

The illusion of the “healthy personality” and the reality of transpersonal being

Opinion

The basic thesis of this article is that the concept of the psychologically “healthy personality” is basically an illusion, having no basis in reality, and which cannot actually be achieved, because a psychologically healthy consciousness and the conceptually derived narcissistic ego-personality are really antithetical to each other, or fundamentally incompatible with one another. A healthy consciousness and the ego-personality, or the conceptually defined sense of exclusive, separate, identity, exist in different dimensions of consciousness. This article will attempt to demonstrate that psychological health is natural or inherent to our pure, undistorted, unmodified, consciousness when our consciousness is abiding in the non-dualistic, holistic, relational, dimension of Transpersonal Being, whereas egoistic personality arises from consciousness abiding and functioning in duality, or self-division and continuous narcissistic psychological disconnection from others. When our consciousness is primarily identified with the ego or the conceptually defined sense of self, then it is living in a state of becoming, i.e., living in a presumed sense of deficiency while striving to become, conditionally achieve, or validate something about ourselves that we hold to be better or more self-approving than what we are currently being. An individual person who is functioning in a state of becoming is striving to reach the unreachable goal of becoming some-thing absolutely, exclusively, definitively, indisputably, or completely, in order to establish or validate a sense of identity as being something that seems to be substantial or impressive, self-consistent, enduring, undoubtedly, irrefutable, and therefore real.

The narcissistic ego-personality is basically defined in this article as an acquired, false or illusory, sense of self, consisting of various presumptive ideas about ourselves, or partial self-definitions that are not inherent to our being, or our individual and relational consciousness energy force, which is an inherently indivisible, undefinable, wholeness that is beyond all partial self-interpretations. We are “defining” or distinguishing the Transpersonal Self as the real self, consisting of our inherent permanent being, beyond the ego-personality as a set of conceptually acquired ideas about ourselves. Those egoistic self-definitions are basically arbitrary or groundless, i.e., derived only from speculative thought, and not inherent to our being, holistic intelligence, or conscious life energy presence. The Transpersonal Self’s inherent indivisible wholeness makes it an intrinsically self-consistent integrity, a unitary, unlimited, undefinable, experiential, expansive, connective, proficient, unconditionally fulfilled, wellbeing nature, whereas the ego’s composite, partial, often contradictory, self-definitions and judgmental self-evaluations make it intrinsically narcissistically self-contracted or dualistically self-preoccupied, as well as self-divisive, fragmented, self-conflicted, only conditionally self-accepting, and also conditionally self-rejecting, which produces the ego’s deep-seated, foundational, feelings of psychological deficiency, insecurity, and anxiety.

In the state of becoming, consciousness is identified as being an egoistic personal “I” in the form of an “It” (using Martin Buber’s

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terminology), i.e., we are identified with a psychologically detached knower, I, or me, which holds itself to be an “It” by enduringly identifying with some conceptually defined objects of knowledge or objectified, delimited, fragments of consciousness having particular, distinctive, qualities or traits. Those conceptually defined traits are presumed to be absolute, exclusive, or completely unrelated to polar opposite qualities that are held to be “not self.” Furthermore, our egoistic individual “I” or self is also held to be experientially disconnected or totally psychologically separated from other individuals who have other conceptually defined identities or exclusively delimited traits. In reality, however, consciousness is inherently, permanently, essentially no-thing other than pure, unmodified, undifferentiated, undivided, holistic consciousness. That natural absence of conceptually defined and exclusively differentiated self-knowledge comes to be equated by the ego with being a psychological nothing, a nullity, or a void, once a conceptually defined sense of exclusive, absolutely delimited, psychologically disconnected, experientially separated, identity, or a personal egoistic self, has become differentiated from and superimposed upon that underlying undefinable, indivisible, natural unitary wholeness of unmodified, unbounded, pure conscious awareness.

Once the conceptually-defined, exclusively differentiated, personal entity self is created, it then lives in a state of extreme or absolute psychological disconnection, inwardly and outwardly, or what can also be described as a persistent state of absolute duality, self-division, or becoming, which means, essentially, that consciousness, when identified with the egoistic personality, rejects what consciousness really is, as no-thing, i.e., no exclusively defined or absolutely demarcated entity. Our unmodified pure consciousness, or our Transpersonal Being, is an inherent unitary wholeness, with no absolutely or exclusively differentiated, delimiting, self-fragmenting, self-definitions. When our individual consciousness is identified with the ego-personality, or the conceptually defined sense of identity, then it pursues what it feels that it conceptually ought to be, by trying to make its preferred, desired, or approved traits absolute, exclusive,

definitive, conclusively and completely validated, as well as defining itself as psychologically disconnected and extremely differentiated from the conceptually defined identity of other individuals and social groups, which makes those qualities appear to be undeniable, substantial, and therefore "real". Then our conscious awareness and volition sets out to absolutely, exclusively, definitively, protect/defend, affirm/validate, and enhance/aggrandize those particular conceptual traits with which it is identified.

In contrast to the psychologically unhealthy presumption of absolutely or inflexibly defined, exclusive, extreme, continuous, enduringly persistent, controlled, total differentiation, complete experiential disconnection, or total psychological separation, from other individuals, and also in contrast to the psychologically unhealthy, infantile, total lack of any sense of distinctive individual particularity or relative differentiation from others, the psychologically healthy and mature individual acknowledges a relative, experiential, but not a conceptually defined, flexible, occasional, degree of natural differentiation, and also occasionally, appropriately, asserts the freedom to assert a relative degree of psychological distance, individual boundaries, or experiential disconnection, from others, and oppositional independent self-will, when that seems appropriate, beneficial or necessary. However, the psychologically healthy and mature individual also has the natural freedom to psychologically reconnect to others and acknowledge some degree of similarity and/or complementarity with them, when that seems appropriate, rather than being rigidly locked into a persistently enduring, inflexibly defined, absolute, exclusive (totally predetermined, defensively controlled, involuntary, one-sided, imbalanced, partial, self-divisive); or completely programmed, habitual;insufficiently, overly, or inappropriately, selective; generalized, sense of extreme psychological connection or disconnection from everyone.

The psychologically healthy Transpersonal or spiritual reality is not impersonal in the sense of ignoring, denying the natural reality of, or devaluing the relatively unique, distinctive particularity of oneself and other individuals. Our real personality, or our genuine personal qualities, consists of our inherent, natural, life energy-derived, directly experienced, individual and relational potentials, talents, capabilities, preferences, interests, inclinations, spontaneous mannerisms, and other distinctive traits that are inherent to our being, whereas the illusory ego-personality basically consists of presumptive self-interpretations and judgmental self-evaluations that are not necessarily always consistent with our actual personal qualities that are inherent to our being, but are merely assumed to exist. The ego's conceptually defined personal qualities often distort, obscure, contradict, and impede the development of our genuine personal qualities. In contrast to the ego's often antagonistic, judgmental, comparison, competition, and conflict with others for an exclusive sense of superiority, which involves defining others as inferior, the genuine personal qualities that are inherent to our being do not depend on rivalry with other individuals, because those genuine personal qualities are directly experienced and unconditionally inherent to our being, rather than conceptually inferred, and conditionally acquired or conditionally lost, conditionally validated or invalidated, conditionally proven or disproven.

Our genuine particularity, or our spontaneously arising, uncontrived, uncontrolled, undistorted, naturally distinctive personal qualities, make us each lovable and beautiful in our own very special way, and also enable each of us to make a relatively unique, or naturally special, contribution in terms of our natural way of serving others, and also through the relatively unique perspectives through

which we reflect, epitomize, experience, and express, the holistic reality of life, or truth. Our naturally distinctive individual way of serving other individuals, society, and the indivisible whole of life, constitutes what may be called our natural life function, which no one else can naturally replicate in precisely the same way. [see our article, "Our Archetypal Life Function", https://www.academia.edu/12852413/Our_Archetypal_Life_Function].

However, the illusory/false, conceptually defined, presumptive and therefore distorted, artificially controlled, socially conditioned, conditionally acquired, and manipulatively induced or insincerely contrived, personal qualities of the ego are not genuinely lovable and beautiful because they are basically unreal, and, therefore, devoid of genuine life energy, and its inherent loveliness, joyfulness, and vitality. The intentionally manufactured ego-personality is metaphorically analogous to a lifeless plastic "flower", which imitates a living real flower, but is intrinsically unable to actually become a living flower, just as the artificially contrived ego-personality is unable to actually become a living aspect of our natural, genuine, individual personality. Likewise, the overly impersonal, undifferentiated, or homogenized tone of some pseudo spiritual teachings that deny reality and value to all forms of diversity, or particularity, as well as some other aspects of society and culture that attempt to fit everyone into the same unvarying procrustean mold or invariable, prescribed, standardized, conditionings, such impersonal tendencies that deny and devalue diversity are basically stale, lacking genuine vitality and charm, and they prevent genuine love from arising through the encounter, and mutual communicated sharing, of the distinctive genuine particularities or the naturally very special, experientially and ontologically genuine, personal qualities of various individuals engaged in communion with one another.

Only qualities/traits, potentials, talents, inclinations, and preferences that are truly natural or inherent to our individual life energy pattern, or our soul-pattern, can be self-actualized or grow progressively more developed in a real or genuine way, whereas qualities and goals that the ego tries to conditionally acquire for itself, or which it may incorporate from social conditionings and imaginary ideals, are devoid of real life energy presence, and therefore, they cannot grow, develop, blossom, or achieve fruition in a genuine way. Instead, the ego's attempts to fulfill its conditionally and selectively acquired goals produce only greater growth of illusory, presumptive, lifeless, self-interpretations, like an artificially contrived, static, restrictive, inflexible, heavy, burdensome, stifling mask that must be discarded, released, outgrown, or dis-identified from, for our real "face", our real life energy pattern, our genuine, natural, life energy potentials and functions, to grow progressively more developed, or self-actualized, in an authentic manner. Genuine psychological and spiritual growth necessarily involves the progressively greater discovery, development, or actualization of tendencies that are truly natural or inherent to our individual and relational life energy force, whereas approaches that attempt to improve individuals, interpersonal relationships, and society, in various ways that are derived from speculative self-interpretation and conditionally acquired, presumptive, ideals, are not grounded in real life energy, or real being, and, therefore, cannot be truly therapeutic or fulfilling, but instead, must inevitably prove, sooner or later, to be psychologically, spiritually, and socially unhealthy, unfounded, unsound, and therefore ultimately counterproductive and toxic.

Any completely inflexible, exclusively predetermined, defensively controlled, mode of perception and functioning reflects, psychologically unhealthy and immature, escape from illusory feelings of deficiency,

insecurity, and anxiety. Those illusory, psychologically painful, feelings are naturally resolved, dissolved, or transcended when they are not rejected and escaped, but are instead welcomed, embraced, reunified with, by consciousness, but not exclusively identified with by our consciousness. When our consciousness develops a greater level of psychological health and maturity by reunifying itself with previously estranged, rejected, repressed, psychologically painful, or experientially uncomfortable, feelings, then it naturally experiences an unconditional sense of wellbeing, security, and fulfillment, which are inherent to the indivisible wholeness of our real being, our natural life energy force. That greater level of unconditional psychological security, which is developed by being open to directly experiencing whatever is actually arising in and around us, without control, censorship, or speculative, distancing, interpretations, enables individuals to function in a psychologically healthy, fulfilling, non-defensive, flexible, spontaneous (but not irresponsibly impulsive or reckless), undefined, relatively experientially differentiated but also relatively psychologically connected, non-egoistic, or non-narcissistic, manner.

