteem. She

could not see her own beauty, nor could she accept the love and caring of others. She felt she didn't deserve to be loved and attracted men who abandoned her. She accepted abandonment as a part of her life and believed that loneliness was the natural consequence of being in relationship. She had such a deep core belief in abandonment that she even was abandoned by her own children, who chose to live with their father when they were old enough to choose.

In her hypnotherapy sessions, Anna spent most of the first year regressing back to her father leaving her mother and Anna when she was two years old. There was a lot of self-blame and constant guilt, feeling that somehow the separation and divorce was her fault. It took many sessions for her to work through these feelings and to realize that it was in no way her fault.

During the second year, Anna went on to a very deep level of work through psychodrama. She began to realize that her mother had married a sex addict who actually had his eye on her. Soon after the marriage, he began trying to get into bed with Anna and touching her sexually. When she tried to tell her mother, the response was, "Don't be silly, Joe would never do that." Anna felt betrayed by her mother who refused to see the truth and continued to set her up to be abused, probably so that Joe would stay around.

This situation further reinforced Anna's feelings of deep unworthiness that began with her natural father's departure. She couldn't trust anyone, and she projected these feelings onto her relationship with God. How could she trust God to be there for her or to love her? The years of sexual abuse plunged her into a spiritual crisis, where her soul left her body and her psyche split.

The healing work truly began as Anna was made aware of her childhood pattern of dissociation. As she released this dissociation, Anna felt safer to feel and express her deepest emotions. This was a process of learning to trust the group members as well as the process of Personal Transformation. She was encouraged to move out of the victim roles that she played in her family, and to begin taking back her power. She began to speak her truth as an adult by telling her step-father that he had no right to touch her, and finally to tell her mother the truth.

The most powerful healing came for Anna during the *temazcal* experience. Passed down from the Mexica Indians of

Mexico, this tradition is akin to the Native American Sweat Lodge. In the temazcal people often "journey" to visit other Souls who have already passed on or spiritual teachers who may have a powerful message for them. Anna had a visitation from Jesus and began to reclaim the lost pieces of her soul. She realized that God had not abandoned her as she had felt during much of her life. She reclaimed her spiritual self and her right to have God in her life. She realized that she was loveable and that she did not have to create abandonment in her life anymore. This was a powerful transformation for her and came as a culmination of all the work she had done for two years.

William

William entered the two-year program as a very lonely man. He had recently been involved in a situation where he had "blown the whistle on" a co-worker for unethical behavior and ended up alienating several of his colleagues. He felt alone, isolated and misunderstood by many of the people who were most important to him. Even though he was an intelligent, personable and well-educated man, he often experienced feeling like a victim in his relationships.

Through the powerful work that he began in hypnotherapy, he went back to his family relationships where his mother was extremely dependent and his father was critical, shaming and distant. He was responsible for the emotional needs of his mother at an early age and because of this usually felt overwhelmed in relationships by women's needs. He chose to remain distant in relationships because then he was not expected to perform or to fulfill their unmet needs.

In the second year of the two-year program, William began to address his relationship with men and authority figures. The person he had confronted was in fact a man in an authority position with power over him. Even though he continued to feel that what he had done was correct, he began to also see the deeper layer of rage that he had toward men in these positions. He acted out scenes of his father constantly putting him down, harshly criticizing and shaming him and often refusing to see any positive qualities in him. His psychodramas included powerful scenes where his father would shame him, then trick him and try to buy him off with money. Underneath the anger and rage was a

deep grief for the loss of any type of loving or meaningful relationship with his father. The child's pain and hurt was very profound.

One of the most important learning experiences was in a Master Mind group where William began to see how he had a pattern of abandoning people. Because of his fear of intimacy based on his self-limiting belief that "the people you love the most will hurt you," he often left people before they could leave him. He would miss Master Mind conference calls with his group and not keep commitments which he had made with them. He had an attitude of non-caring and isolation.

William began to open up to the fact that he even felt abandoned in his birth. Because his mother had anesthesia, he felt that she was not present there for him. When the contractions began, William experienced his mother working together with him to get him out. But then he suddenly felt numb, powerless and he could actually smell the ether. He felt his mother emotionally withdrawing as she was knocked unconscious by the drug. His birth experience reinforced his feeling of separation, abandonment and powerlessness.

