

Psychosynthesis Quarterly
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The digital magazine of the Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis

This issue's theme:
Imagination & Psychosynthesis:
Developments in Image-Based Theory & Practice



AAP provides resources for people to cultivate peace and purpose.

Our mission is to advance the theory and practice of psychosynthesis to benefit individuals and society.

The Psychosynthesis Quarterly is published by The Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis (AAP) four times a year in March, June, September and December. The AAP provides resources for people to cultivate peace and purpose. Our mission is to advance the theory and practice of psychosynthesis to benefit individuals and society.

The AAP was founded in 1995 and is a Massachusetts nonprofit corporation with tax exemption in the United States. AAP membership supports this publication and the other educational activities of AAP, including scholarships. Membership and donations are tax deductible in the United States.

The Psychosynthesis Quarterly accepts announcements, ideas, reviews of books and events, articles, poetry, art, exercises, photos, and letters. Tell us what has helped your life and work, what can help others, and examples of psychosynthesis theory in action.

We hope our suggestion of from 250 to 1500 words may serve as a guideline that helps your writing. We prefer that you use the APA style guide when possible, for things like punctuation and references.

Announcements, book reviews, and upcoming events are also welcome, with a request that nonmembers who wish to **advertising** make a donation to AAP. To donate, [click here](#).

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*Note: We receive submissions from all over the world. You will see the authors “native” spelling in their articles.

With thanks to Peter Stewart for copy editing

Letter from the Guest Editor: Allan Frater

Imagination & Psychosynthesis: Developments in Image-Based Theory and Practice

A very warm welcome to this issue of the AAP Quarterly dedicated to 'Imagination and Psychosynthesis: Developments in Image-Based Theory & Practice'

It seems to me any respectable internet magazine on the topic of imagination needs a good story. So let me begin.

It has long since seemed to me that Imagination is something of a Cinderella at the Psychosynthesis Ball.

A Cinderella Imagination seemingly destined to live in the cinders, given some crumbs to eat and a small, hard place to sleep at the edges of the Star Diagram. A Cinderella Imagining somewhat overwhelmed by the step sisters of feeling, thinking and sensation – who seem to get so much attention in the Disidentification Exercise.

A Cinderella Imaginal who gets used and put to good purpose, slaving away in many techniques and exercises, day in and day out, doing the work of therapy – in which she perhaps briefly bursts into the limelight, but never brightly enough to eclipse the Consciousness and Will circling around the field-of-awareness on the central stage.

And perhaps this is as it should be. Perhaps Cinderella Imagination is forever to be a kitchen dweller, marginal in the shadows, just way too ambiguous and shapeshifting a character for these rational times – and the clamour for evidence, facts and explanations.

However, when I wrote the invitation for submissions to this edition, I had in mind that there would be people out there in the Psychosynthesis community just like me. Which is to say, people who are interested, if not a little obsessed, with the place of Imagination in Psychosynthesis theory and practice. People who could perhaps play the role of the Fairy Godmother and help the Cinderella Imagination get to The Ball.

Well, I was not to be disappointed. A host of Fairy Godmothers appeared, called forth by the magic of the Internet. Together they have dressed Cinderella Imagination in the finest fashions and set her in her carriage to be carried to The Ball by the beautiful flock of birds that are Marjorie, Peter and the host of others who make all this wonderfulness happen.

As so dear reader, do please allow your physical eyes to scan across the marks on the screen. And as you do so, allow your eyes of imagination to be carried forth into the story world of the Psychosynthesis Ball which comes into appearance between you and the text.

In the first part of the Ball, you will be invited to share in a programme of 'theory and practice' on Imagination. Here you will dance the steps of Imagination in clinical application.

In the second part of the Ball, you are further invited to share in a programme of 'personal and creative' reflections, stories and inspirations on Imagination. Here you will dance the steps of Imagination in everyday life.

And then we will close with a few final intimations of forthcoming attractions and further reading. I hope you find vivid images and inspiration to carry with you as memories after the Ball comes to an end, as all good things do.



Allan Frater is an author, psychotherapist, supervisor and teacher at The Psychosynthesis Trust in London, UK. He is interested in the role of imagination within normal everyday life, creative work and healing/transformation. His first book 'Waking Dreams' presented a critical development of standard approaches to 'active imagination' and 'guided imagery' incorporating paradigm shifting ideas and methods from ecopsychology, complexity theory, fractal geometry and transpersonal psychotherapy. He runs a popular on-line 'Waking Dreams' course and is currently writing a second book, provisionally titled 'Living Between Stories: Imagination in a Time of Crisis'. Find out more via his website www.wildimagination.uk

Already Gone: Imagery and Spiritual Experience

by Bonney Gulino Schaub RN, MS and Richard Schaub PhD
Huntington Meditation and Imagery Center

Introduction

According to the transpersonal psychiatrist, Stanislav Grof (1989), the classic modern work on spiritual development is Assagioli's 1933 essay, "Self-Realization and Psychological Disturbances." A posthumous collection of Assagioli's essays, *Transpersonal Development* (1991), elaborates on his study of the modern person's process of spiritual development.

In all of his work, Assagioli was concerned with the potentials of the person beyond the socially conditioned personality. Along with Jung, he pioneered in Europe what later became transpersonal psychology in the United States. Assagioli's main theme was that higher states of consciousness objectively exist in dormancy in each person, and that the activation of these states brings wisdom into the mind, peace into the body, and joy into the emotions. With such positive benefits, Assagioli considered it obvious that higher consciousness should be studied and activated. Imagery was his primary method to accomplish this.

Imagery and Spiritual Experience

Assagioli identified the cross-cultural images that are known to activate spiritual energies and emotions. These include images of ascent, descent, expansion, awakening, light, enlightenment, fire, empowerment, love, wisdom, path, pilgrimage, transmutation, new birth, regeneration, liberation, resurrection (Assagioli, 1965). Rather than wait for these images to possibly appear in the dream life of his clients, Assagioli advocated the active use of these images in order to activate higher consciousness and spiritual development.

In the case study that follows, we can see how a spiritual imagery experience reduced suffering and increased peace. In Charles' case, imagery activated his spiritual level of consciousness as he went through the dying process.

Case Study: Charles

In the era before effective treatments were found, Charles was terminally ill from HIV-AIDS. The virus had by now led to neurological brain damage. Charles was unsteady on his feet, and his speech was beginning to slur. His memory was slipping away from him.

This case study describes an imagery session with Charles. The session took place in his apartment as he was lying in bed in severe discomfort from skin rashes and from the side effects of the then-ineffective AIDS medications.

Under these circumstances, it would be hard to imagine how imagery could help. In fact, this single session provided Charles with a higher vision that helped him throughout the dying process.

Charles had a home healthcare nurse who visited him in his apartment. She saw that Charles was desperate for any kind of relief from his anguish. Trained in psychosynthesis at the New York institute, she decided to use a method – Inner Wisdom – that she had personally benefitted from.

The imagery session began with an induction technique of 1) asking Charles to close his eyes and follow her voice, 2) asking him, despite his severe itching from the medications, to bring his attention to his nostrils, and 3) to follow his breathing without trying to alter it in any way. She then asked him to imagine that each breath had the potential to take him deeper and deeper into peace.

The nurse noticed that Charles' chest was in a slower breathing pattern. This suggested that Charles was responding to her directions and was experiencing a more relaxed, more inwardly absorbed state. The nurse next suggested that he continue to follow his breathing as he listened to her talking about the fact that in all times and cultures people have prepared themselves for inner work in exactly the same way Charles was now doing. She spoke further about imagery as an ageless practice for realizing inner wisdom. She then wondered if Charles could begin to imagine meeting someone in another time and culture who was following his breath just as Charles was doing. She said nothing more.

She saw Charles' chest movements slow down even more. Her own personal experience in imagery told her that at that moment Charles had deeply let go. She silently meditated by his bedside, keeping her eyes open to observe any changes in him.

Twenty minutes passed. In most imagery sessions, this is an incredibly long time of inward absorption.

The nurse felt a palpable peace in the room. Now moving ever so slightly in his bed, Charles opened his eyes and began to tell the nurse what he had experienced:

“I felt my body sink deep in the bed. I felt a great heaviness and peace.

The itching was gone, and it’s still gone. I saw an image of a young man.

I then saw him become ill, and saw his flesh begin to fall off him, until he became a skeleton. Then his flesh reappeared, and his life force returned. He was again the same healthy young man I first saw.

“Soon, the flesh began to come off him again, his life force left him, and he became a skeleton again. At that point, I saw an old man behind him, and I realized that as the old man moved his hand to the left, the flesh came off the young man, and as the old man moved his hand to the right, the life came back to the young man.

“I watched this with great feelings of peace. I felt something very important was being taught to me. I can’t even say the peace was in me, because by the time I was watching this I had absolutely no sense of my body at all. My body was gone. My body had dropped away. I was free, I was floating free. I had no fear at all. I was free.”

Charles closed his eyes and sank back into peace. The nurse sat quietly, not wanting to say anything. Thinking that Charles may have fallen asleep, she left the apartment.

When she visited Charles a week later, he had invited three friends to be there for the nurse’s visit. He wanted them to experience the imagery so that they could learn it and practice it with him whenever they were with him. Charles had found a way to help himself.

In a month, he could no longer manage at home. He was hospitalized, and after a few days he stopped communicating. Visitors would talk to him, not get a reply, and then leave. The nurse visited him, and the same process happened.

Everyone began to accept this as either a neurological and/or emotional consequence of his dying process. The nurse found out from his friends that Charles had made them promise to guide him to his inner wisdom if he was near death. The friends had agreed to the promise, but they all felt embarrassed about the thought of guiding Charles in this strange process with other patients and visitors around in the hospital room.

One evening, his friend, Paul, was visiting him at the hospital. As Paul was about to leave, the floor nurse told Paul that this was probably Charles’ last night. Charles’ vital signs and her long clinical experience told her so. Paul became upset and started to go toward the elevator to leave the hospital. He suddenly remembered the promise to Charles - to guide him to his inner wisdom in the event he was about to die.

Paul went back to the hospital room. There was Charles, not moving and uncommunicative. His silence had continued throughout his hospitalization. Feeling very self-conscious, Paul leaned close to Charles’ ear and began to guide him into the imagery method he had learned from the psychosynthesis-trained nurse.

Charles continued to lie there, unresponsive. Nevertheless, Paul continued to guide Charles to follow his breathing and to begin to imagine a wisdom figure from another time and place and to imagine both Charles and the wisdom figure both breathing and meditating together.

Paul finished the guiding. To Paul’s great surprise, Charles spoke. He said, “Don’t worry, Charles is already gone.”

Paul began to both cry and feel happy. He did not know what was happening to him. Charles died 30 minutes later.

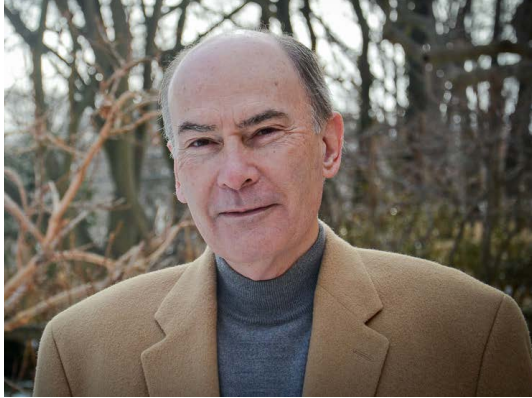
Having studied, practiced and taught psychosynthesis for 45 years, we have felt quietly empowered to bring this work to anyone in any situation. The results of course are not as dramatic as the Charles’ example, but sometimes they are great teaching moments.

A quick anecdote about one such moment. At a public talk, we guided the audience through an Inner Wisdom method. When we finished guiding, a woman was very eagerly waving her hand for our attention. She was invited to tell her experience, and of course we had no idea what to expect.

She said that she asked the inner wisdom figure if she should buy a Rolls Royce car. “And you know what he said back to me? ‘Will it help you to love?’”

There were some giggles in the audience, and then the beauty of the wisdom landed in the woman’s awareness, and she laughed out loud.

Imagery may be just the name of a method, but what it is tapping – the vast intelligence of the mysterious imagination – is an entirely different matter.



Dr. Richard Schaub has trained hundreds of healthcare and mental health professionals internationally in the clinical applications of meditation, imagery and the transpersonal psychology of psychosynthesis. He was one of the original founders of the New York Psychosynthesis Institute and has taught several times at the original Italian institute in Florence. Previous to teaching, Richard worked in many clinical settings, including oncology, cardiology, adolescent psychiatry and drug and alcohol rehabilitation. His emphasis on teaching meditation and imagery skills began in 1985 with the first HIV-AIDS epidemic when peace and wisdom became a compelling need for patients in severe crisis. The co-author of five books, Richard's finest professional experience was providing a half-year training of PTSD staff at a Veterans Hospital and a Federal grant to produce a book for the training, *Transpersonal Development*.

Kinesthetic Imagination

by Brad Roth, LMFT,
Certified Laban Movement Analyst, Psychosynthesisist

Preparation

Take several normal, attentive breaths, and then breathe TALL, up and down, like a flower growing while sending down roots; breathe WIDE, side to side, like arms spreading to hug, but in your torso; breathe DEEP, front to back, like reaching to shake hands, forward and aft, particularly filling your *backspace*. Breathe into the space surrounding your body, energizing a cocoon or aura. This is your *kinesphere* (1), your movement potential from the spot you are in, the space you **delineate** in potential when moving your spine or extend your arms and legs. Now **expand** your spatial awareness and kinesthetic awareness, your movement sensitivity, to your "*movement field*." (2) This can be as small or vast as you wish (inner space, kinesphere, room, yard, park, town, etc.).

In short: breathe TALL, WIDE, DEEP, AROUND, AND OUTWARD.
Shorter: T, W, D, A, O (**phonetically: tw-day-oh**) (**when: today**)

Practice this at different times in the course of your day, purposefully breathing in the three dimensions (vertical, horizontal, saggital) (3), establishing your kinesphere and movement field. It can be accomplished in a few seconds, or even in one inhale and exhale. This is one way of "*coming to our senses*," and in particular to our kinesthetic sense and our spatial sense. It is from here that we can exercise our *kinesthetic imagination*.

In short: *k-sense, sp-sense, k-imagination*

Action

Let's take a walk in the park, an imaginary walk in an imaginary park. The following three scenes are intended to engage you as both an observer and as a kinesthetic participant. Please note that one or more of these "movement events" may not be your "cup of tea," and may produce more anxiety than insight. Feel free to simply read and move on **cut: from these**, or modify them to suit you. Participating in imagined movement is not intended to traumatize the nervous system, so you be the judge of what feels right to you in your kinesthetic world. If these scenes feel safe and interesting or invigorating, then consider them fully with your k-sense, sp-sense, and k-imagination:

- a young child swings on a swing, higher and higher, forward and back, finally reaching the maximum pendulum arc;
- two joggers pass in opposite directions, acknowledging each other with a small wave;
- someone pedals by on a bicycle.

These three activities share a steady and repetitive rhythm as a baseline, an even "da, da, da, da" at different speeds. The child's rhythm is the slowest: "swing . . . swing . . . swing"; the rhythm of the woman on the bicycle is a little faster: "peddle..peddle..peddle..peddle"; and the joggers' rhythm is faster still:

“foot.foot.foot.foot.” The child’s movement has the most force or power, this being at its maximum at the bottom of the swing arc; the joggers have a lesser but faster repetitive force, the impact of their footfalls; and the cyclist’s force lesser still, but is more even throughout the pedal stroke, alternating one leg to the other. (4)

Having considered them and perhaps pictured them, take time if you haven’t to “enter into” each one, as if you are one swinging, jogging, and riding a bicycle. Sense them each in turn and in real-time, the time it would actually take to do them, rather than a condensed “fast forward” version of them. This *slowing down to sense imagined movements in real time* (5) is very important- we can’t “speed read” motion in the present moment, and we don’t need to do so when using our k-imagination. Little is gained by “fast-forwarding” imagined movement, and most likely, much is lost. So go for a swing, building slowing to a fuller arc (only if you feel good about it), take a jog, and go for a bike ride. A half minute of each will do, perhaps a little longer to build the swinging up to an arc you are happy with. (Remember, you have to extend your legs forward while pulling back on the ropes with your arms, and then tuck your legs under and lean your head and torso forward while also pushing forward with your arms, gaining a little more height in your arc with each “pump.”) If you experience images along with these movement sensations, have them be “from the inside looking out,” as it were, out past your nose, down your arms, and so on, rather than as little movies of yourself. Take your time.

Recuperation

I hope you feel invigorated, that you have “*come to your (kinesthetic) senses.*” Perhaps now enjoy a few moments of repose, of lingering to smell the air outdoors, to take a drink of water, or perhaps pausing **to** listen to sounds around you. All these are advisable as a recuperation to the exertions of the imagined activities above. (6)

Kinesthetic sensing: past, present, imagined

Along with participating kinesthetically in imagined movements, we also have a lifelong record of actual movement experiences, our kinesthetic memory. These recede from us like water under the bridge, with our last breath being the closest to our recall, and perhaps some outstanding movement event years back still fresh in our body’s memory. Also, our repetitive movement skills- knitting, walking behind a lawn mower, dicing carrots, riding a bicycle—retain a freshness from their repeated use and rhythmic character, enhanced by our ability to “rehearse” them even while our body is in repose. This recall is not unlike our remembering a melody. Both require us to remember, to *relive* them, in real time, in the time they take.