In order to differentiate its presumptive, groundless, tenuous, vacuous, fragile self-interpretations, the adopted egoistic conceptual self, or the defined, delimited, sense of identity, tries to validate the reality of its existence by establishing itself as persisting and self-consistent through psychological time, space, and causality. The adopted self utilizes memory or thought, as past and future, as the means of establishing its sense of continuity over time, and therefore concludes that it has established its psychological existence or conceptually defined sense of identity as some-thing real. The conceptually defined sense of identity's logic is, "If I can remember my past and project myself into the future, then this sense of the continuity of my existence establishes that I am some-thing permanent, self-consistent, continuous, and, therefore, real, now." Thus, as a result of the extreme narcissistic self-preoccupation related to the ego's attempt to become some-thing absolute, exclusive, permanent, or definitive, and establishing or validating its sense of identity and continuity over time, consciousness, in the egoistic state of becoming, is chronically immersed and absorbed in self-preoccupied thought, or incessant, distracting, self-defining, mind chatter. That kind of narcissistic self-preoccupation typically hampers our inclination and ability to live in the psychologically healthy process of full contact, or non-dualistic communion, with objective reality in the world, in the here and now present moment, which is necessary for optimal living, or optimal experiential wellbeing, optimal performing, and the ability to cope effectively with adaptive challenges that can vitality affect our social adjustment, which in turn can vitally impact our ability to fulfill our basic financial and interpersonal relationship needs. Non-dualistic communion, and the optimal contact with reality that it involves, can occur only in the timeless Now, involving, or arising through, an encounter with someone or something other than the narcissistic ego, in which the sense of separate self-awareness is totally absent.

As another related means of attempting to affirm the reality of its psychological existence, or its conceptually defined sense of identity, the adopted egoistic self locates itself in psychological space by labeling itself as being some particular some-thing which is separate and distinct from those who are a different labeled some-thing. Thus, the narcissistic ego's conceptually defined sense of identity, and its ability to affirm or validate itself as some-thing real, is dependent upon affirming its sense of separateness from others. Therefore, its relationships with others are necessarily fraught with friction, opposition, competition, alienation, hostility, and the like, for these are what maintain the psychological sense of separation and

differentiation from others which thereby affirms the narcissistic or egocentric, conceptually defined, sense of self. However, engaging in a genuinely caring or truly loving interpersonal relationship is feared, avoided, and rejected as a perceived threat to the narcissistic ego's sense of continued psychological existence, or its foundational sense of separate self-awareness, independent psychological space or experiential distance, exclusively or absolutely differentiated identity, and resistive self-will, or oppositional willfulness. Developing a genuinely caring or truly loving interpersonal relationship is viewed as undermining the narcissistic ego's continued psychological existence, or its separate sense of self-awareness, because it involves experiential communion or non-dualistic energetic union with another person.

The adopted egoistic self also attempts to affirm its oppositional, separate, self-generated, sense of psychological existence through psychological causality, by establishing itself as the powerful volitional cause of some particular influenced effect that it has put itself on the line to influence. Therefore, its interpersonal relationships are fraught with psychological needs to influence other individuals, which may or may not be consciously recognized. That egocentric psychological need to influence other individuals typically produces a tendency toward extreme aggressiveness, willful defiance, and competitive psychological games of one-ups manship, because being unable to influence others is interpreted as suggesting that one is absolutely impotent of will and therefore psychologically non-existent, or disaffirmed/invalidated in one's basic sense of psychological identity.

Thus, the domain of the personal self, or the conceptually defined sense of separate identity, and living in the state of becoming, or abiding in a presumed sense of deficiency while striving to become, conditionally achieve, or validate qualities, traits, or labels about ourselves that we presume to be "better," or conditionally more acceptable to us, involves imaginary presumptive thought, fantasy, or groundless mind-chatter, instead of contact with actual reality of the objective world and our genuine subjective experiential states. That process of divorcing our conscious attention and feeling life-energy from what is experientially real or genuine in ourselves, and in our encounter with other individuals, situations, and phenomena in the objective world, produces excessively extreme separateness and conflict instead of communion and love; chronic tension and frustration instead of peace and joy. The state of becoming involves our consciousness engaging in an unnatural state of duality between various competing self-interpretations, and opposing favorable and unfavorable self-evaluations, or positive and negative value judgments. In this state of becoming, our consciousness, identified with the narcissistic ego, is engaged in a chronic process of internal self-division, self-contradiction, self-conflict, and related conflict with others. This self-divisive, self-conflicting process arises because consciousness is mistakenly identifies with being both the fragment of consciousness which is the subjective self, or the separate sense of self-awareness, as well as the fragment which is the objective self, which consists of our conceptual self-definitions, judgmental self-evaluations, memories, and momentary egocentric experiential states. This psychological dichotomy or inner self-division can also be described as the observer and the observed, the experiencer and the experienced, the thinker and the thought, the judge and the judged, the censor and the censored, or the enduring sense of separate self-awareness, relatively enduring conceptual self-definitions, and the moment-to-moment experiential self.

However, when consciousness abides in Being, or its natural, undistorted, inherent, undivided, integral or unitary wholeness of

being, then it is in its natural condition of non-duality, in which it is an unlabeled, indivisible wholeness, a whole without any parts, in contrast to the ego, abiding in a state of becoming, in which it is striving to become a synthesized or composite whole, which is the sum of some various labeled parts or traits with which it is identified, to the exclusion of contrasting polar opposite traits. Abiding in our true, unmodified, undistorted, inherent Being, consciousness lives in the timeless or Eternal Now, with I as Thou (in Martin Buber's terminology), which is an undivided Transpersonal Being rather than a personal entity self, or a conceptually defined sense of identity. Abiding in Being, consciousness is totally without any egoistic goals or predetermined desires arising from trying to gratify the ego's psychological needs, such as the ego's strivings for an absolute, exclusive, total, continuous, or completely/fully and permanently validated, sense of protection/security, affirmation/validation, and enhancement/aggrandizement of the particular labeled some-things with which it is identified, and which are so characteristic of the state of becoming.

Living in the state of becoming places our consciousness in a constant state of frustration and tension because it lives with a chronic lack of a genuine and enduring sense of resolution, self-consistency, or peace. Consciousness is constantly pushing to fulfill its goal of making absolute, or attempting to completely and permanently validate, the ever-changing relative traits with which it is identified. Thus, living in becoming is a constant striving which is never an arriving, not only because the relative can never be made absolute (i.e., conditionally validated, conditionally invalidated, conceptually defined, disputable, insecure, changing, traits or qualities cannot be made inherent to our permanent being), but also because the personal self fears, rejects, and avoids, enduring peace and contentment, because that is antithetical to the ego's foundational self-identification with desire, becoming, or a continuous attempt to becoming something better than what we presume that we are currently already being. Therefore, the ending of desire and its concomitant tension would be experienced as stagnation, lack of passionate excitement and vitality, which would be interpreted by the ego as tantamount to psychological death, or a threat to the ego's continued psychological existence, which it typically refuses to tolerate.

The ego becomes synonymous with deficiency, desire, and becoming (i.e., striving to become something other, more, or "better" than what we are currently apparently being) because the ego is constantly trying to become absolutely, exclusively, conclusively, definitively, completely, permanently, some-thing, thereby affirming its basically illusory nature as being something "real," substantial, and enduring, in its attempt to deny and escape from the more basic realization that consciousness is essentially no-thing, i.e., no enduring conceptual self-definition or personal self. The ego equates that lack of defined self-knowledge or self-interpretation with being an inner void, and therefore, with being a threat or danger to its sense of continued psychological existence, or its basic sense of distinctive identity. Thus, the end of desire and becoming would be the acceptance of the no-thingness of consciousness, or its lack of intrinsic, enduring, conceptual self-definition, which to the ego implies its invalidation and dissolution. Therefore, perceived deficiency, compensatory desire, and the pursuit of goals of becoming, or self-improvement, become, not necessarily fully consciously, equated with psychological security, derived from the continued psychological existence of the ego, whereas the end of deficiency-denying egocentric desire, and ceasing the continuous striving to become enhanced in some way, becomes equated with stagnation, lack of passionate vitality, and psychological death or negation of the ego. Thus, as soon as one

goal is accomplished and desire is gratified, fear of stagnation and related feelings of perceived deficiency then steps in, and makes the ego immediately erect a new goal of becoming, or attempted self-improvement. This process of insatiable desire and continuous striving places our consciousness in a chronic condition of frustration, tension, conflict, anxiety, and presumed danger or threat, associated with the not necessarily fully consciously recognized experience of psychological insecurity and insubstantiality. Thus, psychological becoming (or attempts at conditionally achieved self-improvement) and psychological health are antithetical to one another, and because becoming is the domain of the personal self, or the conceptually defined sense of identity, therefore, the narcissistic ego-personality cannot be psychologically healthy, or truly and enduringly fulfilled.

It can also be contended, from another viewpoint, that egocentric personality cannot be psychologically healthy because health cannot accurately be ascribed to something which is not essentially real. The narcissistic ego-personality is nothing more than the sum of various conceptually defined labels or interpreted traits with which our consciousness identifies itself, or which it attempts to conditionally achieve. Such an identity is basically comprised of presumptive thought, in contrast to our actual life energy presence, which is our real experiential and ontological self. Therefore, the ego or conceptual self-interpretation is not real, but only an illusory apparent sense of self. All labels and traits are only relative in nature, and so one is also its relative opposite, to some degree, as well, and, therefore, being both, one is, essentially, being neither of them. Just as there is no north without south, there is no kindness without unkindness, no independence without dependence, no intelligence without ignorance, etc. The arising of the one implies the inherent existence of the other as well. Relative opposites arise together and drop out together, and the existence of the one depends upon the simultaneous existence of the other, to some degree. Thus, for example, one cannot be absolutely, exclusively, continuous, kind, intelligent, male, independent, strong, ugly, or whatever positively or negatively value judged personal trait with which one is identified, because all such conceptually defined traits are only relative in nature, and are dependent upon some standard of comparison, as well as upon its relative opposite for its apparent existence. Hence, if on the trait of intelligence, I compare myself to a person with severe cognitive and developmental disabilities, I might conclude that I'm a genius, but if I compare myself to someone like Albert Einstein, I might conclude that I'm stupid. In addition, on some matters, such as psychological theory, I may feel myself to be greatly informed, but on other matters, such as automobile engines, I may consider myself to be extremely ignorant. Being only relatively intelligent, I am also relatively unintelligent, and so I cannot accurately hold to exclusively, absolutely, conclusively, enduringly, being that trait called "intelligent", or any other conceptually defined trait. What is essentially, intrinsically, naturally, real in us cannot be a relative, selectively acquired, and constantly changing phenomenon. In truth, the "I", or the defined sense of identity, dies every moment with the cessation of every thought and the desire that gives it rise, and it arises again with every new desire and thought, but it appears to be an enduring entity because of labels and memory, which seems to give the "I" a semblance of permanence and continuity.

There can be no changing thoughts or feelings, or nothing objectified or known in consciousness, without the Transpersonal or undifferentiated, unmodified, pure consciousness as its essential background, support, or underlying composition, any more than there can be a wave without water, or a candle without wax or another fuel. The Transpersonal substance of reality is an unbounded, connective, consciousness and vibratory energy that underlies, comprises, and

unifies diverse inner and outer, or subjective and objective, phenomena that arise in consciousness, metaphorically comparable to an unseen canvass or screen upon which various images or pictures appear. Our unmodified pure consciousness and life energy is inherently real because it is basically changeless, self-luminous, self-existing, self-validating, which is to say that it has an independent existence, or is not dependent upon anything or anyone else for its own existence. The wave is dependent on the water for its existence, but the water is not dependent upon the wave for its existence. Therefore, we say that the water has essential, inherent, unconditional reality, whereas the wave has only apparent, temporary, conditional reality. The same principle is true for the personal and the Transpersonal consciousness. Changing personal thoughts and feelings cannot exist independently of the pure, unmodified, undifferentiated, or Transpersonal consciousness which is their essential underlying composition, or substratum, and so the Transpersonal background consciousness is permanently self-existing, or intrinsically real, whereas the personal or acquired, changing, thoughts and feelings, abiding in the foreground of our awareness, have only apparent, contingent, conditional, partial, reality.