William began earnestly working through these feelings of abandonment in his rebirthing as well as in his psychodrama sessions. He had a powerful realization of all the people he had abandoned in his life, including his family members and members of this group. He realized that this pattern actually kept him feeling lonely, isolated and disconnected and that he didn't want to do it anymore. He made great strides in changing these patterns and in bringing the people he loved closer to him. He made amends with his sisters and brothers, his wife and children and his mother who was still alive.

Just before the very last session, which focuses on healthy completion, William communicated that he was not coming because his mother was dying of cancer and he thought he should be there for her. This of course sounded like a very *good reason* indeed to miss the last session. But we always distinguish between the *good reasons* and the *real reasons* for people's behavior. The real reason for not coming appeared to be that completion would probably be difficult for William due to his deep fears of abandonment and his previous pattern of

abandoning others first so he wouldn't feel the pain of separation.

William was encouraged to do all of his completion work with his mother in person, while she was still lucid, so that there was no unfinished business left between them. The doctors said that it would be several months before her death, so William had plenty of time to complete with her and to attend the completion of his group. He agreed, wanting to change his old patterns of avoiding separation.

William came to Mexico, the location of his final group meeting. He was very pleased that he had come and was beginning to understand just how important it was to him to have healthy completion with the people he had grown so close to. Suddenly he received a call from his wife saying that his mother had taken a turn for the worse and that they were calling the family together. He was supposed to fly home immediately. It turned out that the earliest flight he could return on was two days later. He resigned himself to the fact that he could not go home immediately. He knew that there was a reason for this situation and he was accepting of it.

That night, he received a phone call that his mother had died. The next morning, he had an immense amount of grief and we did a group hypnotherapy session with William to help him process his grief. In his session he said that he wished he could have been home so he could have heard his mother's voice call his name one more time. He released a huge knot of grief from his heart. After the session he was very grateful to have so much group support during this time.

Right after his session, the group participated in a temazcal ritual. During his shamanic journey, William visited his mother's spirit. He was ecstatic as he described her sweet face surrounded by light and *her voice saying his name out loud.* He was so happy to be hearing her voice one more time as he had longed for. Later that evening he spoke to his wife who told him that his mother did not speak again after he did his completion process with her shortly before travelling to Mexico. William realized that if he had not stayed with his group and had his shamanic journey in the temazcal, he would not have heard his mother's voice again. He realized that everything had happened exactly as it should have. There were no accidents and he realized that

coming to Mexico allowed him to complete in a healthy way *with his mother* and *with his group*.

During William's transformation process, he was also involved in the spiritual meditations that worked to open up the Heart Center as well as the other chakras. He discovered, as is often the case, that people who are angry at the earthly father often transfer this anger and mistrust to the spiritual father, i.e. God. As he released his anger towards his own father and then towards God, he was able to open up and receive God's love. He began to have clear visions of Christ and to feel the unconditional love in his heart. He listened carefully to the messages that Christ was sending him. Through this spiritual awakening, he was able to transfer this love into his most intimate relationships. William continues to experience healing with all of the very most important people in his life.

He stated over and over that he could not have done this work if he hadn't been a member of such a loving and supportive community. He was so grateful for the loving relationships with each one of the members. He was adamant about the fact that many of them had become just like family to him. He knew that his powerful transformational journey was made possible in part by the safety and trust that he had received as a group member.

William sent this note to be shared after he returned home to participate with his family in his mother's funeral: "Thank you for the wonderful personal transformation. I could have never been so consciously prepared for an experience of this magnitude (mother's funeral) had it not been for my experience with my group. I never felt so cherished and loved by all that occurred in Mexico at our final weekend. I never felt so *renewed* by an event (the funeral) that is supposed to be so final and grim. I have never felt that life has been so reaffirmed. I have never felt so flooded with love from God. All my negative and fearful assumptions have been shattered like tiny fragments of glass. It is so beautifully clear that I can now start anew. Grateful is the word that comes to me, but seems so inadequate for what I feel about this transformational experience."

Lonnie

One man learned in his transformational work that he has had many lives in which he betrayed his tribe for money, and

knows that in this lifetime he must change the pattern. He had literally sold his soul to the devil. His choice to remain in integrity now is resolved, his path is clear, the age-old pattern is ended.

Jill

A woman who was burned at the stake knows that her destiny is to be the healer that she has always been, but this time without being persecuted for it.

