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ATP NEWSLETTER



REMEMBRANCE OF GEORGE LEONARD

REVIEWS

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SCIENCE AND THE COSMIC MEMORY
FIELD** BY ERVIN LASZLO

**MEDICAL RENAISSANCE SERIES:
THE SECRET CODE** BY NORM SHEALY

**STARING AT THE SUN:
OVERCOMING THE TERROR OF
DEATH** BY IRVIN YALOM

**SOUL SHAPING: A JOURNEY OF
SELF-CREATION** BY JEFF BROWN

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**SOUL SURVIVOR: THE REINCARNATION
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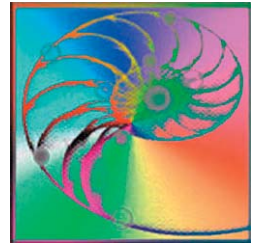
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<i>JHP</i> subscription added to membership (or <i>JHP</i> alone)	\$ 25 (\$112)
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NEWS & COLUMNS

- 4 • CALENDAR OF EVENTS
- 6 • PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE Each One, Reach On, "Re-Membering"
Home . . . *Carroy U. "Cuf" Ferguson and Leland C. "Chip" Baggett*
- 8 • JOURNAL OF HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY JHP Contents and
Editorial Commentary . . . *Kirk Schneider*
- 10 • INSIDE AHP George Leonard—A Life Fully Lived . . . *Paul Rest*

ARTICLES

- 11 • Beyond Terror Management: Mindful Engagement of Loss, Grief,
and Mortality . . . *Brad Hunter*
- 15 • Relational Dharma: Igniting the Heart of Shared Liberation
. . . *Jeannine Davies*

ATP NEWSLETTER

- 18 • 11th EUROTAS Conference Report, Milan 2009 . . . *P. L. Lattuada*
- 18 • 12th EUROTAS Conference Announcement: Knowledge, Pleasure,
and Belief, Gwatt, Switzerland, September 29–October 3
- 19 • Conference Announcement: 17th International Transpersonal Conference:
Consciousness Revolution: Transpersonal Discoveries That Are
Changing the World, Moscow, June 23–27
- 19 • Conference Announcement: Kundalini Research Network Presents
Perspectives on Kundalini: Clinical, Research, and Traditional
Views, Pennsylvania, May 14–16
- 19 • Conference Announcement: Psychedelic Studies, San Jose, April 15–18
- 20 • 2008 Jubilee Diamond Delusional (Erratic) Archboulder Awarded
to Professor Dr. Stanislav Grof, M.D., Ph.D . . . *David Lukoff*

REVIEWS

- 22 • **The Akashic Experience: Science and the Cosmic Memory Field**
by Ervin Laszlo . . . *Karen Castle*
- 23 • **Medical Renaissance Series: The Secret Code** by C. Norman Shealy
. . . *Adele Ryan McDowell*
- 24 • **Staring at the Sun: Overcoming the Terror of Death**
by Irvin Yalom . . . *Robert Epstein*
- 25 • **Soul Shaping: A Journey of Self-Creation** by Jeff Brown
. . . *Bob Edelstein*
- 26 • **Healing Trauma: Attachment, Mind, Body, and Brain** edited by
Marion F. Solomon and Daniel J. Siegel . . . *David Lavra*
- 27 • **Soul Survivor: The Reincarnation of a World War II Fighter Pilot** by
Andrea Leinger, Bruce Leinger, Ken Gross . . *Adele Ryan McDowell*

27 • AHP AD RATES

AHP PERSPECTIVE

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AHP-Sponsored Events

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LEVEL I • 39 CECs • 10-6 p.m. •

New York City

March 6-7, April 10-11, April 24-25,
2010 • New York Open Center

LEVEL II • 26 CECs • 10-6 p.m. • New York City

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Contact: <http://www.newyorkvoicedialogueinstitute.org> (212) 956-0432



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discount



MIRIAM DYAK



CASSANDRA COSME DE PREE

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April 8-9, 2010 • Ojai, California • The Oak Grove School

April 10-11, 2010 • Ojai, California • Pepper Retreat

Contact: Touch the Future, <http://tffuture.org/store/jcp/symposium>



MANIFEST YOUR MYTHIC DESTINY: TRANSFORMING PERSONAL MYTHOLOGY AND AWAKENING YOUR INNER SHAMAN

SUSAN BURNS, MA LMHC FNBCCH

Embark on a journal of personal mythology guided by your inner shaman. Learn to access transformative tools such as your Mythic Map, invite deeper wisdom as you take the path of consciousness into the Story Field. Discover the power of manifesting your unique personal narrative as you integrate with story and dream work, releasing what no longer works for your while creating a transformational vision that empowers your deepest self. Explore your psychic depths through expressive therapies: Art, Movement, Transpersonal Consciousness and Body Work. The foundation of the work is The Personal Mythology curriculum available in Personal Mythology: Transform Your Mythic Path by Stanley Krippner and David Feinstein (link to book at www.mythevolve.com) with deep consciousness and experiential work designed by facilitator Susan Burns and guided by group process.

SPONSORED BY AHP • 20 CECs • \$350 (\$300 for AHP) • 6:30-9:30 p.m.

April 21-23, 2010 • Bellevue, Washington

Contact: Susan Burns at (425) 881-9000; info@mythevolve.com; www.mythevolve.com



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AHP-Sponsored Events

TRANSFORM YOUR MYTHIC PATH: PERSONAL MYTHOLOGY AND DREAMWORK WITH STANLEY KRIPPNER, PH.D.

How do you find and change a life story? Be delighted at the mythic path that awaits you. Join legendary psychologist, author, and teacher Dr. Stanley Krippner for a once in a lifetime opportunity to work with personal mythology and dreams. Create a new destiny for yourself through the recesses of your psyche, finding and transforming the hidden patterns that are dysfunctional to your story. You will work therapeutically with dreams, explore the elements of myth and how they apply to your life, come alive through expressive mediums and gestalt therapy, and gain tools to work with others. Dr. Stanley Krippner, PhD. is a living treasure in Dream Study and Mind-Research, original pioneer of Transpersonal Psychology, internationally known for decades of research in consciousness studies and shamanism.



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April 30-May 2, 2010 • Tacoma, Washington, \$95, \$85 AHP, \$65 students
\$85/\$75 early registration

Contact: Susan Burns (425) 881-9000; info@mythevolve.com
http://www.transformativegroups.com/personal_myth_olympia.htm

GENEEN ROTH

SPONSORED BY AHP • CECs

April 2010 • Chicago, Illinois
October 8–9, 2010 • Seattle,
Washington

Contact: The Conference Works! (800)
395-8445

Register: <http://www.ConferenceWorks.com>



DEEPENING YOUR THERAPEUTIC WORK USING THE EXISTENTIAL- HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVE with Dr. Bob Edelstein, one-day workshop

SPONSORED BY AHP • CECs

May 2010 • Portland, Oregon

Contact: BobEdelstein@BobEdelstein.com



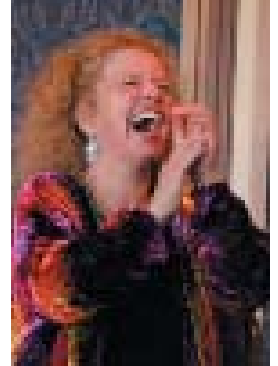
DONNA EDEN with David Feinstein, Ph.D., ENERGY MEDICINE FOR WOMEN AND THE MEN WHO LOVE THEM

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• 12 CECs

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July 23–26, 2010 • Los Angeles, California •
Crowne Plaza Hotel LAX

Contact: The Conference Works! (800)
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October 1–3, 2010 • Indianapolis,
Indiana • Body & Spirit Studio

Contact: The Conference Works! (800)
395-8445

Register: <http://www.ConferenceWorks.com>



Each One, Reach One: Re-Membering “Home”

Carroy U. “Cuf” Ferguson & Leland C. “Chip” Baggett

In 1962, the founders of AHP presented a bold, new Evolutionary Vision for Human Potential, giving birth to, stimulating, and nurturing a profound shift in Consciousness for how we can think anew about ourselves as human beings. No longer were we to focus solely on what’s wrong with us as human beings or how we are or have been conditioned. Rather, the door was opened to focus on how we can “become” and “be” our Optimal Selves. The founders also created a “Home” for “kindred spirits on the edge” to explore that Human Potential in order to evolve our Consciousness, individually and collectively. That “Home” was AHP.

Over the years, AHP has championed, supported, and nurtured the Evolutionary Vision and has remained the “Original Home” for the Human Potential Movement and the emergence of what can now be called the Synergistic Human Potential Movement. The Synergistic Human Potential Movement is mirrored through the myriad of activities of many authors, presenters, organizations, associations, researchers, inventors, seekers, spiritual and cultural creators, who are engaged in synergistic paths to assist in the evolution of Consciousness and the development of our Optimal Selves. It is in this context that we now issue a call to “all kindred spirits on the edge” to *re-member* AHP as your “Home.”

We are framing the call as an outreach activity with the title “Each One, Reach One.” We want each reader to connect with at least one other kindred spirit in your networks (e.g., family, friends, colleagues, neighbors, acquaintances, etc.) to share with that person what you may know about AHP and the origins of the Synergistic Human Potential Movement, and to invite that person to *re-member* AHP as the “Original Home.” And, if that person does not currently have a “Home” for support of the Soul, or for personal growth, personally or professionally, or if that person is in search of a connection with a “Home” for personal or professional growth, we want you to invite them to join you in your connection to AHP by becoming a member. Even if that person currently has what s/he considers a personal or professional “Home,” we encourage you to invite them to join AHP and to view AHP as part of her/his “Extended Family.” Each One, Reach One.

What is a “Home”? In a beautifully sung ballad by



AHP CO-PRESIDENTS CHIP BAGGETT AND CUF FERGUSON

Dionne Warwick, she wonderfully reminded us that: “A House is not a Home.” There are many who grew up in houses, but not homes. We want you to *re-member*, therefore, that AHP is your “Home.” A “Home” is something more—a transcendent feeling-tone that connects one human being to another in a very special, nurturing, and growth-promoting way. It evokes a recognition that “I am because we are and we are because I am.” It gifts us with memories of lessons learned and not learned, of what we desire and what was missing “inside” as we grew to who we are now. In a broader spiritual context, it beckons us to *re-member* who we are. Each One, Reach One.

There are numerous definitions of “Home,” and here are a few that we found meaningful (*American Heritage College Dictionary*): “Home” is: “an environment offering security and happiness”; “a valued place regarded as a refuge or place of origin”; “the place where something is discovered, founded, developed, or promoted; a source”; “an institution where people are cared for”; “to the center or heart of something; deeply”; “to go or return to one’s base of operation”; and “to move or lead toward a goal: homing in on the truth”. Contained in these descriptions, therefore, is that feeling-tone of a special, nurturing, and growth-promoting connection. It is in the spirit of that kind of connection to AHP that we want you *re-member*. It also is in the spirit of that kind of connection to AHP that we invite you to engage with us in our outreach activity of “Each One, Reach One.”