Our personal or conditionally acquired thoughts and feelings are never entirely or essentially real, but are only an apparent degree of relative illusion and relative reality, or a partial mixture of illusion and reality, superimposed upon our unbounded pure consciousness, which is the underlying changeless background composition of those changing thoughts and feelings. That superimposition of relative thoughts and feelings upon our absolute pure consciousness occurs through the use of labels or conceptual definitions, which provides the illusion of fixedness to that which is really in continuous flux. To suggest a metaphorical analogy, in the unbounded whole universe of ocean water substance, the various modified water forms, such as, waves, bubbles, ripples, and foam, may feel or presume themselves to be completely or exclusively distinct, unrelated, and separate from each other, and from the ocean water substance or substratum that entirely comprises and underlies them. However, this view is only an illusion, based upon the diverse particular labels with which each individual is identified. At the essential core level of our being, we are all inherently being the one and the same underlying Transpersonal reality, like unifying ocean water substance, in which we all abide, and of which we are entirely comprised. The same is true for our various personalities which apparently seem to separate and distinguish us from one another, even to an extreme degree, but in our commonly shared Transpersonal reality, we are all one, or naturally connected to each other, without losing our natural inherent particularity, as a reality of unity in diversity or diversity in unity, epitomized by the Latin motto, "E Pluribus Unum." We are all naturally, necessarily, abiding in the same unbounded whole Ocean of Consciousness-life energy, and likewise it is inherently abiding in us all. That unifying Transpersonal substance of reality endows the diverse particularities that abide within itself with a commonly shared, universally accessible, intrinsic, ontological reality and basic experiential truth that naturally bridges their various distinctive perspectives, metaphorically like pure clear light unifying the entire color spectrum within itself.

We may come to have a hint of this connective, relational, or Transpersonal, reality in moments of deeply invested non-dualistic communion, genuine caring, or true love. Love preserves, accentuates, and appreciates, the natural distinctive particularity, or relative uniqueness, of our own individuality and the particularity of others to whom we connect in love, but it diminishes, or, at times, completely eradicates, the narcissistic ego's presumptive sense of psychological disconnection from others, as well as the ego's presumptive self-interpretations and other excessive thought, or incessant mind chatter.

Those presumptive, narcissistic, self-interpretations are basically groundless, arbitrary, and not inherent to our real individuality, or our naturally distinctive life energy pattern, but instead function as distracting impediments to the optimal development of our real, intrinsic, life energy-based, natural distinctiveness, as well as functioning as an impediment to loving communion with others. The relational or connective energy substance of love, or warmhearted caring, which naturally flows between individuals, also has a significant Transpersonal, transcendental, universal, or unitary aspect, as a holistic ontological reality existing beyond or surpassing the various individuals who abide and connect to each other in love. Consciousness is most real, fulfilled, and psychologically healthy when it abides in love, as a relational self, which is our true self, or our intrinsic life energy pattern, whereas consciousness does not experience those fulfilling inherent qualities when it is identified with and functioning as a narcissistic ego-personality, which is a false sense of self, an illusory sense completely separate, psychologically disconnected, self-preoccupied, self-generated, identity.

As was suggested earlier in this article, the ego-personality cannot accurately be considered to be psychologically healthy because health is synonymous with wholeness, or non-duality, which is a condition in consciousness of no internal contradiction or conflict, whereas the ego's conceptually defined sense of identity involves various dualistic fragments, or competing interpretations of ourselves, incessantly engaged in opposition and conflict with each other. For consciousness to be psychologically healthy, it must abide in its natural condition of being an indivisible unitary whole, which is its unmodified inherent Transpersonal Being. The personal self, because it is only a delimited entity or partial fragment contained within that whole of consciousness, stands as something incomplete. Therefore, the ego experiences chronic feelings of deficiency. Someone who is aware of and identified with only what is a set of partial, exclusive, delimited self-definitions still lacks the realization or awakening of his or her Transpersonal essence, and therefore cannot accurately be said to be psychologically healthy or fulfilled.

Even by definition, the narcissistic ego-personality cannot be considered as being psychologically healthy. The word "personality" comes from the Latin word *persona*, meaning mask. The personality, or the conceptually defined sense of identity, presumes itself to be a fixed and enduring reality, but what is fixed and static can never be truly alive or real. At best, the psychological mask or personality can only be considered to be well-fitting or well-adjusted, but never psychologically healthy. Instead, only the experiential realization of being the "Real Face" or unmodified inherent nature of consciousness can be accurately considered as constituting genuine psychological health and fulfillment. Personality is the psychological mask or the assumed, interpretive, sense of identity that covers over the "Real Face" of consciousness, and thereby prevents real psychological health and fulfillment. Therefore, the only truly psychologically healthy consciousness is that one which has dropped all of its masks or adopted, selective, partial, self-definitions, and has realized its own true essence as Transpersonal Being, or our own distinctive individual form of the connective relational reality of Love.

Thus, full or optimal psychological health, functioning, or fulfillment requires the transcendence, by consciousness, of its identification with some personal or relative conceptual self-definitions, and the resulting direct experiential realization of transpersonal consciousness referred to as *Transpersonal Awakening*. This is similar to what others have referred to as spiritual or Divine Self-Realization, but we do not prefer these terms, or other related terms such as self-actualization,

because they have been misused by some psychology writers to suggest a state of personal or egoistic fulfillment, which is not really possible because of the basically illusory nature of that personal identity or conceptual self-definition, and so the only real fulfillment for the illusory personal self is its own transcendence. Transpersonal Awakening, on the other hand, is meant to suggest a direct, unmediated (non-conceptually mediated), experiential realization of a different level or dimension of consciousness, beyond just the presumptively interpreted sense of conceptually defined identity. The Transpersonal dimension of consciousness is essential, pure, undefined, or non-objectified consciousness, which is intrinsically the triune of absolute Peace-Love-Joy, and may be subsumed under the one unifying label of "Bliss Consciousness." Thus, Transpersonal Being is the true goal for which all psychological need, desire, or motive is striving, for all desire is only for the experience of fulfillment, or for peace, love, or joy in one form or another. Therefore, Transpersonal Awakening is the only real fulfillment for consciousness. The direct realization of one's Real Being is the underlying object of all of one's psychological desire and becoming, yet, ironically, it is precisely that condition of personal desire and becoming in consciousness which prevents consciousness from awakening to its real Transpersonal nature.

Thus, real fulfillment or Transpersonal Awakening can never take the form of some kind of self-actualization of the illusory ego-personality, as a validation of aggrandized presumptive self-definitions, nor can it be some kind of goal of Becoming, self-improvement, or something to desire, because it is really the consequence of the absence of all psychological desire. Transpersonal Awakening is closer to terms which writers use to describe spiritual or mystical experience, such as, Enlightenment, Liberation, Nirvana, Cosmic Consciousness, or the Kingdom of Heaven. It represents fulfillment in the true sense of the word, meaning to feel full, whole, consciousness at complete rest or contentedness, the ending of all psychological needs, desire, striving, or becoming, and the ending of the feelings of deficiency from which they arise. Thus, psychological health and fulfillment for consciousness is not the result of any kind of conditionally acquired achievement or attainment. It is not the outcome of any kind of progressive movement over time toward some kind of predetermined goal or ego-ideal, but, rather, is just the elimination of all illusory sense of deficiency, not by becoming absolutely some-thing, but, rather, by dis-identifying from all labels of being some-thing, and permitting consciousness to be its true reality of being no-thing, i.e., no defined thing.

The gateway to fulfillment realization or Transpersonal Awakening is opened only by consciousness living in being or non-duality, subjectively unified with our own genuine experiential states, and objectively engaging in natural communion with other individuals, activities, and phenomena in the world. If consciousness surrenders the dualistic observer of the observed contents of consciousness by taking its natural, unmodified, stance as being no-thing (i.e., not holding any predetermined self-definitions), until some observed experiential reality arises of its own accord, from moment to moment, and, therefore, takes its stand as being only that experiential reality and not its outside observer in addition, then consciousness will naturally be in non-duality, inwardly and outwardly. There must be no conceptual self-definition which acts as the dualistic director, controller, censor, or judge of the contents of consciousness. Then spontaneous insights can arise, of their own accord, in the service of transpersonal consciousness restoring consciousness to its natural condition of being an inherent non-duality or indivisible unitary whole. Then consciousness will spontaneously bring to awareness, for integration or reunification, those painful experiential realities which

have previously been dualistically rejected by the conceptual self as being threatening to its sense of identity or psychological existence.

If there is just a silent, non-reactive, direct observation or non-dualistic listening to each experiential reality as it spontaneously arises, without applying a label, judgment, goal, or speculative interpretation, so that there is no distracting movement of the mind away from it, then no state of duality is erected, and in that choiceless (involuntary) and desireless (goalless) condition of consciousness, the experiential reality will tell its own complete story until totally drained out of its pent-up psychic energy. That process of non-dualistic communion with our actual experiential states will bring with it, sometimes in a spontaneous flash of intuitive insight, the full understanding of the experiential reality, and the underlying causal source from which it arises, which leads to its genuine resolution or transcendence. Whatever is fully understood leaves no trace of itself in consciousness. "Understanding" derived in any other way is not real understanding at all, because it yields no liberating effect, but, rather, is only a speculative interpretation in the service of the ego's need for protection, validation, or enhancement.

Thus, genuine psychological growth is not necessarily some kind of gradual progression that takes place over time, along some continuum of relativity or conditionally acquired presumptive qualities (e.g., worth-worthlessness, security-insecurity), but can take sudden spurts arising from liberating experiential insights, when our consciousness is free of predetermined beliefs and controlled goals, and, therefore, is abiding in an optimal state of openness and receptivity to new genuine understanding. In this way, when consciousness is open to spontaneously arising, uncontrolled, uncensored, new experiential insights, that can ultimately bring the total understanding of the psychological ego, or the conditionally acquired, conceptually defined, illusory sense of self, as it is traced back and resolved into its Source of origin, which leads to its transcendence. Then consciousness is abiding in Silence to its depths, and from that Silence, spontaneously, unexpectedly, and in a flash of sudden insight, can come the intuitive realization or awakening of consciousness as Transpersonal Being. Thus, it is only upon the tides of consciousness spontaneously following the unpredictable winding trail of its actual experience and natural inclinations, intuitively guided, from moment to moment, by its core sense of rightful integrity, that awareness is carried Home to Transpersonal Awakening of the Source or core level of its own being, holistic (partly conscious and partly subliminal or non-conscious) intelligence, or life energy force.

The yearning for the awakening of that *Fulfillment Realization* is the basic drive underlying all psychological motivation. As long as the narcissistic ego-personality is not totally understood, in this way, with its component self-concepts, psychological desires, needs, identifications, and attachments, and the feelings of deficiency from which they arise, then identification with any kind of false self, i.e., any kind of conditionally acquired mistaken identity, cannot be transcended. As long as some-thing conditionally acquired is still identified with, then there still remain the feelings of deficiency and its compensatory desires to make that conceptual identity something absolute, by creating the self-images and other distracting mind chatter associated with living in the state of becoming, which continues to cloud or block the awakening to Transpersonal Being. Thus, consciousness can experience its inherent fulfillment only when consciousness is in natural non-duality with its own experiential states, subjectively, and with objective reality in the world, and, also, when all psychological desire and the feelings of deficiency from which they arise are transcended. Therefore, because the personal self, as a false or illusory sense of self, is synonymous with duality

within oneself, and also between oneself and others, which produces incessant conflict, deficiency-feelings, and psychological needfulness, it can never be psychologically healthy or fulfilled.

