

Psycho-Spiritual Development (Updated Sept 2023)

First of all, I want to make clear that I do not automatically bring any aspect of spiritual exploration into my work as a therapist. For some people it does not fit and I entirely respect that, there is always much work to do on healing our psychological self. For others, the spiritual (whatever we mean by the word) can be an important aspect of their experience and so needs to be included.

Two dimensions to human existence – The Personal and The Transpersonal/Spiritual

It is ever clearer to me that human existence is made up of these two basic dimensions of life, the personal and the spiritual or transpersonal. To realise our full potential we do need to "Grow up", which is about healing and developing in the personal dimension, and "Wake up" (Ken Wilber's terms), which is about increasingly opening and connecting to the spiritual or transpersonal dimension.

Claudio Naranjo in "Gestalt Therapy", Jill Hall's humanistic psychology in her wonderful book "The Reluctant Adult", plus Bessel van de Kolk, Peter Levine and Gabor Mate from trauma psychology, Jack Cornfield, John Welwood, A H Almaas, Ken Wilber, Terry Patten, and Thomas Hübl, from psycho-spiritual approaches, are just some of the very many voices calling for this recognition of our dual nature. It is the transpersonal, with its deep roots of "Goodness, Beauty and Truth" within us, that connects us to what is most precious and meaningful. I see the transpersonal or spiritual as being made of Consciousness, Love and Energy, which correspond to the three basic ways we have of relating to life, of head, heart and body.

Head, Heart and Body

This basic division of how we relate to the world, through our thinking, feeling and sensation/breath intersects with the two dimensions, so that each of these three aspects of ourselves has both its personal and transpersonal dimensions.

On the personal side, we have all the genetic and personal traits we are born with, we all our conditioning from our families and our culture, and perhaps most importantly we have our trauma with all its inevitable consequences. I have never met anyone who has not been left with trauma from their formative years and whilst there is obviously a scale here, I do think that everyone can benefit from healing their wounds and enabling their emotional development. Also developing their thinking and understanding and taking responsibility for their philosophy, as well as looking after and healing their bodies. But before looking at the personal dimension I would like to first set out how I understand the spiritual / transpersonal perspective.

The Spiritual aspects of our Heart, Head and Body –

To me the extraordinary thing about our spirituality is just the fact that sometimes we can have moments of connecting to it, despite all the obstacles we have in the way. This always feels like a gift, like grace. There are many ways this happens, be it through being in nature, or meditation, singing, dancing, sport, through intimacy of some kind, ceremony, prayer, yoga or Tai Chi, doing the washing up, etc., etc. In these moments it is as though we are blessed by the sun bursting through our clouded selves and these moments happen because of the staggering fact, one that many teachers over millennia have made clear, is that we are all, already enlightened, but it is covered up by the layers of 'ego' that flows from our un-processed trauma, our conditioning and general unconsciousness. Occasionally we get a glimpse through the clouds.

As with our psychology, our spirituality has three basic 'flavours'. We connect to the "spiritual" through our heads, as in developing our consciousness of our consciousness, as well as our

understanding. This is about the movement into being present to myself, “I” aware of “I” experiencing whatever is, here and now. Of holding ourselves in question as part of our ongoing pursuit of self-knowledge. Our connection to Truth

With the heart, it is by opening to our self-compassion, on the way towards embodying unconditional Love, to being loved and therefore able to love. It feels like a connection to God, to the profoundly beneficent Goodness of Life. It can be felt as deeply supportive and affirming, and again, it is as though Love is always there when we open our hearts to the depth of this present moment.

And with our bodies the need is to deepen our sensitivity to sensation as we connect to the energy of Life that we are given every day. Here there can be a profound sense of being ‘at one’ with the energy of the Universe, of vibrating deeply in tune with aliveness itself. Our body is the container for our experience. Connecting to our bodies sensation always brings us back into a deeper connect with the ‘here and now’, it grounds us deeper into what is real and visceral. Our connection to Beauty.

So we can see that the transpersonal dimension of our heart, body and head correspond to the ancient Platonic idea of “Goodness, Beauty and Truth. Connecting any two of these three aspects together gives us more presence and power, and connecting all three even more. The support and inspiration that comes from a holistic deepening of our connection to these "spiritual" dimension of life, is necessary if we are find our fullest freedom.

