

# **Transformation and The Inner Counselor Process™**

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Thesis  
submitted to the Faculty of  
Holos University Graduate Seminary  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

**MASTER OF THEOLOGY**

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The work reported in this thesis is original and carried out by me solely, except for the acknowledged direction and assistance gratefully received from colleagues and mentors.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

How can I even begin to express my gratitude to all beautiful and magical souls that have blessed this journey over the past four years? This has been an amazing experience. The material used in my final essays drew from the entire range of work done at Holos, as well as outside and additional study. Having the opportunity to put this all together with the support and encouragement of my chair has allowed me to complete this portion of my studies with a sense of gratitude for all that I have been gifted from Holos.

With a debt of gratitude, I gratefully acknowledge the following people who have been instrumental in this process:

Ann Nunley, for her infinite patience as my chair, my friend and my guide. Thank you for creating the amazing and transformational Inner Counselor Process™. Your enthusiasm, support, and asking just the right questions gave me permission to boldly speak my truth.

Monika Eichler and Patricia Norris, for serving as my committee. Thank you for your insights, wisdom, guidance and support. Your excitement about this work fuels my desire to continue to develop all that was beyond the limited scope of this paper.

Karin Cremasco & Carolyn Faivre, Whose loving support and care talked me down off the ledge more than once.

Martina Steiger, who worked with me as I wrestled with both life and school challenges. Your graceful handling of all the behind-the-scene issues allowed me to continue focus on my work.

Vera Borgmeyer who patiently handled all the program changes, leave of absence paperwork and missed deadlines. Even with all the changes you never failed to remind me that everything happens in the proper time.

Bob Nunley, Karin Cremasco and the Cyberbuddies for being the cheering squad, especially Liz Donnelly for helping me chase down quotes! This weekly connection to community gave me the touch-point that kept me on task.

To all the faculty who gave the gift of their expertise and mentoring throughout my coursework at Holos, Norm Shealy, Carolyn Faivre, Sue Beck, Karin Cremasco, Bob & Ann Nunley, Bob Matusiak, Monika & David Eichler, and Vera Borgmeyer.

The French Bakery and First United Methodist Church Escondido who with infinite patience gave me places to write when the muse no longer lived at my home.

The Institute of Imaginal Studies and Cohort 15, for listening to my ideas, giving me feedback, and expanding my experience of what Imaginal Psychology is all about.

Artisans By the Sea, my painting group, who when I was learning the process, lined up as willing volunteers and even brought their friends. You always supported me, even when my individual passion took me away from our shared passion.

Hannah and Sophie, the two most beautiful, talented, smart, patient and loving daughters I could ever ask for. Thank you for supporting me in following my dreams. I love you so very much.

My Mom, Carolyn, and my sisters Susie and Mary, for all their support and assistance. I couldn't have done it without your help. I so appreciate my extended family for keeping a sense of normalcy for my kids while I was off in my own imaginal world of ideas.

Bob Matusiak, my friend, mentor and challenger, for teaching me the importance of doing my own work, even when it was the hardest thing I have ever done.

Gary Dodge, my friend, cheerleader and the best editor anyone could ask for.

Sheri Skiba, my best friend, who listened to me ramble, was infinitely patient when the work became my life, read every page way too many times, kept me on task, held down the business while I was writing, helped with my kids and most importantly, provided well needed comic relief.

Mike Stickler, who 23 years ago said, "Why *not* you?" You have always believed in me, even when I found it hard to believe in myself.

Thank you so much for the support, guidance, wisdom and love that allowed me to bring this to the world. May this and my future work be worthy.

## **ABSTRACT**

These four essays address the questions of who, what, when, where, why and how human transformation occurs. Included is a discussion of transformational components, their relationship with one another and with an underlying holistic structure. The goal of these discussions is to provide the reader with an understandable and functional approach to human transformation.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
ABSTRACT .....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	viii
LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
INTRODUCTION: Goals, Objectives, and Initial Thoughts .....	10
ESSAY 1: Transformation & Psychospiritual Maturity .....	13
The nature of transformation.....	13
Noetic downloads .....	13
On being lost .....	15
Soul, Spirit, and the connection to that which is greater .....	18
Learning with the bodymind .....	19
ESSAY 2: The Imaginal Dimension: Imaginal Structures and Personal Myths.....	24
Inner images .....	25
It's all just a matter of interpretation .....	27
Engaging the imaginal .....	30
ESSAY 3: Engaging the Imaginal Body.....	35
Being Aware of the Body vs. Body Awareness .....	35
Body Awareness and the field of the Imaginal .....	38
What is transformed?.....	40
The chakras .....	44
ESSAY 4: The Transformation Process .....	51
Case History vs. Soul History .....	51
Mythopoiesis as a change agent .....	53
The Inner Counselor Process™.....	54
Voices of the Old Symbol.....	55
Healing vs. Adapting .....	57
New Symbol – Rewriting the story/changing the myth.....	59
CONCLUSION: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How: A Recap .....	63
REFERENCES and BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	68
APPENDIX A The Inner Counselor Process™ Integration Chart.....	71
APPENDIX B The Inner Counselor Process™ Process Outline .....	72

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
Figure 1. The Imaginal Dimension.....	39



## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>		<b>Page Number</b>
Table 1.	Downdraft Affects to Telos .....	42
Table 2.	Updraft Affects/Transmuting Agents.....	43

## **INTRODUCTION: GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND INITIAL THOUGHTS**

In his book, *The Little Book of the Human Shadow*, Robert Bly aptly described how we drag behind us a “long bag” into which we stuff all the rejected parts of ourselves. And thus, “We spend our life until we’re twenty deciding what parts of ourselves to put into the bag, and we spend the rest of our lives trying to get them out again.”<sup>1</sup> With this simple statement, Bly has summed up a basic theme of life for many of us. Regardless of what school of psychology one ascribes to, it is clear that the process of growth is a matter of adaptation and that this growth manifests as either incremental or transformative change.

Human development begins with incremental change. In this slow and methodical way, knowledge is built piece by piece upon what is already known, adding and refining information filed in the library of our experiences. For example, we learn first not to touch the stove because it is hot. It doesn’t take too many tests of the adult’s theory for a child to acknowledge the wisdom of being careful around fire. This is an example of incremental adaptation. The first step is to learn not to touch the stove at all; the second is the point when the child learns that the entire stove is not hot, but rather it is the burners that need special attention.

Transformational learning is distinct from informational or incremental learning as it involves the component of imagination. Staying with the example of the stove, transformational change occurs when a child makes the leap from the binary good/bad, safe/not safe polarity of the stove to seeing that the stove is a tool that can be used to prepare meals.

As children gain increased autonomy, for instance when they develop to the point of being able to feed themselves, the way they relate to the world changes. This increased autonomy and self-reliance are important and valuable byproducts of transformational learning. Given this potential for exponential growth, the objective of these essays is to set the background for further discussion of how transformative change can occur and how it can be facilitated in a therapeutic or counseling/spiritual direction environment by using a structured methodological approach.

It is first important to understand the nature of transformation. This first essay explores how transformational learning differs from incremental learning and why it is important in the process of psycho-spiritual maturation. The second essay discusses the role of imagination and the process of identifying the imaginal structures and personal myths through which we perceive the world. The third essay focuses on what transforms in personal myth and the purpose or capacity that is the end result. The final essay of this series addresses various ways these myths are established and the process of rewriting the subconscious scripts that manifest our myths in the external world.

## Endnotes: Introduction

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<sup>1</sup> Bly, *A Little Book on the Human Shadow*, 18.

## **ESSAY 1: TRANSFORMATION & PSYCHOSPIRITUAL MATURITY**

### **The nature of transformation**

Transformation would appear to be more a process than a specific occurrence. James Hollis, in his book *Swamplands of the Soul*, states that “Invariably, the task involves some new level of responsibility, some more honest encounter with the shadow, some deepening of the journey into places we’d rather not go.”<sup>1</sup> Like the child learning to cook, transformation brings us face to face with complexities and responsibilities that we may not recognize at the onset. Learning to cook is a process that allows the individual to fend for himself, which provides an enormous amount of freedom. But that freedom has a cost. Who amongst us, having learned how to cook, has not heard the voice of our parent saying, “You’re hungry? Go fix it yourself!” This push and pull between desiring independence and movement into the unknown while still holding onto the familiar dependency creates its own version of madness. As Michael Mead commented in a 2007 lecture, “What is madness, but the nobility of the soul at odds with circumstances?”

### **Noetic downloads**

In this exploration, the term “madness” does not imply a DSM-IV<sup>2</sup> diagnosis. Joseph Campbell in his book *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* outlines the steps of the hero’s journey. The first step is that of the call. This “call” is what, in a 2004 lecture, Caroline Myss referred to as a “download.” The term noetic download is an appropriate description. The Institute of Noetic Sciences offers this definition of “noetic:” “The word

"noetic" comes from the ancient Greek *nous*, for which there is no exact equivalent in English. It refers to "inner knowing," a kind of intuitive consciousness—direct and immediate access to knowledge beyond what is available to our normal senses and the power of reason."<sup>3</sup> While *the call* echoes the mythic dimension of the hero's journey, it has the sense of something that comes from the outside. Typical of the call to the hero's journey is a crisis that creates both the opportunity and necessity for the hero to begin a journey into the unknown, a search for a solution to a problem. Certainly, when one is faced with a crisis, there is the potential for a mythic journey. By definition, a mythic journey is a transformational experience, but the response to an external call is not always transformational because the hero is free to refuse the call. Just as a diagnosis of cancer can be a life-enhancing and transformational experience for some, this is not always the case. In finding language for the noetic moment that precedes a soul-directed transformation, the term *download* seems an apt description. Like a computer download it comes all-of-a-piece containing a holistic gestalt of necessary information. It is this noetic attribute, the deep and clear inner knowing that something is different, that is the hallmark of transformation. When referring to the madness that precedes transformation, it is the acknowledgement that, while the individual may not overtly display any diagnostically psychotic behavior, the internal experience can seem like deep confusion and uncertainty. It is common at such times to feel as if suddenly set adrift in a rowboat without oars or sight of land. Prior to a transformational experience, there is often a deepening of the awareness of the differences between two choices. Michael Mead described this as the ability to hold two distinct polarities concurrently while waiting for the third, yet unseen option to enter. Robert Sardello made the same observation yet

phrased it a bit differently in a 2008 lecture, commenting that, “The moment you feel the need to be secure—that’s it, you’re gone. It is important to step into the unknown.”