As we engage in the outreach activity of “Each One, Reach One,” we are cognizant of the role of cultural scripts. Cultural scripts are profound, hypnotic “directives” for how we may unknowingly operate in the world. They may operate as unexamined, inner programs, guiding our decisions and actions as we grow and move around in our personal, societal, and global life spaces. One deeply ingrained, general cultural script in the United States, and elsewhere, for example, is the script that in order to mature as a human being, you must move away from “Home.” This cultural script is viewed as the appropriate and normative way to develop into a responsible and caring adult. And so it may be that within this kind of cultural context,

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

some “kindred spirits on the edge” may have moved away from AHP as “Home”, unknowingly and arguably following this cultural script.

And, yet, also contained in the cultural script is a yearning to return to or a desire to remain connected to a “Loving and Caring Home.” We all know that wherever we go, we carry an inner sense of our “constructed home experience,” be it positive or negative. If we have constructed that home experience as positive, we, as adults, yearn to periodically touch base with that “Loving and Caring Home” (e.g., phone calls; texting; Facebook; during holidays; special family events). If we have constructed that home experience as negative, we, as adults, may tend to stay away or minimize direct contact, until healing takes place, all the while yearning for that “Loving and Caring Home.” Whatever the case, we want you to *re-member* that AHP was founded and is here as your Extended Loving and Caring Spiritual Home. So all “kindred spirits on the edge” and others are welcomed. AHP is inclusive. We invite you, therefore, to rejoin AHP, if you moved away,

or to maintain your current AHP membership, and also invite you to invite those in your life spaces to view AHP as their “Extended Loving and Caring Spiritual Home.” Each One, Reach One.

In August 2009, at AHP’s Summer Board meeting, we (Cuf and Chip) officially affirmed our sense of “Home” as co-presidents of AHP. We consciously joined our synchronistic Energies to “mirror” the feeling-tone and the transcendent nature of “Home.” We have jokingly observed how our co-presidency has an Ebony and Ivory flavor to it. But, as long-time friends, we know that this is just a “surface mirror,” and we wish to invite all “kindred spirits on the edge” to *re-member* AHP as the “Original Home” for many transformational and evolutionary ideas and practices to evolve our Consciousness, individually and collectively, and to become our Optimal Selves. We think of this as a “deeper, Soul-linked mirror” sense of “Home.” It is through *re-membering* the gift of “Home,” and connecting and re-connecting with kindred spirits on the edge that we invite each reader to join us in our outreach activity of “Each One, Reach One.” Welcome Home!

— CUF FERGUSON AND CHIP BAGGETT

NOTICE OF AHP BOARD OPENINGS

The AHP Board of Directors is currently seeking candidates interested in actively serving on the board. Since we are a working board, your involvement can be a rewarding opportunity to serve the organization of AHP and the mission and projects it provides in the world. Board meetings tend to be dynamic and interactive, as we often discuss diverse opinions about a variety of pressing organizational matters. Other than being an AHP member, there are no specific demographic requirements for serving on the board. We seek diversity of age, race, gender, education, profession, and geographic location. There may be times when the board has a particular need for someone with a specialized area of knowledge or expertise (i.e. accounting, marketing, conference planning, web design, etc.). At those times, the board will likely emphasize this skill when selecting its next new board member.

Before you submit your letter of application, you should be familiar with the responsibilities and expectations of being a board member. The basic term for an “at large” board position is three years. If a board member becomes an officer, his/her term could be extended. Primary responsibilities of “members at large” involve attending two board meetings per year (two to three days each), maintain regular internet contact with the board, and participate in whatever projects or committees you might choose. It is the responsibility of each board member to pay for his/her travel, room and board at the meetings, and maintain Internet service. The average expense to be expected per year ranges from \$1500 to \$3000 depending on airfare to the meetings and any personal or career variables unique to your circumstances (lost working days of income). (If AHP relates to your profession, expenses may be tax-deductible.)

If you are interested in being considered for a board position, please submit a letter of application to the AHP Board of Directors. To help us know something about you please provide the following information in your letter.

1. Basic demographic information that you believe would help us to know who you are. This could include such things as: name, age, sex, race, geographic location, etc. [This is not intended to be discriminatory, but is rather for you to give us basic information as you wish.]
2. Please share with us your interest/connection with AHP. That is, is your membership in the organization primarily personal, professional, ideological, other? Feel free to elaborate.
3. What is your reason for wanting to serve on the board?
4. Do you have any specialized experience, skill, or expertise that you believe would be valuable to your participation on the board?
5. Do you have any concerns or questions about any aspect of board involvement? (please be specific)
6. a. Should the board want to appoint you, how much lead time would you need?
b. If the board is not currently in need of your participation, would you be in a pool of candidates for future selection and service?
7. Would you be interested in attending a board meeting to observe our process and meet the people you will be working with?
8. Please provide any other information that you think would be helpful in us getting to know you.

Thank you for your time and interest in pursuing this process. Send applications to the Presidents: cuferguson@aol.com & chip@wakinguptogether.com

Journal of Humanistic Psychology

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— Kirk J. Schneider



KIRK SCHNEIDER

Table of Contents

“You Will Be Like God”: Fascination of Force and Social Conformism in Two War Episodes . . . *Martino Rossi Monti*

Basho’s Therapy for Narcissus: Nature as Intimate Other and Transpersonal Self . . . *Will W. Adams*

Nature Therapy: Thoughts about the Limitations of Practice . . . *Ronen Berger*

The Abiding Nature of Empathic Connections: A 10-Year Followup Study . . . *Sharon A. Myers and Catherine M. White*

Goal Consensus and Collaboration in Psychotherapy: An Existential Rationale . . . *Thomas Mackrill*

Illness and Meaning: A Review of Select Writings . . . *David R. Whitsitt*

Editor’s Commentary

Welcome to 50 years of *JHP*! Little could the founding editors—Maslow and Sutich—have realized, but the revolution they sparked has robustly endured. Today, more than ever, humanistic psychology stands as the guardian of the holistic-radically empiricist tradition of William James and the early personality psychologists, that other quarters of psychology have too readily forsaken to reductionist interests. I have great hopes, moreover, for a humanistic renaissance within psychology, in spite of the aforementioned challenges. This is because the data—people’s lives—continue to uphold our principles. To illustrate this contention, one need only look at the growing interest in qualitative research within the American Psychological Association; the contextual factors movement in psychotherapy outcome research; the mind–body/whole person movement in healthcare; and the personal growth and spirituality movement in the profession as a whole. Unless the discipline turns completely on its head, the humanistic–holistic contribution looks to make major contributions in the years ahead.

Speaking of major contributions, one of the most important is our understanding of human cruelty. Rollo May and Carl Rogers debated it in the Summer 1982 (pp. 8–21) issue of *JHP*, and others have brushed on it through the decades. However, few have focused as baldly on the subject as our first author in this issue, Martino Rossi Monti. “You Will Be Like God” is one of the most stark and yet illuminating assessments of the human propensity toward evil that I have ever read, and no humanist should miss its reality-sobering cry.

In the second article, “Basho’s Therapy for Narcissus,” Will Adams takes us in a different direction on the subject of evil by excavating a long-admired, yet strangely neglected Zen poet named Matsuo Basho. Basho’s poetry, according to Adams, can help to lift us from our narcissistic preoccupations with a rigid and narrow conception of selfhood to an “eco-centered” and “participatory” *experience* of life. I highly urge you to read this eloquent piece, which points, as well as any piece can, to directions that may counter—or at the least, moderate, people’s “fascination with force.”

In "Nature Therapy: Thoughts about the Limitations of Practice," Ronen Berger expands the exploration of eco-consciousness with further discussion of his nature-centered healing. In this followup to his earlier *JHP* article (Spring 2008, pp. 264–279), Berger examines the parameters within which nature therapy can proceed and the potential it holds for a more integrative eco-centered therapeutic profession.

Shifting to the research side of the equation, "The Abiding Nature of Empathic Connections" brings a welcome empirical dimension to the above two contextual approaches. Meticulously following up on their ten-year study of therapeutic outcome, Sharon Myers and Catherine White show convincingly that not only are empathic connections key to the success of in-session transformation, but for transformations well beyond. This is one of the rare studies of the subtle and lasting effects of a pivotal humanistic and therapeutic offering.

In "Goal Consensus and Collaboration in Psychotherapy," Thomas Mackrill identifies yet another significant element in the therapeutic menagerie—*existential* aspects of therapeutic goal-setting. Too often, Mackrill observes, we equate goal setting and the like to simple reinforcement strategies that "grease the wheels" of a successful behavioral shift. However, in this tightly organized piece, Mackrill shows that goal setting has profound implications for the sense of meaning and purpose in life, not just facilitative markers.

Finally, we conclude this issue with another remarkable exercise in empathic resonance. In David Whitsitt's eloquent "Illness and Meaning" physical and psychological suffering is examined from the standpoint of seven variegated narratives. Among these are Susan Sontag's *Illness and Metaphor*, Anatole Broyard's *Intoxicated by My Illness*, and Gay Becker's *Disrupted Lives*. Discover how each of these writers describes illness from the "inside," as it were, based on personal and professional observation, to unpack its cultural, moral, experiential, and relational meanings.

A few notes on upcoming humanistic-oriented conferences: Please be sure to mark down on your calendar that the first East–West Existential Therapy Conference will

be held in Nanjing, China April 2–5, 2010. Contact Dr. Louis Hoffman at louishoffman@gmail.com for more information. Also, the 2010 Human Science Research conference is slated for August 4–8, 2010, at Seattle University, Seattle, Washington, focusing on the theme of "Giving Voice to Experience." For more information go to <http://www2.seattleu.edu/artsci/psychology/Default.aspx?id+6314>.

Three new books of historical importance to the existential–humanistic community are now in print—Amedeo Giorgi's *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology: A Modified Husserlian Approach* (Duquesne University Press), Kirk Schneider and Orah Krug's *Existential–Humanistic Therapy* (American Psychological Association Press), and Eugene Taylor's *The Mystery of Personality: A History of Dynamic Systems* (Springer).

Finally, on very a sad note, our dear *JHP* Board Member Al Siebert passed away on June 25th, 2009, at the age of 75. Al was a tireless and enthusiastic contributor to our *Journal*—as well as to the area of resiliency studies for which he was widely known. Not to be forgotten, another dear friend of the humanistic movement, Hobart "Red" Thomas, beloved instructor at Sonoma State University and contributor to *The Handbook of Humanistic Psychology*, also died recently—June 10th, 2009—at the age of 85. Both trailblazers will be sorely missed.

— KIRK J. SCHNEIDER



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George Leonard — A Life Fully Lived

— Paul Rest

In January 6th, 1966, on the Festival of the Epiphany, George Leonard delivered an address at a gathering in Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. The event was to celebrate the opening of Esalen Institute's San Francisco office. It was also an event where Abraham Maslow was to be honored with the keynote address. Then the West Coast Editor of *Look* magazine, Leonard rose to give an initial statement on behalf of the Institute.

David Lukoff, Ph.D., recently sent me an email that contained the eloquent recommendation that he made when nominating Leonard for a honorary doctorate at Saybrook University. Writing about this event at Grace Cathedral, Lukoff noted that Leonard had challenged all there to see that "... this was not a time for analysis ... but one of action." Leonard declared "a new kairos ... the awakening of a new intelligence, where every scientist would become a seer and every academic a prophet."