As an over-generalisation, in Abrahamic spirituality the connection is felt to be more through the heart to “God” or to the “Love of God”. For Eastern spirituality it seems to be more about the head and consciousness, with arriving at Emptiness or Nirvana or the un-describable ‘no-thing-ness’ of the Tao. The East also opened the path to spiritual development incorporating the body, through Yoga or Tai Chi or Martial Arts etc. (but the Sufi’s used dance, the Jewish and Christian traditions used song).

These three forms of connection obviously touch and influence each other, they can all give a profound shift in our consciousness. Any two are better than one and ideally we can connect all three together. But however holistic or not our spiritual experience is, it always gives some balm to our heart’s insecurities. Spiritual connection immediately supports our hearts to open and relax and our sense of separateness or alienation diminishes. As Helen Greaves (1969) put it, there is “Relaxation unto God”, referring to a deep letting go and opening, into the profound support of knowing that we a part of the Goodness of life. Part of the Absolute behind the creation of the Universe. I find it helpful to see this Absolute as having this triune structure of being made up of Consciousness, Love, and Energy/Light and however we experience connecting to it, it builds a deep trust in life. It enables us to intuitively recognise that this is more important and meaningful than all our personal concerns and identifications. Spiritual opening can only be a ‘here and now’ experience, even in tiny doses it transcends the personal with its power and intensity of beingness and sense of meaningfulness.

Many people in relating their big “enlightenment” experiences (examples on batgap.com) talk about a sudden and profound shift in their relationship with themselves, their identification with their small ‘self’ is dropped and the “I” becomes clear and free in its connection to the Consciousness, Love and Energy of the universe

The Philosophical ground for this perspective

It makes so much sense to me that the universe's evolution, ever since the "Big-Bang", is all about facilitating this conscious embodiment of Being. It is a staggering story of matter becoming ever more complex and conscious. This evolutionary process can also be seen as unfolding throughout the history of human culture to the point now where almost everyone on the planet has access to vast amounts of information, and the speed of change is growing exponentially. There is an explosion of rising consciousness across the globe, but still our survival is very uncertain.

It seems that the Universe/God made choice an essential aspect of our developmental process on both the personal and societal/global levels. If there is to be real choice, then "failure" has to be a possible part of the picture, we can fail, societies fail, civilisations have fallen, our civilisation might fail, human beings might become extinct, but in the end, it is all within the frame of this staggeringly creative evolutionary force unfolding throughout the universe. There have been multiple mass extinction events in Earth's history, and each led to the evolution of more sophisticated life forms. If we destroy ourselves there is still plenty of time for another species to evolve into self-consciousness, and maybe they will reach Pierre de Chardin's "omega point" of a world fully realising the Consciousness/Love/Energy, the "Truth, Goodness and Beauty", that seems to be at the heart of creation.

As I understand it, our human process of self-realization is the final act in the transformation of nothingness, first into matter, then into Life, and then into the realization of the Consciousness, Love and Energy of the Absolute. To Non-Duality teachers, and the increasing band of scientists who subscribe to "Panpsychism", it is consciousness that is fundamental. Matter arises from consciousness, the material world flows from consciousness, not the other way around (see as above, also Goswami, Lent, Currivan, McGilchrist). This perspective is part of seeing that our essential nature consists of "Goodness, Beauty and Truth". Understanding and embodying this, fundamentally changes our perspective and worldview. The universe is no longer just a random happening without meaning, something that is alien and threatening, something that we have to conquer and have every right to over exploit for our short term gratification. Instead it becomes a living, emergent, unfolding process of which we are a crucial part (see also Duane Elgin). We have the possibility of working with Nature and developing a relationship of service to this profound process. Such a perspective enables us to see that our materialistic obsession with "me, and what my ego wants" totally misses the mark. It is about participating in and facilitating the blossoming of Consciousness (do see YouTube conversation between Rupert Spira & Bernardo Kastrup).

So, if Consciousness is fundamental and Non-Dual in nature, and if choice and self-responsibility are real, then surely logic dictates that the Universe must be both Dual and Non-Dual at the same time. Choice implies duality, there has to be something separate for it to have any meaning, for it to be real in any way, so it must be that both are true? Is this then the fundamental paradox of existence? Taking this as so helps us to understand why the issue of whether or not free will exists is such a huge conundrum (e.g. see Robert Lawrence Kuhn's podcast in "Closer to the Truth"). It is essentially the same problem as whether or not God exists. Obviously not the daft "straw man" arguments about an omnipotent being directing everything, but the real question of whether there is a teleological force (operating through all the exquisitely finely tuned laws of nature that enabled life to emerge), that set the gigantic experiment of this universe unfolding those billions of years ago.