Useless imaginings

We can now design imagined movements and movement environments toward a particular purpose, perhaps assisting us in our personal growth, or enhancing our well-being in some way. To do **so** is an “*act of will,*” as Roberto Assagioli explains it. (7) Taking a cue from Assagioli, perhaps we should begin our practice with “useless imaginings,” which function solely to improve our imagination and concentration, and the vividness of our k-sensing, and thereby to strengthen our power of intentional imagination. (8) Choose to imagine stepping up on a small footstool and back down, repeating it on the other side, and doing this for, say, twenty steps total, counting the sets, without rushing. Now imagine opening and closing a refrigerator door with your right hand and then with your left, for ten sets. Depending on which side the hinges are on, one experience will suggest a widening of your torso with the arm movement and door opening to the same side, and a narrowing **of your torso** while using the other arm **moving across your body**. In your imagination, while widening with one arm (and inhaling to take advantage of more space in your torso), and narrowing with the other (exhaling), let the imagined movements “breathe you,” like a bellows, you and your refrigerator. You might find, in your present again, that sitting up straight (lengthening your spine) naturally causes you to inhale. This becomes *an invitation to consciously link your body movements with your breath*: since your torso is constantly changing shape, **lengthening and shortening, widening and narrowing, advancing and retreating** in the three dimensions, your breathing can support or be enhanced by these movements, becoming synchronized with them. Via your every day movement activity, you can “breathe life into your life.” This can happen in the imagined movement world as well, allowing our k-imagination to become particularly “embodied” and infused with our breath.

Kinesthetic Imagination

I'll now offer a few sample movement scenarios for you, though it is really up to you to use this resource to further your purposes. What circumstances and environments can you imagine yourself in, in such a way as to unlock the attractive power of imagination, and also ground it with the bodily experiences of movement and breath?

Before embarking on this kinesthetic journey, let us create a whole-body, dancing invocation. The ancient Chinese practiced what they called "*the Four Treasures*," and these were *lying, sitting, kneeling, and standing*. (9) K-imagine each of these, enjoying each as a treasure, as a marvel, as an opportunity. Now make a sequence of the four of them, in any order. Make this a ritualistic calling forth of the world's potentialities, asking that they come to you, or come from within you. These energies are yours for the asking, grounded in your bodily experience, your k-experience, and your "will to imagine." They can be invoked to serve you, and to serve others.

Movement scenarios:

- standing in line, waiting for the doors to open to a concert of your favorite music, the line wrapping around the block, and you are about in the middle, shifting your weight now and then from one side to the other;

- scattering handfuls of seeds (or other approved food) to a gathering of ducks on the water or seagulls on the sand, using your non-dominant hand as well, and occasionally tossing some in the direction of a bird that doesn't seem to be getting his or her share;

- vacuuming a room in your house, moving light furniture and other objects aside and then putting them back in place, managing the chord to the vacuum gracefully and with anticipation, one hand moving it about and the other propelling the vacuum. Sense the grounding of your weight into the floor and the floor pushing back, completing the circuit, and sense how this all works as a series of weight shifts and steps forward and backward and to the side, a tai chi form, *Vacuuming Tiger*, a dance with your machine;

- sitting as a therapist with a client, you find yourself especially alert physically, seeming to "record" their every hand, arm, and torso movement with your own body. You reflect back a movement that you find particularly evocative, and rehearse it with your client, a little duet. You then ask him or her what moving like this evokes for them: perhaps a feeling, a thought, a sensation, an image, an impulse, or an intuition; (10)

- taking a walk with a friend or two on a wide and level walkway in a park, or on a trail in a nature preserve. Imaging the footfalls at the pace they would likely happen, and how you find a suitable pace that is sustainable for your companion(s). You widen your focus to take in the particulars around you as you go (the grass, some fallen leaves, the wind in the trees), while also moving in concert with others, sensing your own body's motion, the alternating nature of walking, the inhaling and exhaling of your breath.

Footnotes

1. Bartenieff, I. (1980). *Body movement: coping with the environment*. New York: Gordon and Breach, Pp.23-25.

2. The "movement field" is a term I use to describe the movement around you than you can be aware of, in the place you are now.

3. Bartenieff, I. (1980). *Body movement: coping with the environment*. New York: Gordon and Breach, Pp.29.30. Practiced as a sequence of movements with one hand leading- upward, downward, side across, side open, backward, forward- this is called the "*dimensional scale*."

4. Ibid, Pp.49-51. Timing and force are part of movement theorist Rudolph Laban's categorization of "efforts," this word derived from the German "*antreiben*," which means to "drive" or "propel." The four efforts are *weight, time, space, and flow*. Expressed as polar pairs, they are *light/strong, sustained/sudden, indirect/direct, and free/bound*.

5. "Real time" is a concept I learned in postmodern dance, taking the time on stage, for example, to boil an egg (postmodern dancers would do such things in performance), rather than to demonstrated a condensed version of it in a more typical theatrical timing.

6. *Exertion/Recuperation* is a theme stressed in the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies (LIMS) Certification Program. Among other pairs of apparently oppositional themes are *Mobility/Stability, Function/Expression, Simple/Complex, and Part/Whole*. See <https://labaninstitute.org/about/> and <https://psychomotorischetherapie.info/website/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/LMA-Workshop-Sheet-Laban.pdf>

7. Assagioli, R. (1974/1999). *The act of will*. Woking, England: David Platts Publishing Company.

8. See "The Gymnastics of the Will." <https://kennethsorensen.dk/en/the-training-of-the-will/>

9. The "Four Treasures" were offered for movement exploration by Robert (Bob) Ellis Dunn in a post-modernist choreography workshop in New York City in January, 1992.

10. These are the six Psychological Functions of the "Star Diagram" or "Will Diagram," a central model in Psychosynthesis. See "The 'star' diagram: your personal tools" at <https://aap-psychoanalysis.org/What-is-Psychoanalysis>.



Northern Lights from the air



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An Imagined Apology

By Catherine Ann Lombard



Forgiveness is a tricky business. Born out of a paradoxical mixture of human suffering, responsibility and love, the essential power of forgiveness is that it *contains* rather than proliferates violence. This short reflection explores where forgiveness comes from and the power it holds. I also offer one way to create forgiveness with the help of your imagination.

Forgiveness is a creative process. You decide how much, when, where, how, and under what conditions to forgive. As Jungian psychologist Clarissa Pinkola Estés writes, “The important part of forgiveness is *to begin and to continue*” (author’s italics). It does not happen overnight, it does not have to happen fully. But one thing is certain, it cannot happen from your head. We cannot reason our way around, into, or towards forgiveness. Forgiveness comes from the heart, and it requires a great love, a Love beyond ourselves.

Assagioli wrote:

“Forgiveness is not an act of passivity or weakness. Every time we forgive, we perform a ‘magical act’, because we break a chain and, by doing so, we free ourselves from a bond. Forgiveness is a conscious act of will and love, that truly knows how to forget and stop the sad succession of resentment, vendettas and struggles among human beings. Forgiveness is the most effective way to bring peace to the souls of the world.”

Throughout the years, I have come to understand that forgiveness is a process of both acceptance and surrender. It is a long process and does not happen once but gradually, many, many times. Perhaps this is what Jesus meant when Peter asked him, “How often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?” Jesus answered, “Not seven, I tell you, but seven times seventy” (Matthew 18:21-22).

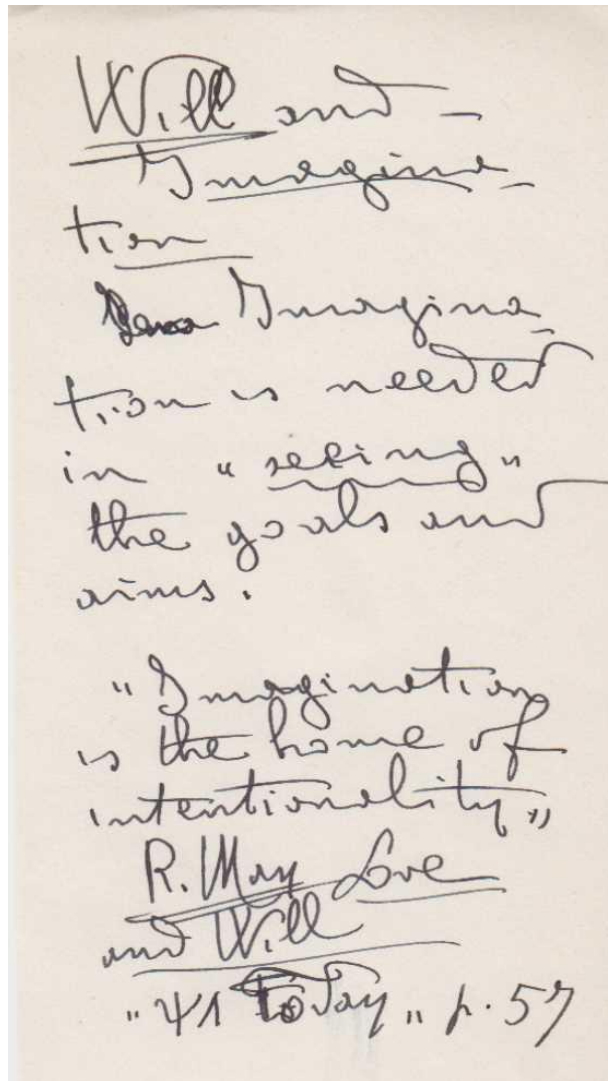
Writing the Apology You Long to Hear

One example of creating forgiveness can be found in [The Apology by Eve Ensler](#). Throughout her childhood, Ensler had been physically and sexually abused by her father. Decades after his death, she decided to write an apology for him – the apology that she had yearned to hear all her life. The book is

written entirely from his perspective. In its "Introduction", she talks about using her imagination to create the words she needed to hear her father say:

"My father is long dead. He will never say the words to me. He will not make the apology. So it must be imagined. For it is in our imagination that we can dream across boundaries, deepen the narrative, and design alternative outcomes."

As Ensler points out, the first step towards forgiving or making an apology or even hearing an apology can begin with our own imagination. Assagioli said that our imagination has the great power to produce something that never existed before. By using our creative imagination, we help to externally manifest that which we visualize. In other words, by just imagining ourselves forgiving someone or apologizing to someone or having our perpetrator apologize to us, we begin to engage in that very act.

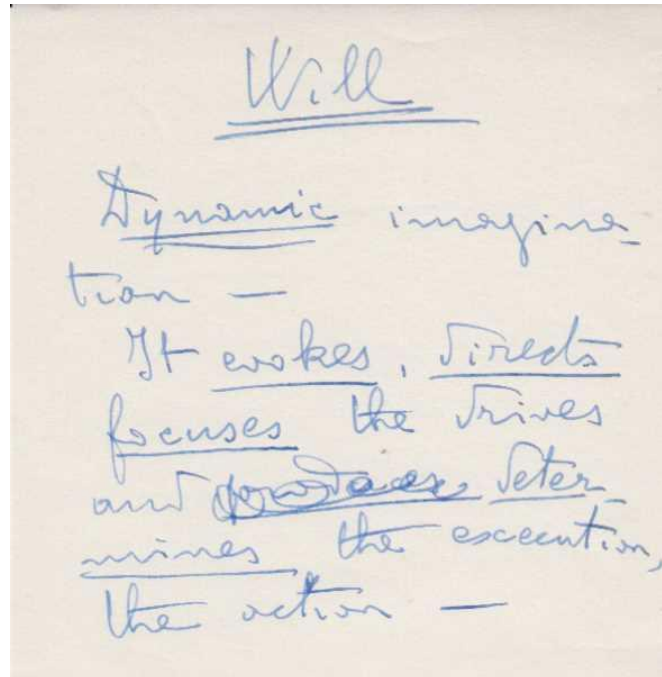


Will and Imagination / Imagination is needed in "seeing" the goals and aims. (Note from Assagioli's Archives)

Now, like most psychosynthesis techniques, using our creative imagination is not so easy! We can't just say 'I'm sorry' and Poof! Magically all is forgiven and forgotten. The imagination must be fully engaged in creative play. We must physically feel the apology. We would do well to write it down with pen and paper, say it out loud, imagine the injured or injurer sitting before us. We then need to chew on all of our feelings, thoughts and bodily sensations. Let the dust settle. Allow for the sinking feeling in our stomach. Perhaps cry and even scream our response. Breathe and imagine again...

Clair's Story

I have many examples from my counseling practice of how the imagination can work in this way. Here is just one. During our second session together, Clair talked about her longing to reconcile her relationship with her father, which had ruptured fifteen years earlier. When Clair was 11 years old, her father decided to stop talking to the family, made this announcement to her mother and marked it by shaving his head. He only engaged with the family in angry outbreaks, otherwise he was completely silent. Towards the end of Clair's detailed description of what had happened, she was sobbing. Five days after Clair shared her longing for reconciliation, she received a letter from her father – completely unprompted by her – requesting that they arrange to talk about what happened when she was 11 years old.



Will / Dynamic imagination – / It evokes, directs, focuses the drives and determines the execution, the action – (Note from Assagioli's Archives)

Forgiveness Invokes Freedom

Both acts, whether we forgive someone or apologize to another, brings freedom. Freedom from the visceral memory of the wounds received in body, soul and psyche. Freedom from the inner emptiness left by the harm we may have inflicted on another. By holding tight to this goal of freedom, a higher transpersonal quality, we can endure the wretchedness we might be feeling as we relive painful experiences. Ultimately, as we move towards reconciliation, inner freedom is awakened and nurtured, activating an inner opening within our heart in which peace can move in and take residence.

To move more deeply towards birthing forgiveness or an apology requires self-evaluation and reflection. Both forgiving and apologizing are a remembering. Both are humbling. Both victim and perpetrator become equal, fallible, human beings. Both abdicate power. Both become vulnerable.

An apology means examining the details of what you have done. Forgiveness means reliving the details of what has been done to you. Because God is in the details. Freedom is in the details.

This freedom – for both the forgiver and forgiven – is a spiritual release. Ultimately, you will feel a wave of energy move through your body. Your knees might shake and your chest rattle with sobs. In the end, you will breathe again and see the world differently. You will be more connected to all around you.

I leave the final words to Enslar:

“Find a clergy, a person, a counselor. Start to work on your apology. It’s a process. It’s a journey. It’s a practice. It takes time. And to those who can’t get an apology, write yourself one from your perpetrator. Work with somebody to support it. Write a thorough letter to yourself from the person who harmed you. The impact on me was profound. I feel free in a way I have never felt in my life.”



The author would like to thank Clair (not her real name) for allowing her story to be shared here.



About Catherine Ann Lombard

Catherine is a psychosynthesis psychologist, counselor, writer and researcher. Most recently she translated and wrote the “Introduction” to [Roberto Assagioli’s *Creating Harmony in Life*](#). She lives in Italy with her husband where they grow most of their own food. You can learn more about her at [LoveAndWill.com](#).

The Imagination Imagined

An edited extract from *'Waking Dreams: Imagination in Psychotherapy & Everyday Life'* by Allan Frater

In the psychosynthesis literature characters of imagination are 'inner figures' approached through an 'inner programme' or 'inner dialogue', resulting in an 'inner integration'. And yet, when we look at what actually happens in therapy rooms, there is also very often an implicit experience of such imagined characters, not as inner-figures, but as an imaginal presence in the normal everyday world. Whether perceived in a teddy-bear, doll, drawing or in a landscape of imagination during a waking dream, such figures are sometimes interacted with as-if they are independent and autonomous others, not at all 'inner figures' or 'parts of us.' But the understanding of imagination as 'inner' does little to address this activity of imagery in the world.

I took advantage of a research project during my psychotherapy training to explore this gap between theoretical understanding and actual clinical application. The title of my project was 'The Imagination Imagined'. It aimed to find out how a therapist's theoretical assumptions regarding imagination qualitatively shape the client's imaginative experience. A series of interviews were conducted with psychosynthesis psychotherapists, a key part of which invited them to share how they might have responded to the following clinical situation, which was based upon a composite from my own practice:

I'd like to describe to you a clinical vignette.

A client reports how he had been looking out a train window, more daydreaming than noticing the countryside slipping past, and how on turning back into the carriage he saw on the chair opposite him a little boy whom he recognised as his younger self, quietly sitting and looking back at him.

The client knew it was not a physical little boy and yet it, "did not feel made-up" and had "a sort of reality."

If we take it for granted that this client is psychologically stable, how might you have responded?

The results of the interviews fell broadly into two groups. In the first group, the understanding of the 'little boy' was an internalisation of the client's actual historical 'little boy'. In other words, the 'little boy' on the chair was a projection of a memory, an experiential picture from childhood that properly lived inside him. In other words, imagination was assumed to be a psychological interiority and this first group would have offered this inner-imagination understanding to the client in an unqualified manner, using terms such as 'subpersonality' and 'Inner Child' or the phrase 'that child part of you' as an opening to reflect upon the historical origins of the 'little boy.'