On January 6th of this year, forty-four years after that event, George Leonard died peacefully at his home in Mill Valley, California, surrounded by family and friends. Besides his *Look* magazine editorship, where he coined the phrase "human potential movement," Leonard was the author of numerous books on education, athletics, Aikido, and leadership; a combat pilot during the Second World War in the Pacific Theatre where he saw action; a visionary, seer, and in the words of Richard Strozzi-Heckler Ph.D. was a "thought leader [where] he often ... forecasted the future and helped make it happen a decade before it occurred." Strozzi-Heckler continued: "This happened with Civil Rights, the Feminist Move-

ment, the surge in the Consciousness Movement, and on and on."

Leonard was a 5th degree black belt in Aikido, a martial art in which he did not obtain his black ranking until after his 50th birthday. He added what he learned from this discipline into his literary, educational, and transformative messages to the world.

Wendy Palmer, a 6th degree black belt and the creator of "Conscious Embodiment," and one of Leonard's partners at the Aikido of Tamalpais Dojo in Mill Valley, California,

wrote: "He probably introduced more people throughout the world to Aikido than anyone except Kisshomaru Ueshiba" (the son of O Sensei, the Founder of Aikido, who headed the worldwide organization from The Founder's death in 1969 until his own death in 1999). Leonard, at 6 feet 4 inches tall, was a formidable presence on the mat. Strozzi-Heckler, also a 6th dan in Aikido and another of Leonard's partners at the Tamalpais Dojo, wrote that "... he had very strong technique. ... He was like a great whip, and if you were on the end of it as it cracked you knew you had been thrown."

Besides creating LET (Leonard Education Training), he was also the

creator of the Samurai Game. Lance Giroux, a West Point Graduate and 1st degree black belt in Aikido, wrote that when he experienced Leonard for the first time he saw that: "He made no one wrong, yet challenged everyone to think." Giroux, who is the only person in the world authorized

to train and certify persons who wish to become facilitators of the Samurai Game, observed in his twenty years of weekly (and as he notes, "sometimes more") interactions with Leonard, that "... he believed in the innate capacity of the average human being." Giroux adds: "He was

curious. He wanted to mix it up. He got in there for the play of it all. He wanted to know."

This theme of Education was a key part of Leonard's vision. Strozzi-Heckler writes that he "represented ... a passion and commitment to whole-hearted education." His books such as *Education and Ecstasy* are manifestos that are still timely today. When reading this book again, I was struck by what Leonard wrote in the Introduction: "I had visited hundreds of schools, thousands of classrooms. Instead of merely talking with school officials, I had spent days and weeks in a single classroom, sitting at a child's desk, taking a child's viewpoint." Leonard was willing to get to



Richard Strozzi-Heckler

WENDY PALMER, GEORGE, RICHARD STROZZI-HECKLER

the heart of what he was investigating at the moment, and demonstrated both his agility and sense of humor by tucking his 6-foot 4-inch frame into a child's desk. Those who knew George can imagine him carrying out this physical feat!

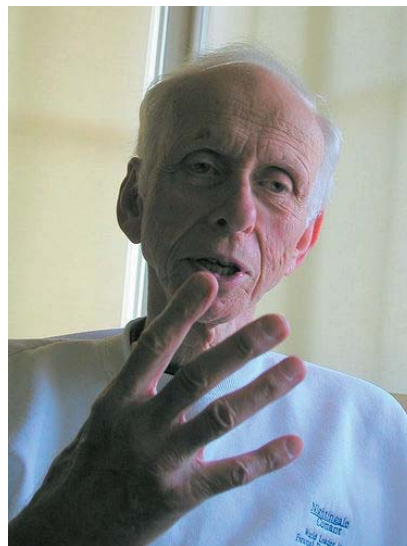
Another example of Leonard seeing beyond the horizon was in the publication of *The Ultimate Athlete*. He wrote in that book, drawing together the smaller and larger pictures at the same time, “. . . that athletics, in addition to flattening your stomach, can change the way you live and provide the basic guidelines for a lasting transformation of consciousness.” He then offered a whole new paradigm of games in the Appendix that addressed body, mind, and spirit: “New Frisbee,” “Infinity Volleyball,” “Yogi Tag,” and more.

In the mold of great prophetic thinkers like theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, Leonard, whether through his writings, his workshops and semi-

nars, his teaching as an instructor of Aikido, or as a mentor and friend, was willing to forge in the fires of his vision that action which was grounded both in the reality of the now and in the possibility and potential of the future.

In Lukoff's remembrance to Saybrook of the events that occurred on that Feast of the Epiphany decades ago he wrote of Leonard's exhortation to those present that “those who spoke (at that event) would also speak for everyone who cast their lot with the future. The means had to be found so that each person could actualize their divine potentiality, not by denying the world but by affirming every part of it.”

George Leonard's physical presence and light in the world will be missed. His spirit will live on in what he accomplished, but even more so in the lives and hearts he touched. Palmer wrote: “. . . (he had) fierce loyalty and heartfelt connections (that) were the ground of his friendships.”



Jay Cross

GEORGE LEONARD

These are the testaments of a life well-lived.

PAUL REST is a writer who lives in Northern California. He has contributed articles, reviews, and poetry for this publication. He can be reached at: paulrest@paulrest.com For information about the Samurai Game, visit <http://www.SamuraiGame.org>.

BEYOND TERROR MANAGEMENT: *Mindful Engagement of Loss, Grief, and Mortality*

In a world that has become blind

I go to beat the drum of the Deathless. ~ Buddha

— Brad Hunter

We can propose a thumb nail sketch of Terror Management Theory (TMT), which is an offspring of Ernest Becker's work *The Denial of Death*, as a conceptual framework that views all human activity as a vain attempt to disguise, suppress, distance, or deny our mortality. This point of view is somewhat consistent with the Buddha's contention that *all becoming* leads to suffering and ends in death. Whatever we construct

will inevitably fall into ruin; whatever I become must eventually become undone!

One of the implications of TMT is that we are always walking—unconsciously most of the time—“in fear and trembling” over the very thin ice of our own mortality. Death Anxiety could be viewed as the emotional baseline of our human existence. Although we do indeed expend tremendous amounts of energy suppressing the very idea as we pursue distractions

and self-affirmation through achievements, pleasures, entertainments, recognition, addictions, and so on, the inevitability of our death is always circling just below the surface of even our grandest schemes and thoughts.

Is there an alternative to this baseline of anxiety? Since so much of our suffering arises from turning away from the basic facts of impermanence, constant change and flow, running from the shadow of our own eventual demise, can we transform this suffer-

MINDFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH DEATH

ing to some degree by *turning toward* the very things we are most afraid of? What happens when we unpack and deconstruct this great boogeyman we have named “DEATH” and begin to look intently at the details of this fleeting phenomenal world, through the lens of the “three marks of existence”: *annicca* (impermanence), *dhukkha* (unsatisfactoriness) and *anatta* (not-self)? The promise of such a mindful insight practice is that we have nothing to lose in this investigation. To be sure, there will be fearful moments and more than one long dark night of the soul, but don't despair; as one contemporary meditation teacher used to say, “you can't fall out of the universe!” What we stand to gain through investigation and letting go is beyond price and measure.

UNPACKING THE DARK CRAWL SPACE

If we can openly discuss what exactly it is that we are afraid of concerning “death”, we discover a variety of elements that make up these fears. There are many different strands in death anxiety, but for the purposes of our meditative lens of the three marks, it is fruitful to zero in on a few key factors. Other related fears can be seen as subcategories of these factors. Having conducted a number of experiential workshops around this subject in recent years, I have found a general consensus among participants

that the fear of death can be broken down into four main components: pain/suffering, loss of self & other, the unknown, and loss of control. Our preliminary examination of these components might not be able to penetrate to any great depth immediately, but at least by taking a fresh look from other perspectives, a path may be opened which could eventually lead beyond what Becker called the “Holy Terror”.

Pain & Suffering

It is both helpful and important to make a distinction between the sensations of pain and the experience of suffering. As several meditation teachers have put it, “pain is inevitable; suffering is optional.” One way of approaching pain from a different angle is to take up a mindful inquiry of its supposed opposite, pleasure, from the point of view of the three marks of existence. Is there any experience, no matter how delightful, that is permanent and unchanging? If there were such a permanent and unchanging experience, would it remain truly pleasurable after many hours, days, weeks, or years? Would that pleasure itself not then become a source of suffering? Can we sense the contraction in the body when a pleasure is desired but out of immediate reach, thus making the desire and the anticipation of pleasure a discomfort, a vague kind of pain itself? As awareness is honed and refined to ever more subtle levels, shades of stress and distress can

be seen in even the most “pleasurable” of experiences.

Is there any pleasurable experience of the body and the senses that is completely satisfactory? That is, an experience that is so wholly satisfying that one no longer craves another experience like it? An experience so fulfilling that it removes all of life's anxieties and uncertainties and leaves one in a permanently transcendent state? Even those rare experiences that approach an “Intimation of Immortality” lack ultimate satisfactoriness because of their impermanence. Close investigation also reveals that there is no fixed and permanent self, either in the experience or the subject of the experience. This actually becomes a piece of good news when applied to the problem of pain, since it, too, is ever-changing and impermanent.

Our relationship to pain can very much affect whether it remains as raw physical sensation or whether it grows into great suffering. In all of our lives, we meet many kinds of pain—physical, emotional, and spiritual. Can we learn how resistance and denial actually increases the painful sensations and shifts pain toward the area of suffering? Can we learn to soften around the pain and hold it in our experience with compassion and patience? Can we begin to gain some degree of insight into not-self as well—the pain is not “me”. The more I identify with “my pain”, the more I suffer. Awareness has some independence and separateness from the object of awareness. Although consciousness can certainly *become one with* the body, Buddhism constantly points out that all phenomena (including the body) is “not me”, “not mine”, “not self”.

Sample Investigation #1:

Try to locate a place of discomfort in your body right now. Become aware of the sensations of that pain or unease. Just observe the discomfort with increasing degrees of interest and intensity, as if shining a powerful light into that area. Soften any resistance you might experience around the discomfort. Note how this discomfort is not a monolithic or homogenous “thing”;

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it is composed of many different sensations that are constantly in a state of flux. Try “holding” the discomfort in a wider space of compassion and see what happens. And now scan the body and find an area that feels calm and pleasant, or at least free of pain and tension. Shift the focus of your awareness into this area. How does that shift in focus affect your experience of discomfort?

These kinds of experiential reflections can help us to meet both the pleasures and the pains of life with greater equanimity, accepting whatever arises in our experience with neither attachment nor rejection. We begin to see right in our own moment-to-moment experience that both clinging and aversion are causes of distress in our lives. Whatever phenomenon arises is also subject to passing away. All conditioned things arise, change, and pass away as the conditions that support them change.

Knowing and Unknowing: Sample Investigation #2

Sit as quietly as possible and try to find a sense of peace, contentment, groundedness, and security in the body and with the breath. When you have reached a space of relative ease and comfort, gently ask yourself, using your whole body awareness as well as the intellect, “what is it that can truly be *known*?” There is the awareness of the body breathing. Right here sensations arise and pass away. Feelings come up, flow through, and then disappear. Thoughts come and go completely unbidden. If I reflect honestly, I don’t even know what thoughts, sensations, or feelings are going to arise next. How much of what I claim to *know* is really secondary, after-the-fact, conceptualization, conjecture, and hypothesizing?