Transpersonal Awakening is not meant to imply the complete destruction of the ego, but only the complete discarding of the illusion of it being a real psychological agent or entity with which our consciousness exclusively and enduringly identifies. At times, of necessity, such as, when the physical body is in danger of serious injury or perishing, then the body instincts may become activated and respond in spontaneous fashion in order to preserve the physical self, or the body-ego. Consciousness responds most spontaneously then because action no longer needs to be filtered through some psychological self-concept or agent. Sometimes it can also be appropriate to utilize other related aspects of the ego, such as, prescribed social roles, predetermined/habitual ways of perceiving and functioning, hedonistic self-indulgence, not permitting other individuals to inappropriately infringe on our psychosocial boundaries, and so on. Consciousness can utilize the ego when it seems necessary, appropriate, or beneficial to do so, without being identified with it, just like the body can wear clothing for its wellbeing without being identified with that clothing.

The essential elements of Transpersonal Awakening include the following experiential realizations, which can come gradually, or in a sudden flash of intuitive insight. All changing waves of thoughts, feelings, and sensory experience arise and set in Me, the boundless Ocean or ever-present Reality of pure Consciousness-energy-intelligence; the knower, the known, and knowing are non-dualistically, relationally, one, but also relatively distinct, and not fully identical; there is only One Non-Dualistic, essentially unchanging, yet paradoxically also dynamically ever-changing, self-luminous, self-existing, self-validating, absolute Reality, of the nature of pure Consciousness-Vibratory Energy-Intelligence, which is the energy substance underlying all mental and physical objectification and manifestation; the relative world is in continuous flux, and is basically no-thing other than projected thought-forms; Thou Art (I-AM) already, inherently, the Bliss of Paradise, the object of all desire, and have always been That, never having really left that Home of fulfillment; all contrary experience of a "Fall" or loss of that Reality is the result only of an illusory sense of deficiency and compensatory desire, mistakenly attempting to conditionally achieve or acquire the wholeness, fulfillment, and security that we already inherently BE. Egoistic desire, as a compensatory distracting escape from deeper feelings of deficiency, is in contrast to the natural, psychologically healthy, desire or aspiration to actualize the limitless potentials and capabilities that are inherent to our individual and relational energy-intelligence.

[Editorial Note by Barry Hammer: in some of the paragraphs below, my late father, Dr. Max Hammer, cites quotes by other psychology writers, listing only surnames and dates of publication, without any further biographical information. I do not have certain knowledge of the source of any of these quotes, but will put some possible sources in brackets, and omit that in other cases where I do not know of a possible source. In either case, it may be worthwhile for interested readers to try to trace possible sources of some of the quotes listed below.]

The recognition of the reality of Transpersonal Being seems to be growing in writings by prominent clinical psychologists. [Anthony] Sutich (1968) ["Transpersonal Psychology: An Emerging Force", *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 1968 (8), 77-78] writes, "A fourth force is emerging in psychology—Transpersonal psychology." He indicated that transcendence of the personal self is one of its concerns.

[James F.T.] Bugenthal (1965) [*The Search for Authenticity: an Existential-Analytic Approach to Psychotherapy*, New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1965] has indicated that "A further phase of human development that is infrequently attained....may be called 'transcendence.' This (level) is one at which the person would move through and beyond many of the limitations on awareness and experience that are generally taken for granted and would then realize new oneness with all being."

[Roberto] Assagioli (1965) [*Psychosynthesis: A Manual of Principles and Techniques*, New York: Hobbs, Dorman, and Company, 1965] uses the term "spiritual psychosynthesis" to make reference to a further state of unity beyond mere personality integration or personal psychosynthesis. Assagioli uses the term Self to denote the higher or transcendental "I." [Abraham Joshua] Heschel (1965) [*Who is Man?* Stanford University Press, 1965]. Another possible source of the Abraham Joshua Heschel quote might be, *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism*, New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1955] is another who claims that "man's true fulfillment depend upon communion with that which transcends him." [Abraham] Maslow (1967) [a complete bibliography of Maslow, which includes multiple entries for 1967, is available online through this URL link: http://www.maslow.org/sub/m_bib.htm] states that "the so-called spiritual or transcendental life is clearly rooted in the biological nature of the species...."

"The spiritual or value-life falls well within the realm of nature, rather than being a different and opposed realm. It is susceptible to investigation at once by psychologists and social scientists, and in theory will eventually become also a problem for neurology, endocrinology, genetics, and biochemistry, as these sciences develop suitable methods."

[Joseph] Campbell (1949) [*The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. 1st edition, Bollingen Foundation, 1949] points out that the struggle to supplant the ego with Transpersonal Being has portrayed itself throughout the history, literature, and myths of humankind. He writes,

"Man is that alien presence with whom the forces of egoism must come to terms, through whom the ego is to be crucified and resurrected and in whose image society is to be reformed. Man, understood however, not as 'I' but as 'Thou'; for the ideals and temporal institutions of no tribe, race, continent, social class, or century, can be the measure of the inexhaustible and multifariously wonderful divine existence that is the life in all of us."

Some of the examples of the symbolic struggle and search for Transpersonal Being that Campbell and others discuss from the myths are: The Odysseys of mythic heroes, such as Ulysses and Jason, in their searching for "treasures" such as the Golden Fleece and Holy Grail; the yearning to return "Home" after long and weary voyages; all the attempts to find paradises on earth, such as, Shangri-La, Shambhala, and other Utopias, and even from the fairy tales as seen in the stories of the coming to real life of the puppet Pinocchio and the toy doll the Velveteen Rabbit. There are also many examples from the scriptures such as from John 3:3-5, "Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, unless ye be reborn, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven" and from Luke 17:21, "Behold, the kingdom of heaven lies within thee."

Although Transpersonal Awakening is basically an ineffable experience, [Edward?]Carpenter's (1912) [*The drama of love and death: a study of human evolution and transfiguration*, London: George Allen & Company, LTD, 1912. Another possible source: Edward Carpenter, *Love's coming of age: A series of papers on the relations of the sexes*, Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1912]

description is typical of the many who have tried to put it into words. He writes:

"of all the hard facts of science...I know of none more solid and fundamental than the fact that if you inhibit thought (and persevere) you come at length to a region of consciousness...of an altogether vaster Self than that to which we are accustomed. And since the ordinary consciousness with which we are concerned in ordinary life is before all things founded on the little local sense, it follows that to pass out of that is to die to the ordinary world."

"It is to die in the ordinary sense, but in another sense it is to wake up and find that the "I", one's real, most intimate Self, pervades the universe and all other beings—that the mountains and the sea and the stars are a part of one's body, and that one's soul is in touch with the souls of all creatures. Yes, far closer than before. It is to be assured of the indestructible immortal life and of a joy immense and inexpressible."

"So great, so splendid is this experience, that it may be said that all other questions and doubts fall away in face of it; and certain it is that in thousands and thousands of cases the fact of its having come even once to a man has completely revolutionized his subsequent life and outlook on the world....

"the ordinary mortal self, with all its worries, cares, limitations, imperfections, and so forth, falls completely off, and lies (for the time) like a thing dead; while the real man practically passes onward into another state of being.

"To experience all this with any degree of fullness, is to know that you have passed through Death; because whatever destruction physical death may bring to your local senses and faculties, you know that it will not affect that deeper self....

"I say, this heart and kernel of a great and immortal Self, this consciousness of a powerful and continuing life within, *is* there—however deeply it may be buried—within each person; and its discovery is open to everyone who will truly experience—with its accompanying sense of rest, content, expansion, power, joy, and even omniscience and immensity—as the most fundamental and important fact hitherto of human knowledge and scientific inquiry, and one verified and corroborated by thousands and even millions of human kind."

The realization of Transpersonal Being is essential not only for individual psychological health, but for the wellbeing of the entire world. Numerous international conflicts have brought us to the brink of disaster. The causes of these conflicts appear to be very much related to, and can be understood as, symbolic projections of man's basic inner struggle to be free of his ego. Various oppressed ethnic, racial, and feminist groups, as well as numerous colonized nations are all shouting, "We want our freedom now!" Various other social ills, such as, crime, substance abuse, bigotry, environmental pollution, lack of compassion for relatively disadvantaged members of society and other related forms of social injustice, etc., are basically rooted in identification with the narcissistic ego, and its self-preoccupied lack of genuine caring for individuals and groups with which it does not identify, or to whom it does not feel related and ethically responsible.

Humankind's identification of itself with the ego or separate, unrelated, narcissistic, false sense of self has produced a pervasive callous selfishness. Although everyone is relatively unique, and should be appreciated for their distinctive particularity, consistent with the old song, "everyone is beautiful in their own (special) way", when an individual becomes excessively, exclusively, preoccupied

with her own uniqueness, she becomes accustomed to seeing others as completely unlike and unrelated to herself, which produces psychologically unhealthy extreme narcissism and lack of empathy, compassion, and unselfish caring for others. The differences between individuals and groups become overly emphasized, to the neglect or exclusion of appreciating relatively universal aspects of the human experience that can bring people together in genuinely caring, compassionate, empathic, cooperative ways if better recognized and appreciated.

When I become convinced of my individual uniqueness, and also of the uniqueness of my particular ethnic, religious, gender, and/or other differentiated group identity, if that sense of uniqueness becomes absolute rather than relative, to the exclusion of also recognizing and appreciating the relatively universal aspects of human experience that can bring people of diverse outlooks and backgrounds together, as a principle of unity in diversity, or "E Pluribus Unum", the more that I tend to hold my sense of individual and group uniqueness, or distinctive particularity, to be absolute rather than relative, in that way, the more I tend to defensively, antagonistically, possessively, try to impose my own needs, values, and viewpoint on others, and devalue their legitimate human rights, views, needs, and concerns. Those things which I view as mine have become extensions of my own ego. The human being, identified primarily with the narcissistic ego, tends to protect, defend, possess, monopolize, and/or aggressively impose on others that which he perceives as "his", and also subtly or directly comes to reject and attack that which he perceives as "not his". Thus, for example, when I come to identify myself with a particular religious organization or group, denigrating or attacking my church, my beliefs, or my behavioral norms is seen as an attack on myself, which must be met with counterattack in order to preserve my conviction that what is mine is of the greatest value, validity, preserved, aggrandized, and secure.

Because we have been so persistently, socially and psychologically, conditioned to reacting almost exclusively to differences rather than similarities or universalities, the excessively differentiated or extremely unique-feeling "I" or ego self-definition soon finds itself feeling isolated, fragile, vulnerable, and insecure, and begins to reject and attack almost everything and everyone that is not incorporated into his self-system. As he does so, his alienation from others becomes more intense, which then intensifies his feelings of vulnerability and insecurity, leading to a more and more aggressive stance toward the world. The vicious circle is clear. Today, as identification with, and intensely positive valuing of, the narcissistic, divisive/separatist ego increases, we have more and more conflicts between country against country, race against race, religion against religion, social class against social class, females against males, as well as conflicts between parents and children, and between older and younger generations. It is our identification with our differentness that produces much if not all of the hostility and conflict between peoples.

Nations and regions of the world where members of some particular ethnic, religious, or social groups devalue and resent people of other backgrounds and beliefs, such nations and regions tend to have maximal levels of social unrest, and even violent conflict. When members of particular groups feel totally separate from, unrelated to, and devalue or demonize people outside their group ideology that can readily lead to mutual lack of understanding, mistrust, antagonism, and even violent conflict. In other nations and regions where greater psychological maturity is prevalent, involving the ability and willingness to empathize with, and respond compassionately to, people whose beliefs and backgrounds differ from one's own, antagonistic conflicts will be much less prevalent,

and social diversity will enhance rather than detract from the vitality, creative renewal, productive innovation, and cohesion of society. In other communities, regions, or nations where differences between people are less observably apparent and where they all share the same cultural heritage and a similar socioeconomic status, there tends to be less internal strife because there is more of a unitive or family feeling that incorporates all of the citizens. Domestic violence is a serious problem in many areas of the world, but in other cases, it feels much easier to be violent or antagonistic in other ways to someone whom we feel shares very little in common with us.