In using an 'inner imagination' language with the client, this first group were communicating a belief system or psychological theory arguably unrelated to the observed phenomena. A belief systems not of spirits or ancestors, but one in which images are : 'inner' and 'subjective'; representations of the 'real' (in this case, actual physical events from history) but not 'real' in themselves; only of secondary importance to tracing them back to what they represent in the 'real' and 'objective' world.

This inner-imagination understanding is the predominant presentation across the literature of not just Psychosynthesis, but also other orientations which focus upon image-work, most of whom, while taking imagination seriously show very little consideration as to what it is phenomenologically. As the psychotherapist Mary Watkins writes: "It is ironic that those psychologies which seem to give the greatest respect to the imaginal have not inquired into the subject of what they have imagined of imagining."

I was therefore not surprised that this first group of interviewees held an unqualified inner-imagination position, which reflects the assumptions within Psychosynthesis theory and also the common-sense and dictionary definition understanding of imagination in mainstream culture. However, the second group of interviewees described an alternative way of working. In their response to the client,

they would have deliberately avoided any kind of abstract language such as ‘Inner-Child’ or ‘subpersonality’, or any search for the historical origins of the imagined character. Instead, these therapists straightforwardly acknowledged the reality of the character by matching the ‘little boy’ language of the client and inviting a simple non-jargonistic description of the experience.

This second group were consciously avoiding inner/outer and unreal/real thinking and language. It was understood by this group that such a dualistic framing placed a layer of abstract terminology over the client’s experience, moving the therapy towards a rational thinking-about analysis rather than an experiential exploration, which these therapists valued highly as a primary means towards healing and transformation.

One of the therapists in this group spoke of how, “You step in and explore: what does he look like, how do you feel towards him.”; another spoke of the importance of “the client connecting with their imaginal sense, rather than being a detective and tracking down something that happened in the past,” while another spoke of the therapy as, “a discussion of what makes the world a magical, meaningful place... which needs to be opened, validated, explored, so that the client can have it more consciously”. In refraining from inner-imagination theoretical language the client’s imaginal attention, far from being diverted from the activity of images in everyday life, was being actively enhanced.

The two groups were separated theoretically as well as methodologically. It was not just a subtle question of language games. How these therapists understood imagination mattered. While none of the second group were able to succinctly describe an actual theoretical position on the reality or otherwise of the ‘little boy’ image, they nevertheless all recognised there was more to it than the inner-imagination understanding, which they took much more provisionally than the first group. In other words, the second group made a distinction between theory and practice, ideas and experiences, whereas the first group were conflating them together. I concluded it was their theoretical agnosticism towards imagination that allowed this second group to convey an interest in the client’s actual imaginative experience rather than forcing the ‘little boy’ into an abstracted inner-imagination belief system.

The inner imagination definition is best understood as a metaphor rather than an actual description of what happens when we imagine. Images are only “as if” but not really inside us in an actual inner place or realm easily separated from normal everyday life, in the way photographs are inside a smartphone. In other words, imagination is both inner and outer. As the late maverick psychiatrist R.D. Laing wrote:

“This distinction between outer and inner . . . is a distinction between different modalities of experience, namely, perception (as outer) in contrast to imagination, etc. (as inner). But perception, imagination, phantasy, reverie, dreams, memory are simply different modalities of experience, none more “inner” or “outer” than any others. Imagination is neither entirely inner or outer.”¹

However, with overuse and a lack of alternative ideas, the difference between inner imagination theory and actual experience can be easily missed. While an ‘inner imagination’ theory is not wrong, and can be helpful to step back and gain perspective, it does tend towards a more analytical thinking-about images which eclipses the quality of attention needed for imagining. As the following four limitations show, inner imagination assumptions are poorly aligned to what image-based therapists most value in experiential work.

Dualistic

The inner imagination assumes a dualism of inner and outer. Images have a proper location within and an improper projection onto the world, the limitation of which can lead to a preoccupation with a withdrawal of projections. In extreme cases of fantastical delusions, this may have some merit; however, in less disturbed individuals (that is, most people) the attempt to fit the complexity of imaginative experience into neat inner/outer categories is rarely satisfactory or clear-cut.

Rationalistic

An inner imagination approach turns images into ideas, rather than working with them as imaginative experiences. Time and energy are put into wondering about where images have come from, to whom they belong, what they represent, and whether or not they are projections to be withdrawn to a source within. All of which is perhaps interesting, and sometimes useful, but needs to be recognized as a rational thinking-about images at odds with the commonly understood importance of experiential work in psychological transformation.

Narcissistic

Inner imagination obviously focuses attention inwards: images are assumed to be personal and subjective, perhaps even something we have made up and have a certain control over. The danger of which is a narcissistic self-absorption, in which the ego becomes identified as “the-person-doing-the-imagining”, a distortion that serves to further bolster and suit the needs of this egoic identity, moving away from the more relational imaginative engagement that might challenge egoic identification.

Mechanistic

If imagination is ‘inner’ and we are somehow on the outside peering in, like a mechanic working on a car engine, then it is no surprise the images inside this machine imagination are theorized “as if” mechanical “objects” or “parts”, and change is the moving around of these image objects. However, this mechanistic framework offers little to support therapists in further understanding how imagination seems to create new ideas, identities, and ways of being, a process that rarely proceeds in a linear, predictable, and controllable mechanical fashion.

The inner imagination is at best a partial understanding, ill-suited to the needs of psychotherapeutic work. What is needed is a much closer match between theory and practice. An understanding aligned to the complexity of imagining and its place in psychotherapy and everyday life. One which points towards the quality of imaginal perception itself rather than thinking-about images. A joined-up imagination that brings self and world together not further apart. And a theory of change that embraces the human irregularity of dreams rather than the fantasy of a mechanical imagining.

References:

- 1, R.D.Laing, The Politics of Experience



Allan Frater is an author, psychotherapist, supervisor and teacher at The Psychosynthesis Trust in London, UK. He is interested in the role of imagination within normal everyday life, creative work and healing/transformation. His first book ‘Waking Dreams’ presented a critical development of standard approaches to ‘active imagination’ and ‘guided imagery’ incorporating paradigm shifting ideas and methods from ecopsychology, complexity theory, fractal geometry and transpersonal psychotherapy. He runs a popular on-line ‘Waking Dreams’ course and is currently writing a second book, provisionally titled ‘Living Between Stories: Imagination in a Time of Crisis’. Find out more via his website www.wildimagination.uk

Imagery is like deep sea diving

Addressing psychological problems at their core

By Jan Taal

If you have chronic psychological problems (neuroses, disorders, complexes or whatever you call it) and are unable to get rid of them, such as long-term depression, persistent trauma-related and other unpleasant experiences, you might want to try a different approach. Instead of trying to get rid of it, try making contact with it 'inside'.

You can do this by going to the feeling of the problem, in your body, in your inner world and giving it your attention. What is your feeling or image of it? Maybe you get a visual image, maybe a physical feeling or sensation.

Start giving this attention to get to know it, contact it, without trying to solve it. Like meeting a stranger for the first time, with curiosity, without prejudice . . . With persistent mental health issues, it is often like what old stories and fairy tales tell, something in you wants to be found, felt, healed or liberated.

Imagery is a very appropriate method for this: by consciously choosing, with sufficient 'I-strength'*, to engage with the 'problem', to contact it carefully, to discover and begin to feel what it needs or may have to offer you at its core. (Taal, 2022)

** I-strength is the psychological ability 'to deal with inner states, emotions and energies' or to put it in other way, the psychological ability 'to cope, manage what happens to us inside and in the outer world'.*

Something pulling me down

Kees has a chronic depression. 'I can't move forward, it's like something is pulling me down,' he says. And also: 'when I get up, it's often like there's a gloomy fog'. When asked where he feels this most in his body, Kees puts his hands on his stomach and chest. When he is then invited to bring his attention under his hands, to feel and perceive with his inner senses, after a while Kees says he thinks he sees a kind of chain. The therapist has Kees explore this image further and advises him to follow the chain downwards, if he can handle it. At first Kees thinks this is a precarious undertaking, he is afraid of the deep. But with the help of an imaginary diving suit,

flippers and an oxygen cylinder, he finally dares to take on the trip down.

At the bottom of the sea, Kees discovers to his surprise that the chain is attached to the wreck of a ship. In the closer examination of the wreck, Kees gets the curious feeling of having come face to face with a piece of his past, the failures in his work and marriage. There are flashbacks and several times the imaginative experience is gently interrupted, a pause is taken to cope with the emotions that have arisen. Then, as Kees continues his investigation, he discovers that there is a wonderful light in it, a light he had not seen before. This light becomes very important to him, warming him inside. In the following sessions, he manages to loosen the chain. It relieves him and in the weeks that follow his emotional state improves. In the following months he gradually regains the élan to make plans again and take steps forward in his life.

A symbolic, meaningful dimension

Imaginatively 'going inner to meet' a psychological problem is not a cognitive, rational process, it is much more of a dreamlike journey full of emotion and symbolism. The content and dynamics of the inner self, the psyche, is a purely symbolic, meaningful world, a world in which there can be obstacles and monsters, but also fairies, counsellors and guides, hidden treasures, elixirs and sometimes miraculous light. Every inner image in it represents psychic energy in a symbolic way, or rather every part in our imagination is a symbol and can lead us to resolution and inner vitality.

The imaginative encounter with a difficult content within ourselves can be threatening or fearful at first, but because you choose to go there of your own free will, you can prepare yourself and take all kinds of measures and call for help along the way, just like a traveller who enters an unknown territory well prepared. Kees in the example above put on an (imaginary) diving suit and flippers. Sometimes during such a process it then turns out that there are valuables to be found at the bottom.

Encounter with a scary animal

Another example, in which a client has a confrontation with a scary animal. It reminds me, the therapist in this case, of the fairy tale of the princess with the golden ball. In that story, the princess lost her golden ball, which fell into deep water. But luckily there is a frog who fishes up the ball for her. The frog, however, wants a reward in return. It is psychologically interesting that there are several variants of the reward in this ancient story. In one variant, the frog wants to sit at the table with the princess, to eat. In another variant, he wants to kiss and make love with her. And in yet another variant, the princess gets so furious that she throws the frog to pieces against the wall. In all cases, the frog turns out to be an enchanted prince, whose liberation can only come about because the princess makes real contact, for better or worse.

Thea suffers from an eating disorder. She has recurrent binge eating, sometimes pulling open the fridge and eating whatever is at hand, other times vomiting and trying to lose weight. When I, the therapist, ask her to go inward to the feeling of binge eating, after a while she gets the image of a hideous reptile. Thea finds the beast scary and disgusted. I then suggest to her to take the time to breathe calmly again, before looking at 'the beast' again. She does so, and then reports seeing her father's eyes in the beast standing in front of her. It startles her. We discuss her father's role in her life and how it is apparently connected to her eating disorder.

I suggest to Thea to continue and to contact the reptile again, to meet it attentively. My expectation was that Thea would begin to befriend the reptile, to begin to come into harmony with it, but nothing of the sort. Thea becomes furious and says she wants to attack it, destroy it, banish it from her life. With great force, she attacks the pillow I give her for it, pounding on it with all her might, and Thea screams that she wants it out of her life.

Afterwards, she says it is the first time she has expressed herself like this, she feels liberated. After a week, and again after a month, we discuss how things have gone for her and whether the liberated feeling has continued. Thea says that being able to express her anger so fully has been a breakthrough and that she has now found the strength to resist her binge eating; she succeeds by trial and error. Her self-confidence has grown.

Self-reinforcing, creative resources

To get to grips with chronic psychological problems, imagery offers surprising creative and non-verbal tools. It is an excellent, primal method that calls on the person's own self-reinforcing resources, but needs to be applied with care, dosed and in achievable, I-strong steps. Imagery has many different techniques for it.

Imagery is an inner process, but in particular also a process with creative expression, drawing, painting, writing, collages, voicing, movement, drama or role-playing, singing, dancing and music making, and in all kinds of combinations, depending on what is useful in the process and feasible for the person. The more the person actively works with the images and manages to express and apply them in daily life, the more integration of the psychic energy involved will take place.

Transcendental aspects of imagery

The way and attitude with which we make contact with an image is of paramount importance. Each image, be it a knife, a grain of sand, a swamp, an abyss, a wound, a monstrous creature or a nightingale, once truly contacted, fully with all one's inner senses, without any bias, it will tend to reveal its true transcendental nature. Although we use the same language as we experience the outer world, inner seeing, touching, smelling, sensing, feeling is of a completely different dimension. It seems comparable to how we experience the outer world; in fact it is quite something else.

Contacting an image, or feeling, or any other internal perception, brings us in a deeper state of mind and the more we are able to use our inner capacity to truly sense, without any prejudice, and truly possess what we experience, the deeper the 'image' will reveal its innate inner transcendental dimension, the light that's within us, now and forever. But if there is fear, fear of what one is encountering in the imagery, one needs to fortify oneself first, to become strong and capable to face what is showing and contact it heartfully. Relaxation, physical grounding and breathing are key elements in fortifying the 'I-strength'.

Sylvia, in her forties, felt so mistreated by her lover, who betrayed and left her. She feels miserable, lost, forgotten and denied. It brings back all her memories of what her mother told her one day, something that has hung over her like a dark shadow all her life: her mother tried to abort her, but the attempts failed.

When the therapist suggests she connect with that horrible, miserable feeling, going inside, she sees a dead embryo lying in a dark corner, like a forgotten dirty mop. She is shocked and at first completely wiped out. When, after some time, she has found her strength again, she dares to approach the embryo, a process that took several weeks. Then, to her great surprise, she slowly begins to feel that the embryo is not dead but alive. It just needs her sincere, heartfelt care. It is her genuine, attentive, warm-hearted approach, essentially realizing that she herself is lying there in a dark corner, that made the embryo alive, since its true nature is life and light.

Selection of publications

available from: <https://www.imaginatie.nl/en/articles>

Taal, J. (2022). *Imagery in Therapy, Counselling and Coaching*

Taal, J. (2017). *Course Book Imagery Toolbox 3.0.*

Taal, J. (2016). *Coping with cancer through imagery and artistic expression.*

Taal, J. & Krop, J. (2003). *Imagery in the treatment of trauma.* In: Sheikh, A. A. (ed.) *Healing Images. The Role of Imagination in Health. Imagery and Human Development Series.*

Imagery I discovered as a major tool for development and transformation in the 1970s. Ever since imagery, in its many forms, has been a tremendous interesting enterprise both for myself as well for my clients.

Bio

I studied Clinical Psychology at the University of Amsterdam and the University of Leiden (1973-1979), was trained in Psychosynthesis in the Netherlands and Italy (1978- 1982).

Prior to Psychology I studied Cultural Anthropology. I wandered in Afghanistan, the mountains of North-West Pakistan, India and Nepal (1969-1973). During this fieldwork there were many significant encounters. It led me to study Spiritual Traditions, Sufism, Jungian and Transpersonal Psychology and Traditional Medicine and rituals of healers in the Amazon region in South America.

I have been practicing as a healthcare psychologist since 1980 until now and founded the Amsterdam School for Imagery in 1985 to train professionals in the application of imagery and provide workshops for interested laypeople.

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Announcement: An evening with death

Exploring death, beyond rationality and learned beliefs, with in-depth imagery experiences.

December 19, 2023, 19:00 - 21:30 CET

Information: <https://www.imaginatie.nl/en/training/workshop-an-evening-with-death>



Mental Imagery, Metaphors, and More in Coaching/Counseling

By Patrick Williams EdD, MCC

Metaphors create powerful images and invite energetic and emotional awareness. They can draw forth imagination, unlock creativity and simulate resourcefulness. Imagery, of course, is an ingredient in metaphors that has powerful information.

- A metaphor is a figure of speech, in which one word or phrase stands for something else.
- The origin of the word comes from Amphora (Greek) a storage container for transporting valuables. So the information that surfaces from a metaphor is the valuables and the metaphor contains previously unknown (unconscious) insights.

Coaches also utilize with and explore the use of metaphor in coaching. Metaphors create powerful images and invite energetic and emotional awareness. They can draw forth imagination, unlock creativity and simulate resourcefulness.

Andrew Ortony, a researcher in learning and cognition, made a radical statement some years ago: Metaphors are necessary, not just nice (1975/2001, p. 29).

A metaphor can be viewed as simply one person's description of something as 'like' something else. In George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's mind-expanding book, *Metaphors We Live By*, they say: "The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (2003, p. 5).

When one acknowledges that most of our thought processes go beyond our conscious understanding, metaphors give a unique perspective into how we think about, feel, and experience our world. Consider this: the tangible world around us is made up of billions and billions of constantly moving atoms and lots of empty space in between. What we see is our own internal perception—colors, shapes, patterns. Isn't it all just a metaphor for the real thing? Perhaps metaphors are the closest we ever get to the "true" experience of reality.

Carl Jung explains the importance of the unconscious mind in his book, *Man and His Symbols* (1964). At some point of perception, we reach the edge of certainty beyond which conscious knowledge cannot pass. The unconscious, however, has taken note of all events and experiences, and will store this information in forms and symbols that may be somewhat obscure. Jung was convinced that by analyzing those symbols that appear through connecting with our unconscious, we have access to a much wider and more comprehensive understanding of ourselves, our relationships, and the wider world around us. Our use of metaphors in everyday language is one such "key" to deciphering our unconscious wisdom.

