

Psychosynthesis

Founded by Roberto Assagioli (dates) a contemporary of Freud and Jung Psychosynthesis combined Assagioli's two main spheres of interest: the medical world of psychiatry/psychotherapy and his spiritual experiences that began as a young man. Having been exposed to the prevailing theosophical ideas of the time through his mother Assagioli was convinced of the reality of the spiritual dimension to life through his direct personal experience. This then began to inform his thinking of Psychological models of the unconscious: Assagioli saw that there were layers or strata of the unconscious, the lower, middle and higher aspects of it and therefore that as people we may repress positive faculties or gifts in the subconscious just as we may hide our more shameful or difficult feelings. In this way Psychosynthesis visions a therapeutic process that may as much be about uncovering our tremendous potential as people then it is about recovering and healing damaged parts of the Psyche. As such Psychosynthesis remains a psychotherapeutic approach firmly vested in the camp of emphasising human potential.

Psychosynthesis has two main branches to its work: **Personal Psychosynthesis** and **Transpersonal Psychosynthesis**.

Personal Psychosynthesis.

Personal Psychosynthesis has as its main objective the discovery (or recovery) of the true individuality of the client, the 'I'. Psychosynthesis recognises that we have many voices or roles inside of us competing for attention, these sub-personalities contain many important qualities that we possess as people that may however be at times taking over or working against us when not held alignment by the Will of the 'I', the centre of true individuality inside us all. Psychosynthesis asks us the question of any situation we find ourselves experiencing a problem within, where is my will? Who is, or which part of me, is running the show at this particular time? These different figures may include the child (in either a playful or a wounded form), the parent, the inner critic, the warrior, our role in our career etc. Through identifying these various different sub-personalities Psychosynthesis aims to allow us an increasingly conscious choice as to which part of ourselves we bring to any given situation or event in our inner or outer lives. These various sub-personalities may have a strong correspondence to Jung's notions of an archetype (for example the Inner Child, the Warrior the Old Wise Figure) and indeed Jung and Assagioli found many points in each other's work that they agreed with. As with Jungian thought Psychosynthesis emphasises the role of the individuation process, identifying in ever more refined forms what is most truly unique about ourselves, becoming increasingly conscious of our conditioning and able therefore to more freely chose the nature of our development in the world, even as that development may correspond with archetypal human values or forms throughout the ages.

Transpersonal Psychosynthesis.

Psychosynthesis is a transpersonal therapy. This means that Psychosynthesis recognises that human existence in general and therefore any meaningful therapy takes place in a more than just personal context. This more than personal context may include the larger socio-political environment that we live in, the biosphere or physical environment, the collective unconscious from which we may follow Jung in asserting that the crucial archetypes humanity follows or interrelates with, emerge from and larger spiritual forces that make up existence, for example realized beings or teachers (such as Christ or the Buddha) or devic or angelic forces. So transpersonal Psychosynthesis involves an understanding of ourselves as operating within in a number of environments or systems, the environment of the earth (Gaia), the environment of man (culture and society) and the environment of larger spiritual movements or currents (religion, spirituality, direct experience or realization). In placing people consciously in these environments Psychosynthesis seeks to overcome what could be seen as an excessive inwardness in Psychotherapy, a sense of working on our personal process as a somehow separate event from our relationship to the world around us. I agree with Robert Sardello who in seminal books such as *Love and the World*, and *The Soul of the World* that therapy as with every other authentic process within life involves a movement to meet the Soul of things and if therapy subscribes to the illusion of a simply separate inner realm then we are in danger of losing our sense of the natural law or moral sense that comes to us in our meeting with the Soul of the World which may be realised symbolically or archetypically as Sophia, the nature of wisdom.

Present Issues

In wishing to relate in integrity to the Soul of things Psychosynthesis seeks to appreciate women and men in their natural state so that we all may begin authentic existence exactly where we are at this given moment without having to pretend to anything different. In this way Psychosynthesis seeks to underpin the often mutually interpenetrative processes of personal and transpersonal Psychosynthesis with an existential solidity. In the realm of the existential nakedness of being with ourselves, each other and the nature of things we come to perceive our inherent truth as human beings. In this way Psychosynthesis seeks to experience the honesty of the human condition, which in itself can be of great relief to people who have been struggling with a sense of inauthenticity or inner shame about not living the truth of who they feel themselves to be. In this way in the process of Psychosynthesis do we seek to experience the meaning of the client's life or story as it already is, to allow the truth of that to come through, to allow a natural emergence of the client to determine the course of the therapy. In this way therapy outgrows its merely palliative or subservient roles and seeks to place its primary response firmly in the reality of the client without restricting the parameter or larger context of that reality in any way.

Therapy is a shared reality

Psychosynthesis therapy is very useful in exploring depression, grief, alienation, loneliness, relationships crisis and a sense of being blocked or frustrated in life. Some of my clients have had problems in one or more of these areas for many years, some relatively seriously, however Psychosynthesis therapy and my work as a therapist does not just centre on endless explorations of the past. Instead the client is seen as part of a larger whole, the larger holistic sense of their life that within that context a depression may mean something, maybe a pointer to their real nature...that a relationship crisis may actually allow into light a sense of something unresolved for many years before the relationship even began. In this way as a therapist one remains open to the shared reality of being truly and with depth with another person inside the therapeutic space, a kind of sacred space at best, a temenos. In this vision there is no sense of some kind of pat interpretation of the situation and whilst experience teaches the many parallels in human experience there is in every situation something unique something that distinguishes one crisis or depression from another in the particularity of another's reality. In this way good therapy as a relationship to the intentions of an art, to find reflected in the personal the universal, to find in the universal something relevant for the person. The science of therapy through theory or method, through the empiricism of previous successes or failures is the background or form to this but the content or even outcome of the therapy relies on the sense of the meaning that emerges from *any* individual life if you witness it truly.