The psychologically unhealthy phenomenon of non-constructive, antagonistic, social conflict arises not from the fact of diversity per se, but rather from our psychologically immature and unhealthy tendency to overemphasize the differences, devalue or even demonize people who seem different than us, and insufficiently appreciate and value universal aspects of human experience that can unite or bridge people of diverse outlooks and backgrounds. For example, people of any skin complexion can be racist if they feel completely unrelated and antagonistic to, and devalue people of, other "colors," "races", or complexions. Only when people develop a greater level of psychological health and maturity that enables them to become less identified with the ego's sense of absolutely exclusive, unrelated, antagonistically competitive identity (competing for a psychological sense of absolute superiority, and relatedly trying to make other individuals feel absolutely inferior, devalued, or worthless), can they develop greater levels of empathy, compassion, tolerance, and goodwill, so that diversity then becomes beneficial rather than harmful to society and its various individual members and diverse groups.

No real enduring peace and good will can ever be realistically expected until appreciation of diversity is balanced with experiential understanding of the inherently relational, connective, contextual, nature of reality, which joins together diverse polarities and perspectives into a greater indivisible unifying wholeness, such as a whole spectrum or continuum, in contrast to the narcissistic ego's view of diversity as a collection of unrelated fragments of reality, each devaluing one another, and antagonistically competing for an exclusive, absolute, sense of value, truth, validity, unilateral advantages, and coercive control over others. Likewise, intrapersonal fragments of consciousness within the individual psyche need to be experientially unified for psychological wholeness and health to exist, just as previously fragmented, disconnected, sectors of society need to come together in a genuinely caring, mutually respectful way, while preserving their diversity or particularity, for a psychologically healthy society to exist and flourish.

No amount of legislation, punishment, or rebuking will ever put an end to hate and violence. If it lives in the hearts of the people, it will find some avenue of expression, sooner or later. What is necessary is a purging or transformation of the heart through the connective energy presence of love, and the related recognition of the natural, inherent, true brotherhood/sisterhood or spiritual family of humankind.

The world today desperately needs a unifying principle that can help bring the peoples of the world closer together instead of further apart. Such a unifying principle potentially exists in the spiritual reality of love, or Transpersonal Being. When the Bible urges us to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 5:43, 19:19, 22:39; Mark 12:31,33; Luke 10:27), we do not interpret that injunction as saying, "Love others as much as you love yourself." Instead, we interpret it to mean, "Recognize that the true Self, essential being, or form of love-life energy substance, of the other individual is truly, naturally, inherently related to your own true Self as another distinctive, particularized form of love-life energy.

The connective relational energy of love naturally arises and flows between you and others as a result of your experiential realization of this great truth." It is not realistically possible to achieve human brotherhood/sisterhood merely by appealing to high ideals or to a sense of duty. Instead, something more than that is essential to release human consciousness from the clutches of selfishness and greed. In particular, it is essential to develop a precise understanding of how greater psychological maturity and health, along with greater levels of spiritual awakening, can best be developed, as a means of enabling and motivating individuals to outgrow the narcissistic ego, and its inherently selfish, divisive, antagonistic, and other malign qualities, while growing in the conscious experiential realization and expressed development of the connective, relational energy of love.

Thus, our impassioned plea to all workers in the fields of psychological health, social work, and related human services, is, please encourage your clients to balance their natural sense of individual uniqueness or particularity, and their appreciation of inherent human diversity, with greater insight into the universal reality of love-life energy, and other related universal aspects of human experience, which can produce greater intrapersonal, interpersonal, and societal integration, unification, experiential relatedness, cohesion, compassionate good-will, empathy, healing, and health.

To truly and deeply understand exemplars of psychological health and maturity, and related spiritual awakening, it is not sufficient just to study them from the outside, such as, by focusing on their observed behaviors and mental cognition. Although those relatively tangible aspects can also be significant and worthy of study, it is much more important to study psychologically healthy, mature, spiritually advanced individuals from the inside, so to speak. We psychotherapists, counselors, social workers, and other human services professionals need to ask ourselves questions that provide deeper insight into the experiential basis and transformational significance of that kind of psychologically healthy character development, such as, What is going on in their consciousness? How do they come to be this way? What is the causal basis of their enormous compassion, empathetic sensitivity, creativity, gentleness, tolerance, capacity for loving, and feeling of genuine unselfish good will towards all human beings, perhaps even to all living beings, of all species. Let us carefully study precisely what it means when we experience a particular human being as being "elevated" or having developed a relatively advanced level of self-actualization, fulfillment, or peak experiencing, peak performing, and genuine nobility of character. Elevation of what? Toward what? How well do we really understand the nature of fulfillment or love? Why has our understanding of psychologically mature and healthy qualities of character been so vague and seldom studied? How does individual uniqueness relate to interpersonal connections and universal human values and experiences?

These are not just metaphysical questions designed for interesting speculative discussion, but, rather, are issues with significant applied practical implications that ought to be part of psychological study, as well as being worthy of study in other humanistic fields of inquiry. It is time to broaden the scope of psychology to include these kinds of questions if we are ever to come to sufficiently understand the nature and essence of the whole of consciousness, particularly more expansive, fulfilling, self-actualizing, psychologically and spiritually above normal, aspects of consciousness that abide beyond the scope of the self-confined, self-limited, often habitual, narcissistic ego-personality.

In contrast to the psychologically relatively healthy ego-personality, the fully healthy consciousness, i.e., the Transpersonal, holistic, or integral consciousness, views its basic sense of experiential wellbeing,

fulfillment, security, identity, self-esteem, and strength of character ("ego strength", courage, tolerance of psychological discomfort for the purpose of constructively coping with adaptive challenges and self-actualizing growth-opportunities) to be unconditional, inherent to our permanent being, rather than viewing those qualities of wellbeing as being conditionally acquired and/or conditionally lost. The fully psychologically healthy and mature Transpersonal Consciousness has nothing to prove about itself, because its inherent unconditional wholeness, wellbeing, nonjudgmental self-acceptance, security, serenity, and contentment cannot be conditionally enhanced, diminished, proven, or disproven, whereas the ego-personality's positive, favorable, or desired self-definitions can, at any time, be disconfirmed or invalidated by experiences and/or interpretations, coming from oneself and or from others, that seem to validate an opposite sense of negativity or deficiency. Therefore, the narcissistic ego is frequently trying to validate, prove, enhance, or aggrandize, its fragile sense of preferred identity and psychological security.

The real self, or the holistic self, embraces all spontaneously arising relative polarities of experience and constructive options of functioning, but is not exclusively, enduringly identified with any of them, nor does its unconditional inherent experiential wholeness, wellbeing, and fulfillment depend on any of them. Thus, the real self, our Transpersonal Being, is not fearfully, defensively, possessively, attached to any subjective or objective relative polarity of experience or expression. By way of contrast, the narcissistic ego exclusively, enduringly, identifies with some particular, desired, relative polarities and completely devalues, rejects, and escapes others, depending on whether a particular relative polarity enhances and confirms, or diminishes and disconfirms, its conditionally acquired, conditionally lost, sense of psychological security, identity, worth, and proficiency. Typically or generally speaking, the more extensively or intensely one is identified with the narcissistic ego-personality, the more psychologically unhealthy or pathological one will be, in one's attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors, whereas the less one is identified with the narcissistic ego, and the more that one lives or functions consistently with the qualities of the holistic real self or transpersonal being, the more psychologically healthy, mature, and fulfilled one will naturally be.

Our transpersonal being or holistic real self is also characterized by the following psychologically healthy inherent qualities:

An intrinsic, unconditional, sense of peace, love, and joy (or ecstasy)

The healthy consciousness is intrinsically, unconditionally, being the triune of peace-love-joy, which means that his sense of wellbeing is not attained through some extrinsic source, for it is not conditionally dependent upon or related to his achieving or receiving anything. This differs significantly from the egoistic sense of elation, which is dependent upon the ego feeling a conditionally acquired, conditionally lost, sense of enhancement or aggrandizement in some way, and is relative to feelings of deflation which come when the ego feels itself to be diminished, attenuated, or disaffirmed in its sense of identity and related psychological needs. Those egoistic psychological needs are typically rooted in a basic sense of deficiency, continuously striving to achieve or validate a conditionally acquired sense of greater proficiency. So true joy, or ecstasy, is not a sense of egoistic elation, nor is it the same as a sensation of pleasure or fun, because joy, being intrinsic to Transpersonal consciousness-energy, does not come primarily through the physical senses, and therefore, is not exclusively a pleasurable sensation, although it can also include that,

along with relatively less tangible or subtler frequencies of ecstatic vibratory energy.

The same is true for love and peace, which are really indistinguishable from joy, and from each other, for they are not three separate states or qualities, but are rather a triune which may be subsumed under the unifying label of "bliss." So the psychologically healthy or transpersonal consciousness is intrinsic, unconditional, Bliss, without reason or provocation by any external stimulus or event, but is the consequence of consciousness naturally abiding in non-duality with its subjective experiential contents and with objective reality in the world. Bliss is the natural condition of consciousness when it is living in non-dualistic loving communion, and totally free of desires arising from the attempt to assuage underlying feelings of deficiency, or living in a state of becoming, or attempted self-improvement. However, our real self naturally has other kinds of desires urging it to actualize its/ our inherent potentials and capabilities, so that we can experience progressively greater levels of fulfillment, and so that the life energy abiding in our natural potentials and capabilities can be unblocked, free flowing, and, therefore, naturally regenerative and vibrantly joyful, rather than being blocked, stifled, and therefore distorted into an opposite degenerative or toxic energy-momentum. The narcissistic ego's unnatural sense of enduring duality or predetermined psychological distance from other individuals, as well as from our genuine experiential states, and from our natural potentials and talents stirring within us to be actualized, produces inner and outer tension, conflict, and other toxic or negative experiential states, antithetical or opposite to the naturally regenerative, ecstatically free flowing quality of our unblocked, free flowing, undivided, wholeness of consciousness-life energy.

A pervasive attitude of letting-be and contentment with what is

The psychologically healthy consciousness is marked by the absence of psychological need because of the absence of feelings of deficiency. He has no deficiency-based desire for himself in terms of his own self-enhancement, nor does he manifest and desire to improve or change the world's natural structures and functioning, although he does compassionately endeavor to make changes in the world that will truly benefit other people and himself. His profound self-contentment stems from his clear and direct realization that his consciousness is already inherently being peace, love, and joy, the attainment of which is fundamentally the object of all psychological desire. He understands that peace, love, and joy cannot be found except when all such deficiency-based striving totally ends, for they arise only with the total acceptance of and communion with what is. Nonjudgmental acceptance of and non-dualistic communion with what is can sometimes lead to pioneering insights about how best to beneficially alter, appropriately modify, build upon, or further develop what already is, so that it can manifest what it is naturally meant to become or progress into, and how best to heal or reconfigure toxic or inappropriate situations and phenomena so that they are better aligned with the natural harmony, health, and goodness that are intrinsic to Transpersonal Being.

When we are naturally being a unity rather than a duality in consciousness, there is no second or additional self, present in consciousness, to operate as the dualistic observer, experiencer, controller, or judge of the contents of consciousness, and so she has no choice but to let-be whatever experience spontaneously arises in her consciousness from moment to moment, and she reacts with that same sense of unity and letting-be in regard to the world. Because

she can let be what is, she does not have to interpret, distort, control, or escape from any experienced reality coming from inside or from outside, and, therefore, her contact with reality is optimal. From her stance as the Transpersonal Reality, which is intrinsically perfect or flawless (inclusive rather than exclusive of the necessity for occasional adjustments and modifications of circumstances that do not currently sufficiently reflect the natural, life-affirming, wholeness, harmony, and purity of Transpersonal Being), she can see, and, thereby, gradually manifest, that same perfection in the world. From her psychologically healthy, spiritually awakened viewpoint, her happiness and wellbeing are not very dependent on conditional circumstances and acquired possessions, although she can also enjoy and appreciate them for their own sake, without defensively clinging to them as a way of assuaging egoistic feelings of deficiency and insecurity. Thus, to some extent, it may be said that she is in the world but not of the world. Fulfillment, or the most that life can ever be, exists primarily in non-dualistic communion with what is, and is usually not found away from or outside of that, and, therefore, in living in communion, she is living as fully as it is possible to live.