### **On being lost**

How does one do this stepping into the unknown? What cues are there to lead one into the process of transformation? This download seems to come in one of two ways; either directly into conscious awareness as a fully developed knowing, or it comes through the body as a felt sense. A felt sense is a physical response that may be used to identify reactionary patterns that are not necessarily conscious. An example of this would be how an unexplained sense of anxiety could be an alert that there is an underlying fear. Another example would be a sense of dread that spontaneously and unexpectedly occurs before an event. There may be times when a noetic download comes in but requires too radical a shift from the current personal or social paradigm and is discounted consciously or unconsciously only to later manifest as a somatic response. An example of this could be when a spouse’s infidelity is suspected but discounted only to surface later as anger or depression. As Hollis observed, because we don’t always want to go to these transformative places, often it is through the felt sense of the body that we first engage transformation.<sup>4</sup>

As Eugene Gendlin observes in *Let Your Body Interpret Your Dreams*, “A felt sense usually requires deliberately settling oneself to sense what is not there yet, and waiting to let it jell and come.”<sup>5</sup> The physical sense that change is in the air is not one that is commonly recognized in the fast-paced and hectic environment that is the current

American culture. In the book *Working with the Dreaming Body*, Arnold Mindell, a clinical psychologist, comments:

The biggest problem I encounter is that people have not learned how to work with their feelings. One in a million mothers or fathers say to their children, “Tell me, how are you feeling in your stomach, in your legs, in your joints?”<sup>6</sup>

Mindell here is making the link to the existence of feelings within the body. Ann Nunley, in her work with The Inner Counselor Process™ defines feelings as the combination of the emotions and the sensations or felt sense within the body.<sup>7</sup> When engaging transformation, this disconnect between the mind, the body, and the emotions presents a significant stumbling block. Transformation most often engages the whole person and is a fully mental, emotional, somatic, and spiritual phenomenon. It is this paying attention to the physical body, the somatic symptoms as a manifestation of mental, emotional, and spiritual issues, which requires a shift in the reigning American paradigm of medical reductionism. Mindell continues:

It is interesting to me that this man’s throat problem also makes him more aware of his voice, his throat center of consciousness. Just as the mind has its individuation process insofar as one learns about the different parts of oneself, so the body, too, wants to individuate and discover all of its potentials. The body has many centers and points of awareness. Your body uses projections and psychological problems to stimulate discovery of its different parts.<sup>8</sup>

Attuning to the felt sense and listening to the body is, I believe, a key to the initiation of a transformational process. In this manner, the felt sense operates as an anchor for the psyche, thereby introducing a grounding component into the process. It is this connection to the physical that engages the totality of the individual in a holistic manner. Gendlin identifies what to look for when connecting to the felt sense, “You want what comes in *your* body and resonates with thousands of *your* experiences.”<sup>9</sup> It is



through the individual history that the connection is made between the internal psychosomatic experience and the external world. James Hillman in *Healing Fiction* makes this observation:

To make the distinction between inner and outer on the other grounds, means seeing the movement between soul and history to be a process that is continually internalizing and externalizing, gaining insight and losing it, deliteralizing and reliteralizing. Soul and history are names we give to this more fundamental operation going on between what Hindu thought refers to as *suksma* (subtle) and *sthula* (gross), between the fictional metaphorical viewpoint and the literalistic historical viewpoint, between inwardness and outwardness. It is not that there are two kinds of events, or two places of events, but two perspectives toward events, an inner psychological one and an outer historical one.<sup>10</sup>

Hillman makes the argument that it is not the gross historical events that define us, but rather our subtle and personal accounts of it. In this way all of our personal history becomes a fictionalized account of the factual history, the personal myth or imaginal structure through which we view the world. The next essay explores this concept extensively, but for the present discussion it is important to recognize that there are a minimum of two levels of interpretation, internal and external; both need to be engaged for a quantum shift in perception to take place.

Understanding the movement from an incremental learning mode to a transformative one requires clarification of the definitions of change and transformation. A discussion with Aftab Omar revealed the difference as a matter of degree when he said, “Change is informative learning, a change within the rules. In transformation, the rules change.”<sup>11</sup> This suggests that the noetic download is the call to action to meet the needs of the Soul rather than the egoic personality-self. By Soul’s employment of somatic body responses, the individual is brought face-to-face with issues and ideas that could

otherwise be easily dismissed. In effect, it is often through the body that the individual can begin to identify the stuck and shadow places.

Shaun McNiff, in *Art as Medicine*, notes, “It is the nature of the soul to be lost to that aspect of mind that strives to control it. Mind has to dissolve, to let go of its control, in order to experience what is not itself.”<sup>12</sup> It is in this letting go, this willingness to step into the unknown, that is key to the transformational experience. As Omar commented, “One finds one’s way by being willing to be lost.”

### **Soul, Spirit, and the connection to that which is greater**

It is important to define the way in which the term “Soul” is being used in this discourse. In this discussion the Soul refers to the eternal essence of the individual and is the repository of subconscious, conscious and super-conscious information. This repository operates as the “Higher Self” maintaining its connection with Divinity in order to guide the incarnate self to and through life experiences. The Soul in this instance operates with a growth and development agenda that may or may not be consistent with that of the egoic personality of the incarnate self.

It seems that an opportunity to do the real inner work is provided whenever the needs and directives of the Soul/Higher Self are in opposition to the desires, wishes, and comfort of the incarnate egoic self. Noetic downloads may indeed be the communication link of the Higher Self to the incarnate self. While informational or incremental change happens at the level of the incarnate self, transformational change involves these noetic downloads and happens at the level of the Soul.

The concept of a Higher Self that guides and directs the individual peppers the literature. In his writings on Psychosynthesis, Roberto Assagioli made this reference:

Among the modern psychologists we have Jung, who teaches that there are, within what he calls the 'collective unconscious', elements of a higher, superpersonal nature. The sociologist Sorokin devoted a chapter of his book, The Powers and Ways of Altruistic Love to the superconscious. Frankl, the Viennese neurologist, openly acknowledges the existence of super-conscious experiences. The psychiatrist Urman of Innsbruck speaks of a 'higher psychology'. And lastly a comprehensive study of the superconscious has been carried out by the American psychologist A. Maslow, professor at Brandeis University, who has written up his findings in a book entitled Towards a Psychology of Being. He uses the term 'being' for the overall range of experiences we call superconscious, because one of their characteristics is to give a sense of 'fullness of being', or a sense of intensity in existing and living.<sup>13</sup>

### **Learning with the bodymind**

Many respected researchers in the field of holistic medicine have made the link between the effects of personal history and physical symptoms. Gendlin makes the clear observation that, "The past is always still here."<sup>14</sup> Either assimilated into the whole of one's experience or encapsulated, in the case of trauma, "our biography becomes our biology"<sup>15</sup>. Caroline Myss and C. Norm Shealy, pioneers in using the intuition to read the body in order to locate the source of psychospiritual issues, discuss how each and every emotional response is catalogued and encoded into specific areas of the body. They propose that learning to "read" these bodily symptoms is akin to reading the biography of the individual.<sup>16</sup> In her book *de-mystifying... Medical Intuition*, Lori Wilson describes this process of "reading" the body,

Each of us has an energy field or bubble of "history" that surrounds us. We are literally walking libraries. Within that energy field, many blueprint memories or conditions specifically relating to our bodies

are very energetically “loud” or electrically charged. These charged items are naturally easier to find or read, as it were. Strong emotions, trauma, physical injury, accidents, sickness, disease, and even strong beliefs work their way into the foreground of the energy field and can often be sensed or perceived by intuitively sensitive people.<sup>17</sup>

Candace Pert makes this connection very clear when she refers to the body as the subconscious mind. Pert is a leader in the field of physiology and has pioneered the study of how emotions are stored within the body. In her 2006 book, *All You Need to Know to Feel Go(o)d*, she describes this link,

Memories are stored not only in the brain, but in the body as well.... Whether your memories are conscious or not is mediated by the molecules of emotion. They decide what becomes a thought rising to the surface, and what remains buried deeply in your body. What this means is that much of memory is emotion driven, not conscious, although it can sometimes be *made* conscious by intention.<sup>18</sup>

This statement suggests that by connecting the intention of the mind with the physical sensations of the body, what Pert calls the *bodymind*<sup>19</sup> is engaged. Pert details how “All systems of our physiology are connected and coordinated by emotion-laden, information-carrying molecules, engaged in constant cross talk, for example, between the nervous and immune systems.”<sup>20</sup>

Many studies have shown that when external gross facts are linked with internal subtle emotions, retention and recall of the information is drastically improved. This improvement is directly aligned with Pert’s observation that “you acquire knowledge with your entire bodymind, not just with your brain.”<sup>21</sup> Pert continues:

Using the new paradigm physiology of a bodymind and psychosomatic network, we can understand how emotion and information can create a milieu or environment that closes down systems and interferes with healthy functions impeding wellness and causing disease. Memory, as we know, is stored or encoded in cells at the level of the receptor throughout the bodymind. When we experience a traumatic event,

physical or psychological, an emotional component of that trauma exists in the body as well as the brain. For the most effective healing, then, it makes sense to engage the bodymind, not just the body.<sup>22</sup>

The research into emotions and the mind/body connection suggests that learning happens best when it is accompanied by emotion, that it is emotion that affixes the memory into the biology. Where in the biology this information is stored is also important. Pert notes:

Interestingly, the chakras correlate with physical locations along the spine and ganglia on either side of it, where the molecules of emotion are most densely populated. These chakra locations are nodal points where information can enter into the psychosomatic network, so I can speculate that when we play the note that that corresponds to the chakra color, we vibrate receptors at that chakra level, and thus access various informational points of the psychosomatic network.<sup>23</sup>

Pert makes a leap in this statement in that she not only specifies that where the information is located is important, but proposes that by using the Hindu spiritual knowledge of the chakra system, it is quite possible to activate these informational points. This opens the potential for the embedded memories within the informational points of the psychosomatic network and their associated reactionary patterns to be shifted and modified. It is this conscious engagement of the bodymind through the process of active imagination that is key to the success of transformational approaches such as The Inner Counselor Process™.

In her book *Wisdom of the Psyche*, Ginette Paris, a clinical psychologist practicing in Santa Barbara, California, describes how she has made the shift from trying to resolve conflicts to allowing them to direct the healing process.

Many authors of popular psychology books and most therapy centers offer advice on how to save the marriage, improve communications, enhance

self-esteem, and achieve love and success. I am investigating the opposite: the element in the psyche that wants to destroy relationships, to leave, to die, to go down and stay low for as long as it takes for the old identity to die. This turning inward and downward comes from an unconscious sense that if the exhausted old “me” does not die, my body will carry the death wish in a literal and terminal fashion. What the psyche refuses to acknowledge, the body always manifests.<sup>24</sup>

In other words, when either the noetic download from the Higher Self or external circumstances are too radical for the conscious psyche to integrate and act upon, the resulting discontinuity manifests externally as either denial or conflict and internally as emotions such as depression or anger.

When we do our own work we are examining both the internal experience of our incarnate life and the associated external manifestations. When life clips along in a smooth and orderly fashion there is often neither the need nor the desire to venture into the shadowy places. Thus, it is often either adversity, or the directives of the noetic download from the Higher Self, that provides the impetus for transformation.

## Endnotes: Essay 1

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- <sup>1</sup> Hollis, *Swamplands of the Soul*, 15.
- <sup>2</sup> DSM-IV-TR® Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition.
- <sup>3</sup> [http://www.noetic.org/about/what\\_is.cfm](http://www.noetic.org/about/what_is.cfm)
- <sup>4</sup> Hollis, *Swamplands of the Soul*, 15.
- <sup>5</sup> Gendlin, *Let Your Body Interpret Your Dreams*, 161.
- <sup>6</sup> Mindell, *Working with the Dreaming Body*, 27.
- <sup>7</sup> Nunley, *Inner Counselor Manual*, February 2007, 44.
- <sup>8</sup> Mindell, *Working with the Dreaming Body*, 26.
- <sup>9</sup> Gendlin, *Let Your Body Interpret Your Dreams*, 24.
- <sup>10</sup> Hillman, *Healing Fiction*, 26.
- <sup>11</sup> All references to Dr. Aftab Omar have been taken from the author's notes from lectures given at the Institute of Imaginal Studies in Santa Rosa, CA between September 2007 and May 2008.
- <sup>12</sup> McNiff, *Art as Medicine*, 21.
- <sup>13</sup> Roberto Assagioli, MD, Transpersonal Development – The Dimensions of Psychosynthesis, Crucible (HarperCollins), 1991, page 26.
- <sup>14</sup> Gendlin, *Let Your Body Interpret Your Dreams*, 152.
- <sup>15</sup> Reference from the author's notes taken from a Caroline Myss lecture January 2004.
- <sup>16</sup> Myss, *Anatomy of the Spirit*, 78.
- <sup>17</sup> Wilson, *de-mystifying... Medical Intuition*, 127.
- <sup>18</sup> Pert, *Everything You Need to Know to Feel Go(o)d*, 48.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.
- <sup>24</sup> Paris, *Wisdom of the Psyche*, xi.

## **ESSAY 2: THE IMAGINAL DIMENSION: IMAGINAL STRUCTURES AND PERSONAL MYTHS**

*Recognize what is before your eyes, and what is hidden will be revealed to you.  
-- The Gospel of Thomas*

The previous essay established the environment that precipitates transformational change. The objective of this essay is to identify the components necessary for such a major shift. To recap what has been covered to this point, the following observations have been made:

- Transformational learning is qualitatively distinct from informational learning in that it involves a radical discontinuity that shifts us from one state of being to another.
- Noetic downloads are often a catalyst for transformation
- The process of transformation includes a period of unknowing, a sense of being in new and unfamiliar territory.
- Attunement to the felt sense of the body can help to discern the nature of the required transformation
- External events and the associated emotions are perceived by the individual and recorded within the cells of the body
- The necessity of engaging the Will in order to take responsibility for one's life.