Returning to the three marks of existence, settle into the body and into the question (without intentionally looking for answers), allow the question to float playfully in an open space of awareness: “Is there anything that I can know that is permanent,

eternal, that will give me complete satisfaction and peace, something that I can truly call my ‘self?’”

While maintaining a sense of self-compassion, such gentle questioning and investigation can lead to a much deeper experiential and intuitive knowing. To put a modern spin on an ancient saying, when we know for ourselves whether the water is hot or cold, we don’t need a meta-analysis for validation.

Control: Sample Investigation #3

Within the same kind of relaxed, open, and meditative space allow yourself to

explore direct experience while loosely holding a free-floating question of control. What makes us feel the need for so much control? How much (or little) control do we actually have? Can we control the next thought that is going to come up, or sensation, or emotion? How much control do we have over our reactions to the events that come to us? If we have so little control over even our internal world, what makes us think we should be able to control the grand events arising from cause and effect outside of our influence?

A thorough investigation in this manner can lead us much deeper into an innate trust in the unfolding of events and a lessening of our anxiety about outcome and control. The appropriate combination of *attention* and *intention* can also reveal a space between an event and our habitual reactions to that event. It can provide a few seconds of clear awareness to actually take control and choose our responses to life events, while at the same time providing the equanimity to accept those things that are beyond our control.

Loss of Self/Other:

Sample Investigation #4

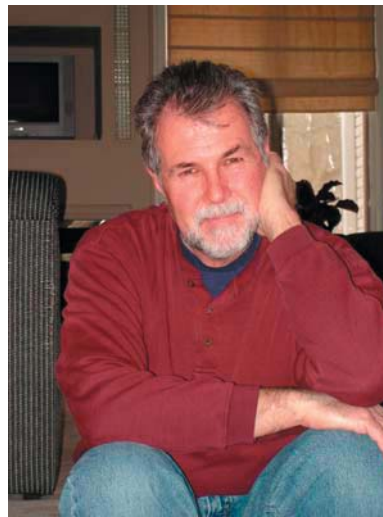
Be especially mindful of your own feelings in any direct investigation of mortality. Always establish a sphere of safety and grounding that you can return to and give yourself permission to peer into the abyss based on the meditative principle of “just this much”. It is easy to be overwhelmed by fear and grief in these meditative reflections, so it is important to first establish a familiar state of calm awareness that can be maintained with some degree of success for a period of time. Such an investigation

should not be entered into if one is already in a state of anxiety. Some familiarity with a calming meditative practice is highly recommended as a prerequisite for any reflection that even approximates a “cemetery meditation”.

Once again, placing yourself in a space of grounded safety and compassion, try to recall the first time that

you realized that death meant that you too were going to die. Perhaps it was the death of a friend, a relative, a pet, or an animal found on the street or in the park. Maybe your own thoughts and imagination brought you to this point. How old are you at this time? If you get close to the emotional charge of this memory, can you feel cellular traces of this memory? Is there resistance to the recollection of this experience? Are you able to hold the resistance itself in an intra-psychic sphere of compassion? If you can approach the raw and preverbal sensations themselves with openness and compassion, what do you experience? Grief? Loving acceptance? An expanded sense of self? A wiser adult embracing a frightened child?

Bring to mind as clearly as possible a cohesive sense of your “self”—the



BRAD HUNTER

core “I am” feeling in the body. Allow the mind to consider the loss of this “self” for a few moments noting the sensations that manifest in the body and the subsequent stream of thoughts in the mind. Now reflect back over your life, asking yourself with both sincerity and playful curiosity: “Which ‘self’ am I afraid to lose?” You could not have been your childhood self had you not died to your infant self, so to speak. You had to die to childhood to become a teen and then again to transform from teen to adult. The more refined you make this investigation, the more fascinating and revealing it can be. “Is this the same ‘I’ sitting here now as a week ago Thursday at lunch? Is my entire being-in-the-world identical at this moment to when I began reading this? Do I have to carry this fixed sense of ‘me’ in order to experience? Can the ‘I’ gradually fade away without taking the ‘am’ with it?” Eventually we will discover that we couldn’t get rid of the “am” even if we wanted to!

As a dear friend and teacher says, “We can’t even have it when we have it!” The Buddha said that “there is nothing in this world worth holding on to.” Even if there was some conditioned phenomenon of permanent and ultimate value, how could we possibly grasp IT and hold it forever, when we can’t even grasp and hold a “self”? We know the difficulties in relationships when one person relates to another as a fixed, unchanging entity. We see it in our most intimate relationships between friends, lovers, partners, spouses, bosses, employees, parents, children, teachers, and students. When these relationships shift and change to the point where the relationship itself has ended—sometimes through death—grief is inevitable. But, can we look at it all more intently and see that nothing, no one, not even my self, was ever “mine” to begin with? Working gently with this realization can make grief “a gateway to the garden of enlightenment”, to borrow a phrase from Sufism.

**Leaning toward the Deathless
There is an unborn, unconditioned,
uncreated.
Were it not for the unborn, unconditioned,
uncreated,
There would be no escape from the
world of the born,
The conditioned, and the created.
~Buddha**

There is an unintentional wisdom in the joke “you can’t get there from here.” To borrow an image from my teachers, I can’t experience the warmth of a Florida beach while I am holding onto a frozen lamppost in Ontario. I actually have to *let go* of the lamppost and go to that beach in order to experience it. In one sense, we don’t have to *travel* at all in meditation in order to find a spiritual truth that is closer than close. On the other hand, as long as we are looking (and behaving) in the wrong direction, in the wrong places, and through shattered glasses, a clear perception of deep spiritual truth will not be able to present itself *as it is*, and we will certainly not be able to embody and live out of this perception. To paraphrase Shantideva (8th C), we hate our suffering, but how we love its causes! The problem is that, without meticulous and diligent scrutiny, we have no hope of seeing these causes or of realizing how habitually attached we are—the causes are so *there* that we just assume that is the way things are and must be.

As long as I am leaning toward conditioned existence for ultimate peace, happiness, and fulfillment, I am inclining in the wrong direction and expecting permanence and reliability where none exists, looking for lasting satisfaction and joy in the unsatisfactory, and hoping to discover unshakable identity in that which is not-self. It goes against the grain to challenge the seemingly universal assumptions that life’s fleeting moments of joy provide us with genuine, lasting sustenance and meaning. Our first conclusion might be that dropping this cherished belief opens a road to annihilation and crushing depression. But this stage of meditative practice is called “disenchantment” for good

reason. We need to break the spell of the false promises of the phenomenal world if we are going to glimpse a reality that is deeper and beyond the superficial and transitory appearance of things, a glimpse that will ultimately lead to the cessation of suffering. As soon as we begin to loosen our grip, our clinging to the pretty lights of the passing show, the luminosity of our own compassionate, wise, and unborn nature begins to radiate through our life and all the manifestations of our being-in-the-world—and all this, without our having to become anything in particular.

Numerous offerings abound for spiritual experiences, ultimate realities, heavenly realms, Soul, transcendence, absolute Mind, etc. We can mistake a wide variety of fleeting spiritual highs as a taste of Nirvana or an encounter with G*d. (Whole religious movements and countless cults have grown from just such passing phenomena—which is not to say that such experiences may not have value and point us toward higher truths.) We can end up deifying ego as True Self, the Godhead, Pure Witness, and so on, as the result of a brief instant of transcendence that “I experienced”. There is an old warning about not mistaking the thief for one’s own child. Words and concepts can always be deceiving, but one word that I like for the deathless, unconditioned reality that seers of many different traditions have used for centuries is *Heart*. If we can uncover this unconditioned Heart, we have an opportunity to uproot our fundamental existential terror. As the late Ajahn Boowa would have put it: “The heart has no cemetery.”

**May suffering diminish.
May all beings be at ease.**

BRAD HUNTER left the ivory tower of existential philosophy and psychology in the early 1970s for a brief sabbatical. The sabbatical turned into 35 years of working in the area of death, dying, and bereavement while developing his meditation practice. In more recent years, Brad has begun guiding others in meditation at the same time he became certified as a clinical hypnotherapist specializing in anxiety, trauma, grief, and depression. He can be reached at no_manclature@yahoo.com

RELATIONAL DHARMA: Igniting the Heart of Shared Liberation

— Jeannine A. Davies

We need the vision of interbeing, we belong to each other; we cannot cut reality into pieces. The well being of “this” is the well being of “that,” so we have to do things together. Every side is “our side;” there is no evil side. — Thich Nhat Hanh

(Hanh TN, 1992, *Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*. New York: Bantam, p. 99)

We are all too aware of the myriad forms of violence and human conflict and the nuanced forms of suffering that it causes. Inherent within this fabric of suffering, and its release, whether expressed by the people we work with, or experienced within ourselves, is inevitable reciprocity; our very existence is woven in and through our profoundly connected nature. As humanity continues to suffer together, and often because of one another, so, too, do we share in the capacity to develop the consciousness necessary to transform and transcend these painful conditions.

The Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh (in the quote above) alludes to a relational path as a vehicle to greater freedom in his concept of “interbeing” and in the admission that “we have to do things together.”

Relational Dharma seeks to support experi-

ential recognition of the inseparable nature of all life through perspectives and practices that foster insight through shared awareness within

human relationship (Davies J, 2009, “The Holy Undivided” in Jones Z, Dunne B, Jahn R, Hoegger E, eds, *Filters and Reflections: Perspectives on Reality*, Princeton: ICRL Press).



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BURMESE FREEDOM LEADER AND NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Stuart Issett

Through mind-to-mind contact in the dharma, or higher truth, and subsequent coordination upon the intersubjective terrain, a stability and momentum form. This leads to an ignition that propels experience to migrate through cumulative stages or levels as they pertain to liberation. Liberation in this sense refers to a progressive and increasing degree of acclimatization within freedom—the release from the gravitational pull of unconscious or conscious experience of bondage within the self-generated forces within mind that produce suffering and limitation. (Davies: 113-114)

But what gives rise to this awakening into Relational Dharma, where another’s suffering or freedom is felt as our own? What supports the internal conditions that enables one to feel

the current of our innate emotional interrelatedness—to awaken the heart in such a way that we are propelled to act in service of another’s freedom as if it were our own?

IN BURMA: A LIVING EXPRESSION OF RELATIONAL DHARMA THROUGH FEMININE-INSPIRED ACTIVISM

Insight into this refinement of the heart can be found in the Buddha’s teachings and their application within

Presently, this ancient spiritual culture is shrouded in a totalitarian nightmare; ruled by one of the most ruthless military dictatorships in modern times. In 1990, not long after the nationwide pro-democracy demonstrations were crushed, drawing comparisons to China’s massacres at Tiananmen Square, the military regime, known as the “State Peace and Development Council (SPDC),” proposed “free and fair democratic elections.” Aung San Suu Kyi formed the National League for Democracy (NLD), and traveled the country

are internally displaced and living in malaria-infested jungles. Hundreds of thousands are enslaved as forced laborers. Close to one million more have fled the country and live in squalor in refugee camps along the country’s borders.