It seems to me that what so many philosophers have failed to understand and incorporate, is the fundamentally developmental nature of human beings. How people can move from being almost entirely mechanical in their everyday living, just as Gurdjieff emphasized, to eventually, being almost entirely choiceful, connected through choice, to the Consciousness, Love and embodied Energy of the universe.

Opening and connecting to the transpersonal dimension of our nature, with its triune structure, is to facilitate the evolutionary aim of the Universe. Formlessness finally being able to manifest in Form. Our ability to contribute to this is dependent on the exquisitely paradoxical process of combining these two dimensions of Life, of Form and Formlessness, of the personal and the transpersonal. We have to try from the right place to reconcile these irreconcilables, using self-responsibility and choice together with opening to and participating in the flow of the Tao. It is paradoxical and confusing! When we are still caught in “victim mode” with our unhealed wounds, the ego is strong and it needs to engage in “doing”. Here, passivity is unhelpful. As we increasingly heal and integrate, we can move more towards “letting go”. Premature letting go is spiritual bypassing, and we need all our deep honesty and self-questioning to avoid the temptations of that. But we also need the nourishment and encouragement that comes from connecting to the spiritual dimension because this helps to support the persistence and determination we need.

Surely the force that caused the creation of this universe, that set this gigantic experiment in motion, did it for some reason. It seems to fit so well that its goal was/is to manifest itself in form, rather than simply remain un-manifest. This is why our human “Beingness” is so special, and why the fact that we have choice so crucial. It all makes the realization of Consciousness, Love and Energy into embodied form, meaningful. Humans realising their potential, through choice, is the triumphant fulfilment of this amazing experiment. Why bother if everything is predetermined! There is surely no fun, or point, in that! As the Sufis put it, Love is the force that brought the universe into existence. It wants to be known. I imagine that throughout our galaxy and all the billions of other galaxies out there, this process must be going on with innumerable civilisations struggling to realize and embody Consciousness, Love and Energy.

From all this flows an understanding that this universe is bound to be made up of a mixture of accident and causality. There is obviously no omnipotent being with a white beard directing everything in detail. It only seems logical to me that God, or whatever label you choose for the force that set the universe in motion, did so with the hopeful aim of realising itself in Form. It makes no sense to me that the whole process was designed to be entirely deterministic, this gigantic experiment was set in motion and bounded by a set of laws (of nature) geared towards achieving its goal. But much had to be left to chance for it to be meaningful. Chaotic systems are everywhere, interacting with each other, making much of what happens accidental. But it seems to me that it is this that creates the opening for choice to play its crucial role and therefore bring meaning into our lives. The laws of nature and spirit are guiding the universe towards facilitating the realization of Consciousness, Love and Energy, of “Goodness, Beauty and Truth”, through us. The fact that we resonate so deeply with this, that we are developing towards it, that it is imprinted so deeply in our unconscious, is all testament to this. That we have been given choice to participate in this, I still find extraordinary!

The personal aspects of our Heart, Head and Body

Elsewhere I have articulated in some detail how trauma, in its widest sense, creates our woundedness and consequent insecurity and how in doing so it interrupts the connections between our head, heart and body. As well as hindering the development of any these parts, trauma creates our insecurity which then hinders the development of whole self.

The core of our healing is, in my experience, always to do with the heart. Trauma’s effect is centrally about the self being wounded in an un-bearable way, it is our feelings that are overwhelmed. There are certainly consequences for our thinking and our bodies that flow from this, but they are secondary.

Healing often means working backwards through the sequence of consequences of trauma. This then means that we need to first re-building the relationships between our heart, head and body. Often sensing our body is the most immediate and practical step we can take, it immediately grounds us into the here and now and expands our awareness. For some the next step is to understand ourselves better. With these two parts of ourselves better integrated we are more supported to be able to face the un-bearable feelings behind the trauma. In my experience, with some integration it becomes possible, with the support of the body to open more and more deeply and directly to all the underlying levels of feeling we have within us.