Metaphors Give the Coach Insight

As a tool for coaching, clients' analogies and metaphors give you a window into their unique perception of their situation and goals. When clients tell you they can "see light at the end of the tunnel," that is what they are experiencing. There is light for them, and they are experiencing themselves as if in a tunnel. They will unconsciously "know" much more about their situation from this metaphoric viewpoint. They are very likely to know in which direction the light is, how far away it is, and where it comes from. They will know about the structure of the tunnel, how it feels and looks, how narrow the passage is, and where they are in relation to the tunnel.

When coaching conversations become stale and in need of a shift in energy, we find that listening for a metaphor in a client's language can lead to exploration by simply asking him or her to describe it and give it life. Encourage the client to see how the metaphor transforms. This is an elegant way to create an

atmosphere of shifting thought and outcome without an abundance of dialogue, instead letting the metaphor represent the shift wanted or needed.

There are 3 basic ways to utilize metaphors in coaching conversations:

1. Just listen for a metaphor that the client shares. Our language is full of metaphors. they might say they feel stuck, or lost in the woods, or some other image. As a coach, just ask, what kind of stuck is that stuck, or tell me more about stuck. After some exploration, the coaching can create ideas for changing the metaphor. What needs to happen?
2. Create a metaphor by asking the client, when you think of this issue/challenge, it is like what? Notice the question does not say what is that like?' Instead, the phrase *it's like what* almost always elicits a metaphor to work with. (This comes from Clean Language created by David Grove who I trained with in 1987)
3. Offer a metaphor that comes from your intuition. Say to the client. " Susan, I have an image that comes to me as you describe your challenge. May I share it? Then, if they agree (most always) state the metaphor or symbol that you sense and see where it takes the client.

The use of metaphoric images helps to bypass intense emotions that might derail new awareness and instead creates a way to shift an image which changes the emotional energy unconsciously connected to it. This is not to avoid emotional expression but to give emotions a pathway that is more transformative, while being less traumatizing.

Other ways to tap into the unconscious and go below the surface of current thinking are the use of guided imagery and even photographs. In coaching, both in person and in in video meetings, I have used photographic cards from various sources*, but also even family photographs as well as what art does one have on their wall and why...what does it say to them generally and maybe specifically to a life desire or desired way of being. What story may be attached to the photo or painting?

** Points of You™ and Center for Creative Leadership Metaphor Explorer cards.*

Use of Mental Imagery in personal mastery in sports

I'm sure you've all seen Olympic athletes such as ski racers, divers, high jumpers, football quarterbacks, equestrians, golfers, and so forth mentally rehearse an upcoming performance. It only takes a few seconds, but they visualize the performance the way they want it. Plenty of research has shown the efficacy of this.

In her book Psychosynthesis Counseling in Action, Diana Whitmore writes: "Imagery is the language of the unconscious and reveals in a symbolic way conflicts and contents which may be unavailable to the conscious self."

Imagery in coaching or counseling may be used to evoke or to illuminate...to gather new thoughts and insights that may surface from the image. I have taught that in coaching, we assist the client to gather new information from their unconscious, not to *eliminate* thoughts but to *illuminate* what can be.

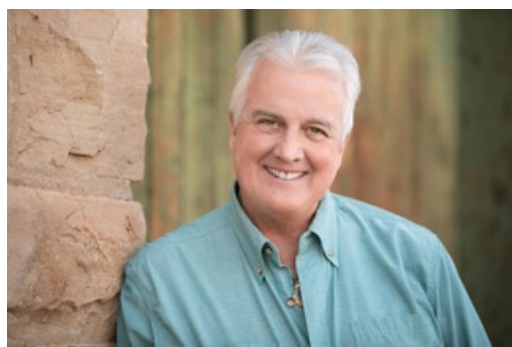
Today, the neuroscience of research in Coaching and use of imagery reveals how the brain changes with the use of imagery using PET scans and/or fMRI. The team at the Weatherhead school of management at Case Western Reserve University led by Dr. Richard Boyatzis and documented in Helping People Change.

The Future holds great promise in the use of and research in the value and power of guided imagery. I make a distinction in contextual guided imagery and narrative guided imagery. Both have their place in counseling or coaching.

Contextual is when we ask a client (or group) to imagine being in a mountain meadow. And on the one side is a trail up the mountain, and there also is a valley by a river that goes down somewhere. The client chooses the meadow, mountain, or river valley.

Examples of a more narrative guided imagery could be Assagioli's suggested use of meeting a wise being and having a conversation or exploring one's future self with the experience more like a narrated story from the practitioner.

The power of imagery derived from metaphors is undeniable and is a tool suggested by Assagioli in his early writings, while also encouraging the expansion of those tools, which is visible today in coaching, counseling, and teaching.



Dr. Patrick Williams, EdD, MCC

Founder and Advanced Curriculum Instructor

One of the early pioneers of coaching, Pat is often called the ambassador of life coaching. Pat has been a licensed psychologist since 1980 and began executive coaching in 1990 with Hewlett Packard, IBM, Kodak and other companies along the front range of Colorado.

He then started his own coach training school, the Institute for Life Coach Training (ILCT), which specializes in training those with a human services orientation. He has authored 6 books about

professional coaching with W.W. Norton books.

In 1977 Dr. Pat completed his doctorate in Transpersonal Psychology (following an MA in Humanistic Psychology) Training in psychosynthesis was part of that curriculum and opened his doors to Assagioli's wisdom.

Pat is a past board member of the International Coach Federation (ICF). He is past president of ACTO, the Association of Coach Training Organizations and an honorary VP of the Association of Coaching Psychology and a Founding member of Harvard University's Institute of Coaching. And in 2018, he was selected to be one of 5 coaches in the inaugural *Circle of Distinction* by the ICF.

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Pat continues to speak and train others in aspects of optimal living.

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ICF Circle of Distinction

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Master Certified Coach, (ICF)

Honorary VP (International society of Coaching Psychology)

Lifetime member of the Association of Humanistic Psychology

Imagination, intuition and thinking – a creative relationship

By Svante Björklund

Imagination, intuition and thinking, our three great powers. Not enough to make us fully human but to take us to new heights of awareness and participation in Life.

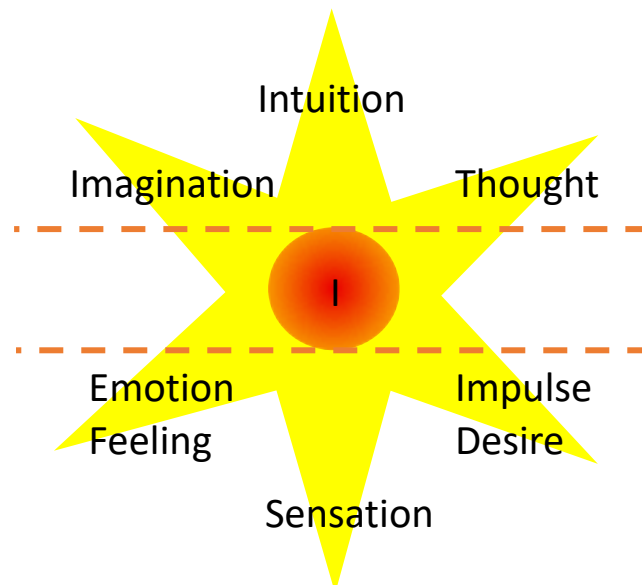
I think I have become a bit enamored by these three powers, three forces of life. And this from a long life of my own experiences of them and through them but even more so by the promise they hold for mankind.

The crux is that they come with a lot of responsibility as they can be used very efficiently both for good and for bad. It prompts the question – how do we know what good or bad really is, and in what context and with what perspective?

Let us first take a dive down in our psychological constitution. I will use Assagioli's Star as a very helpful guide to understand this in psychosynthesis ways. When we overlay the structure of the egg, we can see a clear division into three psychological functions pointing down and three pointing up. We use that as an indication of their qualities, not as a perfect truth, but to aid in understanding our inner life.

As a rough sketch we can perceive feeling, sensation and impulse/desire as influencers, to use a modern term. These are necessary for our survival and quality of life. They keep informing us of both inner and outer context and happenings. They contribute to that what makes us human, and they are neither good nor bad in themselves. They influence us in many ways, and they can be experienced by Me (I) and regulated by My will but not directly generated as they are autonomous functions. For example, to generate a feeling or a sensation we need to imagine it, seeing an inner image. To activate a desire, we can think of a situation that associates with the desire. The psychological laws will give us more ways of generating these three psychological functions.

In the upper parts we have the three power-functions, imagination, intuition and thought. Thought is rightly the process of thinking rather than just having thoughts as mentioned above. They are not good or bad in themselves. Only when used by Me and My will can they be good and used by a subpersonality in survival mode they can often be used for bad.



The use of authentic and conscious will directly from I, more or less connected to Self, seems to make actions and decisions more good. In psychosynthesis terms the use of Good will and/or Transpersonal will is to follow a moral compass. A compass that is more reverent to Life than just having good ideals or following an ideology, which can be fraught with danger.

By going inwards and getting to know ourselves in our deeper roots we can make that compass whirl around and point in the right direction. In those moments, they are usually only moments, we have what I want to call Right Thinking and Right Action. Thinking that is creative and inspired by imagination and intuition not taken from the storage of ready-made answers and opinions that we carry with us in those vast realms of learned memories. Imagination can here be used to ascertain consequences and help choosing the Right Action.

This compass can be acquired by living a healthy and normal life that includes more or less loving human relationships. It can also be acquired by purposeful training. Is that not what we do in psychosynthesis training?

To expand the perspective as much as I can, I will give you a scenario where we can see the vast space for actions that opens up when we consider the two poles, thesis and antithesis, of the Infirmity of Man and the Universal Will. The infirmity of man is mentioned in Psychosynthesis by Assagioli from 1965, page 20 and 21, 1993 edition.

“In our ordinary life we are limited and bound in a thousand ways—the prey of illusions and phantasms, the slaves of unrecognized complexes, tossed hither and thither by external influences, blinded and hypnotized by deceiving appearances. No wonder then that man, in such a state, is often discontented, insecure and changeable in his moods, thoughts and actions. Feeling intuitively that he is “one”, and yet finding that he is “divided unto himself”, he is bewildered and fails to understand either himself or others. No wonder that he, not knowing or understanding himself, has no self-control and is continually involved in his own mistakes and weaknesses; that so many lives are failures, or are at least limited and saddened by diseases of mind and body, or tormented by doubt, discouragement and despair. No wonder that man, in his blind passionate search for liberty and satisfaction, rebels violently at times, and at times tries to still his inner torment by throwing himself headlong into a life of feverish activity, constant excitement, tempestuous emotion and reckless adventure.”

Not much have changed except that we now can see it more clearly as it plays out in the open. Thank you internet and global communications.

The other pole is Universal Will. Not so easy to grasp as it is transcendent and thus not to be understood by the rational logic but with intuitive rationality. Rational here is understood in two different ways, the latter as a higher cognitive function. In the sense of Assagioli’s words, “The existence of a universal mind, of an inherent *rationality* of the Universe, has been affirmed by many in various ways, both philosophical and scientific.”.

Building on this understanding and the various definitions and explanations Assagioli makes in The Act of Will, we can devise a path to expand our consciousness, and thus our space for action and development, through some experiments. The explanation of Universal Will as the very *fabric of the universe*, stuck in my mind a long time ago. (I don’t remember where I read it and if anybody has a clue, please let me know.) Another directly from Act of Will, p18, is “... our relationship with the ultimate reality, the Universal Self and how it embodies and demonstrates the Universal, Transcendent Will.” In many texts on psychosynthesis, from Assagioli and others, life and living is used as in living self and Life as a universal reality.

I eventually came to a conclusion what Life with a capital L means after having edited and read all the contributions to seeing psychosynthesis as a Living System in the September Quarterly. Truly inspirational perspectives which made me see a connection between Life and Universal Will. Life itself being the ultimate Living System. Contemplating this connection in the light of Quantum Physics and the many new perspectives on the creation of our universe in the Big Bang where time and matter did not exist, I concluded that Life is the creational power/force that manifested itself as a Will that willed the universe to exist as we know it and so much more that we still don’t know and cannot know in full with our limited capacity. I was inspired by Stephen Hawking, who with the help of mathematics and some colleagues, concluded that the Big Bang preceded the creation of Time. As time did not exist it is meaningless to say that the Big Bang was before the creation of Time. Can we live with that as a Mystery? Yes. We can. We are here and we have the gifts of imagination, intuition and thinking to use on a journey of not only understanding but of cocreation of the future and Life. AND if we truly are

cocreators of our lives and the life of the planet we live on and with, imagination will be a deciding part in how that will play out.

This brings me to the meditative exercise I devised for the Webinar in October on Psychosynthesis as a Living System. Using imagination we can journey back to “before” and experience the Mystery of the Void to find the antithesis of the Infirmity of Man.

The intention was to create that elusive state of mind which is the space of infinite possibilities and inspire to further exploration. If that succeeded or not will be the judgement of the individual. I will explain the use of the result further below.

The creative use of imagination. Use it as a portal to a different state of mind.

Imagine that you can travel in time. Say to yourself – I’m a time traveler... Now go back through time to the very beginning of time. You’re now in the space of the Big Bang. You stand at the borderline of time, its very beginning, its birth, and looking at the state of being “before” time was even started... You perceive a timeless void.

...

It is possible to sense this dimension. This is where Life is... Life is the origin, ever present...

Life is timeless in its core... Life has a quality of will, Universal Will...

You can sense Universal Will stirring in the timeless, luminous void...

Life wants something...

Life wants to manifest beyond the void...

The clock of our universe is starting to tick, and the manifestation of Life is happening... Universal Will is realizing itself...

In the flow of time Human Being is manifesting...

Somewhere, somewhen YOU are manifesting... You are becoming yourself... Self is real... You are real...

Feel it... Sense it...

Who are you really?

Take a deep breath and come back to now and here.

After having done this meditation as the experiment it is we have the antithesis to “The Infirmity of Man” that is so familiar as it has become the thesis of our lives. We have now the maximum tension in the bow of Life and the scene is set up for Fractional Synthesis. Starting where we are, aiming our arrows towards the union with Universal Will. Feeling the advent of a fraction of the Universal Will as it manifests in our own individual, Transpersonal will. Self is cooperating and transforming the unfathomable powers of Universal Will to something manageable to the individual. We are on our psychosynthesis journey to serve on the path of Life.

Bon Voyage, Svante

PS. This essay can be seen as an installment of the Will Project. “Relationship between the human will and the Universal Will.”



My first encounter with psychosynthesis was in New Zealand during the 90’s. After having returned to Sweden (my native country) I started my psychosynthesis journey in December 1999, organizational consultant in 2003 and therapist in 2005. Started with teaching as an apprentice in 2004 with the new beginners. Still teaching the in-depth sessions for the therapists based on the two last(!) books by John Firman & Ann Gila. Also involved in systemic supervision with the organizational consultants.

Digging in the archives with Alle Fonti in Florence is also a high point together with two international conferences in Italy. The embodiment part was securely grounded with 15 years of Aikido, 8 years of Yoga and especially with the Rosen Method including two magic meetings with Marion Rosen and all the Rosen intensives on top of that.

All this has been very useful in the Systemic Constellations work since 2005 with all the best teachers in Europe. Systemic Constellations has been embodiment in practice for me and sometimes a painful experience of self-discovery. Now it is a passion to be exercised as often as possible.

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Embodied Transformation Through Autofiction

By Anastasia Wasko

Images are currency. They ebb and flow with our own being and sense of awareness of being. The crossing of borders within ourselves is the journey of navigating inner space, the landscape of the human being living in this Earth experience while being spirit in nature. Inner space is full of characters associated with the images because those characters play out the psychodramas that we then play out in our inner and outer lives. We live by and through the stories that we tell ourselves, and we connect (or don't connect) to narratives around those stories.

But often, the stories overwhelm or at the least, obscure, our aliveness, and what we must be with is an inability to be in full presence and disidentify from a subpersonality. We run story scripts that are emotional and laden with nuanced memory. Often, the mindsets keep us in a negative or nongenerative state. True creative agility arrives with the presence of a creative mindset that, by its own nature, emerges through emotional regulation.

We are burdened by the legacy of stories, which turn inward as psychodramas. This is what we explore in therapy. The images that flood in through meditation and somatic connection are valuable, and the use of them as currency is what we pay to heal. Our sense of personal wellbeing can be had when we find expression for emotional and intellectual conflict, and through that expression, we can be healed from stories through imagination.

There's a particularly useful form of working with imagination—I use it in my client practice and my own practice. It's called autofiction. Autofiction is the container that can hold transformation because the genre is a vehicle for catharsis in ways that aren't limited by narrative form and truth-telling that is at the core of memoir or essay. Autofiction allows the writer to have the material experience they need.