Gertrude

Gertrude is a Catholic sister who initially didn't want to tell anyone about her background. The reason was not shame, but rather because she wanted people to see her for herself, rather than to judge her with preconceived stereotypes. She described her transformation process as a birth in and of itself. She stated, "I've received myself back. I truly have a self now." Her fear that others would not see her for herself stemmed from the realization that she didn't know who her *self* was.

One of the most important parts of her transformation was reclaiming her body. Gertrude realized that because of the body shame which she carried, she had never actually been in her body, and therefore she had never really felt alive. As she peeled away the layers of shame and fear, Gertrude discovered herself, the self that had been hidden for so many years behind the shame initiated by her father, then by the church and ultimately by herself.

Community

There are two ways a group can hinder our transformation, but many ways community can expedite it. Transformative experience can be group-dependent, what Jung called the collective experience of transformation. This transformation is temporary and conditional, limited to being created and experienced within the group. It takes place on a lower level of consciousness than an individual one because the collective psyche of the group sinks to mob psychology. The group experience is easier to achieve, because many people unified and

identified with each other sharing a common emotional experience exert great suggestive force. The individual becomes dependent on the group for creating the experience, rather than developing the personal capability of autonomously experiencing it (Jung, 1959, pp. 125-127).

Another hindrance is the support we may receive not to change. The process of transformation often results in estrangement from those who have been our companions in ordinary life. As we develop new insights, new interests, new life scripts and life goals, those in our companionship circle who haven't changed in a like manner are no longer able to effectively support us. They may even try to sabotage our growth in a new direction, and support us to turn back to the old ways. This is especially common with relationships that have involved addictions or other behaviors designed to keep us numb and asleep.

However, we can create *healthy community*, a network of new companions, like-minded and supportive of the newly expanded perspectives. This is a community of seekers on the same path who value consciousness over unconsciousness. After spending time with people who share their soul on the deepest levels, it is difficult to go back to cocktail parties and idle chit-chat. It becomes very boring to spend time with people who are not honest about their feelings and are still highly involved in feeding their hungry egos.

Such a community is what Maslow called a *eupsychian* environment, one which maximizes healthy psychological growth. "Socially, this means sharing the company of people who value transpersonal growth, who undertake practices to foster it, and who provide an atmosphere of interpersonal safety that allows for defenselessness and experimentation" (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993, p. 112). What the group can best provide to a transforming individual is "a courage, a bearing, and a dignity which may easily get lost in isolation" (Jung, 1959, pp. 127).

The process of individuation according to Jung, "brings to birth a consciousness of human community precisely because it makes us aware of the unconscious, which unites and is common to all mankind" (Jung, 1966, p.108). It is the final step in transformed consciousness: serving the suffering humanity with

compassion. Joseph Campbell spoke of this final phase as "the hero's return."

> "The transition from the state of consciousness where we feel trapped or entangled in a net, to the state of consciousness where we are consciously and intentionally participating in a network is one aspect of the process of liberation through transformation. The question is . . . how can the limiting net be changed into a liberating network?" (Metzner, 1998, p. 70).

Making Transformational Changes Permanent

Following are what we can expect when we make these transformational changes permanent in our lives and in our relationships.

1. *We refrain from dissociation and instead are fully present in every moment.*
    Dissociation is the main way that people numb or escape from the childhood wounds of abuse, shame and abandonment. In childhood it takes the form of "daydreaming," watching a lot of television, or excessive withdrawal. As the child grows older, the dissociation often turns into addictive behavior such as smoking, eating disorders, compulsive sexual behaviors, alcoholism or relationship addictions.
    A key ingredient of personal transformation has to do with feeling existentially complete and choosing to remain present in each moment. It means that the individual has completed sufficient personal work to extinguish the deep underlying fear of nonbeing. This allows the process of reclaiming the real self to unfold. It means that the individual has permission to feel and express the deepest emotions and thus to release the patterns of dissociation.

2. *We are clear enough to base our daily choices on our intuitive knowledge, wisdom and love rather than on fear.*
    Most people believe that their decisions are made from their rational, thinking mind. In actuality, many decisions are made from the unconscious emotional level, where the person's deepest motivation is often fear or avoiding anticipated pain. People usually have "good, rational reasons" for their choices, for the healthy ones and for the self-destructive ones. The ego-

consciousness believes its fabrications, rationalizations, and excuses.