This is about repairing the connections between our heart, head and body, as well as developing the parts of ourselves that have been underdeveloped and need to mature. This may be our heart, in terms of being able to feel and label and understand our feelings, it may be our head, in terms of developing our thinking and understanding ourselves in a cognitive way and clarifying our own philosophy. Also, for most of us there is a need to tune into and become more sensitive to our bodies.

Our trauma may well have been held out of awareness for a long time, or it may be relatively recent, but we need the support of our whole self to develop our awareness of it, and build our ability to face it. It is our avoidance that makes us insecure, defensive and over-reactive. When we have eventually faced the full depth of the hurt, fear or distress, our insecurity naturally falls away.

In therapy there is the support of someone alongside us in this process, which is an important ingredient in healing, because the nature of trauma is that it happened when there not enough support and it left us isolated and alienated. Having someone on “our side” able to consistently support our heart to open, to help make sense of our experience, as well as challenging our internalised self-judgement, is deeply helpful. It is a training in self-awareness, self-compassion and self-care.

We need to take responsibility for ourselves so that we can face our ‘what is’, face the reality of our woundedness, our lack of perfection. It is about knowing ourselves, about becoming more and more conscious, rather remaining un-conscious. It is about understanding the structure of ourselves, our motivations and our defences. This is hard work at times and it can take a long time.

We need to find the self-compassion that comes from facing and being with the depth of our hurt and learning to care for our wounded selves whilst letting go of self-judgement. This is where a spiritual connection can be helpful to our psychological development. It helps us to see that there is a larger, loving, and compassionate reality out there, of which we are a part.

Trauma and our Shadow

Many, as above, who have been articulating this psycho-spiritual path use Carl Jung’s terms “shadow” for those unconscious repressed part that trauma caused us to bury. Traumatic experiences, whether of the dramatic kind, or from those of drip, drip, drip nature, all cause the hurt, distress, fear or shock to be buried in our unconscious. Once there they inevitably turn negative, because we blame ourselves for what happened. The feelings stagnate and get turned in to our “not good enoughness”, our sense of unacceptability, of being bad, all of which cause us to be insecure about ourselves. Many people live completely unaware that they are insecure and would strongly deny it if challenged. Those parts of themselves remain in shadow, unseen.

Healing the Personal

It is by bringing these shadow parts into the light of consciousness and love, and held with the conscious energy of our bodies, that we heal and find our self-compassion.

The other aspect of our healing and development that bridges the psychological and spiritual domains is this essential process of learning to “separate myself from myself” (Gurdjieff), or “to make an object out of what I’m subject to” (Kegan). We need to learn this in order for the many processes of self-awareness and healing to take place. Therapy only works through helping people to see, face and process what they have previously been unable to bear. We grow and develop by digesting / including what we were previously subject to. This is a “include and transcend” process (Wilber), we become aware of what is in the way, work to deepen our awareness and understanding of it and thereby face and digest and assimilate it, thereby transcending it. Awareness of what we still remain subject to then naturally emerges into our consciousness, to be made into the next ‘object’ of study. Really this is classic “Gestalt Therapy” (Perls 1951) theory and has been around for some seventy years.

This process depends upon this shift in consciousness, a shift from being caught in identification with being a victim, or to some grandiosity, to a place where my “I” can be present and able to observe what is going on. This shift is both prosaic and profound. It is the un-bearable hurt, fear or distress in our trauma that forced us into avoidance and identification, of which there many types, but clearly the deeper the trauma the stronger the identification, the more defensive and fixed the ego is. We are all victims to some extent, and in some way, as no upbringing can be perfect. It is also true that many clients begin their therapy with the words “I had a happy childhood”!

Rumi was so right with his now famous quote “You cannot aim for Love, all you can do is work to remove the obstacles to love within you.” As we clear the obstacles we naturally move closer and closer to Love, Freedom, Consciousness, Energy, God or whatever you wish to call it.

Our essential nature is always trying to help us heal, be it in our body to mend, or our heart to heal and open, or our head to become aware and understand. It is our spirit’s desire to return home to its source. Our psychological “symptoms” (and many physical ones too), are simply the expressions of this ‘wish’ of the self for attention and healing.