The form isn't completely new, although it is more obscure than mainstream memoir (also a form of writing that involved internal processing and transformation). *Paula* by Sandra Hoffman is a conventionally published book written by the author's desperate need to get to know something of her grandma, a woman who "haunted her." The author harbors a mixed batch of emotions for the figure in her clear childhood memories. Paula, the alcoholic, mentally ill grandmother who went through the author's closet and had a rosary in her hand around the clock terrorized her. Hoffman recounted the memories, but wrote into the story the grandmother as *Hoffman needed her* to be—in the very least, someone with more than just a brooding presence. Sandra Cisneros did a similar form of creating what she needed in *The House on Mango Street*. Cisneros made a place for herself on the page through short, vignette-type scenes recounted over the course of a year. She was a young Latina living in a neighborhood where she didn't fit in. The work wasn't pure fiction; it was based on where she lived. The fiction is that it may or may not have happened exactly as she described it. But it doesn't matter. Autofiction isn't there to tell the mainstream ideal that we need to have a neatly ordered story of our lives, or that we have a bootstrap story that feels good in hindsight. Autofiction tells the story of what we individually need to see on the page.

Who cares why they walk in the shadow of the narrator? Is it not a tension that we all feel—to walk in slight delay, or side step, to the version of us that lives online, lives on social media, lives at home, lives in our "real" lives? The days when we had separate lives are long gone. We've forgotten how to write like that—but autofiction is a forgiving genre.

I self-published my first book-length work of autofiction in 2001, and then I created a micropublishing company and released my follow-up book. *Meta Work*, was released in 2021. The story tells my journey moving through mental health challenges, self transformation through creative writing, and finding peace through autofictional form. I lived with a disorganized mind that couldn't discern memory from trauma. The work itself was an exercise in organizing my reality, but it gave me the control I had previously lacked. I contained my perceptual experience on a page and teased out a story within the flood of images. The connection to aliveness came from seeing the rapid-fire series of images on the page; then, in an act of disidentification from those thoughts, I was able to make my own meaning and tease out a subpersonality from them. The transformation came once I could create distance from the subpersonality

(of being a woman sick with mental illness and the negative narrative around that) and see that I had the power to make more conscious choices once I was in a more disidentified state.

Here is the opportunity to work with the emotional resonance—this is the story, the felt-sense of embodied experience. Then, once the story is distanced, that is, disidentified from, the act of transformation occurs *while using imagination to write a new story with “I” as the main character*. The fiction is the container to play with new emotional experiences. This is especially valuable when the memory of an emotional experience does not already exist or is not easily accessed. A person who lives in a trauma mindset might not be able to feel or perceive joy, ease, or peace, but writing out a scene in which they actively do is an act of transformation and opportunity to step into that emotion. Writing and working with imagination is an act of embodied transformation.

Noting again the literal and figurative meaning, especially when writing beyond traditional forms, there is a need for traditional expectations of creative writing to be put aside. What we are writing are the following: a story is about a character and what happens to them. A story has a beginning, middle, and end. Through autofiction, we can jump into a memory (or series of memories), deem it a beginning, middle, or end, and write from there. Healing and integration is never linear, so why not choose a form to match that? What *I* or *my client* needs to happen can be written next—imaginatively or literally, depending on what the story needs to create the desired emotional experience. A story creates a shared emotional experience (the emotional resonance achieved with a reader, whereby sometimes the sole reader is also the writer). The act of putting words to the page *as the character in the story* allows us to ask, “What is my self talk like? What have I been through especially here in ____? What’s the emotional experience?”

The story may be a closely held experience. When moving away from an individual’s unique experience, a bridge of connection is made through narrative. Narrative is a way of looking at the world, a worldview that influences thought and meaning. Narratives unfold over time (without a distinct beginning, middle, or end). They create a strategy and influence decision-making similar to the way a mindset is a series of thought patterns and behaviors into motion. Narratives are cornerstones of connection; they are threads woven from many stories that share a common experience. A disabled person, a Black woman, an unhoused person may read or hear stories from others who have the lived-experiences of those identities and find common ground. From this point, emotional regulation is easier to achieve, and a return (or stepping into) to the creative, generative mindset is available.



Anastasia Wasko is a writer, editor, and transpersonal guide from the New York/New Jersey area and currently living in northeastern Alabama. She has a BA in Transpersonal Psychology from Sofia University (former Institute of Transpersonal Psychology). She is currently exploring psychosynthesis in the masters program at The Institute of Psychosynthesis in London, England.

Wasko’s fiction and creative non-fiction writing have appeared in Space Cowboy’s Simultaneous Times podcast, *Thrive Global*, and in *Journal of Exceptional Experiences*. Her debut work of autofiction *SevenThirteen* was self-published in 2003. Her second work of autofiction called *Meta Work* was released in 2021, and third work called (*KiezKucker*) is being released in 2023.

Anastasia has spent several years working on Mindfield, the official publication of the Parapsychological Association. She wrote a chapter on engaging the transpersonal in scientific inquiry for the book *Paranormal*

Ruptures: Critical Approaches to Exceptional Experiences.

Anastasia focuses on helping individuals explore their relationship with the world beyond the ego so they can be more present, joy-filled, and fulfilled in their human experience. She believes that creative expression is the medicine we can take. Her biggest joy is the writing work she does.

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Imagine

By Shamai Gabbay, PhD

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one
John Lennon

Our imagination is what keeps us alive. Without it we would be swimming in a sea of despair. We would have nowhere to turn for our daily stress and anxiety. The Oxford English dictionary says that to imagine is ingenious, subtle intelligence, and rare. It refers to a representation of ourselves, a form of mental image or picture of ourselves that we create.

I imagine, therefore I will. In her 2016 Article in The Trust, *Paula Góes talks about how clients can form their future by molding a symbolic process which includes both memory and fantasy.* (May R. Love and will. New York: Delta; 1989) *Góes* says that Assagioli seemed to support this when he claimed that ‘we cannot perform the simplest voluntary act, for instance, the movement of a muscle, unless the image of the movement has first been evoked’, and stated that ‘visualization is a necessary stage for action’. (Assagioli R. *Psychosynthesis: a collection of basic writings.* New York: Penguin; 1976) May added that ‘there is no will without a prior wish’, asserting that ‘imagination is the home of intentionality’. For him, the wheels are set in motion by the conception of the possibility, as fantasy pushes reality to a new depth: ‘Fantasy is the language of the total self, communicating, offering itself, trying on for size. It is the language of “I wish/I will” – the projection in imagination of the self into the situation.’¹

On the web there are many examples of exercises one can do to stimulate the creative self. Sorenson offers a few that help to discipline and create the self/Self.²

Aphantasia is the word given to the inability to visualize, to create in the mind’s eye an image of what is to be. These people cannot recall images of familiar objects or people. Prof Adam Zeman, a cognitive and behavioural neurologist at the University of Exeter coined this word in 2015. He

first became aware of the phenomenon when he was referred a patient who had ‘lost’ his visual imagery after a heart operation. “He had vivid imagery previously,” recalls Zeman. “He used to get himself to sleep by imagining friends and family. Following the cardiac procedure, he couldn’t visualize anything, his dreams became avisual. He said that reading was different because previously he used to enter a visual world and that no longer happened”. Brain scans show a kind of daydreaming network, active when you think about the past, or anticipate the future. These include the primary visual cortex and an area in the fusiform that’s close to a region involved in face recognition; the frontal and parietal lobes, which are usually involved in decision-making, working memory and attention; the hippocampus and medial temporal lobe which include memory, and the default node network or daydreaming network. It seems that there is a loss of connectivity between decision-making areas and visual areas.

Hyperphantasia is at the other end of the spectrum. These people describe pictures so vivid that they can find it hard to be sure whether an image was perceived or imagined. These people can get lost in an imagined world that feels real. When they listen to other’s stories the visualization can be felt so strongly that it feels like it’s happening to them.³

Why is this important to know? Because it is a reminder that we all see the world differently without even realizing it. We all create our own reality through the imaging of our tomorrow.

“I am enough of the artist to draw freely upon my imagination. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.” (Albert Einstein The Saturday Evening Post, 1929 in an interview conducted by George Sylvester Viereck)

¹ <https://psychosynthesis-trust.org.uk/i-imagine-therefore-i-will/>

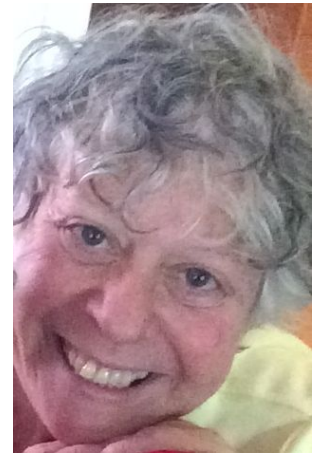
² <https://kennethsorenson.dk/en/visualization-exercises/>

³ <https://www.sciencefocus.com/the-human-body/aphantasia-life-with-no-minds-eye>

The 43 Best Quotes On Imagination

<https://www.writerswrite.co.za/the-43-best-quotes-on-imagination/>

Shamai Gabbay, PhD, lives in Karmiel, Israel. She is a graduate of Psychosynthesis Pathways of Montreal and has served for many years, in many varied positions, on the Steering Committee of the Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis. She is a retired psychotherapist, educator, and educational consultant and has done volunteer work in hospice and home care services, prisons, and senior's residences and has presented at numerous conferences, and been published in many peer review.



Will & Imagination, a Venturesome Pair

By Will Parfitt

“Lift your centre of consciousness upward to the inner worlds, the soul. Through the sphere of feeling and imagination we penetrate to the world of thought and even higher – to spiritual levels. Our propelling energy is that of aspiration directed by the great unrealised potency of the will.” (Roberto Assagioli, n.d.)

“Through imagination we are capable of being united to the gods, of transcending the mundane order, and of participating in eternal life. Through this principle, therefore, we are able to liberate ourselves from fate ... it is a great mistake to consider imagination to be the same as fantasy and daydreaming. Imagination is the image-making faculty, an image creating power which when developed may prove of the utmost importance as assisting the soul in its forward journey.” Israel Regardie (1972)

I was wondering if I had anything original or different to say *about* imagination, then I realised I didn't really want to, I've written quite extensively on the subject in my books anyway. Then I realised what really moved me was to write *not about but with* imagination. Coincidentally – assuming, probably incorrectly, that coincidence happens – I opened a file where some years ago I'd been transcribing [with the help of a computer] some old texts I'd written many, many years ago ... and up popped this piece below. I'm not sure what I make of it really, but it was written in around 1978 when I was very involved in the human potential movement, was attending gestalt, rebirthing, and bioenergetics growth groups and a wise mentor at the time pointed me in the direction of Psychosynthesis. The weekend before writing this I had been on a Gestalt group and the very next weekend I was to attend my very first introduction to Psychosynthesis with Diana Whitmore [or Becchetti as she still was then.] It was a wonderful course and it set me on a track to the future that happened through a combination of will and imagination – the imagination to want something and the will to make it happen ...

... and this was the last thing I wrote just before my first Psychosynthesis weekend:

“Doing whatever comes to me when I do it, doing it when it comes to me. I feel I can scream a little freer, even involuntarily like when beating the bed. It doesn't feel like anger I mean I am not anger. more like a release ...

“I sneezed another kind of release, you feel it coming and you can either go with it or try to control it. Go with it, rising, then it becomes you, you are "sneeze". You see nothing, your eyes close. You see everything as upwardly-tingle then blow. I smiled, then took control again and used tissue.

“I think I'm starting a cold, I am warm in my contact-boundary, warm inside but aware of a stomach-felt pain slight but not constant therefore noticed – came on during bioenergetic exercises just now, All made me aware of me, and part of me is this cold. Be the cold:

“I am a cold. In reality I am composed of countless parts, swimming about in a body, just being us, doing what we do, I do not mean you any harm, but if I harm you, I am not sorry. Cannot be sorry for just being myself,

“Me: Being myself, I would not want to harm anyone. Yes, I see the "would" amongst the trees, I probably could. But perhaps being oneself cannot be harmful to other self.

“Cold: *Words, Words, Words, I'm just being me. Let me be. Don't fight me and I won't fight you.*

“Me: A truce, But I'd rather you were you in someone else.

“Cold: *I might prefer to be somewhere else too. But I don't. I'm just being me, that's enough*

“Okay, you are you and I am I, Let's leave it at that for now.

“Now I am aware of an itch on the side of my right eye which I rub and write about it here. Rub nose next, check side of hand for wetness, none, it's still all held inside. Let it out, don't hold back, Orders? From where? Questions? From whom. I question myself that gives myself orders and I order myself that questions myself. I like playing with words like that and it doesn't half get them confused. Them? Me, silly, but in that case what I said was wrong, for it does not confuse me. It transcends both-me to create One-me. See!

“Interpretations, who needs them? Just trying to be moment-to-moment aware and all I get is this word-junk. Most days are like this.

“Also, most beings are like this, This is. No also, no most. Just All Is. So, as I was saying before I rudely interrupted (not rude really, just trying...how trying it is when I am trying) ... almost, ah but almost what?

“That just left a blank. Now I am aware of this runny nose. Now I am aware that Now I am aware. The typewriter shivers when I type, I wonder what about...

“Typewriter; *I shiver because you stab at my keys instead of caressing them. You know how, caress me.*

“Enough said, I shall, I do. The shaking of a leaf in the wind, light wind, light bent by the wind, blown to me. I feel like a Haiku coming on: I shall wait and see:

“Today
The space
Outside and In,

“Remember to forget the rules, that was what came, call it what you will. Is it affirming a duality some outside, some inside? Seems to be not that, not that rather a unity, in and out the same. The space cannot be other than One Hello, space, talk to me:

“Space: *I have absolutely nothing to say or do. That is me. This is not really me speaking for I cannot speak, but somewhere around my edges this can come through. I notice you still caressing the keys, like using the balls of your fingertips rather than the edges, tips tapping, balls balling.*

“Thank-you, I learned how to type again, then. Not to type but to ball. Having a ball with the keys, we are one, we are none – space.

“It only makes a difference when I am separate either from the World or from my Self; for my I separate from the world sees it as partial, and my I separate from my Self is illusory. There is no two ways about it, for whenever I say “I” it means my Self, a centre of pure am, I am I consciousness, and not the dualistic 'I' of separate ego. It might be said that all the parts make the whole but I understand each part to be the whole. When I am I, I like the part I am playing, for I am a star (as is every man and every woman).

“When I'm here, I often laugh excitedly; no, I am always here – it's when I become aware again of my Being being here. It's not much to say but I greet myself with a 'Hi!'

My Self, I wonder why, if I'm so welcome here & I like it so much then why am I not always aware of being here?

“Silence;
A single swan
Rises from the pool.

“I was going to say 'it feels good to cry' but that is untrue for 'it' does not feel; 'I' feel good to cry and neither is true for I am not my feelings alone; why not, simply, 'I cry...'

“In this crying the tears lubricate not burn, it is freedom to sob; not a forcing out of misery, but a release into acceptance of the Universal Sorrow, and, in that Sorrow, Joy; the Wholeness, the oneness of us all in Love.

“When I am released, I sob in Sorrow for those not yet released, and in Joy for my Free Self. Yet, oh yet ... lift a single stone and the whole world is lifted, too. That 'freedom' is not mine because freedom does not belong, it is not possessed, it just is.

“Touching, feeling, knowing; my Self, your Self, Oneself. ‘The geese have no mind to cast their reflection; nor the water to receive it.’

“And now I am 'back to earth' and being earthed I can feel the energy flow unheeded through me. Being back to earth is being very, very high; and that presents no paradox, for paradox is duality, and I am I, One Centre of Pure Consciousness.

“I turn around what turns around me.
I face what faces me.
What faces me?
Psychosynthesis. (Something has to follow all this analysis ...)”

So, the Will and Imagination were there but I didn't know where they would lead me: to spending the following 45 years working as a Psychosynthesis therapist and supervisor, teaching Psychosynthesis internationally, running a distance learning programme with hundreds of students of Psychosynthesis or write any books on the subject, let alone several. As the esoteric maxim says: ‘for pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect.’

The synthesis of all this work can be found in *The Magic of Psychosynthesis* [PSA Books, 2019]



Will Parfitt has many years' experience in the field of personal and spiritual development including forty years as a psychotherapist. He is the author of more than twenty books, primarily on Psychosynthesis and the Kabbalah, the most recent of which are *The Magic of Psychosynthesis*, exploring the interface between Psychosynthesis and the Mystery Traditions, and *Rose of Heaven*, described as “a soulful collection of tales [that are] are compelling, surprising and encounter a new relational aspect of exploring the heights and depths of the psyche”. Will lives in Glastonbury, England, from where, before retirement, he ran two successful distance education programmes, one on Psychosynthesis, the other Kabbalah, and travelled internationally to run teaching courses on a variety of subjects.

Preface to Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady

‘Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady’ is my rendering of this Arthurian tale. It is an act of imagination, and my imagination continued to mould the story as I redrafted it for inclusion in my—completed but not yet published—semi-autobiographical collection of 60 of my traditional tales.

Whilst not explicitly Psychosynthesis, it is written out of the imagination of a Psychosynthesis Psychotherapist and its themes are deeply psychosynthetic: rights of women, exercise of Will, transformation of the soul, and relationship power.

Over the years, I have understood more and more the interweaving of my twin calling as a Psychosynthesis Psychotherapist and a Storyteller. I write in the introduction to my book:

Storytelling has the power to inspire and to change lives, and at its heart the power is in the quality of relationship between teller and listeners. Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy has the power to inspire and to change lives, and at its heart the power is in the quality of relationship between listener and teller, enabling the teller to have their story heard.

Enjoy!

Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady **By David England**

This is a terrific tale to tell, especially to 9-11 year old children. We cannot start soon enough to acquaint children with the importance of affirming the rights of women. The story has lots of scope for them to express all that nauseating bodily stuff that kids enjoy so much. For the storyteller, there is a wonderful opportunity for characterisation in voice and mannerism, with such strong protagonists as a querulous king, an honourable but emotionally detached knight, and most of all the loathly lady, hero of the story and a feminist icon.

‘Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady’ is a humorous Arthurian tale, with a vitally significant contemporary punch, about the rights of women.

When I wrote the above paragraph about characterisation and strong protagonists, I discovered a new depth in the story. In my subsequent redraft, I have sought to convey the depth that is inherent in the story, whilst acknowledging it as a boisterous tale to tell to older children, as well as to adults.

There is one point to add. A recurring theme in traditional tales is the redemption of the masculine by the feminine. Lady Ragnell is not only the hero of this story, she is instrumental in humanising Gawain, redeeming him from his emotional detachment.

The Story

King Arthur was visiting Carlisle castle with Sir Gawain, the finest knight in all the land. It was a sunny day, and King Arthur had an appetite for hunting in Inglewood forest. When he returned, he looked pale and distraught.

“My liege, what has happened,” enquired Sir Gawain, for it didn’t seem right to see his king in such a state.

The king told his tale,

“I am deep in Inglewood forest, chasing a great white stag. I am unarmed, save for my bow and quiver of arrows. I am distracted—letting the stag escape into the depth of the forest—by the appearance of a tall knight in black armour, sword raised.

‘Sir knight,’ I appeal to him, ‘by the laws of chivalry, you cannot draw sword on an unarmed man.’

The knight sneers,

‘I shall not kill you this day, but I shall kill you in a year and a day, unless you can answer a simple question.’

Puzzled, I ask,

‘What question can this be?’ He answers,

‘I am Sir Gromer Somer Joure, and I seek revenge for the loss of my northern lands. The question is this, what does a women most desire, above all else?’ I grovel,

‘I promise you, sir knight, I shall be here without fail in a year and a day, unarmed, with an answer to your question. Now, please let me depart.’”

Ending his story, the king tells Gawain,

“I find the question quite perplexing, most troubling, so perhaps, Gawain, you can help me search out the answer, so as to save my life.”

“What a puzzle, we can have a little fun with this,” smiled Gawain, until he saw his lord’s face, all forlorn. “Mm! he mused, “Quite a puzzle.”

I say to the listeners, I think Arthur and Gawain need some help here. So, tell me, what’s your answer to the question, what does a woman most desire, above all else? I get lots of answers, gold, jewels, chocolate, shoes, a handsome husband... I’ll let Arthur and Gawain know, I say. The tale goes on.

“Don’t be so downhearted, my liege,” says Gawain, confident of success, “Mount up. We’ll scour the land to find the answer.”

They return a year later, their saddlebags stuffed with answers, but with failing confidence they really have the right answer.

A day before King Arthur must meet Sir Gromer Somer Joure, he wandered off alone. On his way back, Gawain met him on the road,

“My liege, you look somewhat of a pother,” and King Arthur began to tell his tale,

“I ride to the edge of the forest, where I encounter a strange woman. Her girth is as great as her height. Her face is covered in...

Actually, you can help me out here, what do you think she looks like? The lurid imagination of children knows no bounds. I find it hilarious.

‘You have to answer Sir Gromer Somer Joure’s question tomorrow,’ the woman sneers discourteously at me.

‘Humph! Humph! What’s it got to do with you?’

In a sing-song voice, she answers,

‘Da-da-di-da-da! You don’t know the answer.’

‘Then, tell me the answer and I’ll give you a bag of gold.’

‘No use for go-old!’

‘A mound of jewels!’

‘No use for jew-els!’

‘Land aplenty!’

‘No use for la-and!’

‘You’re kidding me, you don’t know the answer at all.’

‘Ah, but I do. Sir Gromer Somer Joure is my stepbrother. I am the Lady Ragnell, and I know his wicked ways.’

‘Humph! Humph! You don’t want gold, you don’t want jewels, you don’t want land. So, what do you want?’”

Ending his tale, Arthur began muttering to himself,

“Loathsome wench, I’ll try the other answers first, she shan’t have what she wants,” until Gawain became exasperated,

“Your talking nonsense, my lord, for goodness sake, you need to tell me what she wants.” He gradually wheedles the rest of the tale out of Arthur, eyes cast down, chin on his chest, more chided child than mighty king.

“‘What I want,’ the Lady Ragnell pauses, ‘is to have the finest knight in all the land, Sir Gawain, as my husband.’

‘Humph! Humph! But that’s impossible, Gawain’s not mine to give away, he’s his own man.’ ‘His own man, yes, I want him to marry me of his own free will.’

‘Humph! Humph! Out of the question! I won’t even put your proposal to him.’

‘Whatever! Maybe you’ll change your mind, so I’ll wait for you here tomorrow.’”

Arthur ended his tale,

“So, there you have it, Gawain, you can’t possibly marry such a grotesque woman.”

Gawain stalwartly disagreed, with a slight lifting of his chin, saying,

“No problem! I would do anything to save your life, my liege,” whilst putting aside the thought of such a spouse. “When the Lady Ragnell’s answer has saved your life, then she and I shall wed.”

The following day, Arthur rode alone and unarmed to the edge of Inglewood forest, where the Lady Ragnell, with a triumphal smile, gave Arthur the answer he needed. Then, he rode on to his fateful encounter with a jubilant Sir Gromer Somer Joure, whose black armour shone in a shaft of sunlight.

“On your knees, my liege,” he sneered, raising high his sword, “So, tell me, what does a women most desire, above all else?”

Arthur tried other answers first,

“Gold!”

“NO-O!”

“Jewels!”

“NO-O!”

“Chocolate!”

“NO-O!”

“Shoes!”

“NO-O!”

“A handsome husband!”

“NO-O!”

Sir Gromer Somer Joure, waved his sword menacingly,

“You have failed, prepare to die.”

In desperation, Arthur bellowed,

“Wait, I have one more answer, what a woman desires above all else is the right and power to exercise her own will.”

For a moment, Sir Gromer Somer Joure stood aghast, then became consumed with anger. Dropping his sword, he raged,

“That loathsome stepsister gave you the answer, that Ragnell, I’ll chop off her head, I’ll...”

Uttering abominable oaths—that I couldn’t possibly recount here—without once repeating himself, his voice diminishing as he ran deeply into Inglewood forest, he fled.

It was a glum King Arthur and an exultant Lady Ragnell who met Sir Gawain on the road to Carlisle castle. Arthur whispered to Gawain, suggesting the marriage might be deferred, perhaps indefinitely, but Gawain’s response was clear,

“By my oath of chivalry as a knight and my promise to Lady Ragnell, I shall wed the lady today.”

News quickly spread that Gawain was to wed the loathly lady, so a large crowd was gathered to greet the three as they entered Carlisle castle, and to get a good look at Gawain’s loathly bride. The wedding was promptly arranged, with forty bishops and archbishops, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, who performed the ceremony. At the wedding banquet, two benches were set side by side at the top table to accommodate the bride’s girth. She laughed boisterously and talked incessantly throughout the meal, drinking and eating copiously, spraying masticated morsels onto the plates of horrified guests, and farting stentoriously. Gawain was courteous and attentive throughout, plying his bride with tasty titbits and

keeping her cup of wine filled to the brim. At the close of the wedding feast, bride and groom were escorted to the bridal chamber. They were at last alone.

Gawain and his bride faced each other. Ragnell, with a quizzical smile, said,

“Well, husband, you have treated me with unfailing courtesy, honour, and respect, and at no time have you shown disgust of my loathly looks. So, now, husband, gimme a kiss. Unflinching, always a gallant knight, Gawain leant forward and lightly kissed her on the lips. Then he jumped back in shock, shrieking,

“What wizardry is this?” For, before him now was a lovely, slender young woman, with long black hair, piercing black eyes, and a mischievous smile upon her shapely lips, dressed in a simple, elegant gray gown. Gawain felt unmanned.

Perceiving his discomfiture, she asked an astute question,

“Don’t you prefer me like this? Or, would you rather I stayed the loathly lady?”

Gawain was flummoxed,

“No...yes... what... but! Of course I like you like this, but how can it be?”

“My stepbrother, Sir Gromer Somer Joure, has always hated me. He sought control of me and all I possess. When I defied him, he accused me of being unwomanly. His mother being skilled in wizardry, he used her magic to turn me into the loathly lady you met earlier. I couldn’t regain my true shape until the greatest knight in all the land, loathsome as I was, were to marry me of his own free will. Through your faithfulness, you have achieved the unachievable.”

His voice cracking as his unfamiliar tears overflowed, Gawain uttered,

“My sweet love, now the evil spell is broken.”

“Only partly so, my love,” was her tender reply, “for you have to make a choice. I can only be as I am now for half the day, and for the other half I must be the loathly lady. This is your choice, I can be lovely by day and loathly by night or loathly by day and lovely by night. If I am lovely by day, the whole court will admire and envy you. If I am loathly by day, the whole court will deride and ridicule you. The nights? They speak for themselves. What is your choice?”

Without hesitation, Gawain knelt before her,

“Madam, I cannot make that choice for you, for it is a choice about your own self, which you need to make of your own free will.”

She clasped him in her arms, their tears flowing together,

“My dearest love, you have answered truly, affirming what I desire as a woman above all else, the right and power to exercise my own will, and in this the wicked spell is fully broken.”

And so, in love, joy, tears, and rejoicing, commenced the marriage of Sir Gawain and the Lady Ragnell.

*David England is a UKCP Registered psychosynthesis psychotherapist in private practice in the grandly named Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. He trained as a psychosynthesis psychotherapist at The Institute of Psychosynthesis London, receiving his MA and Diploma in 1998. For four years—alongside his psychotherapy practice—he worked with a colleague providing psychosynthesis based personal development coaching and training for business organisations, then for seven years he worked as a course tutor at The Institute of Psychosynthesis London. He trained as a Shamanic Practitioner at Eagle's Wing College of Contemporary Shamanism. Impressed by the synergy between Psychosynthesis and Shamanism, he wrote *Soulfulness, The Marriage of Shamanic and Contemporary Psychology* (Karnak Books, 2017). He has successfully integrated Shamanic thought and practice into his psychosynthesis psychotherapy practice. He is also a professional storyteller and a member of the actors' union Equity. He is the co-author of *Berkshire Folk Tales* (The History Press, 2013) and *Lancashire Folk Tales* (The History Press, 2014).*



Does Anyone Alive Know What a Yoke Looks Like?

By Julie Parker

With a finished and edited manuscript titled *The Yoke* seeking a publisher, I am delighted to discover the theme of this December 2023 issue of the Psychosynthesis Quarterly is *Imagination and Psychosynthesis: Developments in Image-Based Theory & Practice*. My guess is that artists with a Psychosynthesis background will submit drawings or articles or simply peruse the latest Quarterly with artistic curiosity to see what other colleagues create. I have a challenging request for all such artists and photographers, because I am a writer, not an artist. I want a Psychosynthesis artist to design a cover for my book. But to know how to symbolize this cover, and convey the story's meaning, the artist will want to know what the yoke represents to me, or did, in retrospect, throughout my illness. That imaginative individual will also wonder how, in the manuscript, a yoke came to represent triumph over a part of me (a tyrannizing subpersonality) that almost led the long, arduous journey to defeat.



The Yoke is a memoir of my descent to the soul of psychosis. Writing about that forty year period of episodic mental illness, I slowly realized that the terrifying situation I fled, entrapping me in recurring symptoms, was best symbolized as a yoke. A yoke is a device that obliges two oxen or horses to pull a heavy weight together that neither can pull alone, 'easing the burden,' adds one definition. It could be seen as the forerunner of the hand-cuff, subduing a suspect, or even a noose, that unbending bow locking one's neck and head into servitude or worse. Yokes have shown up gratuitously in my life. When we bought our rustic Spanish home in 1966, its patio had an old hand-hewn Mexican yoke hanging from an oak beam as decoration. It is still there. Later, teaching yoga, I learned that the word in Sanskrit, 'yug,' means yoke or union, uniting the

faithful practitioner with the Infinite. In the Bible Jesus said, "My burden is easy and my yoke is light."



Either childhood fears and misunderstandings, or tendencies I had brought with me into this world at birth, caused me to become a go-it-alone kid, trusting no one. Like a wild mustang I shied and reared at the sight of a harness. I loved wide open spaces unbridled, total freedom, galloping toward the unknown. At the same time, an insatiable longing pursued me for a safe and enduring partner 'broken-in.' That individual would feel at home in the yoke, trustworthy, grounded, patiently waiting for a teammate to shoulder the other side.

In college I met just such a partner, the man I am still married to, whom I wanted to emulate. The unconscious conflict emerged soon afterward. He was comfortable in the yoke, straining and pulling, delighted to attract and coax me to tug beside him. No sooner had my joy volatilized in a cloud of euphoria than I grew restless, a little bored. A student year abroad seduced me. In France, the first confrontation with on-the-run parts of me caught me unawares, and a journey into mental illness began upon returning. The man in the yoke was patiently waiting. The story traces my battle with this escapist dimension, masked by symptoms I learned slowly to recognize. My partner never abandoned the yoke— oh, once, in a minor infatuation that was the jolt I needed. *Our* yoke with *his* side empty? *My* man chained beside an *interloper*? No way in Hell, in a hay wagon gone berserk!

In the end, with first the power of my will, second, the help of Psychosynthesis and

third, a Higher Self dimension leading me forward like an Observing Eye, I gained the Final Goal. It granted me permanent wellness and my place as a mature adult in the yoke, playfully, often same-old, unpredictably. At 91 and 92 we

teammates are still pulling more or less together, in good health, in love, and laughing with our children and grandchildren over the foibles that make us who we are. Please contact me with any illustrations you might come up with.



Julie Parker

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Julie Parker, BA, Middlebury College, 1954; MA, Marriage and Family Therapy, 1992, Trinity College of Graduate Studies, training in Psychosynthesis by Dr. Edith Stauffer in the early 1970s



Seeing Double

By Mario Canki, Ph.D.

Excerpt from the upcoming book *Dreaming of Dante*

Was it my imagination or a visualization, but I was seeing double. You may see images or hear words not with your physical eyes and ears but with your inner senses of seeing and hearing. Assagioli described the sensation of connecting to higher self in a way that resonates with some of my own experiences: energies descend down into images, and images condense into words.

As one poignant example of connecting to my higher mind and heart, in a meditation, I sensed observing myself sitting and meditating - which I was. I felt myself standing next to my seated physical self. There seemed to be two of me, and it was an unsettling sensation, but a curious one. Continuing with meditation, I questioned what this image symbolized and what was its meaning? After a short time - probably just a few minutes - I recognized that the standing Mario was a subtle expression of my higher self, and the sitting Mario was my physical body. In a sense, I saw myself split into two separate energetic realities, which I recognized with my inner sense of seeing. Seeing myself this way was not uncomfortable; rather, just the opposite - I felt a sense of self-recognition and self-appreciation. The duality of nature visualized.

While everyone recognizes their physical self, the higher self is more elusive. It is the wise being within. It is our own calm and loving spiritual guide that brings out our positive potential, and tasks us with questioning our lower nature. Our higher selves know our purpose, and encompass our potential to live a fulfilling and joyous life through self-awareness.

Next, I had a strong desire to merge the two figures, which I attempted doing in my mind. I felt an inner change in the energy of my physical body that I could best describe as feelings of unity, strength, and peacefulness.

The two separate Marios that I saw in my meditation are two distinct energies that coexist simultaneously. One represents everyday life's physical and mundane reality, while the other exists as our potential waiting to be activated. This image represents the duality of nature that pervades all life. When you unify these two energies in your mind and heart, you start living in awareness and in balance with a spiritual reality. This can be done by anyone, and as you experience the energy of unity, feelings of inner peace and strength begin to replace the feelings of anguish and confusion - which naturally start to peel away and wither.

To grow spiritually, we must integrate our spiritual self into the mundane physical reality of everyday life. This is the way to successfully live a spiritual life, while immersed in the mundane reality and surrounded by everyday problems, instead of having to sit in a cave or in a monastery, meditating, trying to achieve higher consciousness.

This was my first experience of actually seeing myself merging with my higher self. However, to this day, at times, I still practice this mental visualization to strengthen that connection. The more I practice, the stronger the link becomes. I also try to practice this in everyday situations when I feel stuck, anxious, or when feelings of fear overcome me. It takes only an instance to do this, and the process works every time, as it helps in the moment to snap out of whatever is blocking me, or whichever negative feeling I may be experiencing. I have taught this technique to many students since.