Despite Aung San Suu Kyi’s years of isolation, her vision of democratic freedom and what she calls a nonviolent “revolution of the spirit” remains a source of inspiration and spiritual power in the hearts of her people. The effects of this were made visible in September and October of 2007,



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Stuart Isett

the democracy movement in Burma, and in the life and message of the movement’s key leader Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate widely considered a female equivalent to Mahatma Gandhi. Burma, an elegant and enigmatic land, is one of the last remaining Buddhist cultures on Earth. A country of 54 million people, it is home to nearly 5,000 monasteries and meditation centers with more than one million monks and nuns, whose lineage stretches back over 2,500 years to the time of the Buddha.

igniting hope and freedom in the hearts of the Burmese people who had been ruled by fear for four decades. But just months into the campaign she and her closest colleagues were arrested by the authorities and placed under detention or imprisoned. Despite their incarceration, the NLD won a landslide victory, but the election results were never honored.

Aung San Suu Kyi has since spent 13 of the last 19 years under house arrest. Today there are several thousand “prisoners of conscience” in Burma’s numerous prisons. One million more

when tens of thousands of Burma’s Buddhist monks, nuns, and laity initiated a nationwide spiritually infused political uprising.

As images of these elegant monks and nuns appeared on our television screens, unfolding waves upon waves of saffron and pink (the color of renunciate robes), we entered the revolution along with them. As these spiritual warriors peacefully marched on the city streets, chanting the *metta sutta*, an ancient Buddhist prayer reflecting loving-kindness toward all life, we touched the liberating conflu-

ence of where fearlessness, courage, and purity accord in human expression. Together, we saw the horizon of what a heightened expression of living the dharma looks like in the world. We felt its transformational power—how it has the potential to uproot fear, liberating “the need for self-preservation at the cost of another’s suffering”. In this vision we awoke to the unmistakable recognition that our freedom is inseparable, the core intelligence of all nonviolent philosophies.

In an instant the peace shattered. In full view of the world, soldiers loyal to the regime poured into the cities opening fire, killing nearly 200 demonstrators and wounding hundreds more. When the carnage stopped, additional reports told of widespread torture, the emptying and vandalizing of monasteries, and terrifying accounts of night raids, beatings, and disappearances. And today, it continues.

IS THERE HOPE?

Aung San Suu Kyi encourages us to “use your liberty to help us achieve our own.” This request requires us to personalize Burma’s “revolution of the spirit” so that we feel it as our own. It asks that we untangle from the unconsciousness that propels harmful, unsustainable, and ultimately unsatisfying actions. It also asks that we awaken from and reverse the momentum of destructive and outmoded social and genetic conditioning, so that even for a moment we feel and know another’s suffering and freedom as inseparable to our own—the core recognition of Relational Dharma.

Further illumination of the conditions that support this awakening can be seen in Burma’s mystically infused atmosphere. It is revealing that along with the unthinkable restrictions on people’s basic freedoms and the inevitability of suffering that these violations cause, Burma’s social–political climate is permeated with ever-present teachings of the dharma and myriad meditation practices. These forms

function to support the strength and courage to sit with one’s suffering—to look, see, and know its nature rather than to project it outward in the form of anger and harm, or inward through apathy, arrogance, self-righteousness, and fear. The Buddha proclaimed that a noble truth of life is suffering, and it is how we meet our suffering that determines the degree of selflessness or liberation that we experience.

These ancient practices serve to relax an overidentification to egoic self-interests, which in turn softens the rigid boundaries that solidify separation—both from one’s own experience, and the encountering of another’s. Proportionate to the wisdom that no longer sees experiences as strictly an inward and outward reality, we transmute our attachment to self-serving needs and foster an extension of self that progressively includes wider and more intimate spheres of personal experience, thus nurturing our ability to feel other as self, and self as other. As separation recedes, we become more attuned to our indivisible nature. In this way, the dharma lens of mutual relatedness becomes our vehicle for liberation.

As our understandings of the technologies that accompany the teachings of interrelatedness become clear through our direct experience, our attachment to the form of meditation as vehicle into these insights broadens, eventually illuminating the pattern of liberation through contextual awareness itself—including self, other, and world. As one of my teachers, the Burmese meditation master Sayadaw U. Pandita, was fond of saying, “Although the form is helpful, it is awareness that liberates”. When meditation has reached its full fruition, it has formed a bridge out of the confinement of self and separation and ignited the heart in the recognition and meaning of freedom as an expression of selfless love.

Aung San Suu Kyi’s life is a profound example of selfless love. When the people of Burma needed her, she responded with all of the dedication that a liberated heart would vow, in physical form leaving her husband

and two young boys, and in truth widening the sphere of caring to envelop all her people as “worthy of love and respect”.

As the struggle for freedom in Burma shows us, it is through the unwavering dedication to nonviolence and insight into our inseparable nature that reservoirs of courage and beauty rise in the human spirit. Through this process of inspired commitment, one’s innate wisdom is touched, lifting us out of oppression, self-censorship, and fear. As these entanglements are released, the heart of shared liberation opens and we actualize the meaning of Relational Dharma.

JEANNINE A. DAVIES is a writer, psychotherapist, and artist based in San Francisco and Vancouver, B.C. She has been involved in leading groups and retreats in the intersection of nonsectarian Buddhism, meditation, human rights, and the principles of engaged personal and political nonviolent spiritual revolution since 2000, and is cofounder of an online institute dedicated to these principles. She is currently working on a Ph.D. in Psychology at Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center in San Francisco, California. For information on upcoming Relational Dharma groups, please contact Jeannine @ 604.681.5671. jeannine@jeannedavies.com www.jeannedavies.com



11th EUROTAS Conference Report

— P. L. Lattuada

Reflections from the organizer: **Gratitude:** Round sun and fragrance of humid earth smiles me in the heart the memory of days spent together in Milan. The felt sense is that of a spiritual experience of brotherhood and professional value. Personally I am grateful, deeply grateful to the board of EUROTAS (European Transpersonal Association) which honored me with the confidence needed. And to all the presenters and all the participants: You have been extraordinary. The feedback we received was enthusiastic, very appreciative with some constructive criticism.

Quality: To organize the 11th EUROTAS Conference was a fascinating journey from the personal and transpersonal point of view. The organizational machine fired up right after the Barcelona Eurotas Conference, thus in November 2008. Once the date was set, the Mother giving birth, love, dedication, and confidence were the qualities that we immediately knew were necessary.

First Step: The first step, already taken in Barcelona, after having chosen the title and the date, and shared with the board of EUROTAS, was the appointment of the webmaster (Saint Erich) and the preparation of the site.

Organization: At the same time we started with the preparation of a business plan, choosing the location and making decisions about the duration and structure of the event. Eleonora, our General Assistant was the soul of the Organization. With-

out her, nothing would have been possible, the numerous difficulties would not have been surmounted. We learned quickly not to invest too many resources in publicity in the media, which has high cost and low return. We gave priority to the personal contact with those who already had experience with prior Eurotas conferences.

Presenters: With the sending out of the call for papers, the public phase of the 11th EUROTAS Conference was initiated. Then we started on the long and fascinating adventure of contact with all the presenters: their proposals and requests. Every email a world, each contact a teaching. The relationship with each of you has been full. We lived "wired" for a



CARMELA MARCIONELLI LATTUADA, STAN GROF, PIER LATTUADA LUIGI

whole year. You not only entered into our computers, but also into our bodies, into our breath, into our minds, into our souls.

Volunteers: The heights the conference reached have been due to the brilliant splendor of the volunteers. A force coming directly from the heart without which the conference could not have been realized.

The Numbers: Presenters: 125, Total participants: 370, Countries: 24, Volunteers: 34, Staff: 19, Sponsors: 2 for €4,000, Films: 2, Events: 5

Account: Our heart is happy. The 11th EUROTAS Conference seemed to all a Conference of good quality, characterized by the presence of many cutting-edge professionals, a good

atmosphere, and active participation of the public.

12TH INTERNATIONAL EUROTAS CONFERENCE IN GWATT, SWITZERLAND

Knowledge, Pleasure, & Belief

SEPTEMBER 29–OCTOBER 3, 2010

How do Knowledge and Belief influence each other? How do Art and Research play with each other? How can we create a life among materialism religion, and science? We look beyond the narrow confines of conventional belief systems and areas of knowledge to create combinations, integration, and visions among these fields.

Transpersonal Psychology, modern spirituality, and integral consciousness will mediate in a new way. They will bridge anthropological tradition and postmodern living, and be a source of inspiration and understanding within the arts, creative psychotherapy, and everyday living. The splendid Bernese Oberland surroundings will inspire us.

We will work collaboratively to crystallize the essentials of what all human beings have in common. What inspires us? What moves us? Makes us happy?

U. Z. Rüeegg, M.D., President of the Swiss Transpersonal Association extends an invitation: Does this proposal make you curious? Are you personally and/or professionally engaged in networking the above fields? Submit your presentation, workshop, or contribution. With great joy I invite you on behalf the Swiss ATP to the 12th Eurotas.

Contact <http://www.eurotas.org> or the Swiss ITP, Halenstrasse 10 CH-3012 Bern, Switzerland.

ATP NEWSLETTER



Conference Announcement

17TH INTERNATIONAL TRANSPERSONAL CONFERENCE

Consciousness Revolution: Transpersonal Discoveries That Are Changing the World

MOSCOW, JUNE 23–27, 2010

*I*nspired by the success of the 2008 First World Congress on Psychology and Spirituality in New Delhi and of the annual and multicultural conferences of the European Transpersonal Association (EUROTAS), a group of psychologists sharing the transpersonal vision has decided to continue the tradition of the international transpersonal meetings. This group representing the major American, European, Australian, and Asian transpersonal institutions decided to hold the 17th International Conference on June 23–27, 2010, in Moscow.

The mission of the Conference is to present, both experientially and didactically, breakthrough discoveries revealing the fundamental role of consciousness in all human affairs and the value for humanity of our growing insights into the nature of consciousness and of the world. We want to review the role the transpersonal perspective has played in human history from the time of the first shamans 50,000 years ago to the discoveries of modern consciousness research, transpersonal psychology, and other scientific disciplines. The Conference will present not only a comprehensive overview of the forty years of the transpersonal paradigm through the voices of its founders and pioneers, but also outline its future perspectives. We expect more than 1,000 participants from more than 50 countries.

Cultural Program: World Festival

of Transpersonal and Spiritual Arts, post-Conference Journeys in Russia

Presenters: 64, including Stanislav and Christina Grof

Visit: <http://www.ita2010.com>

Inquiries: itasecretary@gmail.com

Conference Announcement

Kundalini Research Network Presents Perspectives on Kundalini: Clinical, Research, and Traditional Views

MAY 14–16, PENNSYLVANIA

*T*his conference will offer participants and instructors the rare opportunity to gather and discuss the powerful impact that yoga and meditation practices, spiritual emergence, transcendent experiences, and the transformative power of Kundalini have on individuals. Through keynote presentations and panels of experts, we will explore what the process of transformation and change looks like from clinical, research, and traditional spiritual and yogic perspectives.

Friday 7:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.

Saturday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Sunday 9 a.m. – noon

Presenters: Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, Lawrence Edwards, Teri Degler, Sat Bir Singh Khalsa, Russel Park, Dale Pond, Paul Pond, Dorothy Walters, Jyoti Jean Prevatt, Barbara Harris Whitfield, Charles L. Whitfield.

Registration Fee: \$150

Register on or before March 15, 2010, for only \$125!