## Inner images

What container is it that lives within us that holds the reactionary patterns so tightly? There is no language for that which comes from the subconscious yet the effects are obvious, repeatable and as dependable as the sun rising each day. Even words of emotion are inadequate to describe this force. No, the responses are not held in words, they are held in images.

John Conger, in his book *Jung & Reich*, makes the observation that “The inner images are the true directors of the outer world.”<sup>1</sup> Language is an inadequate container for the gestalt that is the embedded response; it is only in the image, the symbol that the full concept may be held. What are these images? Are they simply the production of an imaginary world? Henri Corbin, in his essay *Mundus Imaginalis, or the Imaginary and the Imaginal*, proposes that there is a difference between the realms of the imaginary and the imaginal and notes that in his work as an interpreter of Arabic and Persian texts he has been faced with needing to discern the differences.<sup>2</sup> Mary Watkins, in her book *Invisible Guests*, describes the difference this way:

Corbin rejects the work “imaginary” when referring to these phenomena because in modern non-premeditated usage the “imaginary” is contrasted with the “real.” “Imaginary” is equated with the unreal, the nonexistent. Our high valuation of the sensible world, the material and the concrete (what we take to be “real”), shines a pejorative light on the “imaginary.” By using the term “imaginal,” Corbin hopes to undercut the real-unreal distinction, and to propose instead that the imaginal not be assessed in terms of a narrowed conception of “reality,” but a broader one which gives credence to the reality of the imaginal.<sup>3</sup>

The images that come forth as a result of meditation, visualization and active imagination are, as Corbin notes, not fake, unreal nor nonexistent and yet at the same time they do not exist in the physical dimension. These images are the manifestation of a

dimension of reality that informs and infuses both the physical and the imaginary or fantasy. The imaginal is the place between; it is the place of potential that exists between and bridges what is and what could be.

Conger comments that “Jung, in his middle years, undergoing his own internal crisis, relied on the symbolic process, often building with stone or painting dream figures and other images from active imagination. Attention to the symbols, he found, bound and released energy.”<sup>4</sup> What Conger is describing is the usage of the imagination in order to explore the psyche and the healing potential contained within the imaginal. Images and symbols, as Jung discovered, comprise the language of the imaginal dimension and it is through their metaphoric messages that deeper meaning and understanding arises. In our waking conscious state there is a high dependence upon language as the main form of communication. It is precisely because the imaginal dimension is *not* bound by the confines of language that it offers a greater potential for psychosomatic and spiritual integration.

The imaginal operates in the world of images. Color, texture, shape, scale, contrast and brightness are the attributes of the visual medium and since the imaginal is not bound to the laws of physics, these elements may be manipulated to emphasize an aspect that needs attention. In this way the interplay of the image components is directly related to the underlying meaning. These images have ultimate latitude in their ability to change shape, size, and color as well as having the ability for interaction. A visual reaches the soul in ways that are separate and distinct from what is found through the use of language. Language comes in a stream of words, each building upon the one before. Visual images impact directly, with full force, and immediately. It is this immediate and

full sensory experience that allows the imaginal to bypass, if only for a moment, the analytical filtering of the conscious mind. The imaginal impacts first at the level of *affect*. This immediate response, the affects of fear, grief, anger or shame when made conscious, can be used as a method of discernment for the underlying belief patterns. In this way, images allow the subconscious responses to manifest in a way that the conscious self can interpret.

Within the imaginal, images, symbols, and beings can interact giving the individual the opportunity to dialogue with elements of the self that would otherwise be hidden in the subconscious. Taking the feelings and emotions from within the body and allowing them to take shape in the imaginal dimension allows for a level of objectivity to be obtained. Ginette Paris comments that “Symbolic images develop into a story, whereas the concept of neurosis is a dysfunction described in a medical lexicon. The abstract concept of “neurosis” flattens the imagination and requires a clinical cure. The challenge of a story with a monster in it calls for a heroic adventure.”<sup>5</sup>

It is the heroic and the mythic nature of the imaginal process that provides the foundation for transformation. Regarding the use of the fictional and the mythic as a vehicle for personal insights, James Hillman comments, “I believe what Jung is suggesting is this: if psychotherapy is to understand the dreaming soul from within, it had best turn to ‘theatrical logic.’”<sup>6</sup>

### **It’s all just a mater of interpretation**

In using the term theatrical logic, Hillman is referring to the role of the imaginal, or the fictional in the therapeutic process. The world we perceive, however, is always

filtered through the lens of what Aftab Omar has referred to as our imaginal structures.<sup>7</sup> The term *imaginal structures*, refers to beliefs, images and somatic responses that the individual has amassed through the course of his/her lifetime. Although an event has an exterior component, it is always perceived through the thoughts, ideas and experiences of the individual. Imaginal structures are the core beliefs, the scripts and the lens through which we see the world, events and history. It is therefore the imaginal structures that determine the perceptions. Our beliefs are highly personalized because they are deeply influenced by this imaginal structure. In this way all of our personal history can be considered fictional. Candace Pert describes it this way:

In other words, your experience of so-called reality is filtered through your memories, giving your experience a spin adding meaning, and even making part of each situation go or stay unconscious, as in the case of a core emotional trauma, if the event is too painful to remember.

*We're constantly resonating with what we already know to be true.* Everything you feel is filtered along a gradient of past experience and memory that's stored in your receptors – there isn't any absolute or external reality! What you experience as reality is *your* story of what happened.<sup>8</sup>

It is through the story and personal experience that the world is perceived, understood, and interpreted. It is these stories, or personal myths that become the imaginal structures that are the foundation of the automatic response patterns. To paraphrase Aftab Omar's comments in a lecture, "When we take off our lenses to inspect them we sacrifice our delusional clarity in order to more deeply understand why things look the way they do and why/how they are affected by the lens."

Entering into the imaginal is a journey into the mythic for as Hillman notes, "...it is the imagination that gives distance and dignity, allowing us to see *events as images*. It

is the imagination that stand halfway between the world of now and the imperceptible eternalities of the spirit.”<sup>9</sup>

Depth psychology has, through the use of myth, story and symbol, taken the concepts of archetypes and the collective unconscious from Jung and given current psychological theory a level of soulfulness and depth it so desperately needed. Pert remarks that this is because “Carl Jung understood what Freud didn’t, that dreams were doorways into another reality. It’s in this altered state of consciousness, Jung believed, that we connect with our spiritual essence – our soul – which dwells in what he called the ‘collective unconscious.’”<sup>10</sup> Conger adds that, “As we attend to our inner images through active imagination, they change shape and dissolve as if to escape us. But through persistence we can eventually learn what we need.”<sup>11</sup>

Jung, in order to dialogue with these images, employed a method that he called active imagination. In active imagination, the images that come forth are engaged with the objective of discerning new understanding. Conger describes the process in this way:

Jung came to feel that to be fully human the individual needs to differentiate himself or herself from the various complexes and archaic collective contents assumed to be the self. Through dream analysis and a process he called “active imagination,” whereby in a waking state one actively engages the various inner personalities, one carries out the differentiation process.<sup>12</sup>

Jung found, as have others, that the process of individuation or self-actualization is a continual process of differentiation from one’s imaginal structures. Only by examining the lens through which one perceives is one able to shine light into the shadow areas of the psyche. It is the imagination, the ability to enter into the imaginal that is critical to transformation. As Aftab Omar has noted, imagination is what facilitates transformation, therefore what is threatening about imagination is the potential for

transformation. To abduct someone's imagination is to take away their ability to rewrite their story. Paris comments that "the atrophy of the capacity to "imagine" is the breeding ground for all self-inflicted misery."<sup>13</sup>

Like dreams, it is the nature of the imagination to defy rational logic. The transformation of old, well-established "realities" does not happen through logical steps. It is the discontinuity of the imaginal that bridges the gap. Eugene Gendlin comments, "By logic one must begin and end with the same units and patterns. It is not in a logical way that the body implies and interrelates many possible behaviors. A new step does not merely rearrange old pieces. It is often more intricate and very different from whatever happened before."<sup>14</sup> If noetic downloads are the Soul's introjections into conscious incarnate experience, then it is the imaginal that holds in potential the poetics of transformation.

Paris describes the concept of psychological health:

Psychological *health* does not exist in the absolute. We all have the possibility of wisdom of which there are many forms: one of these is psychological *wisdom*. It does not show up as wisdom in full bloom, but as a seed, ready to germinate, that exists in every human being. Where our society attuned to the potential and value of this kernel, we would nurture the psyche's wisdom from a very early age. Wisdom is not a given not some thing. It is more like an orientation. Just as a seed that is germinating grows toward the light, psychological wisdom is that compass within each of us, pointing in what seems like the most fruitful direction. Wisdom is a destination rather than a destiny, a goal rather than a state.<sup>15</sup>

### **Engaging the imaginal**

According to Conger, "Jung realized that he need no longer be a passive observer of his unconscious but that he could actively step into fantasy. He could hold on to a figure in a fantasy and demand something through active imagination. He launched out

upon the sea of the unconscious as if in a sailing ship, aware of the awesome power, the very great risk involved.”<sup>16</sup> What Jung pioneered was the interaction with the imaginal other. What is interesting about this, and what is such a dramatic departure from the established paradigm is the recognition of the multiplicity of the self. Pert puts this in historical perspective, “Our old-paradigm psychology is highly biased to consider mental health a matter of one stable, integrated personality, causing us to deny that we are multiple selves and believe we must be a single self.”<sup>17</sup>

What Robert Johnson in *Inner Work*<sup>18</sup>, Paris in *Wisdom of the Psyche*<sup>19</sup>, Watkins in *Imaginal Dialogues*<sup>20</sup> and Pert<sup>21</sup> all describe is the multiplicity of the subjective self. Each of these authors makes the distinction between the subjective perceptions of the imaginal structures and the autonomous functioning of personality components as is the case in Multiple Personality Disorder. What these authors are referencing is the concept that the psyche is not one single unit, but that even a fully functioning psyche contains multiple and at times conflicting subcomponents. It is therefore either conflicts between or challenges to the imaginal structures that create dis-ease that manifests as the felt sense in the body.

Watkins refers to two distinct types of “imaginal others” common in the well functioning psyche. “In psychoanalytic parlance these imaginal others who are felt as presences as ego/alien are called ‘introjects,’ while those who are closer to our self-representations are labeled ‘identifications.’”<sup>22</sup> Both introjects and identifications are valuable in the processing of imaginal transformation.

These imaginal others seem at first to be exceptionally subtle. The question becomes how to engage these characters that are components of the self, projections of

the personality self, or introjections from the Higher Self? “Nevertheless, there is a way to reach them: monsters want recognition, education, participation. It is as if these virtual beings who live in our imagination want us to acknowledge them, to give them a temple in our inner city, to include them in the psychic community.”<sup>23</sup> Paris goes on to describe that it is through the acknowledgement of the internal monsters, or the shadow as Jung referred to it, that change is made. It is in the imaginal that these monsters, these imaginal others live and interact with us. Johnson remarks:

In the same figurative sense I can say that Active Imagination is “realer than real.” It is not only real in the sense that it has a practical and concrete bearing on our physical lives, it also connects us to a world of forces that are superpersonal and transcendent. It allows us to participate in shaping the flow of the principal streams of energy that join together in each of us to form the long-range patterns of our lives, our relationships, and our attitudes. It affects us on the level of realities that go deeper, and affect us more profoundly, than any local event in our daily lives.<sup>24</sup>

Pert also comments on how accessing this knowledge, through felt sense, bodywork, or imagination leads to healing. “Once emotional information is available, it can help us acknowledge our natural multiplicity, opening the way to heal and restore emotional integrity.”<sup>25</sup>

If it is in and through the use of active imagination that such deep work can be accomplished, the question becomes why has this not been enthusiastically embraced? The split in the Western paradigm between the physical and the spiritual has left the dimension of the imaginal to fall between the gap. Conger comments, “the tendency in analytic writing has been to describe a two-dimensional patient; as a history with symptoms, as a disturbed-feeling mind whose childhood narrative provides evidence for the coherent analytic theory. There is no physical description, no sense of the gestural



dialogue, no expressions recorded or impact felt kinesthetically by the analyst.”<sup>26</sup> Active imagination, by virtue of its interactions with imaginal others has required the unification of the body, mind and spirit—a combination that is just now beginning to take hold. Watkins comments that, “There needs to be a space reserved in theory for imaginal activities; a space where they can be respected in their own right and not treated as merely ancillary or subordinate to other activities.”<sup>27</sup>

It is the nature of the imaginal dimension, the imaginal structures through which we perceive the world and the multiplicity of the psyche, which allows active imagination to operate as an access point for the wisdom of the imaginal others within. The challenge going forward is to suspend what Henri Corbin refers to as the “agnostic reflex,”<sup>28</sup> or as Robert Sardello described it in a lecture, “the ability to question the experience while still in it.” It is my hope that by the conclusion of these essays, it will be clear that through the transformative process, as facilitated by engagement with the imaginal, the door may be opened to an affirmative turn towards the Soul’s compassionate nature.