Dr. Mario Canki is a teacher and a writer. Curiosity about merging of science and spirituality inspired him to pursue a Ph.D. in molecular virology, and to study Higher Self Yoga (HSY). His academic work concentrated on the scientific study of HIV infection and discovery of novel drugs for AIDS prevention. Led by his interest in the spiritual, Mario has studied and practiced the HSY teachings for over thirty years. He also undertook psychosynthesis analysis and training in Clinical Meditation and Imagery (CMI), with the co-founders of the New York Psychosynthesis Institute, Dr. Judith Bach and Dr. Richard Schaub. The intersection of these areas continues to give his life meaning and purpose. As a scientist and a teacher, Dr. Canki believes in coaching and mentoring people interested in developing their inner higher self potential – both intellectually and spiritually. He aims to teach the skills you need for the practice of self-discovery that will guide your life's purpose. mario.canki@gmail.com

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[higher-self-meditation](#)

Systems Thinking is the Basis of Psychosynthesis

- The "Great Synthesis"

By Ewa Danuta Bialek

Modern reality shows to some inhabitants of this planet are concerned about the fate of the world, and the multiplicity of crises in many spaces of life. Almost every day realizes the depth of these problems, touching the essence of humanity, its soul. Over many decades and even centuries, the organism of the broader humanity has been destroying itself, like gangrene, destroying individual cells and organs, leading systematically step by step to self-destruction inside and out.

Something could even tempt one without special error to say that the Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm of the man-machine started in human minds and hearts, and then in the real world, the annihilation of man and the planet.

Science and education, created henceforth over the following centuries and years, have forgotten the ancient message of "know thyself," depreciating what binds man to himself, other people, and the earth. Over the following centuries and years, humankind has forgotten the ancient message of "know thyself," depreciating what binds man to himself, other people, and the earth, focusing only on logical thinking, facts, and profit, instead of "devotedly" engaging with nature, as Henryk Skolimowski - an eco-philosopher from Harbor University - proposed with the concept of "participatory mind". My life paths have led me from science-medicine, through psychosynthesis, and then expanding my horizons to include the philosophy of science, underlying all sciences. Over the years, through contact and exploration of psychosynthesis "on myself," I have taken part in many currents of the paradigm shift in various sciences, creating the framework of a model for the future.

My exposure to managerial and organizational psychosynthesis in the mid-1990s highlighted to me the necessity of "managing myself" before managing others, but also the necessity of "abandoning the shore to explore new oceans." These were the words of my teacher John Cullen, which highlighted to me the search for harmony within myself, as the equivalent of medical homeostasis. It allowed me to establish a personal and transpersonal center from the beginning. Thanks to this, standing in the middle, the ancient "golden center," I could see the whole system, starting with myself, the whole organism, and then going out into the realm of the "Greater Synthesis": parenting, upbringing, education, healing, also the business with the soul, taking care of the person and the planet. Circumstances fostered the picture of this broad system, weaving together what was coming into my life: attending the San Diego Conference in 1996 (Psychosynthesis for the Next Millennium), and in it David Platt's classes. Immediately the following year, thanks to David and a stay in Poggio del Fuocco-one of the psychosynthesis centers in Italy-I found myself at the Findhorn Foundation, an environmental village, expanding my consciousness with a systemic vision of sustainable development that includes the environment. From then on, FF has been my second home to this day.

Then I met Professor H. Skolimowski, joining the eco-philosophy movement in Poland, and soon found myself at Schumacher College, where I realized the shape of the new science and education, whose vision I had carried since learning about psychosynthesis in 1995. It was then that I saw the world and myself as systems of interdependent vessels.

Repeated stays at the Archivio in Florence solidified this image of the great synthesis of man and the world. All that I described previously and the contact with the "living" word of the Creator of psychosynthesis became the beginning of the "model of education for the future," which I created over the years, describing it in many scientific articles in various fields.

Life brought me even more discrete events over the following years, thanks to my participation in many scientific conferences: the creation of holistic pedagogy, integrated medicine, and energy psychology. 7 years ago, a group of philosophers invited me to take part in the First Scientific Conference "Humanistic Challenges of Ecology of Mind, for Finding a Meaningful Place in Polish Science for Gregory Bateson",

with the participation of his daughter Nora. The conference culminated in a sizable conference book, where my article appeared on over 20 pages: A Psychosynthesis Approach to Development as Integrating but Transcending Biology: Gregory Bateson and His "Mind and Nature." What value does Gregory Bateson bring to our way of thinking? This was a description of integrating Bateson's systems thinking into my understanding of psychosynthesis and its expansion of consciousness with further "syntheses".

The culmination of my dozens of books became two based on my understanding of psychosynthesis as a scientific "synthesis and synergy model" and, hence, a systems approach to health and well-being in the broadest sense. They combine upbringing, education, a system of clinics to support child development, service to health (instead of service to disease), or the creation of more bricks of sustainable development to appear in the academic world, to serve in all professions health and well-being, and hence reverse the effects of technological damage, poisoning of the environment, food or finally the planet.

Psychosynthesis has developed those who have gone deeper into their syntheses, and understood its message of "synthesis", starting with their own - getting to the essence of themselves - the soul - and following its call. It is she who directs us to renew the world and human relations with nature. It is she who triggers in us the need to help our clients find the center of themselves, to see the problems of the world, and to meet them, beyond the ego, in their particular interests. Such practitioners of psychosynthesis on themselves have become examples of "following" Assagioli's message of the "Great Synthesis."

I believe one should take an example, especially from people coming from countries that were under totalitarian regimes for years, who, despite many obstacles, practiced psychosynthesis, appreciating the achievements of their creator and his successors, anyone who found space for their actions and followed. They did not depreciate someone's contribution to this so important sphere of human relations and protection of the world from the annihilation done to man and the planet by man. They are the ones who learned languages other than their own to read literature and put them into practice. Examples of ridicule of other, "not good enough", scientific works written in languages other than English, unfortunately also exist among the ranks of those who consider themselves "better". They must learn a lesson in humility and synthesis, and apologize to those whose works they have rejected or depreciated. For these days, language is no obstacle to learning about the contributions of other nations. Such an example of determination and courage can become, for example, Ukraine and the activities of its representatives of psychosynthesis. It was they who, in the most difficult conditions of their own existence, knew how to establish the Institute of Psychosynthesis at the government level, and not just as a membership organization and, in addition, discriminating against some members from the "inferior world." It is they, especially "experienced by life and the history of their nations" who recognize the complexity of historical changes and the undesirable directions in which humanity is heading, and are ready for the highest heroism.

Psychosynthesis, explored over the years and practiced on oneself, is priceless. It is an education of the self, a constant expansion of awareness, and seeing the world's problems and responding proactively. It is through it and through it, we are in the process of "becoming" a better version of ourselves and what we can contribute to the world through ourselves, thanks to ourselves, in "synthesis" and synergy with others, instead of depreciating their existence and contributions to others.

Dr. Ewa Danuta Bialek - a long-life scientist in medicine, completed postgraduate studies in psychology and several courses in Psychosynthesis. In 1997 she founded Association "Education for the Future" and in 2004—the Institute of Psychosynthesis in Warsaw, Poland. She has written 52 books and over 60 articles.

She is dedicated to teaching people about well-being and developing comprehensive methods to address the need for health education and well-being in all stages of life. She described its practical execution, such as running her original programs, highly rated by students as individuals whom she consulted, both in her manuals and books.

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The Psychosynthesis Creativity Contest: Why?

By Peter Stewart (on behalf of the AAP Steering Committee)

In this latest issue of the AAP Quarterly, we announce the launch of the Psychosynthesis creativity contest. We have chosen the topic of “Connection” and invite creative work on this theme from across the Psychosynthesis spectrum, from individual practitioners or organisations, in any creative format.

Submissions are welcome over the coming year (2024) and our intention is to celebrate the best of the creative work submitted during the AAP conference that is scheduled to take place the following year.

In this article, I wanted to give a personal account of what stimulated me to propose such a contest to the AAP Steering Committee.

In June 2021, I guest edited the quarterly on Psychosynthesis and Creativity. I was delighted by the number of submissions, but also by their quality. It wasn't just articles that were contributed but poems, paintings and drawings, photo sequences and more. Since then, I have had the privilege of reviewing numerous creative submissions for the journal. Each quarterly seems to contain images, poetry and even photos of ceramics and textiles, as part of the rich content contributed by AAP members.

When I joined the AAP Steering Committee last year, we discussed ways that the AAP could serve the wider Psychosynthesis community as well as help raise the profile of Psychosynthesis in the world. But that raised a practical question: What is Psychosynthesis?

There is no definitive answer, and even its founder Roberto Assagioli seems to have preferred not to pin it down precisely, but for it to be something living, an evolving system. that could adapt and change over time. In an interview with Sam Keen late in his life, Assagioli described the protean quality of the discipline / science / movement he had created. Asked by Sam Keen to comment on the limits of Psychosynthesis, Assagioli responded to his interviewer with characteristic humour: “That should be your job but I will do it. It is fun. I will answer paradoxically”. He then asserted:

“The limit of psychosynthesis is that it has no limits. It is too extensive, too comprehensive. Its weakness is that it accepts too much. It sees too many sides at the same time and that is a drawback”. (The Golden Mean of Roberto Assagioli, 1984 interview)

This open-ended and integrative quality makes it difficult to pin down. I have many friends in the Psychosynthesis community who speak about how deeply Psychosynthesis has touched their lives as individuals, and who are dismayed that it is not more widely known in the wider community, let alone in government, the corporate world and academia.

Speaking with others on the AAP steering committee, we also noted how different were the various institutes and schools of Psychosynthesis around the world, despite our common heritage (Assagioli) and common values. It felt like we all had a similar sense of the value of Psychosynthesis, but that it was difficult to describe succinctly, it was more like a feeling and a set of values that we shared.

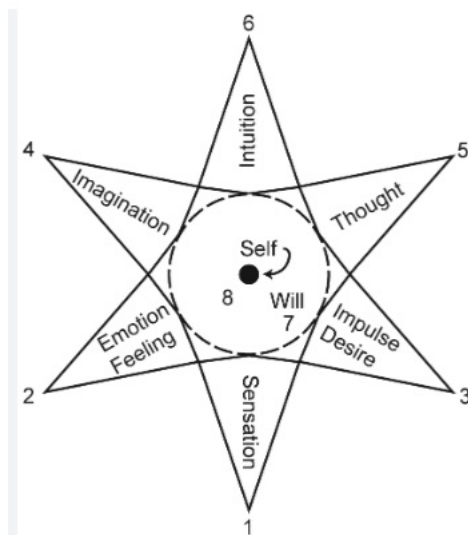
From this difficulty emerged the idea of harnessing creativity to express what Psychosynthesis means for us. Rather than a committee trying to shoe-horn Psychosynthesis into a theory or definition, we would take the opposite approach and invite those in the community to share their vision of and for Psychosynthesis through creative work. This would also provide a platform to communicate the value and values of Psychosynthesis to the wider public.

(Perhaps because I tend to be competitive, I initially envisaged this as a competition with a winner and various prizes; other no doubt wiser heads on the AAP committee suggested that we frame it more as a contest, and we are still discussing how it will be adjudicated and whether and how we might recognize the submissions by awarding a prize or prizes).

We hope that this contest will stimulate discussion within the PS community, and promote positive awareness of PS in the wider world, in fields such as psychotherapy, coaching, education, health and well-being, careers and ecology, as well as the many other disciplines in which PS practitioners are active.

The word “creativity” is, of course, as protean as Psychosynthesis, and its origins run deep. The immediate root is the Latin verb “creo” (I create) but this in turn relates to an even earlier Sanskrit root “kar” which means to produce, generate or make.

Assagioli wrote extensively about creativity. Imagination is one of the six beams of light in the well-known star diagram, along with Sensation, Emotion, Desire, Thought and Intuition.



In his book *Psychosynthesis*, the role of the Imagination takes up nearly a fifth of the chapter on Personal Psychosynthesis Techniques. There are sections on the psychological effects of pictures and colours, and on music as a cause of disease and as a healing agent.

Assagioli also devotes a whole chapter to Artistic Creation in his collection of essays on spirituality, *Transpersonal Development* (Smiling Wisdom, 2007). There are numerous other references to creativity, the arts and imagination throughout his work.

Assagioli described the power of creativity as a vehicle for psychosynthesis and spiritual wholeness. “It would appear that in works of art, there is much more than mere aesthetic value; they constitute living forces, almost living entities, embodying a power which has suggestive and creative effects”. (Psychosynthesis, 1965)

This living power to transform, he says, is something we should cultivate and consciously develop. “We should not allow this force to remain unused, or subject ourselves to it without definite purpose,” he wrote. “Instead, we should learn to use it deliberately for the further development of our personality”. (Psychosynthesis, 1965)

It therefore seems appropriate to celebrate this aspect of his work in a Psychosynthesis creativity contest in a year that will mark the 50th anniversary of Assagioli’s death.

My own creative journey

My own interest in creativity goes back a long way, and Psychosynthesis has helped me explore it more purposefully in recent years.

When I was seven years old, I had a dream that I had hit the moon with a stick. I had reached up with the stick, and when it made contact with the moon, it felt like I had jangled the heavens. I heard my mother’s voice say with (understandable) concern: “Don’t do that. That’s God”. It was a scary dream, although nowadays I can understand and contextualise it more. I have always associated the dream with the barriers and challenges faced by creative individuals. I believe we are in touch with the divine; somehow, but there is also something quite terrifying about holding that responsibility.

When I first got interested in Psychosynthesis, I was in something of a spiritual and creative trough. It wasn’t a crisis as such, but I felt I had lost the sense of purpose that had driven my career as a journalist, and that I was falling short in terms of fulfilling my own creative goals. There was nothing dramatic or sudden about this state, just a nagging and persistent sense of dissatisfaction. I would often ask myself, What is my creative gift? Do I really have such a thing? Or is it all just grandiosity and self-delusion?

My self-doubt persisted, and in some ways became a defining feature of my creativity.

A few years later, armed with my well-thumbed and dog-eared copy of Assagioli’s *The Act of Will*, I travelled frequently up to London for the post-graduate certificate course in Psychosynthesis Leadership Coaching run by Aubyn Howard and Paul Elliott. Ahead of one such weekend trip, the sky turned very dark as I walked down to Lewes railway station for the early train. An extraordinary double-rainbow formed, and I had a sudden, uncanny and tremendous sense of spiritual connection.

I turned towards the rainbow and asked whether I really was creative, or whether it was all just an illusion. And the rainbow, or perhaps the soul behind it, replied: “You are blessed”. This had a big effect on me, I felt a sense of awe that left me tearful and emotional. I wasn’t alone in this. The rail station guard

on the platform was also blown away by the beauty of the rainbow. I cannot remember his exact words, but he remarked on the lines: “What we humans do can be good, but we could never make anything as beautiful as that!”

Since then, I have had a growing sense of a creative mission. I am ambivalent about using the word “calling” and Psychosynthesis has been useful both in encouraging this sense of mission, but also in putting it in a context. Assagioli wrote insightfully about the danger of ego inflation in creative (and spiritual) work, and the opposite polarity that it can lead to, of darkness, depression and despair. A sense of destiny can easily become onerous.

I had the great good fortune during this time to be offered coaching by Heather Mullin of Connect Coaching, who works creatively and with a great sense of humour. We explored the sources of my creative energy, and I depicted some of the sub-personalities and conflicts involved in my creative work through a series of pastel drawings and a short novel called *Stirring the Pot*. I’ve written about this coaching experience in a previous article for the AAP journal, so there’s no need to elaborate but I remain indebted to Heather for a profound coaching journey.

More recently, I attended the Summer School run by the European Psychosynthesis Association in Mullsjö, Sweden. This was a wonderful experience. I had made and edited some promotional videos for the event, and then worked with Jasenka Gojsic to support film director Cecilia Nordstrand to make a short film celebrating the Summer School. Mullsjö is a beautiful small town near Gothenburg, next to a stunning lake, and I was especially lucky to join a four-day creativity workshop there run by Dermot Moore. It was a deep and transformative experience, and I still feel grateful to Dermot for his skillful facilitation, as well as his understanding and good humour throughout.

During the Covid lockdown, I became obsessed with the labyrinth symbol, and my Will project from Dermot’s workshop was to try to create a momentum for large corporations to build labyrinths in the workplace. These would provide somewhere for staff to walk around, relax and interact, but they would also act as a symbol of a company’s commitment to its ethical and spiritual purpose.

This was certainly not something that I had expected to come out of the workshop. Creativity knows no bounds! In conclusion, I would like to quote some words from Assagioli that I hope will encourage those reading this to submit something to the AAP Psychosynthesis Creativity Contest:

“Everyone must come to realize that criticism, disparagement, pessimism and predictions of failure are nothing less than poisons, whereas loving understanding, appreciation, encouragement and a healthy optimism are life-giving: they awaken dormant energies and can lead to a wonderful inner blossoming and precious works.”

Please submit your creative work, it will be welcomed with love and appreciation!

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Sam Keen interview, The Golden Mean of Roberto Assagioli (1984) <http://www.turningpoint.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/The-Golden-Mean-of-Roberto-Assagioli-Sam-Keen.pdf>



Peter is a creative coach who has recently focussed his work on career transitions and issues around employment. He is accredited at Foundation Level by the European Mentoring and Coaching Council. He trained as a psychosynthesis coach on the PGCPCL program run by Middlesex University and the Institute of Psychosynthesis in London. Before that, he worked for more than 30 years as a journalist, consultant and analyst, mainly in the fields of energy and travel. He runs several websites dedicated to his creative interests including pottery, poetry, painting, travel and wine. You can connect with Peter through his website <https://coachcreates.com> which has links to his various social media or by email to peter@coachcreates.com

Book Review : Waking Dreams by Allan Frater

I first became aware of Allan Frater's book *Waking Dreams* when I saw him unwrapping the proof copies on a Youtube video shortly before the book was published. The video had the same humour and accessibility that I found in the book itself, when it finally on my doorstep, several weeks after I had pre-ordered it ahead of the launch in September 2021.