In transformational work, people experience their *inner knowing*, the inner voice which is clear about what is in our highest good. Most people are more used to listening to the "fear voice" and thinking that is their "clear voice." Transformational work strengthens the clear voice and diminishes the fear to a healthy whisper instead of a distracting roar. This results in a deep certainty of discernment between the voices and a willingness to trust. Jung said, "Intuitive knowledge possesses an intrinsic certainty and conviction" (Jung, 1971, p. 453). He said it is the simplest and most natural thing imaginable to hear the voice of that inner friend of the soul. One can simply ask oneself a question to which that voice answers (1959, p. 131).

3. *We learn to identify and use positive energy and not "take on" negative energy.*

Because energy is not tangible to the ordinary person, most people have little awareness of its presence. However, the fact that most people can't see energy doesn't lessen the powerful effect it has on us. A commonplace example would be a family dinner where people are laughing and having a good time. Suddenly, the father becomes angry because his food hasn't been prepared to his liking. He begins yelling and the entire energy at the table is disrupted. People begin to feel uncomfortable and anxious because of the negative energy being introduced. One by one they find excuses to leave.

In Heart-Centered transformational work, energy awareness and management is of utmost importance. Through the hypnotherapy, psychodrama, breath therapy and meditation, individuals learn to recognize and then transmute negative energy into positive energy. They become much more aware on subtle levels, able to identify healthy and unhealthy energy patterns in individuals as well as in groups.

A most important aspect of this work, especially for therapists, is to learn to protect oneself from what we call *energy vampires*. These are people who suffer from lack of early bonding and experience internal feelings of emptiness and depletion. They will often unknowingly suck the energy from others around them in a psychological attempt to fill what is

lacking inside. Therapists who consistently feel drained have not learned how to manage their energy properly. Transformational healers are keenly aware of energy management in every interaction with others. They also know how to manage energy in groups so that one or two individuals are not permitted to drain the energy from the group.

4.   *We live in integrity.*

The word integrity means integration. The private self and the public self can be described as two parts of a person that may be in opposition or may be congruent. John Bradshaw illustrates these two parts as two circles. The further apart the circles are, the more out of integrity we are; the more they overlap, the more integrous we are. An example would be a young girl with an eating disorder. To the outside world, the public self she portrays is the image of being popular with peers and being a top student in her class. The private self on the other hand, is anxious, shameful and extremely self-loathing. She is engaging in secretive behavior such as bingeing on huge amounts of food and then throwing up in an attempt to remain thin for the public self.

In transformational work, we attempt to bring the two circles together in order to discover the real self; which is the truly integrated person. The phrase, "What you see is what you get" describes the person whose inside matches the outside. Living as an integrated person eliminates self-consciousness, anxiety about being an imposter, defensiveness, and secrets.

Another meaning of integrity is honesty, keeping commitments and being trustworthy. In transformational work, we encourage people to be very clear in their commitments and not to make agreements that they won't keep. If they discover that they have done so, then the agreements must be changed to reflect what is realistic. We form Master Mind groups to give members feedback about doing what they say they want to do and keeping their agreements. They help each other manifest their goals by staying honest with themselves and with each other.

5.   *We spiritually manifest what we say we want.*

When people become clear about what they want, manifestation of those goals is another measure of personal

transformation. The Master Mind process taught to Napoleon Hill (*Think and Grow Rich*, 1937) by Andrew Carnegie teaches people to get clear about what they want and then to use spiritual principles to manifest those goals. The Master Mind group forms a spiritual alliance which assists in the manifestation of goals. It uses the principle from the Bible (Matthew 18:20, King James version) which says, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

There may be several reasons why a person is unable to manifest what he/she wants. One is that on a deep unconscious level, they may have feelings of unworthiness or feel undeserving. These issues need to be worked through in order for manifestation to be successful. Secondly, the individual may have made an unconscious decision or be holding an unconscious belief that is contrary to what is desired. For example, the person may be asking to manifest money, but the unconscious belief may be that money is evil. The decision based on this belief may be that, "In order to be a good person, I can't have too much money."

6. *We accept ourselves for who we are, acknowledging the continued growth we desire.*

Because we have grown up in a perfectionist society, we have learned to judge ourselves by our performance, which never seems to be good enough. The love we have learned in our families, schools and churches is conditional, based on performance rather than on the concept of unconditional love. We as human beings are all "works in progress." The power of transformational work is that it becomes a *life path.* Once people begin on this path, it is undesirable to go back to being unconscious and to stop growing. It is important to continue to give ourselves unconditional love and acceptance, even though our transformation is not yet complete. Transformation is a continuing lifelong process, not a single event.