The essential role of Choice

Choice is crucial! No one can take responsibility for us other than ourselves. So there comes a time when we have to choose for the whole of ourselves even in the face of it hardly being possible. Every addict (i.e. most of us), of whatever sort (there is an enormous variety), has to face this dilemma at some point if they are to heal and develop towards freedom. We somehow need to forge, through the force of will, and with some help, at least some integration of the self. As Gabor Mate has made clear, there comes a point when we can no longer blame our current compulsive behaviour on our trauma conditioning, we need to take responsibility for ourselves and our choices.

But, what in us chooses what? The choice of unawareness, it can be argued, is not a choice at all as it is trauma controlling us, yet there must be some choice for there to be any meaning in our lives. The choice to “wake up” can be similarly argued as being not really a choice, we are simply following the self’s, and Life’s, deep and powerful desire to heal and develop. The unconscious self has a huge reservoir of wisdom constantly wanting and working hard to facilitate healing and wholeness. Yet still there must be choice. We cannot “grow up” and “wake up” without taking responsibility for ourselves, which at some level needs us to choose it.

We are caught in something of a paradox here, if we force choosing, it tends to backfire or not work because it is coming from just one egoic part of the self (against which other parts then rebel). But not trying is equally hopeless, as such a giving up inevitably comes from a defeated place within us. Both are trauma generated. This is why choice has to come from some sort of integration of the self, even if that integration is only temporary.

There is also another scenario where choice is discarded. This seems to happen after someone has had an enlightenment, or non-dual, state experience, (for whatever duration). In that experience "trying" is seen and understood as being irrelevant, because in such a state there is no separateness, no separate "I" to try, everything is simply perceived as a miraculously unfolding (as I discussed above). This can lead to concluding that choice is not real. But whilst this is surely correct from the transpersonal / Absolute perspective, it is not so in the relative, personal dimension of life.

We need to see that choice comes in different forms. It is mechanical and relatively meaningless when it comes from just one part ourselves, head, heart or body alone, unconnected to the rest. Do I want marmalade or jam, left or right, night in or night out? Real choice happens when the self integrates into a whole, even if only temporarily. This can happen at any stage in our development, when at a deep level we manage to decide what we really do want, or don't want. We have to recognise though that our best integration at any moment is relative to the extent that we have brought our trauma into consciousness and healed it. Trauma conditions our unconscious, and until that is healed or resolved we are still at the mercy of our mechanical compulsivity. This is why self-forgiveness is so fundamental, otherwise we let our often repeated defeatedness in the face of our compulsivity undermine ourselves as we slide into self-blame or self-judgment. This can so easily move into simply reinforcing our negative, trauma generated and illusory self-stories around not being good enough. But here again is the paradox, we can't "do", and yet we have to accept our responsibility to change.

So, it seems to me that choice is the crucial interface, the crucible, where the personal and transpersonal meet in earnest. My choice, and my responsibility for my choices, is where "I" am challenged to meet myself in a real way, it is where self-responsibility is real, where the task of integration is real, where the personal and the Absolute come face to face in this moment and have to somehow relate through our soul choosing. Choice from ego is just conditioned compulsivity, so surely this is the place where our soul is called to be active, where my essential individuality is called upon to choose? It seems to me that this point is the culmination of the Absolute manifesting this universe so that Formlessness can be realized in Form. This is why the angels in heaven celebrate our healing, our managing to take responsibility for ourselves, our expansion of consciousness, our redemption, our recovery, our remembering, our every step along this extraordinary developmental journey that is our destiny. As the Bible puts it, *"there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."* (Luke 15:10)

Choice is, especially to start with, a profound struggle, beset by constant defeat because there is not a sufficiently integrated self in charge of our behaviour to be able to follow through on our choices. The ego, the head, heart and body, all want different things and make contradictory decisions. We end up lost, confused and defeated. But this struggle is as inevitable as it is necessary in the process of integrating ourselves. Struggling between our ego, our mechanical, habitual and compulsive ways of being and our more integrated holistic and soulful selves, is what forges our integration, it very slowly forges an increasingly authentic and free "I". This work of integration needs the powerful tools of our attention, together with our intention, and both need to be informed by the meaning and values that are informed by our experiences of connecting to "Goodness, Beauty and Truth", rather than our ego. This process also needs all the self-forgiveness and self-compassion and

understanding we can muster, because it is painful, we fail so many times and we need to let go of blaming ourselves.