## Endnotes: Essay 2

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- <sup>1</sup> Conger, *Jung & Reich*, 80.
- <sup>2</sup> Corbin, *Mundus Imaginalis*, 1.
- <sup>3</sup> Watkins, *Invisible Guests*, 4.
- <sup>4</sup> Conger, *Jung & Reich*, 19.
- <sup>5</sup> Paris, *Wisdom of the Psyche*, 69.
- <sup>6</sup> Hillman, *Healing Fiction*, 37.
- <sup>7</sup> All references to Dr. Aftab Omar have been taken from the author's notes from lectures given at the Institute of Imaginal Studies in Santa Rosa, CA between September 2007 and May 2008.
- <sup>8</sup> Pert, *Everything You Need to Know to Feel Go(o)d*, 54
- <sup>9</sup> Hillman, *Healing Fiction*, 46.
- <sup>10</sup> Pert, *Everything You Need to Know to Feel Go(o)d*, 151.
- <sup>11</sup> Conger, *Jung & Reich*, 77.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.
- <sup>13</sup> Paris, *Wisdom of the Psyche*, 197.
- <sup>14</sup> Gendlin, *Let Your Body Interpret Your Dreams*, 147.
- <sup>15</sup> Paris, *Wisdom of the Psyche*, 14.
- <sup>16</sup> Conger, *Jung & Reich*, 76.
- <sup>17</sup> Pert, *Everything You Need to Know to Feel Go(o)d*, 135.
- <sup>18</sup> Johnson, *Inner Work*, 26.
- <sup>19</sup> Paris, *Wisdom of the Psyche*, 70.
- <sup>20</sup> Watkins, *Invisible Guests*, 3.
- <sup>21</sup> Pert, *Everything You Need to Know to Feel Go(o)d*, 233.
- <sup>22</sup> Watkins, *Invisible Guests*, 3.
- <sup>23</sup> Paris, *Wisdom of the Psyche*, 70.
- <sup>24</sup> Johnson, *Inner Work*, 26.
- <sup>25</sup> Pert, *Everything You Need to Know to Feel Go(o)d*, 233.
- <sup>26</sup> Conger, *Jung and Reich*, xvii.
- <sup>27</sup> Watkins, *Invisible Guests*. 5.
- <sup>28</sup> Sardello, *Silence*, 76.

### **ESSAY 3: ENGAGING THE IMAGINAL BODY**

If it is through the imaginal, and the interaction between the imaginal and the physical body that the seeds of transformation are stored, then listening to the language of the body provides the opportunity to tease apart the elements of this approach to transformation.

#### **Being Aware of the Body vs. Body Awareness**

In a 2008 lecture, Robert Sardello made the clear distinction between *Being Aware of the Body* and *Body Awareness*<sup>1</sup>. According to Sardello, one becomes aware of the body as in *Being Aware of the Body*, primarily in response to something that is not working in the usual and automatic manner. For example, when we are walking we may not be aware of our feet until we feel a pebble in our shoe. Upon feeling a change in sensation the focus of attention is directed toward that which is new. In ordinary consciousness therefore, our attention is not brought to the body unless there is a change in sensation from what is experienced as normal.

*Body Awareness* however, refers to the difference between the *attention* of mental focus and the *intention* as having a quality of purpose or meaning. In *Being Aware of the Body*, the pebble in the shoe pulls our attention to a specific location creating awareness in the body of a change in state from OK to not OK. *Body Awareness* is the process of directing intention in order to listen to and gain meaning from the somatic messages that the body is giving. In The Inner Counselor Process™, when the facilitator asks, “Where in your body do you feel the sensation or emotion,” this is an engagement of the *Body*

*Awareness* function. This intentional analysis of the somatic body activates a search for meaning as in “Hmm... let me think about that”. By contrast, *Being Aware of the Body* evokes the “Hey!” response as in “Hey! What *was* that?” So, one might say that *Awareness of the Body* initiates a “Hey!” response, while *Body Awareness* evokes a “Hmm...what does this mean?”

As was discussed in the first essay, the body will log and catalogue all of the emotions and unfinished business of the psyche. It is through *Body Awareness* then that the subconscious information stored at the somatic level is communicated to the level of conscious awareness. Since, by definition, anything sub-conscious is below the level of awareness, if the catalogued emotion and unfinished business of the psyche is to be processed it must first be brought out of the shadow and into the light of awareness. By listening to the cues of the somatic body it is possible to discern the affect from the stored emotion such as suggested by Candace Pert “*Emotions are the flow of information perceived to be essential for the survival of any particular state of consciousness being observed.*”<sup>2</sup> Emotion in this definition is the information collected in response to an initial reaction or affect. The term *affect* is used here to identify an initial response that is accompanied by a felt sense in the body. A felt sense or somatic reaction such as fight or flight is identified by the affect of fear. Affect is the first and primary reaction before the conscious self has time to interpret it. For example, if one is at a local convenience store and hears a gunshot, the somatic reaction is to jump. This reaction is caused by the affect of fear. It is only after the initial reaction that the conscious mind could identify the emotion as feeling scared.

Often the words used for affects and the words that are used to describe emotions are the same and this can lead to some confusion. For clarification, an affect represents an initial response. When you can name the response, it is an emotion. As such, there is often a very short elapsed time between the affect and the emotion. However, in the case of somatically stored emotions, there is often a disconnect between the body and the mind. In this case, it is through the affect that the underlying emotion may be accessed and identified. The process by which the affect reaction is moved through emotion to the resulting response is the subject of essay four.

I would suggest that the affect reaction is the base metal input for the alchemical process of transformation because it is the pure reaction unframed by the conscious mind. Pert notes that affect and emotional responses are “how mind becomes matter, and how we can create our own reality.”<sup>3</sup> How we label the affect and emotions we associate with a given response determines how we weave the stories that inform and support our imaginal structures.

In the book *Meeting the Madwoman*, Linda Schierse Leonard states that, “The first step in this transformation is to identify the particular cage in which we are trapped and acknowledge being in it.”<sup>4</sup> While Leonard was referring to the psychological cage, the same analogy can also be used when referring to the body. There is much to gain from connecting with the somatic body but, as Leonard also comments, “Opening the cage door takes courage and commitment. It requires the death of an old identity, an old addiction, or old securities, and a rebirth with the decision to fly adventurously into the unknown.”<sup>5</sup> The emotions that are locked within the cage of the body can be accessed,

and it is through intentional body awareness and the acknowledgement of the felt sense that transformation is begun.

If, as proposed in the first essay, noetic downloads are the communication vehicle from the Higher Self to the incarnate self, then it also follows that tuning in to the felt sense of the body is a prerequisite to understanding the language. In this way the body acts as a conduit for the Higher Self/Soul. The understanding of the incarnate life as a tap into the transcendent nature of the Soul changes the manner in which life crises are interpreted. As Hollis describes, “Authentic suffering is a realistic response to the ragged edges of being. The purpose of therapy is not, then, to remove suffering but *to move through it* to an enlarged consciousness that can sustain the polarity of painful opposites.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Body Awareness and the field of the Imaginal**

If, as Sardello proposed, the body is the receptive entity for input and connection with the Imaginal Dimension, then Body Awareness becomes a field that has no boundary and where duality disappears. Body Awareness then makes the Imaginal Dimension accessible. As Eugene Gendlin notes, “*From the body’s felt sense they find more intricate perceptions and distinctions than they ever met on the outside.*”<sup>7</sup>

The diagram in Figure 1 illustrates the imaginal dimension’s relationship with the Soul and the incarnate body.

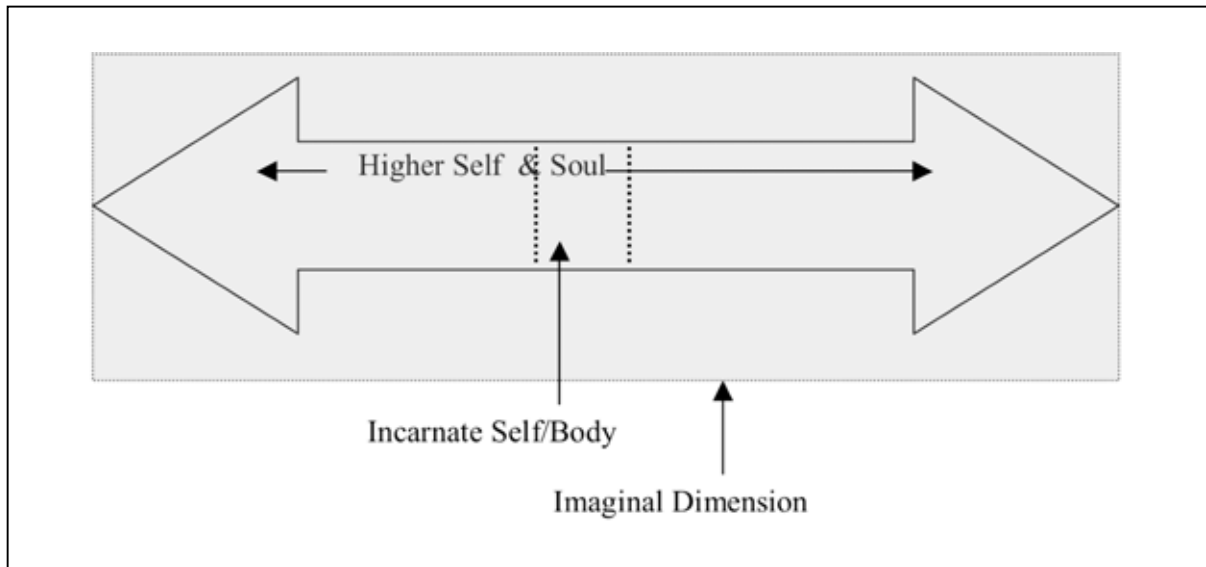


Figure 1. The Imaginal Dimension

The Soul, as discussed in the first essay, refers to the eternal essence of the individual, the repository of consciousness and the vehicle through which the Higher Self communicates with the incarnate self. The *incarnate body* is comprised of the physical biology and is the source of somatic reactions. The incarnate body usually contains numerous raw and primal reactions unfiltered by conscious thought. Brain and mind are not synonymous here. The Brain is contained within the incarnate body. One reaches the Imaginal Dimension through the mind. For the purpose of the diagram the imaginal dimension is represented as a shadowed box surrounding the incarnate body and the arrow representing the Higher Self and Soul. However, it is to be noted that the outline is porous, as the Imaginal Dimension is not bound by finite physicality. The imaginal is the non-physical dimension that bridges between the Soul and the incarnate body. This diagram shows the relationship between the Imaginal Dimension and the incarnate

physical bodymind. The same relationship exists at the level of the astral, mental and causal bodies the discussion of which is beyond the scope of this paper.

As discussed in the second essay of this series, Henri Corbin makes a distinction between the imaginal and the imaginary. The imaginary refers to that which is unreal. The imaginal refers to what the twelfth century Persian shaykh, Sohrawardi, called “Na-koja-Abad, the “land of No-where.”<sup>8</sup> “Abad” translates as a land, a civilized and populated place that has dimensionality; “Na-koja” translates as No-where. It is in this land of No-where that the imaginal others reside and the place to which one must journey in order to meet them. The imaginal is the dimension that bridges the crevasse between what is and what may be; it is in Na-koja-Abad that transformation occurs.