7. *We heal and resolve our unhealthy relationships, and begin attracting healthy ones.*

We use powerful experiential, transpersonal healing techniques to work through unhealthy relationship patterns. One common pattern is that of *Victim*, *Rescuer* and *Persecutor*

(Berne, 1964; Zimberoff, 1989). Clients commonly attract and repeat relationships in which they feel victimized, persecuted, attacked, abused and powerless. That indicates that they are enacting a "victim consciousness" pattern imprinted in their unconscious mind. Others may have the experience of attracting relationships in which they are always the caretakers, and end up feeling overwhelmed, pressured and responsible for the other person. This is "rescuer consciousness."

One sign of successful personal transformation work is a person who begins to attract healthy, equal relationships, in which both people are adults and neither one feels emotionally, physically or financially dependent on the other. As people work through their issues of victimization and begin claiming personal power in their lives, they release the *repetition compulsion* to repeat those imprinted unhealthy and unsatisfying relationships.

The important concept here is that *what we attract into our lives reflects our deepest beliefs* ("The life you ordered has arrived"). Our unconscious mind is like a magnet which attracts to us whatever our most predominant beliefs are. This is true in our relationships with family members, co-workers, bosses and neighbors, but also with money, authorities, nature, and time. Every relationship in our lives reflects the belief system in our minds. Improvement in people's relationships validates that deep changes have been made on the unconscious level.

8. *We freely express our emotions spontaneously through healthy release.*

Many people do not even have names for the variety of feelings that they experience. Sadly, many parents have taught us *not to feel* instead of how to identify and express our feelings. In repressive cultures such as ours, children are shamed for crying, feeling scared or being angry. In abusive or violent families children confuse abuse with the healthy expression of anger.

In dysfunctional families, anger is so repressed that it often turns to rage. When rage is held inside, it has many destructive effects on the person holding it in as well as on the other family members. This rage can be the core underlying issue of children turning to addictions, violence, and the current fad of excessive body piercing. If the emotions continue to be repressed, they may turn into disease later on in life.

In transformational work, people learn to identify emotions through being aware of the bodily sensations that accompany a feeling, and to release these emotions in a way that doesn't hurt another person or property. This is the meaning of releasing the feelings *through healthy outlets*. When emotions are released from the body in a healthy manner, there is no longer the need to abusively take these feelings out on oneself or others. Nor do we project unacknowledged or repressed feelings onto others.

9. *We are current, not unfinished, in every interaction of every relationship.*
    Due to the patterns of repression of feelings and general lack of awareness of healthy interpersonal skills, most people have a string of unfinished relationships in their lives. This means they are holding on to resentments that have been unexpressed about behavior that may have occurred many years ago. This is especially important since every relationship represents an opportunity to look at our deepest issues and heal them. Each person in our lives reflects back to us a mirror image of ourselves. Sometimes these images may reflect shadow parts which are difficult or painful to look at. Jungian analyst Marilyn Nagy (1991, p. 57) refers to this phenomenon as the *projective field*. "Whatever qualities we have that are unknown to us we experience first of all in projection."
    Being current in relationships is also important when we are speaking of a conscious death. Reports of near-death experiences (NDE) indicate that a life review process happens during the death experience in which we must face all the people in our life. Unfinished business in this process will be painful. Part of what is required may be forgiveness. If we are unable to *forgive on the Soul level*, then we may karmically attract this person back into our next lifetime to replay the relationship again in another version. When we get to the place of having no unfinished relationships, then there is no reason to return to another body and we may choose to remain in the light. Tibetan Buddhist Sogyal Rinpoche (1993, p. 97) writes:

> I have been very moved by how the near-death experience reports confirm, in a very precise and startling way, the truth about karma. One of the common elements of the near-death experience, an element that has occasioned a great deal of thought, is the 'panoramic life review.' It appears that people who undergo this experience not only review in the most vivid detail the events of

their past life, but also can witness the fullest possible implications of what they have done. They experience, in fact, the complete range of effects their actions had on others and all the feelings, however disturbing or shocking, they aroused in them (Lorimer, 1990).