Much of her lack of excessive possessive attachment to the material world is related to the realization that all of the diversity of life are merely varied expressions or flux vibratory patterns of consciousness-energy-intelligence, and are under lied by the one Reality of pure Consciousness indivisibly united to pure vibratory energy, which is her true I-AM principle. She realizes that there is a natural connection or non-dualistic relatedness between pure consciousness, as knower, its varied objects of knowledge, and the unitary process of knowing. Thus, the knower feels naturally related to the world, comfortably at home in the world, in contrast to the narcissistic, egocentric, illusory experience of feeling estranged and disconnected from the world, which produces a related experience of estrangement from one's own real being as a distinctive individual form of pure love-life energy presence.

The psychologically healthy and mature individual often lets go of unfounded, overly extreme, value judgments of absolute good and evil, recognizing that various relative polarities naturally have their rightful appropriate place within a greater undivided wholeness of being, as epitomized by the biblical maxim, "to all things there is a season." (Ecclesiastes 3:1) Although psychologically mature people readily see relative "shades of grey", rather than frequently value judging phenomena as being absolutely good and evil, they are compassionately eager to alleviate unnecessary suffering, cruelty, and injustice, and are responsive to the need for appropriate adjustments or modifications of the status quo, from time to time. Psychologically healthy individuals tend to be comfortably at peace with themselves and others, so they seldom criticize or seek to change others unless the status quo is clearly dangerous, harmful, or inappropriate to self and/or others. Rather than seeking to build a veritable paradise on earth by attempting to impose some kind of predetermined, controlled, presumptive, ideal expectation upon the world, psychologically mature individuals make the world better, and occasionally manifest a degree of paradise on earth, by recognizing and further developing the natural goodness that already potentially or actually exists in the world, to some extent.

Being love-creativity motivated rather than ego-deficiency motivated

Being an undivided unitary whole in consciousness enables us to invest our undivided whole conscious attention in non-dualistic communion or oneness with whatever inner and/or outer experience arises in consciousness from moment to moment. That natural

process of non-dualistic communion is both the basis of love and of creativity. Therefore, it may be said that the healthy consciousness responds out of love-creativity because they are essentially one and the same reality, only looked at from different perspectives. Because the healthy consciousness has transcended the identification with his narcissistic ego, and, therefore, also transcends the basic ego needs for self-protection, self-affirmation, and self-enhancement, he is no longer deficiency or ego need motivated, but is rather primarily motivated by love and creativity. In contrast, the psychologically unhealthy consciousness is primarily motivated by factors related to the ego's attempt to deny its foundational sense of deficiency.

The psychologically healthy consciousness is primarily motivated by love, because consciousness *is* being love, intrinsically, when it is totally self-accepting or in non-duality with all of its inner and outer experience, which it naturally is when it is no longer identified with the divisive narcissistic ego and its various deficiency-based psychological needs. This freedom from egoistic psychological needs makes it possible for consciousness to no longer be incessantly self-preoccupied, which enables it to at least occasionally be in a state of love or communion with others. Therefore, one can never really love another individual until he first loves himself. Loving himself means that he non-judgmentally totally self-accepts, or abides in, a state of non-duality with all aspects of his own experience. However, true self-love is not meant to imply some kind of narcissistic self-admiration, self-approval, or favorable self-valuing, which requires being egoistic or self-divisive because it requires being exclusively identified with some particular label, self-definition, aspect, or part of one's whole consciousness, because only the part can be defined, judged, and valued. The natural undivided whole of consciousness-energy can only be loved or be communed with, but never valued.

True love is a reality only for that consciousness which is not egoistic, because the ego, being exclusively identified with traits which self-divisively or dualistically reflect only one side of a particular relative polarity, always feels deficient, and yearns to complete itself or make itself feel whole by incorporating its complementary opposite through relationship. What the ego typically experiences and refers to as "love" is really that yearning or feeling of attraction to wholeness which stems from the attempt to deny his feelings of deficiency, or to compensate for them by trying to incorporate their compensatory or complementary opposite qualities in the form of a relationship with another person who seems to represent the optimal source of compensatory gratification for the feelings of deficiency. What the egoistic consciousness typically experiences as love is actually the illusory feeling of wholeness as represented by the relationship with one's complementary opposite individual, whereas the healthy consciousness is already, inherently, internally whole, and therefore is already intrinsically, naturally, being love. The psychologically healthy individual is motivated by love and not need, because he feels intrinsically whole already, and not deficient.

That experienced sense of intrinsic unconditional wholeness and overflowing fullness, or limitless abundance of being, enables psychologically mature individuals to give unselfishly, generously, of themselves to others without feeling drained or depleted of energy and wellbeing, like a perpetually shining sun or star that is not depleted by its endless shining. In fact, our experience of inherent fulfillment reaches/acceses progressively greater levels of grandeur the more that we unselfishly give of our caring energies and other resources to others, because as we fully spend each current level of energy in caring communion with others, we thereby release or tap into the next progressively deeper, higher, grander, level of our energy-being. This process of not being depleted by giving limitlessly

of our caring energies, but instead tapping into progressively grander levels of ecstatic self-discovery and creative self-development by doing so, is metaphorically like tapping into a bottomless, unfathomable, inexhaustible, wellspring of water or fountain of grandeur, metaphorically representing the boundless resources of our Transpersonal Being, or our individualized divine/spiritual self of pure love-life energy. This psychologically mature process is in contrast to the narcissistic ego's typical resistive fear of being drained, depleted, and treated unfairly if it is asked to invest its energies primarily in caring communion and unselfish service of other individuals rather than in its own continuous hedonistic self-gratification.

The psychologically healthy consciousness not only establishes a sense of communion with one other person, but is also characterized by a sense of love, compassion, and empathic identification with all humankind and all living beings, because his sense of identity is with the inherently relational, connective, Transpersonal ground of being that is the commonly shared unifying life substance or background of all living beings.

The psychologically healthy consciousness is also motivated by whatever is creatively or spontaneously aroused in him from moment to moment. Here, creativity is not necessarily meant to imply some form of artistic expression, but rather reflects a stance which consciousness takes in which it is totally uncommitted in regard to a spontaneous response to any particular challenge. It is not helpful to make a volitional effort to be creative, because any act of the will activates the ego, establishing a state of duality in consciousness which shuts off the free flow of the creative process. To be truly creative is to be spontaneous, thoroughly uncontrived, uncontrolled, not programmed or predetermined in one's perceptions and responsive behavior. Creativity and spontaneity are optimal for the healthy consciousness because when one is being a unitary whole in consciousness, rather than abiding in a state of duality or self-divisive inner conflict between various competing self-definitions and judgmental expectations of oneself, particularly, a division between what one is actually experiencing and what one presumes that one should be experiencing, then, in that absence of self-division and self-conflict, we will naturally be relaxed, which can sometimes enable creative insight and inspired talent to flow from the holistic core level of our being. Then whatever reaction is spontaneously, non-selectively, or creatively aroused in our consciousness from moment to moment can be spontaneously expressed because there is no dualistic second self or psychological ego present to require that the response be first predetermined and filtered in order not to be inconsistent with some concept, definition, or image of self with which the ego is identified and devoted to protecting, affirming, and enhancing.

The psychologically healthy individual does not superimpose too many predetermined conceptual interpretations of life, or live it abstractly, and so his experience is direct and immediate rather than mediated. He does not frequently label or categorize reality, which, if he were to do so, would imply a fixedness to what is, and would thereby rob it of its creative dynamic aliveness. Instead, he relates creatively to what is, as it actually is from moment to moment. When asked why he responded in a particular way, his response will typically be, "it occurred to me."

The psychologically mature individual, as is also true for many relatively psychologically immature individuals, typically has some natural preferences, predetermined inclinations, selective patterns of perception and functioning, persistent habits, spontaneously arising passions, and preliminary value judgments, in terms of spontaneously arising reactions of like and dislike, approval and disapproval, or

the perception of rightfulness and wrongfulness, of varying relative degrees of intensity, and even the occasional experience of absolute or extremely passionate total agreement or disagreement with particular circumstances that arise. However, psychologically mature individuals are typically open and receptive to the possibility of occasionally suspending, modifying, or adjusting their natural preferences and spontaneous judgmental reactions when it seems appropriate to do so, particularly in terms of being open to new experience, insights, and circumstances that call into question one's existing premises, preferences, and goals, and which call for different responses that intuitively seem more life-affirming, truly good-natured, and consistent with the holistic core integrity level of one's being, more so than one's initial premises and reactions. This is in contrast to the more rigid, inflexible, often inappropriate, reactions, premises, and value judgments that are typical of relatively psychologically immature individuals, whose overriding sense of deficiency and intensely demanding compensatory psychological needs prevent them from flexibly adjusting their perspectives to accommodate relevant new circumstances, insights, genuine or realistic experiences, and the intuitive guidance of the holistic core integrity level of their being.

Psychologically healthy and mature individuals do not value judge their own being or the being of others, because they recognize that everyone's permanent being is inherently a pure indivisible wholeness, an intrinsic rightfulness and lovable quality that is beyond all conditional positive and negative value judgments, conditional approval and disapproval, or conditional acceptance and rejection. However, psychologically healthy and mature individuals do have spontaneous value judgments in terms of discerning whether particular behaviors, attitudes, and circumstances seem basically life-affirming or life-degenerative and life-degrading; which is related to the intuitive perception of being essentially consistent or inconsistent with one's core integrity or genuine sense of rightness or wrongness.

This kind of realistic, appropriate, flexible, value judgment that characterizes psychologically mature individuals is in contrast to distorted, groundless, arbitrary, rigid, inflexible, manipulatively opportunistic, or insufficiently firm, overly inconsistent value judgments that are typical of many relatively psychologically immature individuals. Those kinds of psychologically unhealthy and immature value judgments are not grounded in the core integrity level of one's being, and related openness to considering new experiences, insights, options, and circumstances, and then exploring, without predetermined conclusions, whether those alternative perspectives seem rightful or wrongful to one's core integrity. Instead, such psychologically unhealthy, unrealistic, inappropriate, value judgments, are often derived from predetermined, inflexible, idealized, authoritarian, codes of beliefs and behaviors, which may be derived from religious precepts, parental influences, and/or other authoritarian societal conditionings, as well as the ego's basic psychological needs. In other cases, psychologically immature individuals may be overly flexible, inconsistent, or apathetic in terms of readily dropping their intuitively discerned sense of core integrity, and related accurate, undistorted, natural ethical principles and valid value judgments in regard to whether a particular option or status quo circumstance is basically rightful or wrongful in terms of its distinctive vibratory energy tone ringing true or false to our holistic core integrity. This kind of overly feeble real conscience (in contrast to socially conditioned or dogmatically predetermined, inflexible, false conscience) is often the result of psychologically unhealthy hedonistic psychological needs, and manipulative opportunism, arising from intensely demanding, overriding, deficiency feelings and other related psychological insecurities, which intensely demand impulsive,

immediate, inappropriate, gratification of those psychological needs in order to assuage underlying feelings of panic, anxiety, and/or other related deficiency feelings, even at the cost of silencing and violating our genuine conscience, which is part of our core integrity.