Contact: Kundalini Research Network Conference: Himalayan Institute, Honesdale, Pennsylvania, (800) 822-4547; <http://www.himalayaninstitute.org>

Conference Announcement

PSYCHEDELIC STUDIES

SAN JOSE, APRIL 15–18

*T*his spring the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) is hosting the international conference **Psychedelic Science in the 21st Century**.

Conference presenters will address contemporary psychedelic research and psychedelic psychotherapy topics at the largest conference dedicated solely to psychedelics in the U.S. in 17 years. Programming will consist of concurrent tracks exploring clinical applications, neurobiology, issues relevant to healthcare and mental health professionals, and social, cultural, and psychological issues surrounding the therapeutic and spiritual uses of psychedelics. Continuing education credits are available for psychologists, medical doctors, and other healthcare professionals. The conference is open to the general public.

World-renowned presenters include:

- **Stanislav Grof**, M.D., co-founder of transpersonal psychology
- **Ralph Metzner**, Ph.D., consciousness researcher & psychotherapist
- **Andrew Weil**, M.D., integrative medicine proponent
- **Jim Fadiman**, Ph.D., psychologist and pioneering psychedelic researcher
- **David Nichols**, Ph.D., medicinal chemist and pharmacologist
- **Alex & Allyson Grey**, visionary artists
- **Rick Doblin**, Ph.D., founder and executive director of MAPS

A special banquet will honor the lifetime achievements of psychedelic luminaries **Sasha and Ann Shulgin**.

Register before Mar. 15 to avoid the late rate. (831) 429-6362; <http://www.maps.org/conference>

ATP NEWSLETTER

THE 2008 JUBILEE DIAMOND DELUSIONAL (ERRATIC) ARCHBOULDER AWARDED TO PROFESSOR DR. STANISLAV GROF, M.D., PH.D.

— David Lukoff

The controversial nature of transpersonal psychology research at this time of paradigm clash can be illustrated by the response to Stan Grof's research by the academic circles of his native country, Czechoslovakia. In October 2007, Stan received the

prestigious award VISION 97 from the Foundation of the Czech ex-president Vaclav Havel and his wife Dagmar. Former recipients of the annual VISION 97 Award include the brain researcher and neurosurgeon Karl Pribram, the former U.S. Secretary of

Labor Robert Reich, the psychologist Phillip G. Zimbardo, the MIT professor of computer science and pioneer in Artificial Intelligence Joseph Weizenbaum, and the semiotician and writer Umberto Eco. The Havel Foundation gives this description of their award:

VISION 97 is given to thinkers whose scientific work transcends the dominant concepts of knowledge and being, reveals unknown, surprising, or overlooked connections, and touches in a new way the mysteries of the universe and of life. It is thus an Award by which we would like to bring the

transcends the horizon of momentary attractive opportunities, but may not be appreciated and validated until some years pass. What is in a certain way visionary and pioneering.

Seven years earlier (in 2000), the Committee of Club Sisyphus, a group

of Czech academicians functioning as self-appointed defenders of rationality and judges of the purity of science, gave Stan a mock award called "Delusional (Erratic) Boulder." This group—like its American model CSI-COP—is headed by an as-

tronomer (Dr. Grygar). Their annual award is intended to express the club members' ridicule of "silly individuals" who have spent years of hard labor (like Sisyphus) and produced something utterly absurd that makes no sense to rational thinkers. They explained why Stan deserved the Delusional Boulder:



STAN GROF RECEIVES THE VISION 97 AWARD, REPRESENTED BY THE STAFF OF ADALBERT, FROM VACLAV AND DAGMAR HAVEL IN PRAGUE

attention of the public to spiritual achievements, which in the best sense of the word do not meet the criteria of the established ways of exploring of reality. The Foundation also tries—in the spirit of its name—to orient itself in the direction of what in a certain way points to the future, what

ATP NEWSLETTER



This award is given for melding the shamanic techniques of hyperventilation into the so-called Holotropic Breathwork, which can cause a chemical storm in the brain and evoke in the obnubilated individuals extraordinary sensations and experiences. Dr. Grof gives the babbling accounts of doped hyperventilators the status of reality; he deduced from them even the concept of Cosmic Consciousness. According to Grof, human consciousness can through the change of Ph of the blood detach from the body and transport to one of the past lives or to the time of biological birth. Dr. Grof is also the cofounder of a “canine–feline (dog–cat) discipline”—transpersonal psychology—which is trying to unite science and spirituality.

After Stan had received the VISION 97 Award from the Havel Foundation, the infuriated members of the Sisyphus Club created for Stan a special category and awarded him in 2008 the “Jubilee Diamond Delusional (Erratic) Archboulder.”

In When the Impossible Happens: Adventures in Non-Ordinary Reality, Stan wrote:

I think it reflects well the paradigm

clash we are experiencing and the controversial nature of our work. The challenging observations from consciousness research amassed in the second half of the twentieth century and the basic tenets of

transpersonal psychology encountered incredulity and strong intellectual resistance in academic circles. Transpersonal psychology, as it was born in the late 1960s, was culturally sensitive and treated the ritual and spiritual traditions of ancient and native cultures with the respect they deserve in view of the findings of modern consciousness research. However, although comprehensive and well-substantiated in and of itself, the new field represented such a radical departure from academic thinking in professional circles that it could not be reconciled with either traditional psychology and



ASTRONOMER JIRI GRYGAR LEADING THE DELUSIONAL BOULDER CEREMONY

psychiatry or the Newtonian–Cartesian paradigm of Western science. As a result, transpersonal psychology was extremely vulner-

able to accusations of being irrational, unscientific, and even “flaky,” particularly by scientists who were not aware of the vast body of observations and data on which the new movement was based. These critics also ignored the fact that many of the pioneers of this revolutionary movement had impressive academic credentials. These pioneers generated and embraced the transpersonal vision of the human psyche not because they were ignorant of the fundamental assumptions of traditional science, but because they found the old conceptual frameworks seriously inadequate in accounting for their experiences and observations. Closer scrutiny reveals that what they present as an image of reality that has been scientifically proven beyond any reasonable doubt is a colossus on clay feet supported by a host of a priori metaphysical assumptions.

And finally, Stan ends his reflection on this award with a quote by Albert Einstein: *Whoever undertakes to set himself up as a judge of Truth and Knowledge is shipwrecked by the laughter of the gods.*

For more information visit, www.stanislavgrof.com



SILVER, GOLD, AND BRONZE DELUSIONAL BOULDER AWARDS

THE AKASHIC EXPERIENCE: SCIENCE AND THE COSMIC MEMORY FIELD

By ERVIN LASZLO

Inner Traditions, 2009, 288 pp., \$17, ISBN 978-159477298-6

Reviewed by Karen Castle

This is one of my favorite books written by a compilation of authors committed to awakening consciousness in others. The akashic field, what is it? You will have a broad and in-depth understanding of this after you read *The Akashic Experience* compiled by Laszlo. Twenty leading authorities in fields such as psychiatry, physics, philosophy, anthropology, natural healing, near-death experience, and spirituality submit their accounts of interactions with a cosmic memory field that can transmit information to people.

In my experience, the akashic field relates to the transpersonal realms. Stanislav Grof, one of the contributing authors, explains the correlation of akashic experiences in relation to his research with psychedelics and altered states of consciousness. He says: "In my work with Holotropic states, I encountered . . . daily phenomena that could not be explained by . . . academic psychiatry. My early observations in psychedelic therapy showed beyond any reasonable doubt that my clients were able to relive in holotropic states their own biological birth . . . and prenatal life, often with extraordinary details." I have had these experiences myself without the use of psychedelics through deep and fast breathing which Grof calls Holotropic Breathwork. I am certified in Grof's Transpersonal Training but I was not aware of this correlation with the akashic field. You see, I had a different idea of the akashic field because I was trained to access it through an opening prayer. This training refers to the Akashic Records and allows

me to channel messages and answer questions from my akashic masters in a meditative state. Moreover, I was excited to learn from the contributing authors that I am experiencing the akashic in not only deep states of meditation but also in spontaneous everyday events as well.

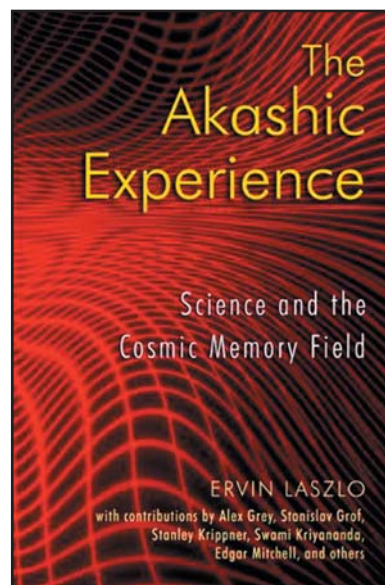
Alex Grey shares several accounts of his connection with the akashic field and the creative process. He says: "However one connects with the Universal Mind and the Akashic field, may the subtle inner worlds of imagination and illumination open an endless source of inspiration for a new and universal sacred art." While writing this book review, I had the fortunate opportunity to witness Alex painting live art in my local area, St. Petersburg, Florida. He is so exquisite in his detail that while watching him I went into a meditative state myself, and, for one moment, experienced divine inspiration. In *The Akashic Experience*, Alex also shares his account of visiting the akashic records after taking LSD. His visual experience included long corridors with "...symbolic scripts, like hieroglyphs and pictograms, mathematics and physics . . ." encompassing everything that would or had ever happened to a person in a genetic code. This experience left him with an understanding that this resource was available to anybody to gain insight from this all-knowing memory field.

As a postscript, Laszlo adds his own account of an akashic experience. He was a professional concert pianist in the 1960s. While playing the piano

he recognized his ability to let go and allow his thoughts and intuition to flow freely. At that time in his life, he did not have a name for it but now recognizes this as an altered state of consciousness. In his creative process and altered state, he describes a source of inspiration allowing for spontaneous interpretation. Along with his quest to understand the nature of reality, these spontaneous experiences led him to eventually understanding a meaningful concept of the world. Laszlo explains this specifically as "... a concept of an organic and dynamic world, where all things are linked with all other things, and all change and evolve together to higher forms of complexity, harmony, and wholeness." This doesn't surprise me, yet he discovered this many, many years ago. Today, he ties it all together with his concept of science and the akashic field. Laszlo's friendships with biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy and physicist Ilya Prigogine contribute to his belief in what he defines as the *natural system*—"a complex system that is in

constant communication with its environment." He further addresses his insight concerning the fundamental elements of physical reality being energy and information. My only suggestion for an addition would be a mention of Edgar Cayce's work, as he was a big contributor to and pioneer in initiating akashic study.

One of the great things about *The Akashic Experience* is that it is like a bedside reader. The exception being that you might not want to go to sleep. Each author contributes an exciting account of their own personal experience or an experience of someone they know. Surprisingly, there is even a story regarding the use



of akashic information in business. My favorite stories, of course, are the experiences whereby people report being healed from a lifelong illness or experience a big transformation. Finally, to answer my own question: What is the akashic field? The akashic field is an ever-growing understanding of our human capacity to tap into energetic healing and access the spiritual world. I encourage you to read *The Akashic Experience* and develop your own understanding of what the akashic realm means to you.