10. *We are prepared for a conscious death, no matter how unexpectedly it may come.*

Socrates said that "true philosophers make dying their profession, and to them of all men death is least alarming" (Plato, *The Phaedo*, quoted in Edinger, *Anatomy of the Psyche*, pp. 169-170). A conscious death is one that is accepted with emotional equanimity and spiritual confidence. Even though Mahatma Gandhi was suddenly and violently murdered, the only words on his lips and in his heart were, "Ram, Ram, Ram" which means God. He was so connected to God in every moment of life that he was not angry or scared or blaming in the moment of his death. Jesus died asking God to forgive his persecutors, "for they know not what they do." He embodies, of course, the supreme spiritual confidence. They both reportedly died completely filled with love for God *and* for their assassins. Sogyal Rinpoche (1993) discusses the preparation for death in our lifetime:

> At the moment of death, there are two things that count: Whatever we have done in our lives, and what state of mind we are in at that moment. Even if we have accumulated a lot of negative karma, if we are able really to make a change of heart at the moment of death, it can decisively influence our future and transform our karma, for the moment of death is an exceptionally powerful opportunity for purifying karma (p.223).

> And this is why, rather surprisingly, it is said in our tradition that a person who is liberated at the moment of death is considered to be liberated in *this* lifetime, and *not* in one of the bardo states after death; for it is within this lifetime that the essential recognition of the Clear Light has taken place and been established. This is a crucial point to understand (p. 107).

11. *We recognize the karmic patterns being fulfilled, and stop creating new karma (accept that "I am 100% responsible for my experience of my life").*

A powerful way to work through karmic issues is to become aware of your individual karmic lessons in this lifetime. In the currently popular "solution-focused therapy," people become aware of their immediate life problems and, along with their therapist, design concrete solutions. We consider this to be the band-aid approach, since treating each symptom is so limited in focus.

As the therapist moves into healing, we look at the bigger picture and go deeper to find the root cause of the problem or illness. We use age regression to discover the source of the behavior pattern that often lies in childhood trauma or earlier causes.

In transformational healing we focus on these life patterns and often move backward in time to past lives to discover the karmic issues. It is always important to ask in the past life, "What is the Soul lesson to be learned from this life?" An important aspect of karmic work is, upon experiencing death in a past life, to go to the Review Stage immediately after death. This is encouraged in order to assess what has been accomplished, what issues were not resolved, and what needs to be examined in the Planning Stage for inclusion in future embodiment (Whitton and Fisher, 1986; Baldwin, 1992, p. 12). Hypnotherapy is a powerful tool to assist the client to clearly access all this karmic information. It is in these stages between lives that the Soul makes the choice of which family and set of circumstances to be reborn into and the exact lessons which this family and setting will provide for the Soul.

Psychologist William Baldwin (1992, p. 121) states, "The characters in the lifetime can be located in other times and places, including the present life. Current lifetime conflicts and personal interactions with these others can be examined. Conflicts which span several lifetimes can be explored and evaluated with regard to the present life circumstances. It becomes clear to the client that the lifetime just recalled, is part of a larger picture, a greater plan."

This gives the very deepest spiritual meaning to the concept of "I am 100% responsible for what I create and experience in my life." It is only by seeing the bigger picture of our lives that we *heal* and *release* the old karmic patterns. Once we get the lesson, we no longer need to repeat it. We then devote our energies to serving the transformation of others, helping them to transmute their fear, anxiety, negativity, addictions and illness into love, power and oneness. This transformational healing can help us to be released from the karmic wheel of birth, death and rebirth so that our Soul can reach its ultimate destination. This is the ultimate goal of this work.

As Metzner (1998) describes, the work leads to fulfilling our *dharma*, or destiny:

> The transformation from a state of captivity to a liberated state is, I believe, reflected in the difference between our concepts of fate and destiny. Fate, which corresponds to what the Indian tradition calls karma, is unavoidable, fixed, and based on the past, either on what has been decreed (fate) or on our past actions (karma). We feel ourselves to be the passive victims of fate, caught in its web or net. Destiny, on the other hand, which corresponds more closely with the traditional Indian notion of dharma, is future oriented, free, and flexible: it is our purpose or destination, what we choose to be and do. We fulfill our destiny by exercising our free will. But until our will is, in fact, freed from the fateful, binding consequences of our past karmic actions and tendencies, we cannot really exercise that freedom. We have free will in theory, potentially, but not in practice or actuality – until we are liberated. When, through the process and practice of transformation, we no longer experience ourselves as victims of our fate, we can become masters of our destiny (p. 73).

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