### **What is transformed?**

What has been presented up to this point is the foundation that necessary for understanding the nature of the transformation process. The next topic to be addressed is “What is transformed?” In a 2008 lecture, Aftab Omar answered this question by stating that what is transformed is affect, and affect is transformed into *telos*.<sup>9</sup> *Telos*, the Greek word for “end,” is a term used by Aristotle to convey a purpose, goal or capacity.<sup>10</sup> According to Omar, affects have *telos*, and it is through the transformational process that the *telos* is invoked.

In his lecture, Omar identified several affects and their associated *telos* as core capacities of transformative learning:

<i>Affect</i>	→	<i>Telos</i>
Fear	→	Courage
Grief	→	Compassion
Anger	→	Fierceness/Necessary Force



Shame → Autonomy

We react with affect; we have an innate capacity to respond with telos. When we react with fear, we have the potential to respond with courage.

When this list is aligned with the Hindu chakras, it is clear that there are missing elements. Anodea Judith describes the chakra system in the book *Wheels of Life* saying, “the Chakra System, coming out of Tantric tradition, weaves the polarities of spirit and matter, mind and body, masculine and feminine, Heaven and Earth, into a single philosophy of many philosophical strands, reaching even back to the oral tradition that preceded the *Vedas*.”<sup>11</sup> According to the Hindu tradition, it is chakras, these spinning centers of auric energy that hold the vibrational frequencies related to affects and emotions.<sup>12</sup> Each type of emotion contains an energetic signature or vibrational frequency that resonates with one of the seven major bodily chakras<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, by attuning to the felt sense of the emotion, it is a straightforward process to locate the resonating chakra. Listening to the language used to describe the emotion is a validation crosscheck that ensures the correct placement. As Judith notes, “the original seven “master” chakras form a profound and elegant system, one that maps logically onto the body through the nerve ganglia, yet connects our physical existence to higher and deeper non-physical realms.”<sup>14</sup> This exercise allows one to see where the gaps are.

In her book *Anatomy of the Spirit*, Caroline Myss provides a succinct outline of the spiritual life-lessons of the chakras:

*The first chakra:* lessons related to the material world

*The second chakra:* lessons related to sexuality, work, and physical desire

*The third chakra:* lessons related to the ego personality, and self-esteem

*The fourth chakra:* lessons related to love, forgiveness, and compassion

*The fifth chakra:* lessons related to will and self-expression

*The sixth chakra:* lessons related to mind, intuition, insight and wisdom

*The seventh chakra:* lessons related to spirituality<sup>15</sup>

The affects of fear, shame, anger, and grief map directly to the four lower chakras.

By adding the affects associated with the upper chakras there is a complete and direct mapping. The next step was to identify the somatic reaction associated with the affect – what does it feel like when engaged – and what is the named emotion most often associated with the felt sense. Sorted, with the additional information, the table looks like this:

Table 1. Downdraft Affects to Telos

<b>Chakra</b>	<b>Center of</b>	<b>Downdraft Affect Reaction</b>	<b>Downdraft Sensation/Felt Sense</b>	<b>Named Emotion (I feel...)</b>	<b>Telos</b>
7- Crown	Spirituality	Disconnection	Being Lost	Sad/Pathetic	Imagination
6- Brow	Mind, Intuition, Wisdom	Shock/ Confusion	Blindsided, Forehead tight/banded	Conflicted	Reflexivity
5- Throat	Will, Self Expression	Betrayal	Speechless	Disappointed	Sovereignty
4- Heart	Love, Forgiveness	Grief	Broken Heart	Desperate	Compassion
3- Solar	Self-esteem	Anger	Fire in the Belly	Obsessed	Fierceness
2- Sacral	Power	Shame	Withdrawal	Embarrassed	Autonomy
1- Root	Survival	Fear	Fight or Flight	Frightened/ Terrorized	Courage

Each of the above affects are described as downdrafts on the Integration Chart of the ICP™.<sup>16</sup> (Appendix A) Few individuals, if any, come into therapy saying “*I am too inspired! I have so many ideas and am so directed in following through on them, I can’t even stay in my skin!*” Rather, it is the downdrafts, the blocked places that the process of

therapy focuses on. This emphasis in the downdrafts, however, skews the perspective. As much potential exists for transformation in the empowered updrafts as the blocked, and frustrating downdraft issues that line the therapeutic office. Recognizing that both the light and shadow aspects have transformative potential is a distinctive and important component of transformation. The ICP™ defines the updrafts as the ideal qualities that direct positive transformation.<sup>17</sup> Mapping the positive affects to the chakra system, the chart is as follows:

Table 2. Updraft Affects/Transmuting Agents

<b>Chakra</b>	<b>Center of</b>	<b>Updraft Affect Reaction/ Transmuting Agent</b> <i>(When I engage...)</i>	<b>Updraft Sensation/ Felt Sense</b> <i>(I feel...)</i>	<b>Telos</b> <i>(Which allows me to embody...)</i>
7 – Crown	Spirituality	Inspiration	Passion	Imagination
6 – Brow	Mind, Intuition, Wisdom	Vision/ Perspective	Clarity	Reflexivity
5 – Throat	Will, Self Expression	Fidelity/ Faithfulness	Discernment	Sovereignty
4 – Heart	Love, Forgiveness	Love	Connection	Compassion
3 – Solar	Self- Esteem	Detachment	Calmness	Fierceness
2 – Sacral	Power	Pride	Self-worth	Autonomy
1 – Root	Survival	Acceptance/ Belonging	Safety	Courage

The table is presented with the chakras listed in the order that they reside within the physical body, from the seventh chakra at the crown of the head, to the first, or root chakra at the base of the spine. For ease, discussion will move through the chakras upward from the first through the seventh. Descriptions of the chakras and their associated function are available from a wide variety of sources and often contain subtle

differences in the manner that attributes are assigned. What follows is gained from a combination of study on the topic of chakras and insight in relation to the nature of affect and telos.

### **The chakras**

The first chakra is located at the base of the spine<sup>18</sup> and is the center of survival<sup>19</sup>. When the first chakra is felt through the updraft affect of acceptance and a sense of belonging to the larger tribe, the felt sense is that of safety. If however the shadow side is evoked, the downdraft affect that resonates with this energy center is that of Fear. When the body perceives a threat, it is the primal affect of fear that is triggered. The accompanying somatic is the heightened alertness of the fight or flight reaction. When named, this reaction is labeled as feeling frightened or terrorized. The ability to transmute the affect of fear develops the capacity for courage. Un-transmuted fear results in an inability to respond appropriately and the common description is that of being “scared stiff.” This inability to move forward in the face of fear is cowardice. Issues that resonate with the first chakra are those that relate to safety in the physical world. These include issues of abandonment, exile, physical trauma and poverty conditions.<sup>20</sup>

The second chakra is the sacral chakra. Located in the lower abdomen<sup>21</sup>, the second chakra is the center of sexuality and power<sup>22</sup>. When accessed through the updraft affect of pride, there is a felt sense of self-worth. It is the downdraft affect of shame that resonates at this level and is evidenced by the research into shame as related to toilet training and sexuality. When the affect of shame is activated, the somatic feeling is withdrawal and is labeled as embarrassment. Embarrassment is the response that first

accompanies the feeling of not meeting expectations. Learning to live in community with others requires an understanding of power: who has it, who doesn't, how it is acquired, managed and lost. The primary tool used to manage power in community is that of shame. It is through successive encounters with shame that the telos of autonomy is engaged. As Aftab Omar clarifies, "autonomy is not independence. The capacity for autonomy is developed by successful and healthy experiences of dependency. When the self-ruling capacity is not completely developed, the individual will vacillate between passivity and willfulness. Left un-transmuted, shame manifests into unhealthy patterns such as unhealthy dependency, manipulation, passive-aggressive behavior, and the inability to maintain personal and physical boundaries.

The third chakra is located at the solar plexus.<sup>23</sup> Where the first chakra asks "*Am I safe?*," and the second "*How am I in relation to others?*", the third chakra asks "*How do I feel about that?*" The third chakra is the area of self-esteem, mastery, assertiveness, submission, domination and survival level intuition<sup>24</sup>. The updraft affect associated with the third chakra is that of detachment. When one is no longer attached to the outcome of a situation, there is the capacity for fierceness. The downdraft affect assigned to this chakra is that of anger. In the center for assertiveness, anger is triggered when there is a perceived injustice. This anger is felt as a fire in the belly and results in emotions characterized by obsession. It is this obsession that when un-transmuted turns to violence in order to exert control. When anger is transmuted however, the capacity for fierceness and the use of appropriate force is developed.

At the fourth chakra, the energy shifts in form as it becomes the connection of the heart that mediates the lower three instinctual chakras and the upper transpersonal

chakras.<sup>25</sup> The heart chakra, located in the middle of the body<sup>26</sup>, connects the upper and lower energies and has the capacity to reach outward with open arms. Accessed through the updraft affect of love, the heart chakra resonates with a sense of connectedness to something of value. When there is a disconnection, the downdraft affect is that of grief. The reaction to a loss is that of heartbreak. As James Hollis notes, "... if there is no experience of loss, there was nothing of value. To suffer loss we are required to acknowledge the value we have been granted."<sup>27</sup> Grief is a powerful affect and the emotion associated with it is that of despair. Un-transmuted, grief becomes depression, a detachment from the world; but grief opens the heart in ways that no other affect can. Transmuted, grief is the catalyst for the development of compassion. Unless grief is felt within, it cannot be recognized and understood in others.

Located at the throat<sup>28</sup>, the fifth chakra is the center through which we find our voice. Speaking one's truth is the lesson of this energy center<sup>29</sup>. When life goes on in a normal and everyday manner, self-expression, with spoken language and creativity the most common forms, is easily accomplished. The ability to express discernment with integrity is the result of the updraft affect of fidelity or faithfulness to one's self. When, however, life feels like the rug has been pulled out from underneath, the felt sense is that of being left speechless. The affect associated with the fifth chakra is that of betrayal and the associated emotion is feeling disappointed. Betrayal is the affect reaction when the external reality does not coincide with the internal expectation or belief system. Left in its raw form, betrayal leads to a feeling of hopelessness and can result in a desire to simply give up. Transmuted, betrayal offers the opportunity to claim one's sovereignty. It is when we find that all that we knew to be true suddenly isn't that we have the

opportunity to claim for ourselves the level of personal authority that grants the freedom of self-governance.

The sixth chakra is located at the brow.<sup>30</sup> Brenda Davies describes, “The brow chakra brings all the others together in readiness for the final ascent to the crown where our spirituality may finally reach full bloom.”<sup>31</sup> This third-eye is the seat of noetic intuition, symbolic sight and wisdom.<sup>32</sup> The sixth chakra updraft affect is that of vision and perspective, the ability to clearly perceive. When one is hit with an unexpected situation the affect of confusion is invoked. This confusion is described as that of being blindsided and a comment such as *I never saw it coming* is a description of this affect. The somatic response is a furrowed brow and can result in a felt sense of tightness or being banded in the forehead. The emotion that is evoked is that of conflict, either external or internal, a sense of not being able to see one’s way. If the Imaginal Structure is sufficiently challenged, the result will be that of either denial or the blaming of external circumstances. When transmuted however, confusion has the telos of reflexivity.

Used often by Aftab Omar, *reflexivity* is a term that describes the ability to reflect upon and discern ones own imaginal structures. It is the capacity of reflectivity that is necessary for the transmutation of fear into courage, shame into autonomy, anger into fierceness, grief into compassion and disappointment into sovereignty. Rudolph Ballentine in *Radical Healing* makes this observation:

The most transformative healing is based on insight, understanding, and the thorough reorganization that follows. Even when it might appear that healing is merely physical, if a truly curative process is taking place, a shift to seeing things differently and reconfiguring of your energy structure and consciousness are going on somewhere underneath, out of sight. But to muster the critical insight and understanding, we must allocate sufficient energy to the chakras above the diaphragmatic horizon.

This becomes a challenge when a huge proportion of the energy is tied up in the lower centers, bound to instinctual biological drives or locked into a dysfunctional pattern of disease. There's a sort of catch-22 dilemma here: without the perspective to see what's going on, you can't choose to focus some of that energy higher. And with the very little energy higher up, it's difficult to gain the perspective needed to make that choice.<sup>33</sup>

It is this capacity for reflexivity that allows for the transformation of the affect of the lower chakras to their respective telos. The fourth essay will discuss in detail how this transformation occurs.