KAREN CASTLE, M.A., studied Transpersonal Psychology at the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology in Palo Alto, California. She offers Holotropic Breathwork workshops and practices Chinese Medicine in St. Petersburg, Florida. For more information, go to www.karencastle.net

MEDICAL RENAISSANCE SERIES: THE SECRET CODE

By C. NORMAN SHEALY
Terrace Productions, 2008, DVD,
\$25, ASIN B001F5GSC8

Reviewed by Adele Ryan McDowell

*H*arvard-trained neurosurgeon and founder of the American Holistic Medical Association, C. Norman Shealy, M.D., Ph.D., has created a documentary film, *Medical Renaissance Series: The Secret Code*. It is well worth a viewing.

Norm Shealy, often called Dr. Wizard by his colleagues given his 10 inventions and inventive strategies, is a man who likes to solve problems and to understand why. Shealy brings his all-things-are-possible thinking to this 92-minute DVD as he explores alternative healing methodologies through case studies, successful patient interviews, and conversations with some of his cutting edge colleagues, including Carl Hammerschlag, M.D., Gladys McGarey, M.D., Caroline Myss, Ph.D., Belleruth Naparstek, Ph.D., Morris Netherton, Ph.D., John Sewell, D.D., and others.

Shealy reports that patients come to see him when there are desperate. His average patient has seen 10 or more doctors, exhausted drugs and surgery, and is almost without hope. In a given year, Shealy has seen 400 patients who have failed every conventional treatment. By the time they get to him, says Shealy, they no longer have one issue; they now have five concerns. It is not just a matter of taking care of the pain; now, the stress attendant to all of these medical issues requires major attention as well, and relaxation becomes most important.

Except in cases of acute illness (think pneumonia, car accident, and the like) where medical care and modern medicine are definitely needed, Shealy says, in general there is a wealth of safe alternatives to drugs and surgery for most chronic illnesses.

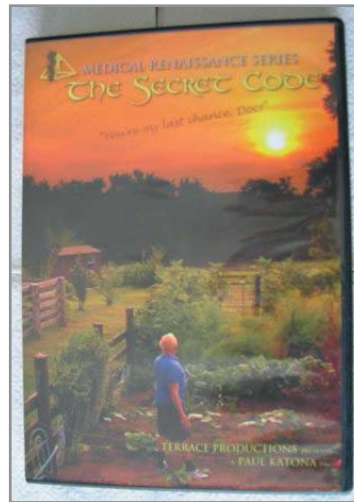
To personalize this message, the film guides us through the alternative treatment processes for three patients, Judy who has multiple issues including chronic pain, pitting edema, and newly realized depression; Rae who has suffered with hormonally induced migraine headaches; and Kevin, who has been beaten down by unremitting depression despite 12 years on medication.

With discussion and/or application to the three patients in question, Shealy introduces an array of possible holistic tools and options, such as the Liss Stimulator, SheLi Tens unit, RelaxMate, Brain Mapping, spiritual kinesiology, guided imagery, past lives, dietary supplements, exercise, Radionics, homeopathy, biofeedback, massage, quartz crystal room, vibratory music bed, Rejuvamatrix, posture pump, free radical test, and the like.

After 10 days to 2 weeks with Dr. Shealy and his cohorts, Judy, Rae, and Kevin are proven to be

50%–80% better. This is after years of unrelenting pain, physical and/or psychological.

There is a homespun quality to this film, and clearly it is not an encyclopedic work on alternative healing methods, but there are more expansive perspectives and much unique information presented. What this film proffers, that is so appealing to me, is the enormous gift of hope and possibility, especially for those living



the tortures of the damned with yet-to-be-solved longstanding, medical issues.

The film is infused with Shealy's conviction, enthusiasm for proven success, and desire to open up the medical world to the secret code. This secret code, according to Shealy, has been around for 5,000 years and was described in an essay on prayer by Ambrose Worell, who along with his wife, Olga, was a most researched spiritual healer. The secret code is this: Thinking sets everything in motion, and every thought is a prayer.

The medical renaissance speaks to this shift in thinking, where the practitioner is open to looking again; where the disease model of waiting for a crisis is replaced with stress relief and self-care; and, to quote Dr. Carl Hammerschlag, where we "dare to create new endings to old stories."

If you are interested in more information, please go to <http://www.medicalrenaissance.net>.

Adele Ryan McDowell, Ph.D., is a transpersonal psychologist, teacher, and channel who has had the great good fortune of studying with Norm Shealy and Caroline Myss in the 90s. Her website is <http://www.channeledgrace.com>

STARING AT THE SUN: OVERCOMING THE TERROR OF DEATH

BY IRVIN YALOM

Norton, 2008, 306 pp., \$25, ISBN
978-0-7879-9668-0

Reviewed by Robert Epstein

Something tells me me that Irvin Yalom's latest book is not likely to be a blockbuster hit even in psychotherapy circles. That's because it's subject matter—facing one's own terror of death—isn't exactly the kind of feel-good fluff that chaise-lounge reading is made of. The book, in other words, is not for the faint of heart. Still, the seventy-five year old Stanford psychiatrist deserves a bow for taking on the mother of all existential fears, and he does so with an oxymoronic combination of gentleness and tenacity. Without realizing it, the reader is coaxed imperceptibly into facing his or her own finitude, if not exactly with equanimity, then at least with fortitude.

Of course, Yalom doesn't enter the dark realm of death anxiety alone. He calls upon distant and near forebears: Epicurus, Nietzsche, and contemporary existentialist Rollo May—all of whom meditated deeply on death and drew from the well of wisdom within as does Yalom.

The author of *When Nietzsche Wept* describes himself as a rationalist and, as such, refuses to spend time in the opium den of religion, whose chief job it is—from Yalom's vantage point—to assuage the terror of annihilation with myths such as heaven, the afterlife, reincarnation, and the like. Though unflinchingly existentialist in his beliefs, Yalom takes pains to assure readers that he never turns a cold scalpel upon his clients' religious tenets, lest he deprive them of the consolation religion offers, however illusory in Yalom's opinion.

Nonetheless, Yalom's notion of "rippling"—a term he appears to have

coined—sounds a lot like a thinly veiled notion of soul or spirit that survives death, even if the individual being doesn't. While quick to deny anything like the soul, Yalom maintains that we may live on in the salutary effects we have had on others. He gives numerous examples of ripples, and perhaps the most notable illustration is the very book Yalom has dared to write on the subject of death anxiety. I'm sure the idea that the eminent psychiatrist has helped countless numbers of people, frightened by the prospect of their own deaths, find courage to reflect upon and even talk about the unspeakable, will doubtlessly give him great comfort.

But is not the notion of rippling—taking solace in knowing that others remember you—still a denial of death, however subtle? The question still begs to be asked: Why is it so important to be remembered after we're gone? Why does it appear to be so hard to accept that death is the end, the dissolution of all that we have cherished and held dear?

Our culture overvalues the individual self, the self as separate and unique. We erect imperious memorials to founding fathers and name buildings after successful business tycoons; we carve the faces of presidents into the sides of mountains, as if stone were the equivalent of immortality.

Death is feared precisely because it reduces us to nobody—the very antithesis of what we strive relentlessly to become in every waking moment of our lives; namely, to be somebody memorable.

Yalom himself finds this existential fact to be intolerable, though he doesn't actually say so. Instead, he conjures the same images of death as the grim reaper that appear throughout literary history. But death

can only be seen in such ghastly ways if separated from life.

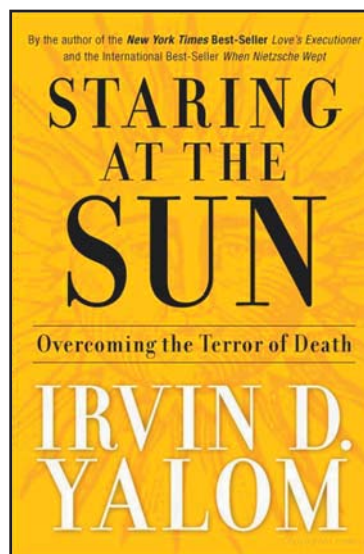
Yalom does urge psychotherapists and clients alike to use the specter of death to prompt one to live more fully. He even suggests that cracking the door of death anxiety can lead to all kinds of "awakenings" which will enrich one's life. Charles Dickens provides the classic example of Scrooge who, upon envisioning his

own death, woke up to being more kindhearted and generous. Others have been jolted into becoming more assertive, independent, adventurous, courageous, loving.

There's nothing wrong with self-actualization or living more fully

while alive. Death anxiety may, in fact, be a symptom of a constricted existence which can be counteracted by confronting one's finiteness and ceasing to put off what matters most for another day.

Still, if death were not seen as separate from life, but an integral part of it, then the idea of death might no longer cause us to shudder so. The spiritual teacher J. Krishnamurti, who Yalom does not discuss, invited people to die to the past, psychologically, in every moment. Yalom never contemplates such a possibility. It is a radical alternative to the status quo wherein death is seen to occur at the very end of a life seen through the linear progression of time. Yalom doesn't appear to comprehend that it is time, not death, that we are bedeviled by. The so-called problem of death disappears as one frees oneself from the tyranny of time, psychologically. How? The self, dissolving into no-thing, enters the Eternal Now—that which lies



just beyond the field of the known (which is composed of thoughts, images, memory—the sum of the past). Yalom (and the rest of us) may yet find our way home along this path without a trail.

Despite the book's limitations, there is a lot of insight and wisdom to be culled from the pages of *Staring at the Sun*. Yalom is a brilliant therapist and a compelling storyteller. Most readers will encounter themselves in one or more of the many vignettes or dreams that Yalom includes. His autobiographical chapter detailing the losses he experienced over the course of a long, productive life is refreshing for its candor and transparency.

Therapists searching for a role model and inspiration need look no farther than the old existential master; clients and the educated layperson will find much that is thought-provoking and comforting.

*ROBERT EPSTEIN, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist and marriage and family therapist in the San Francisco Bay area, who works from a strength-based perspective in therapy and supervision. He co-authored with Stacy Taylor the self-help book **Living Well with a Hidden Disability**. A spiritually oriented book on facing chronic illness and pain, **Suffering Buddha**, is scheduled to be published in 2010. He is also a published haiku poet, and recently edited the anthology **The Breath of Surrender: A Collection of Recovery-Oriented Haiku**—the first book of its kind to address the challenges of recovery from a haiku perspective. Due out next Fall is an anthology of selected quotations from the writings of spiritual teacher J. Krishnamurti. He is also at work on a book of English-language death poems. taylorepstein@earthlink.net
510 234-7224*

SOUL SHAPING: A JOURNEY OF SELF-CREATION

BY JEFF BROWN

North Atlantic Books, 2009, \$15.95, 184 pp., ISBN 978-1-55643-810-3

Reviewed by Bob Edelstein

"When it comes down to it—and make no mistake, it does come down to it—all you are is your soul's journey. What else is there? What else is worthy of the time that you have been given?"

This passage is the driving premise of Jeff Brown's book, *Soulshaping: A Journey of Self-Creation*.

In this memoir, Brown passionately explores his personal journey from a survivalist, ego-defended way of being to an authentic, soul-driven way of being. Or, as I would frame it, he explores how he came to understand that we are spiritual beings having a human experience.