Psychologically mature individuals typically have a certain kind of natural innocence and heartfelt appreciation of the intrinsic beauty, goodness, and preciousness of life, because they are willing and able to, at least occasionally, suspend their natural preferences, and other habitual, predetermined, ways of perceiving and functioning, in order to be optimally open and receptive to letting their inner and outer life experience spontaneously reveal itself to them on its own terms, in a relatively unmediated manner. This involves suspending predetermined interpretive filters and other controlled ways of viewing and responding when it seems appropriate to do so as a way of communing deeply with their life experience, in an incisively penetrating manner. Psychologically mature individuals naturally seek unmediated, undistorted, uncontrolled, uncensored, heartfelt rather than superficial, contact with their inner and outer experience by letting it affect them as it will, without superimposing mediating, distorting, filters or distancing barriers such as, predetermined demanding expectations, preconceived interpretive categories, and unwillingness to risk possibly experiencing emotional hurt or psychological pain and discomfort by letting uncontrolled life experience deeply touch us in various ways.

The holistic core integrity of psychologically mature individuals typically guides them how best to spontaneously, intuitively, appropriately, flexibly balance and integrate various relative polarities of perception and responsive functioning that are inherent to the holistic reality of life, intelligence, or being, such as, various interrelated aspects of relative choice and relative necessity; relative passivity (or nonjudgmental relative acceptance of the status quo, and appropriate relative accommodating attitudes) along with relative assertiveness, seeking to fulfill our own predetermined goals by bending reality to our will; relative unmodified literal simplicity along with relative conceptual, metaphorical, and imaginary embellishment in the ways that we process raw sensory experience; selectively focusing on specific details and/or taking a more nonselective, expansive, inclusive, global awareness; and so on. Being exclusively, enduringly, inflexibly, locked into any particular favored mode of perception and responsive action, and/or entirely rejecting any constructive, life-affirming, option of viewing and functioning, is contrary to the natural holistic flux of reality, inclusive of various dynamic, complementary, relative polarities. That relatively inflexible, predetermined, mode of perception and responsive activity typically reflects psychological immaturity, as a defensive attempt to control our life experience and our response to it in the attempt to prevent the arising of anxieties and deficiency feelings that are, consciously or subconsciously, threatening to the ego, or the conditional, predetermined, sense of identity and wellbeing.

The flexible, undistorted, mode of perception and responsive action that typifies psychologically healthy and mature individuals is in contrast to how relatively psychologically immature and unhealthy individuals typically selectively filter, attempt to control, and interpretively distort their inner and outer life experience, not valuing contact with the actual experiential truth of themselves and of their encounters with other individuals, phenomena, and circumstances in the world. Psychologically immature individuals typically mediate and thereby distort their experiential contact with self and others through a distancing, relatively opaque, filter of predetermined demanding expectations, biased interpretations, as well as habitual, relatively

inflexible, ways of perceiving and responding, as a controlling attempt to ensure the gratification of the ego's basic psychological needs, involving the compensatory assuaging of the ego's deeper underlying anxieties and deficiency feelings.

Living in unmediated, non-dualistic, communion with the flow of experience in the timeless now

The transcendence of the illusory, separate, divisive, narcissistic ego identity, and its basic psychological needs, which are rooted in the ego's basic illusory sense of deficiency, anxiety, and insecurity, is also the transcending of the living in the pathological state of becoming. In the psychologically unhealthy state of becoming, or attempted self-improvement, egoistic consciousness is engaged in the futile, illusory striving to achieve a conditionally acquired sense of greater proficiency, security, worth, and wellbeing, and, relatedly, is attempting to make itself absolutely some-thing, i.e., trying to make its conceptually defined sense of identity, or the relative traits with which it is identified, absolute, exclusive, permanently enduring, conclusively and completely validated, which is not realistically possible. When this state of becoming is relinquished, then the incessant, distracting, egoistic mind chatter that it involves naturally subsides, which enables our consciousness to non-dualistically, uninterruptedly, undistortedly, contact or wholeheartedly commune with whatever experience is spontaneously arising in the here and now moment, which is a state of Being or undivided wholeness, in the timeless Now.

Many Eastern and Western psychological and spiritual disciplines point out the importance of living in the here and now by not letting oneself be distracted away from fully invested contact with whatever confronts consciousness from the external environment. However, living in the here and now cannot realistically be achieved as the result of a controlled volitional act of the will, which they seem to imply is somehow possible. Whatever feelings and experiences are rejected or repressed in consciousness will always draw our conscious attention and awareness away from the external here and now in the attempt to free itself of its repressed psychic energy, and the incessant self-conflict that that self-division produces. That distraction away from communion with here and now reality in the external world occurs because our holistic consciousness-life energy operates under the natural urge of trying to reestablish its inherent condition of being an undivided unitary Whole, or non-duality, by pushing up the repressed back into consciousness so that it can be reintegrated back into the natural wholeness of our conscious-life energy.

Therefore, enduring, substantial, fully invested contact or non-dualistic communion with the here and now external reality is not possible to achieve until consciousness is first established and living in that internal non-duality of consciousness in which it is in self-communion with the here and now arising of its moment-to-moment experiential reality, which liberates all that has previously been rejected and repressed to be reunified or reintegrated back into the natural undivided wholeness of our conscious-life energy. Then, when the distracting process of chronically escaping from feelings and experiences that the ego deems unacceptable and rejects, is no longer operative, then without any act of self-controlled volitional effort, our consciousness, no longer being distracted by egoistic psychological needs, narcissistic self-preoccupation, along with related mind chatter and inner conflict, has no place else to go except to naturally contact and live in communion with whatever encounter confronts conscious awareness, moment to moment, from external reality. Only then can there be said to be optimal contact with reality and psychological health.

Full contact or communion with the here and now actual reality requires no thought and therefore no sense of time, because thought is always of the past, the future, or the interpreted present, but can never be a direct, unmediated, experiential encounter with the immediacy of what is actually arising, or truly present, here and now. Experiential contact with reality occurs only where distracting interpretive or imaginary thought is not operative. Therefore, the psychologically healthy consciousness lives in Being, or undivided holistic unity of knowledge/intelligence, in which consciousness is fully immersed in living in the Present, not as a conceptually interpreted point in time between the past and the future, but rather in the un-interpreted immediacy or non-dualistic flow of the timeless or Eternal Now, and is in complete communion with whatever confronts consciousness from moment to moment.

Because the psychologically healthy consciousness naturally lives in the non-duality of communion with all that it encounters, relatively inside and/or relatively outside, he is said to be "one with the universe." What this essentially means is that because he is one with whatever arises in consciousness from moment to moment, and because there is no universe until consciousness becomes aware of some element of it, as it makes its impression and arises in consciousness, therefore, his consciousness is frequently in communion or one with the universe. However, our consciousness naturally also occasionally focuses on our own subjective self-explorations and interpretive reactions to what is arising in the world around us. Therefore, communion with the objective/external world, and/or with particular individuals, phenomena, circumstances, or activities within it, is occasionally balanced by a spontaneous, rightful, relative inward flow of our conscious attention and feeling life-energy investment, in contrast to the narcissistic ego's controlled, continuous, defensive, self-preoccupation.

Any kind of exclusive, controlled, partial, enduringly predetermined, inflexible focus of consciousness, inwardly or outwardly, reflects psychologically unhealthy, fearful egoistic defensiveness and fixated blockage of the natural spontaneous flow of our conscious attention and feeling life energy between various complementary relative polarities of experiencing and performing. Non-dualistic communion with any external reality or internal experience needs to be continuously renewed and readjusted, from moment to moment, and is not a static continuous achievement, because the spontaneous flow of conscious attention and energy between various complementary relative polarities of experience and activity is naturally dynamic and often unpredictable rather than being closed, finalized, controlled, and habitual.

Consciousness in communion suspends, or pauses, dualistic, separate, self-awareness, which momentarily interrupts, or more enduringly eliminates, the narcissistic ego, and the related process of living in becoming or in chronic deficiency feeling and compensatory insatiable desire. Love is the connective, fulfilling, reality that fills that vacuum of ego-release. Non-dualistic communion is the most complete contact possible with what is, because some element of separation and duality exists in all other forms of contact, particularly in more distancing, superficial, filtered, or mediated modes of contact. Thus, when one is in a state of communion, one can be said to be in love with life, which is an inherently joyful, ecstatic, vibrant, regenerative, healing, psychologically healthy, process. To live in communion is to be living as fully, deeply, and grandly as it is possible to live.

Psychologically healthy individuals have the natural volitional option, from moment to moment, to passively let themselves be carried by the tides of life in its never-ending ebb and flow, peaks and

valleys, or various complementary relative polarities, as well as the complementary, relatively more assertive option, to attempt to steer one's own course or be captain of one's own ship, as a way of exerting our own natural preferences, goals, potentials, capabilities, and life-affirming needs, when that seems appropriate. These kinds of relative polarity options are meant to be naturally viewed as complementary, mutually enhancing, and flexible in their rightful spontaneous flow, guided by our fluid core integrity, rather than being viewed and engaged in as mutually exclusive, one-sided, partial, alternatives. For example, the ego, or conceptual self-interpretation, selective preferences, and assertive volition or self-will, can be psychologically healthy or unhealthy, depending on whether or not we are exclusively, enduringly, inflexibly, identified with it, or are able to put it on or off, like clothing, or equipment, in appropriate circumstances, guided by our holistic core integrity.

Shifting our questioning and searching from deficiency to holistic self-actualization

Psychologically unhealthy questioning and searching arises from the attempt to assuage feelings of deficiency and anxiety, by trying to provide ourselves with a sense of control, predictability, and certainty, with regard to interpretive knowledge and future events. Psychologically healthy individuals typically recognize that reality is too dynamic, fluid, multifaceted, and spontaneous, to be conclusively defined and completely controlled. Their questioning and searching arises from the natural urge to develop greater understanding and appreciation of reality or truth, themselves, and other individuals, as well as the related attempt to actualize or fulfill their fullest range of natural potentials, abilities, talents, interests, preferences, and inclinations or proclivities. That psychologically healthy process of exploration, or questioning and searching, is rooted in love for truth or reality, and the experiential conviction of inherent wholeness of Being and intrinsic unconditional wellbeing and fulfillment, rather than arising from the psychological need to distractingly escape or cover over deficiency feelings. Psychologically healthy questioning and search also involves the natural joyful excitement that comes from discovering and developing what is most vitally alive and precious in oneself, and contributing to the greater self-actualization or progressive self-discovery and self-development of other individuals and society, like an endless treasure hunt. Psychologically healthy questioning and searching comes from our real Self, our Transpersonal Being, naturally seeking to explore, discover, and develop, new, varied, aspects of itself, in contrast to the psychologically unhealthy process of questioning and searching in the attempt to assuage illusory feelings of anxiety, insecurity, and deficiency. Those feelings of anxiety, insecurity, and deficiency, are not inherent to our true self or our real being, but rather arise as a product of contracting or distancing ourselves from the naturally expansive, connective, relational energies of love-life energy substance, and from the actual experiential truth of ourselves, which distorts our naturally regenerative joyful energies into their opposite toxic, degenerative, depressive, self-inhibited, or self-blocked, momentum. In contrast to the psychologically unhealthy process of questioning and searching for some relative polarities in exclusive isolation from their complementary opposite counterparts, psychologically healthy questioning and searching embraces all constructively functioning, natural, life-affirming complementary relative polarities within the greater indivisible integral wholeness of reality, being, or life energy-intelligence.