Located at the crown of the head, the seventh chakra is the energy center that maintains connection with Spirit, the Divine and the transcendent. The seventh chakra is engaged in moments of inspiration and the associated felt sense is that of excitement. There is a passion that is generated from this excitement and this is often the name used to describe a reaction to a new idea or insight. The downdraft affect of the seventh chakra however is disconnection. When disconnected there is a felt sense of being lost and the emotion is that of pathos and often, a deep sorrow. It is this disconnection at the crown chakra that is the catalyst for the search for the meaning and purpose in life. The telos of inspiration is that of imagination for it is through the passion of inspiration that imagination is facilitated. When there is a disconnect of energy at the level of the seventh chakra, the experience is that of being stuck, and stagnation is the result of such a blockage.

Where the first five chakras carry the potencia or potential for telos it cannot be activated until the sixth and seventh chakras are engaged. The Buddha is said to have explained that our issues are like knots in a rope and must be untied, in the reverse order in which they were created.<sup>34</sup> This is an apt metaphor for affects as well. Pulling from



research in developmental psychology, we know that the affect reactions come online in a sequential manner.<sup>35</sup> This sequence follows the chakra system from one through seven. If, as the Buddha suggests, we are to untie the knots that bind us to reactionary patterns, the order must be reversed and the chakras engaged from the perspective of seven and six. The process of untying the knots of the downdraft affects is the engagement of the updraft affects as a transmuting agent.

These first three essays have laid the foundation for a discussion of the process of transformation. This brief discussion of the components has been a gathering of the materials in order to outline the object of transformation at the level of the bodymind. The fourth essay will use these component materials and assemble them to discuss the process of how this type of transformation occurs.

## Endnotes: Essay 3

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<sup>1</sup> Referenced from the author's notes taken during lectures and discussion with Robert Sardello, April 11-13, 2008, Santa Rosa, CA.

<sup>2</sup> Pert, *Everything You Need to Know to Feel Go(o)d*, 136.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>4</sup> Leonard, *Meeting the Madwoman*, 95

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>6</sup> Hollis, *Swamplands of the Soul*, 10.

<sup>7</sup> Gendlin, *Let Your Body Interpret Your Dreams*, 146-147.

<sup>8</sup> Corbin, *Mundus Imaginalis*, 1-4.

<sup>9</sup> All references to Dr. Aftab Omar are from the author's notes from lectures between September 2007 and May 2008 held at the Institute of Imaginal Studies, Santa Rosa, CA.

<sup>10</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telos\\_\(philosophy\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telos_(philosophy))

<sup>11</sup> Judith, *Wheels of Life*, 10.

<sup>12</sup> Bruyere, *Wheels of Light*, 18.

<sup>13</sup> Myss, *Anatomy of the Spirit*, 68.

<sup>14</sup> Judith, *Wheels of Life*, 11.

<sup>15</sup> Myss, *Anatomy of the Spirit*, 69-70.

<sup>16</sup> Nunley, *Inner Counselor Seminar Manual*, 2007 page 21., [www.innercounselor.com](http://www.innercounselor.com)

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Leadbeater, *The Chakras*, 7.

<sup>19</sup> Davies, *The 7 Healing Chakras*, 66.

<sup>20</sup> Judith, *Eastern Body, Western Mind*, 52-53.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>22</sup> Myss, *Anatomy of the Spirit*, 96-97.

<sup>23</sup> Leadbeater, *The Chakras*, 7.

<sup>24</sup> Ballentine, *Radical Healing*, 420.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 422.

<sup>26</sup> Leadbeater, *The Chakras*, 7.

<sup>27</sup> Hollis, *Swamplands of the Soul*, 44.

<sup>28</sup> Leadbeater, *The Chakras*, 7.

<sup>29</sup> Myss, *Anatomy of the Spirit*, 98-99.

<sup>30</sup> Ballentine, *Radical Healing*, 428.

<sup>31</sup> Davies, *The 7 Healing Chakras*, 185.

<sup>32</sup> Myss, *Anatomy of the Spirit*, 98-99.

<sup>33</sup> Ballentine, *Radical Healing*, 430.

<sup>34</sup> Govinda, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*, 168.

<sup>35</sup> Wilber, *Integral Psychology*, 212.

## **ESSAY 4: THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS**

*It is a myth, not a mandate, a fable not a logic, and symbol rather than a reason  
by which men are moved.*

*Irwin Edman*

### **Case History vs. Soul History**

Since Freud, the stuff of psychotherapy has been memories. If, however, this stuff is actually commemorative legends, then psychotherapy has actually been engaged in mythopoiesis, like the other arts. The father of therapy may be Freud, but its mother is Mnemosyne, *Memoria*, mother of the muses, whose tenth, invisible, daughter must be Psyche.

Psychotherapy first set out to heal memory. The first step in that treatment occurred when Freud cured memory of its notion of itself as history – Mnemosyne’s identification with one particular daughter, Clio. The second step cures memory of its fixation on its remembrances by recognizing them as images. Memory heals into imagination. The final step takes place as we recognize that memory, remembering, goes on through her daughters, in modes of musing, in imagining, so that psychotherapy encourages the musing, that activity which frees memories into images. As we muse over a memory, it becomes an image, shedding its literal historical facticity, slipping its causal chains, and opening into the stuff of which art is made. The art of healing is healing into art. Of course, not literally<sup>1</sup>

In this passage, James Hillman outlines the process by which memories are healed as they are transformed into images or symbols. Important to this discussion is the difference between case history and soul history.<sup>2</sup> In his book *Healing Fiction*, Hillman outlines the distinction between the sequence of events that occur in an individual’s life and the personal interpretation of those events.<sup>3</sup> When working with individuals, it is important to take a broad view. The key to transformative learning is not simply to list the historical facts but to tease out the story about those facts in a way that allows the individual’s interpretation to come forth. Just as everyone in a room has a distinct and

unique perspective of the physical surroundings depending upon where they are located, there is also an infinite number of ways any single historical event may be interpreted. As Ginette Paris notes in *Wisdom of the Psyche*, “The analysis of the content of the psyche is not so much an examination of facts (which usually don’t take much time to establish), but of how one imagines their meaning to be shaped, distorted (and) reconfigured.”<sup>4</sup> Hillman also describes that it is not necessarily the events themselves that are stored within the psychospiritual bodymind, but rather the story that is believed about the events. It is the story, the literary interpretation of the historical events that populates the psychic life.<sup>5</sup>

The psyche itself makes ‘history’ that is altogether fictional. We are not merely making history, but making it up as we go along. Henry Corbin always insisted history is in the soul (we are not in history). History-making is a musing, poetic process of Clio, proceeding as an autonomous, archetypal activity, presenting us with tales as if they were facts. And we cannot transcend history, not because we cannot get out of time or escape the past, but because we are always in the soul and subject to its musings. Historical necessity is not historical determinism – caught in history’s objective traces, dragged along. Historical necessity means rather we are caught in our stories, the soul’s histories, tragedies, comedies, its need to form its subjectivity as history.<sup>6</sup>

To refer to this fictional history as a lie is incorrect. Although interpretive, an individual’s account of the sequential events is no less real simply because it is one person’s perspective. It is real for them and denying its validity negates its value as a transformative agent. Fictional history is not a lie, but rather a preferred myth. The story frames the way in which external events are interpreted. As Hillman notes, “events do not tell a story but expose a structure.”<sup>7</sup> Fictional histories are personal mythologies that fit within the current Imaginal Structures. It is this preferred reality that either empowers individuals or leaves them disempowered.<sup>8</sup> Paris comments, “Nothing determines our

quality of life in the future more than the myths in which we place the events of our lives. The more we can appreciate how a myth is an imaginal construction, the less the difficulties and tragedies of our lives appear insurmountable.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Mythopoiesis as a change agent**

As was discussed in the second essay, the Imaginal Structures are the beliefs and personal mythology of the individual, the story that is used to describe the events and one’s participation in them. As such, it is these Imaginal Structures that form the framework of the Adaptive Identity. *Adaptive Identity*, also referred to as the personality self, outer self, or egoic personality, is a term that defines the current operating survival techniques defined by the Imaginal Structures which allow the individual to function within the current environment. As Paris notes, “the more one has a choice of images, myths, narratives, scenarios, stories, paradigms, virtual scripts – call them what you like – to live by, the richer the life.”<sup>10</sup>

The process of transformation is the process of rewriting the story; without the engagement of the Imaginal Dimension, it is impossible to envision a new mythology. Transformation is not necessarily an easy task as the function of the Adaptive Identity is to keep homeostasis, to stay within the known Imaginal Structures. Paris notes, “To break free, one needs not only the construction of a new myth but the deconstruction of the old one. Otherwise, the worn-out myth remains active but hidden, and because hidden, destructive.”<sup>11</sup>

Changing the myth takes a willingness to come face to face with what was previously held within the shadow of the psyche. Candace Pert describes how facing this inner world of the psyche is important to the process.

This work takes trust and courage, but most of all, it takes willingness. There are no 'quick fixes,' no shortcuts to the work of transforming ourselves and our lives. With a skilled facilitator who understands that all emotions are healthy and lead to integration, the job is easier. Most important, the feelings are a bridge between the inner world of consciousness and the outer world of manifestation, and must be felt and experienced if any kind of real and lasting result is going to come about.<sup>12</sup>

As Paris comments, "One needs courage and ferocity to combat the monsters inhabiting the psyche."<sup>13</sup> The monsters of the psyche are "real" in that they manifest in outward patterns that do not serve the highest and greatest good of the self. As James Hollis observes, "What I can bear to look at directly may give me an unpleasant time, but it no longer owns me."<sup>14</sup>

### **The Inner Counselor Process™**

The Inner Counselor Process™ (ICP™) is an approach that utilizes the power inherent in the stored images or symbols to facilitate transformation. (Appendix B) Through a process of guided visualization, the ICP™ enters, not from the story, but through the emotion. By connecting the emotion to the felt sense in the body, the psychospiritual bodymind is engaged. The images or symbols that come forth to represent the "Old Symbol" are multi-dimensional representatives of adaptive reactionary coping patterns.<sup>15</sup>

The ICP™ recognizes that simple willpower is insufficient to fully challenge the Imaginal Structures of the Adaptive Identity. As Paris notes,

Contrary to advice offered in most self-help books of popular psychology, the way out of such painful states does not start with an upward, positive, willful effort of the ego. It begins with an opening of the imagination, often producing dark, twisted, frightening images, symbolizing what needs to die.<sup>16</sup>

In the terminology of the ICP™ the old pattern is not asked to “die” but rather to go through the metamorphosis of transformation. This transformation is accomplished by the absorption of the old reactive patterns as represented by the Old Symbol into an empowered response pattern that is represented by a New Symbol. The New Symbol both includes the protective intent of the Old Symbol and allows the reactionary pattern to be transformed so that the intrinsic needs of the individual are met.<sup>17</sup> In his work in art therapy, Shaun McNiff has discovered that,

Life does imitate art, as evidenced by how we change in response to images. We become what we imagine, as the person obsessed with troubling thoughts knows. It is the artistic imagination, and not the willful mind, that effortlessly transforms the torturing demon into an inspirational daimon. The discipline of changing an image or a story, rather than the moralistic commandment to change ourselves, eases the burden. As the images change, we change with them.<sup>18</sup>

By shifting the old reactionary patterns inherent in the Old Symbol to new patterns of conscious response of the New Symbol, we can become what we imagine.

### **Voices of the Old Symbol**

It is important to honor and to value the Old Symbol for, as Hillman notes, “Our images are our keepers, and we are theirs.”<sup>19</sup> In his book *The Inner World of Trauma*, Donald Kalsched clearly describes the voice of the Old Symbol in what he refers to as the self-care system.