Waking Dreams explores the liminal spaces of the imagination, but its relevance is much wider than that. The book, which is subtitled *Imagination in Psychotherapy and Everyday Life*, explains how metaphor and imagery can help us expand our experience of the world –the world we inhabit in everyday waking life as well as the dream world of our night-time wanderings. It describes the shaping role of the imagination in our perceptions of the world around us, and suggests that this creative faculty is at the heart of our potential as human beings.

The book explores Roberto Assagioli's view that therapy is primarily an act of the imagination, and that a client can find ways of moving forward by engaging the Will to carry ideas and dreams into expression in the world. But it also underlines the primacy of the imagination, quoting Assagioli's words in Psychosynthesis that when Imagination and Will are in conflict, "Imagination wins".

I was initially interested in *Waking Dreams* because several years earlier, I had a vivid experience of lucid dreaming. I experienced what seemed like a whole night's "sleep" in which I walked around dreamworld with my eyes wide open, waking up from time to time and finding I was in yet another layer of dreaming. This led me to re-examine my assumptions about what constitutes the reality of our perceptions.

This is not to take an anthropocentric stance that suggests that what's out there is all in the mind. But numerous studies suggest that our perceptions are co-created by our imaginative faculties and their interaction with the world around. This seems to be the tack that the author explores in the book. He offers a tentative definition of imagining as "the perception of images arising *in between* self and world" (my italics). In other words, he argues, "everything is imagined. Reality is imaginal". But he differentiates carefully between imagination and fantasy, and explains limitations to his definition of inner imagination to make clear that his viewpoint is not dualistic, rationalistic, narcissistic or mechanistic.

This book provided me with food for thought. What I liked most was the insistence on breaking down simplistic assumptions around concepts such as rationality and what it means to be conscious what is inner and what is outer. He does this in clear, non-technical language, full of metaphor and simile, using examples from the arts and novels, but also from technology, such as his mobile phone. All of this has humour and warmth, and makes it an enjoyable and evocative read.

As an example, he reinterprets what he regards to be the popular conception of sub-personalities in Psychosynthesis. "The danger of this idea is that it can obscure the actual experience of imaginal persons, whether in a sleeping dream, a waking dream, a memory, fantasy, movie or novel – which is one of meeting a person with the same individuality, consciousness and intention as normal people in everyday life". Rather than imaginal persons, as per subpersonality work, being assumed as a representation or 'part' of the personal psyche, the book describes how to come into relationship with these characters as autonomous others. Which might sound a bit theoretical but the point is well made by considering for example, the difference in feeling response between meeting: a 'witch' type figure who being a subpersonality is assumed to be 'part' of you, implying some kind of control over her; and an autonomous and independent 'witch' person, who you do not control but can enter into relationship with. In this later case, we are working with the image on its own level, as an image, rather than as an idea or symbol for a meaning which lies elsewhere.

The book also provides plenty of tools to explore the imagination, and the borderlines between the self and the world, as well as their creative interaction. There are lots of exercises that encourage the reader to experiment with their own use of creative imagery and story-telling, and that take you gently into unfamiliar waters. As well as the more explanatory chapters on Embodied, Immersive, Animistic, Mechanical, Ecological, Fractal and Transpersonal Imagination, there are six chapters with enjoyable but sometimes challenging exercises of visualisation and reflection. These cover: Entering, Exploring, Dialoguing, Shapeshifting, Emerging and Patterning.

Frater promises at the start: “This is a book about imagination in psychotherapy and everyday life. It is for anyone who wants to enhance their imaginative life”. I think it lives up to this promise. In a world in which knowledge can be turned into a journal paper with a few clicks of an AI algorithm, this book was both enjoyable and unique.

After Thought

Ironically, I have mislaid my well-thumbed hard copy which had been heavily marked up with yellow highlighter and pencil scratchings, and I ended up writing this review based on selections carried on the Internet. Having recently reorganised my garden shed, decanting several hundred books from the house into its Tardis-like interior, I feel sure that it is in there somewhere and it will re-emerge when the time is right.

What I remember about the cover is the image of an owl and the moon, and a woman in a red dress with a black cat walking across her path. Have a look at the book’s cover for a few seconds if you do get round to ordering it, which I highly recommend.

Now write down what you saw in the cover picture! I bet money that your own memory is subtly different to my own, and maybe even completely different. Our inner landscape certainly has a shaping effect on what we perceive in the world outside. This book celebrates this interaction in new and unexpected ways.

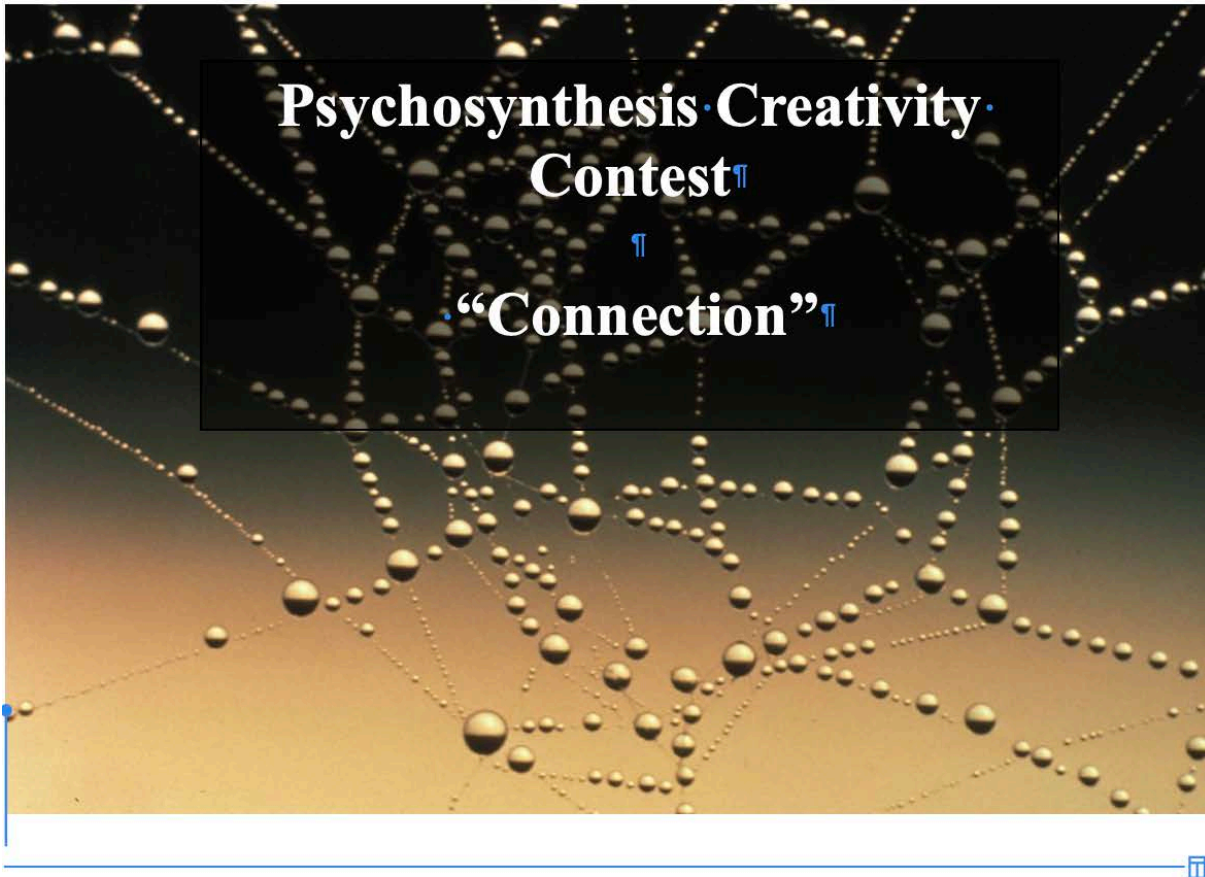
(Waking Dreams; Imagination in Psychotherapy and Everyday Life, by Allan Frater, Kammin Media/ Transpersonal Press, 2021).

Reviewed by Peter Stewart/Coachcreates

Available at Amazon

<https://a.co/d/5YpheCU>





AAP is proud to announce the first ever Psychosynthesis Creativity Contest. The theme of this inaugural contest is “Connection”. We welcome submissions from AAP members and from across the wider PS community in all creative media: visual arts, poetry, music, paintings, prose, stories, film, photos, ceramics, multimedia, digital and others.

Submission Deadline: December 31, 2024.

Entry is free for AAP members. Non-members are requested to make a small donation to the AAP (suggested \$10).

Works submitted for the Creativity Contest will be celebrated at the AAP conference planned for 2025.

[Click here for more information](#)

Webinar: Psychosynthesis & Transpersonal Imagining

Sunday, January 7th 2024, 12 noon EST

Presented by Allan Frater, guest editor of December 2023 Psychosynthesis Quarterly on Imagination and Psychosynthesis, author of *Waking Dreams: Imagination in Psychotherapy & Everyday Life*

About the Workshop:

Much of theory and practice with imagination in Psychosynthesis assumes it to be a personal-historical psychological interiority - for example, with 'inner child' and subpersonality work. However, this personal 'inner imagination' understanding, despite popular usage, is arguably misaligned with the transpersonal or beyond-the-personal premise of Psychosynthesis.

This workshop will turn the conventional inner-imagination view inside out in order to present a truly 'transpersonal imagination', where instead of images being inside us, it is we who find ourselves surrounded by images.

The result is an experiential and theoretical expansion of the possibilities of image-work, not just as a means to rational insight, but as healing and transformative in itself, spilling over beyond the consulting room into the activity of images in everyday life.

The workshop will be a mixture of slideshow presentation and discussion with break-out room practicums and small group work.

Learning Objectives:

- The explicit and also implicit basis within Assagioli's psychosynthesis for an understanding of imagination as transpersonal.
- The 4 limitations of 'inner imagination': dualistic, rationalistic, narcissitic and mechanistic.
- The 4 advantages of 'transpersonal imagination': non-dual, trans-rational, participatory and emergent
- Practice based considerations to better notice, validate and enhance work with images.

Target Audience:

Psychosynthesis Psychotherapists, Counsellors, Coaches and anyone else interested in cultivating imaginative life – or wanting to help others do so.

This webinar is FREE to members, \$25 to non-members.

[Click here to Register](#)

Registration closes Friday, January 5th, 5 pm EST



Allan Frater is an author, psychotherapist, supervisor and teacher at The Psychosynthesis Trust in London, UK. He is interested in the role of imagination within normal everyday life, creative work and healing/transformation. His first book 'Waking Dreams' presented a critical development of standard approaches to 'active imagination' and 'guided imagery' incorporating paradigm shifting ideas and methods from ecopsychology, complexity theory, fractal geometry and transpersonal psychotherapy. He runs a popular on-line 'Waking Dreams' course and is currently writing a second book, provisionally titled 'Living Between Stories: Imagination in a Time of Crisis'. Find out more via his website www.wildimagination.uk

Contribute to the March 2024 Psychosynthesis Quarterly

With guest editor Richard Schaub,
Founder of the New York Psychosynthesis Institute
and co-director of the
Huntington Meditation and Imagery Center

March Theme: Psychedelic Experience Without Psychedelic Drugs: A New Role for Psychosynthesis

This issue is inspired by the rapid rise of interest in psychedelic drugs and psychedelic experiences. Every major university medical school – including Harvard, Oxford, Stanford, Yale, NYU, etc. – now has a psychedelic medicine department. On Long Island where I live, the psychiatry department at the State University of New York at Stony Brook Medical School has such a long waiting list of people wanting to be administered psychedelics that they are no longer taking names. Clearly there is a hunger for transpersonal experiences, and we in psychosynthesis know that such experiences are entirely possible without drugs.

I am looking for articles, reflections, vignettes, stories, accounts of “psychedelic” experiences with or without drugs, whether you were walking in the woods or meditating or in a religious setting or dreaming or loving or in a psychosynthesis session. I am also hoping for commentary and interpretations of this remarkable cultural phenomenon, described by one 29-year-old as “everyone I know is at least micro-dosing on psilocybin or ketamine.”

I will be including a think-piece of what might be driving this desire and would enjoy other perspectives and speculations.

Help contribute to making psychosynthesis newly relevant in this search for the transpersonal.

We hope our suggestion of 1500 words may serve as a guideline that helps your writing. We prefer that you use the APA style guide when possible, for things like punctuation and references.

Announcements, book reviews, and upcoming events are also welcome, with a request that non members who wish to submit advertising make a donation to AAP. To donate, [click here](#).

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT IS February 1, 2024

Please send submissions as soon as they are ready so we can get started reading and editing before the deadline. If you need any further guidance on the topic or submission guidelines do please get in touch. Thank you so much!

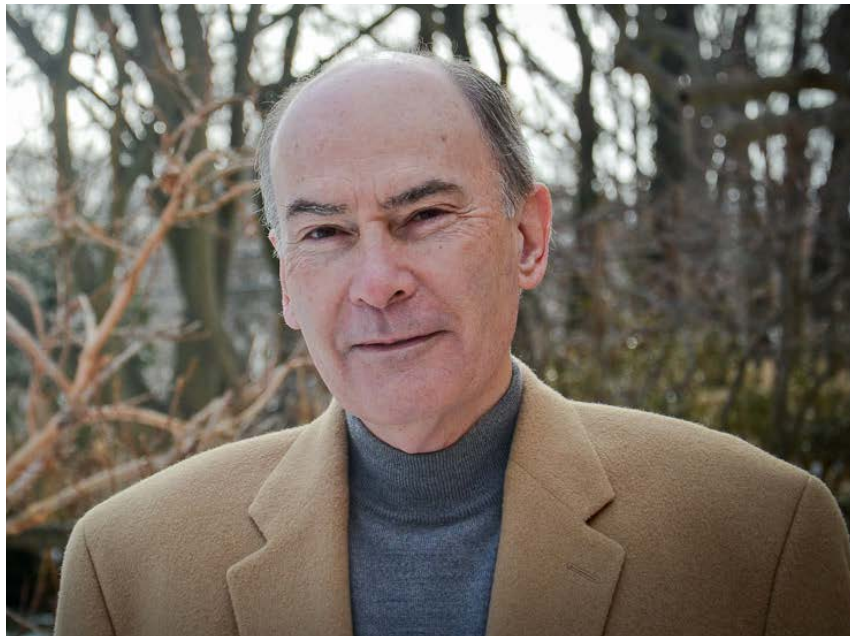
DEADLINE TO SUBMIT IS February 1, 2024

**Articles should be submitted in word.doc format
with all images sent as jpegs or pngs attachments.**

**Please also send a brief bio in a word doc format
and recent photo as jpeg or png attachment.**

Send your contributions to: newsletter@aap-psychoanalysis.org

Dr. Richard Schaub has trained hundreds of healthcare and mental health professionals internationally in the clinical applications of meditation, imagery and the transpersonal psychology of psychosynthesis. He was one of the original founders of the New York Psychosynthesis Institute and has taught several times at the original Italian institute in Florence. Previous to teaching, Richard worked in many clinical settings, including oncology, cardiology, adolescent psychiatry and drug and alcohol rehabilitation. His emphasis on teaching meditation and imagery skills began in 1985 with the first HIV-AIDS epidemic when peace and wisdom became a compelling need for patients in severe crisis. The co-author of five books, Richard's finest professional experience was providing a half-year training of PTSD staff at a Veterans Hospital and a Federal grant to produce a book for the training, *Transpersonal Development*.





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Willing to Love

2023-2024 Season

PsNE Gathering Dates:

All monthly gatherings will be on **Zoom**. Those studying and practicing Psychosynthesis and their guests (from anywhere in the world) are welcome! Donations are accepted and are not required to participate. We will meet on the third Sunday of each month. This year's season will **continue through June 2024** (including December). We will begin each month with optional socializing from 12:30-1 pm Eastern Time. Most **workshops are 2 hours (1-3 pm ET)**. *Please look for PsNE emails for updates with monthly topic descriptions and schedule changes!*

Register Now for:

November 19 "Willing to Love: Facing Illness with Consciousness and Grace" with Janet Messer, PhD and Ilene Val-Essen, PhD [REGISTER HERE](#)

Up Next:

December 17 "Willing to Love: Focus on racial equity and social justice" with Celia Hilson

Coming Soon:

January 21 "Willing to Love: Presence and Unconditional Love" with Judith Broadus and Vincent Dummer

February 18 "Willing to Love: Relationships, Therapy, and the Inner Life of Couples with Jeff Rossman, Jon Schottland, and Urs Mattmann

March 17 "Willing to Love: The Self - Beyond Gender" with Chris Dennler and Judith Firman

April 21 "Willing to Love: Nurturing the Soul of the Relationship" with Amy and Randall Spalding-Fecher

May 19 "Willing to Love: Learning to be Human/Awakening to Love with Gerry Bouey

June 16 PSNE Year in Review: where have we been and where are we going--let's dream and plan together