Reality, or being, and truth, or the genuine, undistorted, understanding of reality, are essentially one and the same. When words and thoughts become distanced from the actual, natural, flow

of energy-experience, and are valued for their own sakes, apart from the flow of communion with what is vibrantly alive or directly experienced within and around oneself, then words and thoughts often become cold, dry, lifeless, or deadening, like dim shadows divorced from the actual physical objects that cast those shadows. Through the psychologically healthy process of fully invested, heartfelt, appreciatively responsive, non-dualistic, communion with the unfiltered, unblocked, uncontrolled immediacy of our actual inner and outer experience, beauty is intuitively realized to be basically one with the love-joy-peace and other related sublime grandeur qualities that are inherent to pure, undistorted life energy flow and our own Transpersonal consciousness. True beauty includes, but is not exclusively limited to, pleasing sensations that are consistent with a harmonious, wholesome, undivided, regenerative, vibratory energy pulse. Furthermore, true beauty also includes a deeper level of vibratory energy experience that can be intuitively detected only by a well-developed, highly awakened, pure heart filled with love, which is the ultimate source of true beauty, in all of its forms.

Fear of death is absent for individuals who reach full psychological maturity and full spiritual awakening to the Transpersonal or spiritual reality of their being

There is no fear of death when we develop the experiential realization that our consciousness-life energy force is inherently timeless and everlasting, or permanently enduring, and is not affected by the demise of the physical body, which temporarily serves as its container and instrument of self-expression. After the physical body perishes, the soul or the enduring permanent core of our being (our life energy-intelligence) will endlessly continue to unfold new, more advanced, instruments by which means to explore, discover, and develop various aspects of itself and of truth or reality as a whole.

A greater overlap between work and play

Psychologically healthy individuals typically see all wholesome, natural, life-affirming, activities and aspects of life as being a form of play, or joyful celebration of the inherent, multifaceted (many-splendored) beauty, goodness, preciousness, and unfathomable wonder of life. Necessary work activities, and the attempt to earn a sufficient or sustainable income from them, can be engaged in with a playful, relaxed, serene, joyful, attitude, viewing the work-related tasks as opportunities to helpfully serve other individuals and society, learn and further develop various productive skills, and develop many of our natural talents, abilities, interests, and inclinations, if we can bring those inner resources into the way in which we perform various tasks. Egoistic motivations, such as the psychological need to prove or validate some positive self-definitions, and disprove or invalidate opposite negative or unfavorable self-evaluations, such as trying to demonstrate a conditionally acquired, conditionally lost, sense of worth and adequacy, and dispel opposite, illusory, deficiency-oriented, feelings such as worthlessness and inadequacy, fall away when we do not identify with the ego's conditional self-definitions and self-evaluations. When those egoistic motivations fall away, we naturally feel more relaxed and psychologically secure, and are not wasting our conscious attention and energies in unproductive inner conflicts, which enhances our ability to perform various tasks and activities in a playful, joyful, optimally effective and productive manner.

Significant periods of silence and concreteness of language

Individuals who have developed a relatively advanced level of psychological health/maturity and spiritual awakening are typically

tolerant of occasional periods of verbal silence, and related absence of unnecessary thought or persistent mind chatter, as an opportunity to let their encounters, and the essential energy presence that underlies those encounters, spontaneously impart its own insightful understanding, without continuously filtering our encounters with life experience through predetermined interpretive categories, judgments of conditional value, and distracting imaginative elaborations. Openness to non-conceptually mediated direct experience, or non-dualistic communion with whoever or whatever we encounter, often, but not necessarily always, results in simple, straightforward, concise, concrete language, reflecting the vivid immediacy of our unfiltered, unembellished, encounters, and the sensory impressions that those encounters usually involve. Sometimes language can spontaneously take on an uncontrived, lyrical, poetic, inspirational, rhythmic quality when it reflects experiential attunement to the naturally free flowing, ecstatic, energy pulse, or the beautiful "song" and "dance," that underlies the phenomena that we encounter, and which naturally arises through our heartfelt, non-dualistic, incisively penetrating, communion with those phenomena. Speech that reflects inner serenity and freedom from continuous egoistic turmoil, typically has a gentle, soothing, tone, arising from the "peace of God that transcends all understanding." (Philippians 4:7).

In some but not all cases, frequent speech and complex, abstract language, reflects egoistic self-display, designed for self-aggrandizement and/or as a means of influencing others.

Psychological health and maturity also typically involves a relative absence of craving for intense sensations and continuous stimulation

Many persons tend to seek out various kinds of intense sensations for stimulation and excitement, so as to feel more vital and alive, and thereby escape from boredom, stagnation, and loneliness, which become equated with a form of psychological death. However, for the psychologically healthy consciousness, such sensations only produce an agitating loss of his sense of peace and oneness with the natural flow of energy and its inherent vitality, simplicity, serenity, beauty, and purity. That natural joyful vitality and serenity can be experienced only when the senses are not being bombarded with continuous intensity, producing disturbing turmoil upon one's pure consciousness-energy, like a pebble thrown upon the perfectly still waters of a lake will disturb its perfect tranquility. Someone who is deeply at peace with herself typically has a basically simple, unelaborated, consciousness, which enables her to find it sufficient to just observe life spontaneously expressing itself, without superimposing agitating sensations, extraneous mind chatter, and egoistic emotions as a way of escaping from feelings of deficiency, insecurity, and anxiety. She naturally finds great delight in what to others are just the ordinary, common, simple everyday natural occurrences, such as watching the sun rise and set, a bird in flight, or children at play.

The psychologically healthy and mature individual is his own authority and standard for behavior

The healthy consciousness is identified with no codified, conceptually defined, value system, has no set of predetermined beliefs or principles, and is guided in his behavior by no external standards, social conditionings, or outside authority. His conviction is that love is the highest and only true morality, and being one with love, he feels that he can do no wrong. Because his actions arise from love, he is virtue itself, in contrast to those who act "virtuously", as a controlled, laborious, volitional act. Such predetermined, or prescribed, "virtuous" actions are basically imitative behaviors meant

to approximate some externally derived standard or presumptive ideal. However, psychologically healthy and mature individuals may be said to be living according to St. Augustine's dictum, "Love, and do what you will."

Psychologically mature individuals need not necessarily be religious in the strict sense of the word, implying adherence to prescribed doctrines or dogma, and membership and identification with a particular church or another sectarian organization. Many psychologically mature individuals make no identification with any exclusive label, group, or segment of life, because their relationship to life is as a whole and not some part. To be exclusively identified with any segment of life can produce conflict and opposition. Thus, for example, to be identified as a Protestant can, but need not necessarily, produce a sense of absolute otherness (or lack of empathic relatedness) and opposition to people of other religious affiliations, such as, Catholics, Jews, etc. Similarly, to stand as a Democrat can, but need not necessarily always, produce some degree of psychological distance, or estrangement and opposition, to Republicans, and so on. Individuals who recognize the inherent indivisible wholeness of life, or reality, may not necessarily identify with particular groups or self-labels, although other psychologically mature and healthy individuals may affiliate with particular groups as a way of developing caring interpersonal relationships and sharing meaningful activities and insights together, and may identify to some extent with particular labels or personal qualities as a means of better understanding their individual and shared-group self-selected goals, preferences, interests, and natural inclinations. It is only when distinctive individual and group identities are presumed to have an exclusive monopoly on truth and value, or to be absolutely superior and unrelated to people who have different orientations, that such defined identities become psychologically unhealthy and divisive of the natural, inherent, relational wholeness of reality.

Conclusion

Psychological health and maturity develops by reunifying all aspects of our inner psyche back into their original, natural, wholeness, and outwardly engaging in caring reconnection or non-dualistic communion with other individuals, phenomena, and activities in the world, as a way of restoring the natural indivisible wholeness of reality, which bridges the inner and outer dimensions, or the subjective knower and its various objects of knowledge. That undivided inner individual wholeness and outer relational wholeness, and the psychological health and maturity that results from it, which is, most essentially, the connective reality of love, is the experiential truth that sets us free (John 8:32) from unnecessary psychological pain and inner conflict, as well as interpersonal and societal conflicts and disturbances arising from fixated identification with conflicted, narcissistic, egoistic beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. The development of inner resources derived from psychological health and maturity, such as, true insight, heartfelt inspiration, inner peace, compassion, empathy, courage, strength of character, beauty, creativity, etc., can be applied in various ways to enable ourselves to reach significantly greater levels of experiential wellbeing, fulfillment, self-actualizing development, and the ability to cope more effectively with challenges arising to our individuality, interpersonal relationships, and society.

In many cases, on the surface, to all who are intimately acquainted with him, an individual who has reached a very advanced level of psychological health and maturity appears to be little different from most other persons who have developed an average level of psychological health and maturity, for he engages in most of the same activities that he was involved with before his Transpersonal

awakening, involving realization of the essential relational oneness or inherent interconnectedness of reality, or Cosmic Consciousness (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosmic_Consciousness), albeit with less possessive attachment and with different motivation. There is no need to appreciably alter his life activities because there is never any need to escape from illusory feelings of deficiency, insecurity, and anxiety, to escape from the ordinary simplicity of life, or to fulfill any egoistic goal of becoming or presumptive self-improvement. Individuals, who have developed a very high level of psychological maturity, involving the awakening of their Transpersonal or spiritual being, intuitively recognize a flawless perfect purity as the true being of all forms of existence, i.e., the underlying life substance that comprises all of the varied forms of material existence abiding in this world. Therefore, the natural, unembellished, simplicity of life is usually good enough for psychologically mature individuals, but they may also try to change the status quo when it seems appropriate, beneficial, or necessary to do so.

Psychologically mature individuals are typically flexible in adjusting their perceptions and behavior to accommodate new, relevant, circumstances, experiences, and insights, because they recognize that the indivisible wholeness of reality includes all natural, constructively functioning, life-affirming, complementary relative polarities, whereas relatively psychologically immature individuals typically function in more inflexible, rigid, controlling, habitual ways, as a means of conforming to and validating some kind of exclusive, partial, conceptually-defined, egoistic identity, and rejecting and avoiding relative polarities, or options, that are, consciously or subconsciously, associated with frustration of the ego's basic psychological needs, perceived threats to the ego's sense of identity, and arousing uncomfortable feelings that seem to threaten the ego's sense of continued psychological existence and wellbeing, such as, feelings of deficiency, insecurity, anxiety, and worthlessness.

As with an ocean in the throes of a storm, its surface may reflect great turmoil, but at its deepest depths, it is always tranquil; likewise, with the consciousness of psychologically mature and healthy individuals who have substantially awakened the Transpersonal or spiritual core of their being, their surface reactions, on the outer circumference level of their being, may apparently reflect turbulence, personal concern, and passionate investment, but at the deepest core, center, or source level of their being, they reflect the unconditional peace, serenity, and joyful vitality that is inherent to that center level of their being, and which extends to other connected aspects or levels of one's being. Only someone who has actually developed a relatively advanced level of psychological health and maturity, culminating in Transpersonal Self-realization, can develop an optimal experiential understanding of the sublime qualities, transformational possibilities, and creative/productive options that that level of reality and development involve, beyond what intellectual analysis and comprehension can grasp, observing such psychologically mature, spiritually awakened individuals from the outside. The development of such optimal levels of psychological health, maturity, and spiritual awakening fulfills at least part of the basic meaningful purpose of life, because it is the key to achieving optimal levels of serenity, psychological wellbeing, fulfillment, and actualization of the fullest possible range of natural potentials, talents, and constructive proclivities.

Editorial Note:

Other related insights by Dr. Max Hammer and Dr. Barry Hammer are presented in their two published books, 1) Psychological Healing Through Creative Self-Understanding and Self-Transformation. (ISBN: 978-1-62857-075-5) and 2) Deepening Your Personal

Relationships: Developing Emotional Intimacy and Good Communication. (ISBN: 978-1-61897-590-4). The primary author is Dr. Max Hammer, with contributions from secondary authors Dr. Barry J. Hammer and Dr. Alan C. Butler. These books can be purchased from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, or our author/publisher website, <http://sbprabooks.com/MaxHammer>. The latter website also posts our other articles, and describes our books and us as authors. More articles by Max Hammer and Dr. Barry Hammer are also available at: <https://independent.academia.edu/BarryHammer>.

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