At some point, or points, in our lives we usually experience a crunch and are faced with the big existential choice around “what do I want?”, with its age-old grand companion of whether “To be or not to be?”. Obviously, the vast majority of people who embark on this “road less travelled” eventually choose life over death, and when they do, it becomes a compass that helps orientate all their subsequent life choices. It is obviously a profound tragedy when someone chooses death, whichever of the many forms that can take. It can also take many cycles of forgetting and remembering before some finally manage to choose. When we do though, manage to get to the top of our “Sisyphean hill”, we then at last have the force of gravity with us, as opposed to against us, and it is then possible to slowly, through using the empowerment that conscious choice gives us, to steadily build our connection to Being. We can accumulate presence around our more consistent and authentic “I”. In the end I think this is all about our choice to say yes to being, to being here and now, valuing the reality of “what is” over fantasy. It is about our commitment to awareness, or as always, to Consciousness, Love and Energy.

The Soul

The word “soul” is also very difficult. It has so many complicated religious and new age associations. For some the word simply refers to deep feelings, and in general it is used so loosely and without definition that I have struggled to know what it means. However, I can see that there does need to be a label for that part of us, that is, on the one hand, separate from our personal conditioned and genetic self, and on the other hand, is separate from the transpersonal/spiritual/non-dual dimension of the Whole/Absolute that I am arguing we are connected to. There must be a part of us that exists separately and is independent of these two enormous forces, something that is able to be aware and choose. It makes sense to me that this is our soul.

It makes sense that our soul is the part of us that is authentic and unique, the part of us that maybe survives our death in some way, the part of us that is a spark of the divine, yet separate from it, and that, as discussed above, yearns to be reunited with the Whole/Absolute again. Plato had a concept called “Anamnesis” for explaining the experience of how we recognised and know the veracity of the transpersonal “Goodness, Beauty and Truth” deep within us. It seems to me that it must be our soul that has this capacity.

I think it is very difficult to talk about “my soul” in any phenomenological way. I think we have very little direct experience of it, if any, and I am suspicious of those who claim to know it. If my definition here has any value, then “my soul” is beyond being perceivable by our usual ego dominated perception, with all its projections and identifications. However, we can perhaps feel it if we listen, it suffers whenever we lose our way into negative self/other destructive behaviours, and it is delightful when we remember ourselves and reconnect to the vitality and truth of the here and now.

The central role of our soul must surely be that it is the part of us that enables us to choose, and so enables us to integrate towards Wholeness. Its existence enables us to listen, to hear and feel the call of Spirit/Absolute wishing us to embody itself. We need to choose to listen ...

Spiritual Bypassing

The power, that comes from our insecurity being temporarily undone through spiritual connection, is often taken by our ego’s compensatory needs. It is brought down into the level of selfish unconscious need, where it is used as arrogance or ‘specialness’ so as to patch over the wounds of insecurity. This is part of what is called “spiritual bypassing” (John Welwood), the process by which

we can avoid facing our underdevelopment or our dysfunctionality through using the power that comes from spiritual connections.

Problems emerge from identifying with, or believing in, the spiritual when we project and deflect our responsibility for ourselves onto “God” or a “Guru”, or some belief system. Sometimes this is directly as an attempt to bypass our psychological “problems”, sometimes it happens more because people get dazzled by their spiritual experience, give it all their attention and forget the personal / psychological aspects of themselves that are untouched by that connection. Either is a type of premature surrendering combined with a grandiosity which enables us to avoid taking responsibility for the actual reality of our insecurity with all its compulsivity and identification.

This “underdevelopment” can be in our heart, head or body. This can lead to any of the three forms of spirituality becoming quite ghettoised experiences with the result that the perspective becomes distorted, prejudiced and unbalanced. Non-Duality, or belief in God, or some practice or other, then becomes the “only way”.

Last thoughts

So, the spiritual can help with psychological healing, and many of the processes needed for psychological healing are the same as those needed for our spiritual development, so they provide excellent training for the work towards eventually transcending our ego. Psychological healing is essential for our spiritual development, it releases us, so that we can find that “relaxation unto God”. We cannot fully let go of our ego until we have healed it! And, as any student of spiritual paths knows, we cannot connect to God, find enlightenment, freedom, etc., by ‘trying to do it’. But what is clear to me is that the work of healing ourselves is a practical way of “removing our obstacles” and practicing the skills we need for this extraordinary journey towards realizing our potential as human beings. I hope I have made a good case for the necessity of integrating both dimensions of human beings on our journey of psycho-spiritual development.

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