You were an orphan and nobody loved you or recognized your soulful beauty, but I found you and took you home and together we’ve made it in

a cruel and corrupt world in which most things are false and banal. Nobody understands you except me and therefore you can never be lonely with me in your life.” This soothing self-comfort works temporarily to ameliorate and rationalize pain, but it gradually breaks down and, like all neurotic circles, the psyche’s “efforts” to dissociate in order to protect itself from acute trauma leaves the personality enfeebled and chronically traumatized. So the person eventually ends up seeking help.<sup>20</sup>

The Old Symbol is an aspect of the Adaptive Identity that represents the gatekeeping functions of the Imaginal Structures. The role of the Old Symbol is to keep a level of homeostasis within the Adaptive Identity by maintaining the current mythology. Caroline Myss identifies this gatekeeping function as shadow attributes of what she refers to as the survival archetypes of the Child, the Victim, the Saboteur, and the Prostitute<sup>21</sup>. Each of these archetypal defenses has its own strategy for keeping the status quo. The Old Symbol strategy within the archetype of the Child asks, “Who will take care of you?” and comforts with the assurance that, “There is no one that can protect you as well as I can.”<sup>22</sup> When the Victim archetype is activated, the voice of the Old Symbol warns the Adaptive Identity, “You will get hurt; badly. Without me you will be completely vulnerable.” Within the Saboteur archetype, the Old Symbol casts doubts upon the capabilities of the Adaptive Identity with such comments as “you’re not good enough” and “you don’t have what it takes to make it without me.”<sup>23</sup>

As limiting as these archetypes can be in service to the Old Symbol, the Prostitute brings an additional strategy. The voice of the Old Symbol within the archetype of the Prostitute may acknowledge that it is not sufficient for the intrinsic needs to be met, but insists that, even with deficiencies, the Old Symbol still provides a level of protection and safety in the physical world. In the guise of the Prostitute, the Old Symbol resists



transformation. The Prostitute voice warns against stepping into the unknown for fear of losing whatever limited security it believes it has.<sup>24</sup>

Consistent with all of the gatekeeping messages of the Old Symbol, is the continued belief in a single and limiting subjectivity. Hollis identifies how,

The task implicit in this particular swampland is to become conscious enough to discern the difference between what happened to us in the past and who we are in the present. No one can move forward, psychologically, who cannot say, "I am not what happened to me; I am what I choose to become." Such a person can come to recognize that the early deficit was not inherent in the child, but the result of circumstances beyond that child's control. One can then begin to tap the energy for life that was previously walled off.<sup>25</sup>

### **Healing vs. Adapting**

As Robert Bly states, "Expressing shadow material by itself doesn't help. The act is more savage than wild."<sup>26</sup> The process of simply becoming aware of the Old Symbol is insufficient for transformation. While behavior modification, emotive purging and other therapeutic modalities may offer a level of change, if uncoupled from the transformational process they risk becoming mere desensitization or compliance strategies. Paris, in *Wisdom of the Psyche*, describes how Psychology and Psychiatry so often operate as a "normalizing power in service to dominant values."<sup>27</sup> It is the internal transformation, the transmutation of the Old Symbol to the New Symbol that incorporates the full dynamic of psychic and spiritual healing. As James Hollis notes, "To align oneself with those forces within rather than reflexively adjusting always to the powers without, thereby furthering our self-alienation, is to feel grounded in some deep truth, the nature of our nature."<sup>28</sup>

It is this alignment with the internal forces that is the seedbed for transformation.

Hillman describes the depth of integration of these psychic forces.

Complexes do not respond to worry, to searching parties, to naturalists with tags and labels. The “little people” (as Jung called the complexes) scurry into the bush the moment one’s attention is turned toward them. Likewise, they cannot be found by just letting-go, as if they would come up the moment we lie down. Relaxed, body-referent introspection is conceived still in the language of will. (Besides, an image or body-sensation that is an illustration of what we are already experiencing in consciousness is merely an allegory, it is merely the same known content depicted in another medium.) The complexes in the deep have their own body and their own will, and this is not bound to the ego’s by laws of compensation. Therefore, humanistic therapies never get below the human in man, nor can they leave his subjectivity. The entire existentialist procedure of man’s choosing by making up his mind after searching himself or sinking into himself, is based on an introspection that omits the little people. Their points of view are given often only when *not* asked for, as the visitations or interferences beyond ego-consciousness.<sup>29</sup>

Although the personality often perceives dysfunctional or inappropriate reactionary patterns as mysterious, and sometimes embarrassing, the Old Symbol patterns developed initially as a protective response. The Old Symbol first served the individual by providing a level of adaptation that was necessary at the time. As the individual has matured, however, these response patterns remain fixed. The efficient automatic reaction of the Old Symbol instills it with a level of power because it triggers at the level of affect, before the rational mind has an opportunity to override it. The Old Symbol activates coping responses automatically and without conscious intervention. Since the Old Symbol is constantly replaying the old story, it takes more than rationality to facilitate a formative change. At the personality level, this reluctance to change is evident in such statements as, “*I know better, I just can’t help myself.*”

Attempting to change the outmoded coping responses by rationalization alone is like yelling at a tape player to play something different; nobody is home! In order to get different music, it is first necessary to record something else.

The process of recording new responses requires awareness both of the Old Symbol patterns and a level of gratitude for the protective service it has given. In order to dislodge the existing patterns these “little people” need acknowledgement. The Old Symbol is tenacious. “Like bacteria that grows back because the antibiotics were not given enough time to penetrate deeply into the vermin, an old powerful myth does not die without a fight.”<sup>30</sup>

The process of dislodging the old myth is only the first part of changing the tape. Without providing the Adaptive Identity with a new and appropriate response, loss of the old patterns potentially leaves the individual in the extremely vulnerable position of having no mythology sufficient to frame the experience. While the Old Symbol may not represent an ideal coping mechanism, it is better than none at all and this is one reason the Old Symbol is so entrenched. “Only a fresh, lively, charged new myth will carry enough magic to replace the old, negative, tired, abusive, retrograde, finished, exhausted myth,” comments Paris.<sup>31</sup>

### **New Symbol – Rewriting the story/changing the myth**

Psychic regeneration happens in the deep layers of the imagination.<sup>32</sup> It is through the engagement of the Imaginal Dimension that the connection is made with the multiplicity of the psyche and access is gained to the wisdom of the Higher Self. Within the ICP™, it is this higher consciousness that serves as the principal guide for the

process. This connection to the Soul operates as a safety valve ensuring that the individual is not re-traumatized by the monsters encountered.<sup>33</sup> These aspects of the psyche appear monstrous because they have become disconnected from the higher consciousness. Kalsched observes, “When the spirit is split out of the body/mind unity it seems to go both places simultaneously. When it ‘returns,’ it does so from both places at once.”<sup>34</sup>

In the process of reconnecting the Old Symbol with the wisdom of the Higher Self or Soul, the individual receives the New Symbol. It is this New Symbol that holds the new story, the new inspiring myth that has the qualities capable of changing the automatic reaction patterns. It is not the appearance of the New Symbol that makes the shift, however. Once presented, the New Symbol must prove to both the Old Symbol and the Adaptive Identity that it is capable of holding all of the protective qualities of the Old Symbol as well as allowing for the intrinsic needs to be met. This rewriting of the myth takes skill and negotiation to neutralize the objections of the Old Symbol.

Within the ICP™, the Old Symbol is absorbed into the New Symbol and thereby all of its protective qualities are incorporated. Reluctance to allow this absorption is often the result of a perceived loss. The Old Symbol has been a valuable ally and to transfer control of the automatic responses to the New Symbol necessitates a letting go of the Old Symbol. This awareness that the familiar patterns are permanently changing creates a sense of systemic loss.<sup>35</sup> It is through the process of grieving that the transition may be made. Kenneth Mitchell, in *All Our Losses, All Our Grievs*, defines grieving as “a process in which the deep feelings aroused by the loss are acknowledged and relatively fully expressed.”<sup>36</sup> By allowing the individual to face the loss of the Old Symbol with

compassion and gratitude, the attachment can then be transferred to the New Symbol. As Hollis notes, “Perhaps nothing which was ever real, which was ever important, which ever had gravity, is ever really lost. Only in letting go of the fantasy of control can one truly grieve loss, truly celebrate value.”<sup>37</sup>

The process of integration of the new response patterns is the process of integrating the thought patterns with the bodymind experience. Within the ICP™, this is accomplished by interaction with the New Symbol. By imagining the new response pattern in action, the individual experiences the feelings, emotions and qualities of the New Symbol.<sup>38</sup> Candace Pert describes the phenomenon.

The more often a neuronal network fires together, the stronger the synaptic connections become – and the more the thought pattern is fixed at the cellular level. Networks that fire together, wire together. Not just neurons, but all cells have ion channels and electrical properties, so thought-pattern conditioning extends throughout the psychosomatic network of the bodymind. You’re literally thinking with your body and the words you say, because sound is vibrating your receptors, which actually affects the neural networks forming in your brain.<sup>39</sup>

The ICP™ connects the thought-patterns with the felt sense of the body, thereby extending throughout the psychosomatic bodymind in just the manner that Pert describes. This ability to change the automatic response patterns through engagement with the Imaginal Dimension provides the opportunity for the internal experience to shape the external. Robert Johnson states, “By changing the inside, we also affect change on the outside. When we focus a great deal of energy within the inner world, a parallel energy often arises in the people or situations around us. In this way we can do healing through our inner work that we never could have done through external means.”<sup>40</sup>

## Endnotes Essay 4:

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- <sup>1</sup> Hillman, *Healing Fiction*, 42-43.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.
- <sup>4</sup> Paris, *Wisdom of the Psyche*, 193.
- <sup>5</sup> Hillman, *Healing Fiction*, 56.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.
- <sup>8</sup> Paris, *Wisdom of the Psyche*, 81.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.
- <sup>12</sup> Pert, *Everything You Need to Know to Feel Go(o)d*, 233-234.
- <sup>13</sup> Paris, *Wisdom of the Psyche*, 154.
- <sup>14</sup> Hollis, *Swamplands of the Soul*, 110.
- <sup>15</sup> Nunley, *Inner Counselor™: Basic Seminar Manual*, 29.
- <sup>16</sup> Paris, *Wisdom of the Psyche*, xii.
- <sup>17</sup> Nunley, *Inner Counselor™: Basic Seminar Manual*, 30.
- <sup>18</sup> McNiff, *Art as Medicine*, 38.
- <sup>19</sup> Hillman, *Healing Fiction*, 61.
- <sup>20</sup> Kalsched, *The Inner World of Trauma*, 157.
- <sup>21</sup> Myss, *Sacred Contracts*, 110.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.
- <sup>25</sup> Hollis, *Swamplands of the Soul*, 70.
- <sup>26</sup> Bly, *A Little Book on the Human Shadow*, 57.
- <sup>27</sup> Paris, *Wisdom of the Psyche*, 26.
- <sup>28</sup> Hollis, *Swamplands of the Soul*, 11.
- <sup>29</sup> Hillman, *Healing Fiction*, 59-60.
- <sup>30</sup> Paris, *Wisdom of the Psyche*, 180.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.
- <sup>33</sup> Nunley, *Inner Counselor™: Basic Seminar Manual*, 27.
- <sup>34</sup> Kalsched, *The Inner World of Trauma*, 67.
- <sup>35</sup> Mitchell, *All Our Losses, All our Grievs*, 44.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.
- <sup>37</sup> Hollis, *Swamplands of the Soul*, 47.
- <sup>38</sup> Nunley, *Inner Counselor™: Basic Seminar Manual*, 40.
- <sup>39</sup> Pert, *Everything You Need to Know to Feel Go(o)d*, 110.
- <sup>40</sup> Johnson, *Inner Work*, 105.

**CONCLUSION:  
WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY AND HOW: A RECAP**

*The psychological life is always lived in a liminal space, always on edges, thresholds, crossings, always betwixt and between.<sup>1</sup>*

In these essays, there has been discussion of the components integral to the alchemical process of transmuting affect into telos and the subsequent distribution of the telos qualities throughout the psychospiritual bodymind. Transformation is not necessarily easy. While spontaneous awakenings have been documented throughout history the deep inner knowing of the noetic downloads more often provide simply the base material for the transformational process. In this approach, the objective of the ICP™ is the cultivation and manifestation of the telos qualities.

Having individually described the underlying language and concepts, the workflow of the process can be described as a unit.