While at times Brown's writing could be perceived as too self-disclosing, I was drawn to his story. I felt compassion for his experiences, both painful and pleasurable. I admired his brutal honesty, and felt a resonance with my own journey. Indeed, I think that is the draw of this book—each of us can find a part of ourselves within the pages. Our longings, our wounds, our healings, our sensing that there is something more to our existence—and in finding that something more, we also discover the difficulty in maintaining daily contact with that something more.

At the heart of soulshaping there is a profound faith in the human experience, in the karmic significance of our personal identity. . . . Soulshaping is not a detachment model. It is an immersion model.

This passage sums up another of Brown's core ideas—his profound faith that if we work through what I call our **existential themes** and Brown calls our *soul scriptures*, we will find a purpose to our existence that transcends our previous knowing. We will begin living a more authentic and actualized life. He explores thoroughly, through his own experience, a basic existential humanistic tenet—the way out of our sense of pain, loss, and confusion, is to move inward and explore our subjective reality. We must immerse

ourselves in our subjectivity, not just analyze it, or we risk, as Brown states, spiritual bypassing—going for the good feelings and thoughts without doing our therapeutic work first. I valued Brown repeatedly exploring this concept and reinforcing the idea that soulshaping, by its very nature, embraces our humanness.

Be authentic and true to your felt experience. Feel all your feelings. Unless your knowing arises from your felt experience, it is meaningless.

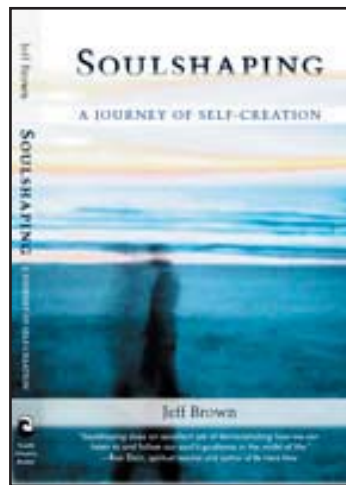
This passage could be a proclamation for humanistic psychology in the emphasis on

the valuing and working through of our emotional experiences, put within a soulshaping spiritual framework. Your soul expands when you see each adventure or life experience all the way through. To do so, you must descend into feelings, no matter what. If you do so,

the experience will reveal its essence, the truth you are subjectively seeking, and you will be expanded.

Brown is very compelling in his presentation of how to specifically go about the soulshaping process, so I would encourage the reader not to forget Brown's deeper intent—trust yourself and your own soul's journey, for it is unique to you. You are the creator of your own soul's journey and while it is helpful to have suggestions from others or feedback from people you trust, ultimately you must trust yourself and your own inner knowing.

To summarize, through Brown's passionate storytelling and insights, gleaned from his life journey, three powerful points emerge for me. The essence of life is that it is all a soul's journey. The heart of the soul's journey is to have a profound faith in the human experience. The process



REVIEWS

of realizing our soul's calling is to feel our feelings fully until we discover what we need to learn.

This is a very inspiring book, and I recommend it both for people searching for hope and guidance in order to find meaning in their lives, and for those who have found meaning and would appreciate revisiting their journey.

*BOB EDELSTEIN, LMFT, MFT, is an Existential Humanistic therapist based in Portland, Oregon. In addition to being a therapist for more than 36 years, he also provides consultation, supervision, and training for professionals. He also provides a one-day workshop entitled **Deepen Your Therapeutic Work Using an Existential-Humanistic Perspective.***

Bob is a founding member of the Association for Humanistic Psychology's Oregon Community and an executive board member of the Existential Humanistic Institute.

HEALING TRAUMA: ATTACHMENT, MIND, BODY, AND BRAIN

EDITED BY MARION F. SOLOMON AND DANIEL J. SIEGEL
Norton, 2003, 357 pp., \$42.50, ISBN 0-393-70396-7

Reviewed by David Lavra

After years of working with children and families in crisis and in desperate circumstances, it was refreshing to read of a connection between brain/mind research and practical effective approaches to therapy. This therapeutic model which specializes in trauma, abuse, and neglect has been developing for decades, and more recently neurological science has unleashed information about the mind's functions that supports their hypotheses. This book represents an advancement in attachment theory in the realm of emotions and unconscious motivations, particularly fear (p. 98).

The last chapter was the most impactful and useful for me personally, as it addressed resolution of trauma-based issues in couples' therapy. Similar to a therapeutic approach

offered in J. Zinker's book *In Search of Good Form*, using intimate relationships we can learn about ourselves and find support while dealing with early issues, bringing those issues and sensations into the now, and rebuilding our relationships. As illustrated here, family-of-origin issues (and traumas) affect us throughout life, but we can best address these issues in therapy. In this last chapter, Solomon clearly spells out the goals of therapy, the responsibilities of the therapist, and the responsibilities of the clients.

In chapter Six, Fosha (p. 245) succinctly concludes that "trauma therapy in essence involves undoing the individual's aloneness in the face of overwhelming emotions", and she describes the basics of Accelerated Experiential-Dynamic Psychotherapy. She states (p. 244) that "all emotional experiences occur in relational context". In that context, therapy transpires, and the relationship with the therapist is a most important curative element. With clear examples, Fosha discusses the parent-child dyad and elements of communication through the three steps of attunement, disruption, and repair. Therapeutic change deals with active parent-child relationships, but untreated affects of poor attachment make therapy important for adolescents and adults as well.

In chapter Five, Shapiro and Maxfield describe the therapy issues PTSD and other traumas, and incomplete or maladaptive primary bonding of child and parent. The AIP model and EMDR treatment are explained. These methods, like others presented in this book, are tied directly to

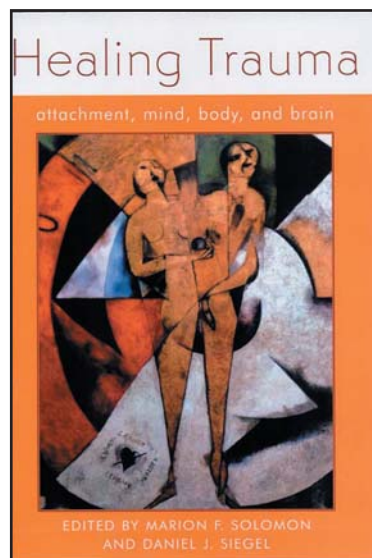
child development, forms of abuse, functioning and development of the brain, mind, and personality. In Chapter Seven, Neborsky describes a treatment model created for anxiety (PTSD in particular) and depression. He states: "It is my central thesis that within each of us there is an unconscious negative processing system that protects us from developing anxiety and/or depression. The system responsible for this function is called the attachment system" (p. 283).

In the first half of the book, issues of abuse and trauma are discussed and integrated with neurophysiological evidence, changes and growth of the brain, and neuro pathways. The effects of relationship and attachment, most critical in the first hours, days, and weeks of our lives, on brain development and behavioral capacities are examined in depth. Studies have continued for at least a half century, but recent technology shows the intricate details of these effects. Specifically, the processing regions of the brain and specialization

of right and left hemispheres are described. The importance of the differences and integration of the two sides underscores the research, and therapies that have been refined. New possibilities for correcting abuse and attachment deficits have emerged.

Every part of this book is dense, full of research and analysis, and fortunately some of the authors repeat major points frequently to help us digest the content. This research and analysis should also augment therapies and serve as a companion book to others such as Elaine Gowell's *Regression and Protection*. The information is critical for both parenting and mental health therapy.

DAVID C. LAVRA is a semi-retired therapist and teacher, now writing books and living in Latin America.



SOUL SURVIVOR: THE REINCARNATION OF A WORLD WAR II FIGHTER PILOT

By ANDREA LEININGER, BRUCE LEININGER, KEN GROSS
 Grand Central Publishing, 2009, hardcover \$12, 272 pp., ISBN 0-446509337

Reviewed by Adele Ryan McDowell

Do you believe in reincarnation? Past lives? A regular, hard-working, churchgoing couple, Andrea and Bruce Leininger were faced with these very questions when their two-year-old son, James, began having unrelenting nightmares and shouting the words, "Plane on fire! Little man can't get out!"

Soul Survivor: The Reincarnation of a World War II Fighter Pilot is the chronicle of their odyssey as they struggled to make sense of their son's constant, shrieking nightmares, out-of-context words, and obsession with planes. The book details their persistent and tenacious exploration that led to far-reaching, soul-satisfying results.

The Leininger family relocates to Louisiana for Bruce's new job, another move in a string of job-related hops. Andrea determinedly works on their house to make it a home for their happy threesome. She is more than ready to put down permanent roots. Their only child, and their pride and joy, begins having nightmares.

Initially the nightmares are attributed to the move, and then they are considered to be a stage, not so uncommon with small children. But the nightmares are loud, disruptive, and disturbing. Andrea shares her concern with "the panel," her mother and sisters who offer advice and solace. Her mother refers Andrea to the book *Children's Past Lives* by researcher Carol Bowman, who confirms that James' nightmares are, in fact, James reliving a past life experience.

With suggestions from Bowman, the frequency of the nightmares decreases. Conversely, James begins talking more about his past life. He mentions an individual's name, a specific aircraft, and the name of his ship, the *Natoma Bay*. At three years old, James draws sea and air

battles showing aircraft from WWII.

By four years old, James constructs his own cockpit and regularly enacts going through the preflight checklist. During a visit to a local air show, one of the Blue Angels asks James what he wants to be when he grows up. James responds: "An F-18 Super Hornet Pilot and then a Blue Angel pilot—the slot pilot."

With every clue that young James offers, both parents look at one another wide-eyed wondering how their little boy could know what he knows. James' father scours the Internet and finds, time after time, that his son's WWII aviation knowledge is accurate.

Bruce Leininger is a tormented man; he is looking to understand. Everything that his son's actions suggest, i.e. a past life, is antithetical to Bruce's hard-rooted Christian religion. For Bruce, there is no such thing as reincarnation; this concept is in direct contrast to the teachings of his faith. Andrea is more accepting of this possibility, but she is equally curious and wants to connect all the dots.

Both parents are disciplined, type-A individuals. With their characteristic drive and focus, they take a dive into the deep end of the pool and dedicate their time and energy to putting the pieces of James' puzzle together. There is a 20/20 interview. There are endless Internet searches that become the yellow brick road that leads to *USS Natoma Bay* reunions, information about crewmates, connection with families who lost loved ones, and young James Leininger

attending a reunion and connecting with friends and family who knew him as James M. Huston, Jr., a WWII fighter pilot.

There is more exposure with a *Good Morning America* interview, which leads to the Leiningers traveling to Japan and visiting the spot where James Huston was shot down. James' journey comes full circle.

This is a comfortable book on what some might consider an uncomfortable subject. It almost feels like you are sitting at the kitchen table hearing the family's experiences. And I could well imagine each of them running to another room to bring in a naval listing, a drawing, or a photo to make everything so clear.

It is amazing that young James remembered such specifics; it is even more amazing that

the veracity of James' past life could be proven in detail and through endless research undertaken by his parents.

This book not only opens up doors and windows on a topic that is often received with an eye roll; it also tells a tale of healing within a family, across generations, among countries, and with seeming strangers. On top of which, it is a good story that will leave you with a full heart and the knowledge that the soul remembers.

ADELE RYAN MCDOWELL, Ph.D., is a psychologist, teacher, and channel who likes looking at life with the big viewfinder. Her website is <http://www.channeledgrace.com>, and her email address is armcdowell@aol.com



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