The process begins with a catalyst. Something occurs that sets the events in motion. The catalyst triggers the affect and it is this triggering that initiates a chain of events that is identified as the somatic response. Once the affect is triggered, the autonomic systems engage. As the body attempts to adjust to the somatic responses it engages a filter to keep the system from overloading. Somatic responses that proceed through the body filter then interact with the Imaginal Structures. Residual resonance trapped in the body filter logs and catalogs at the physical level within the psychosomatic bodymind. It is this energetic signature that impresses the chakra network.

The Imaginal Structures operate as a second level filter. The mental filters of the Imaginal Structures sort, categorize, and assign emotional labels. The body and mental

filters function as transducers, modulating the inherent energy of the affect. When these filters are insufficient for the task, the result is a sense of feeling flooded or overwhelmed, much the way that circuitry is overloaded.

When flooded, the Imaginal Structures attempt to regain stability by adapting to the situation with whatever inner capacity is available at the time. It is this process that generates the protective coping patterns of the Old Symbol. A simple analogy might be that, like a sieve, the mental filter separates out multiple emotions allowing those more fluid to pass through while retaining the more dense material. The more dense material trapped within the mental filter of the Imaginal Structures forms the basis of the Old Symbol. For this reason, there can be multiple old symbols relating to a single triggering event. These structures usually exist at a subliminal level and are “walled off” from the conscious mind.

Over time, the Imaginal Structures utilize the previously developed coping mechanisms in their attempts to regulate new affect energy. Since the nature of the Old Symbol is fixed, the Imaginal Structures simply add on to what has already been established. All systems are created to address an issue. The problem is that the first issue may be the only one that gets addressed because it is the only one that can be seen. The follow-on issues may never get addressed because there is no facility for this in the rigid system of the Old Symbol. This layering of reactionary coping patterns accounts for the multiplicity of responses that the Old Symbol develops over time.

In the ICP™, the attempt is made to establish connection with the core of the Old Symbol by asking the person to experience the feelings and emotions related to the initial affect.<sup>2</sup> The causal power of the Old Symbol is directly related to the intensity of the



emotional state in which it arose. As such, the transmutation of the affect is best accomplished when sufficient emotional power arises to fuel the catalytic change.

Transformation is a response to the call for a new way to be in the world. Telos qualities coincide with the spiritual lessons necessary for psychospiritual maturity. These lessons may be learned either from the light side through the updraft affects, or through the shadow side through encounters with the downdraft affects. Regardless of the point of entry, the destination is the same. The process of transforming the story requires re-imagining the same scenario yet framing it in the imaginal language of a new mythology.

Contemporary American culture, with its emphasis on the updraft aspects of development has often discounted or made pathological, the decent into the depths of the shadow, or “underworld”. There is much to learn from Persephone. Abducted by Hades, Persephone became his Queen and served as an intermediary between the world of the living and the underworld, spending half of her time in each place. As the spiritual traditions show, it is the decent in to the underworld, the dark night of the soul, where the divine is often met wearing the face of the corresponding updraft affect. It is not that the Divine is not present in the light, but that the process of separation from the light raises our awareness of the Divine. Just as one is not usually aware of breathing until it becomes difficult, the decent in to the depths of the psyche is simply the other side of the same coin. The downdraft affects bring awareness to the shadow places where we would rather not tread. The ability to navigate between these polarities is not only a normal process, but is necessary for full psychospiritual development. It is through successful encounters with the downdrafts that appropriate coping patterns are developed within the Imaginal Structures.

Through the ICP™, new reactionary patterns are made available through the New Symbol. By replacing the Old Symbol at the level of the subconscious mental filter and containing the telos qualities, the New Symbol is empowered in its role as a processor of affect energy. Unlike many “developmental” processes, the ICP™ does not require additional effort on the part of the participant. Post process, the New Symbol’s

qualities are simply NOW PRESENT with the participant and it is from these qualities that the new response issues AUTOMATICALLY. The new response is as automatic as the old one was. Consequently the participant doesn’t have to DO anything (Such as, “I will think of my new symbol, or I will close my eyes and see my new symbol.”) It is always the intrinsic qualities of a symbol or archetype that give it creative power and those qualities are now in place within the participant.<sup>3</sup>

In this way, therapeutic approaches such as the ICP™ and Depth Psychology are as Ginette Paris describes, “experimenting with the next style of consciousness, one that allows a person to endure the absurd, to cope with the insufferable, to lose one’s innocence and, instead of turning to Augustinian redemption, learn to swim in the Styx, imagine a life differently, making room for its tragic element.” It is through learning to swim the river Styx that the promise of transformational change is achieved.

*For in the end, we must all give birth to ourselves.*

*-- Linda Schierse Leonard, Meeting the Madwoman*

## **Endnotes Conclusion:**

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<sup>1</sup> Paris, *Wisdom of the Psyche*, 211.

<sup>2</sup> Nunley, *Inner Counselor Seminar Manual*, 36.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 40.

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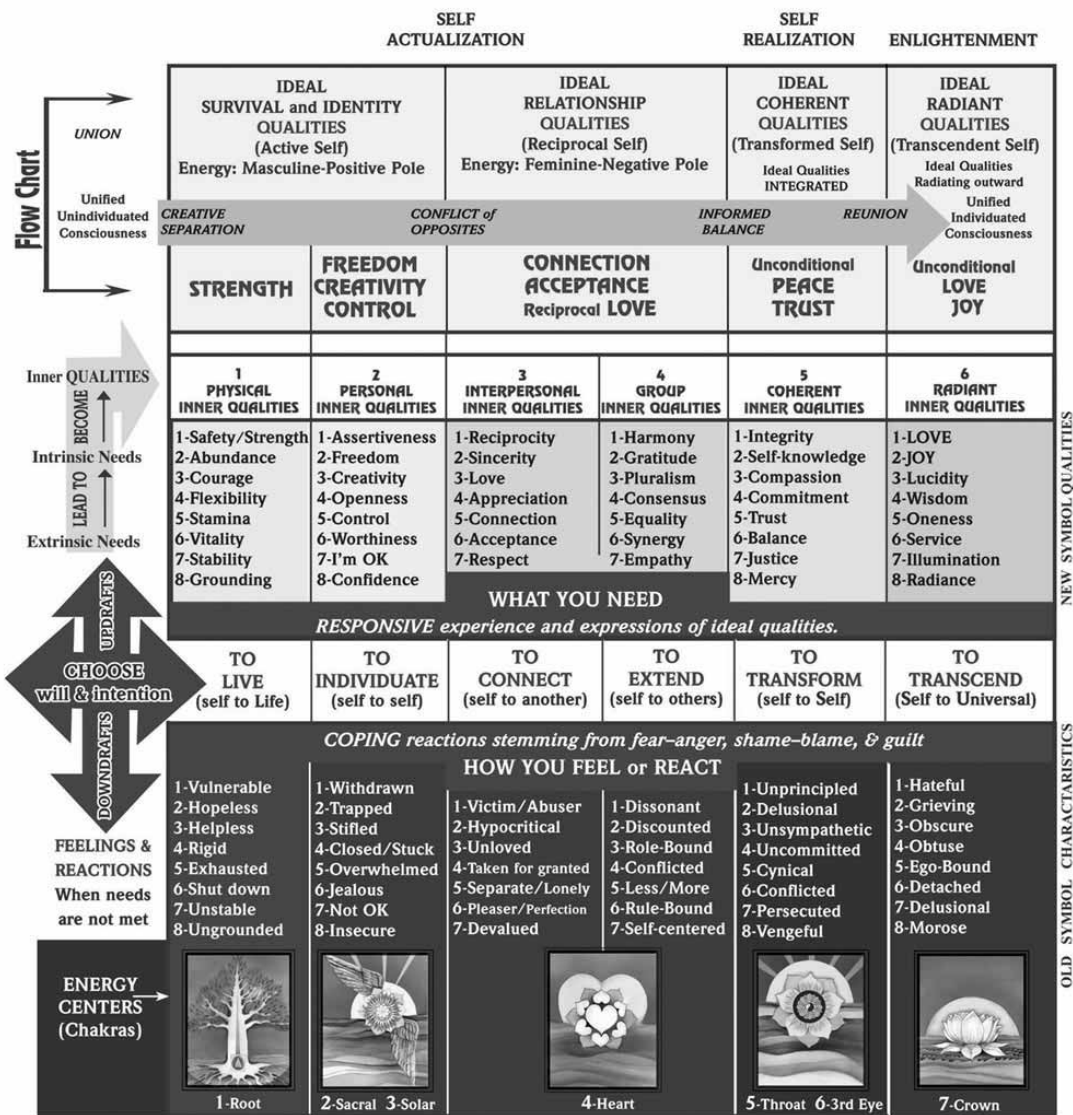
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# APPENDIX A

## The Inner Counselor Process™ Integration Chart

### INTEGRATION CHART

From the INNER COUNSELOR © Ann Nunley



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## APPENDIX B

### The Inner Counselor Process™ Process Outline

1. Let your mind take you to a **peaceful place**. A place of beauty where you feel totally safe • Imagine the surroundings and colors • Hear the sounds • Breathe the fragrances • Describe this place. • In this place you feel **calm, safe, strong and centered**. • Invite your (“*High Self*”) to be present and to be your guide for this journey. • I will invite my *High Self* to be present as my guide.
2. **What is the issue and feeling** you wish to explore? (*Feeling = emotion plus physical sensation*)
3. Ask your (“*High Self*”) if it is **safe and advisable** to address this issue and feeling at this time. (If not, ask to be shown an appropriate issue to address at this time). Are there additional wise and loving guides who would like to be present to help you with this issue?
4. **Go to a recent time** when you experienced this issue. • Where are you? • What is happening? • What emotions do you feel? What sensations are part of those emotions? Where in your body are these feelings the strongest? (Inquire about core areas: throat, heart, stomach).
5. **Let these feelings carry you** to an earlier time. Ride the feelings back through time. • Where are you? • What is happening? • How old are you? • What emotions do you feel? • Where in your body do you feel these emotions the strongest? • What sensations are part of those emotions in your (locations?)
6. What do you truly NEED and WANT? - If you could cry out and say, “I need!” “I want!” what would you ask for? (Dialog to arrive at intrinsic needs).
7. Be fully present in that experience. Feel the emotions and sensations in your (restate locations). Imagine that you can pull these feelings out and SEE them – Let them take form. Describe their form. Do they have a color? • Does this form have an attitude? • This (“Old Symbol”) represents your old coping pattern.
8. How did the (“Old Symbol’s”) emotions, sensations, and attitude **help you cope** when your needs were not met? **Can you thank the (“Old Symbol”)** for providing this response? • Ask the (“Old Symbol”) if it is **willing for you to find a better way** to cope so you can get what you truly need?
9. Fully sense your needs • Ask your (“*High Self*”) to show you a New Symbol - someone or something that symbolizes the *qualities and values* that will protect you and completely fulfill these needs.
10. Will this (“New Symbol”) **commit** to help you with this issue? Will you **commit** to the qualities and protection of the (“New Symbol”)?
11. Bring the two symbols together. Have the (“New Symbol”) show the (“Old Symbol”) how its qualities will BOTH **protect you and fulfill your needs**. • Will the (“Old Symbol”) allow its form and its **coping pattern** to be completely absorbed and changed by the (“New Symbol”) so you can get what you need?
12. **Experience the (“New Symbol”) completely absorbing the (“Old Symbol”)**. Is the (“Old Symbol”) completely absorbed and transformed by the (“New Symbol”) (Dialog until this is complete). How does the (New Symbol) look now? • (there may or may not be a change)
13. The (“New Symbol”) has some advice that you need to hear right now? Listen and then speak the advice out loud. Do (other guides – if there are any) have advice?
14. **Be aware of the original issue and feelings** • Feel the (New Symbol’s) qualities of (name qualities with location of each) • **Empower these qualities** by asking them to provide you with a **specific** response to a specific situation in the **next 24 hours. Describe the situation and your response.**
15. Give the (“New Symbol”) a place of honor within yourself and in your Place of Peace. • Thank yourself, (any guides) and your (*High Self*). • Complete the **Energy Exercise and Healing Prayer.**

*NOTE: Parenthetical phrases direct the facilitator to supply SPECIFIC information.*

*Inner Counselor Process © Ann Nunley, 2007, ICP™ (Fall, 2008)*



