

# Cycles of Healing

Creating Our Paths to Wholeness



By

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Blue Sky Counselors  
Seattle, Washington  
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Creating Our Paths to Wholeness

We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.

T. S. Eliot, *The Four Quartets*

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The seed of a mountain pine contains the whole future tree in latent form; but each seed falls at a certain time onto a particular place, in which there are a number of special factors, such as the quality of the soil and the stones, the slope of the land, and its exposure to sun and wind. The latent totality of the pine in the seed reacts to these circumstances by avoiding the stones and inclining toward the sun, with the result that the tree's growth is shaped. Thus an individual pine slowly comes into existence, constituting the fulfillment of its totality, its emergence into the realm of reality. Without the living tree the image of the pine is only a possibility or an abstract idea . . . The realization of this uniqueness in the individual is the goal of the process of individuation.

—C. G. Jung, *Man and his Symbols*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                   |  |            |
|-------------------|--|------------|
| Cover             | Training Institute Logo (combination of a Mayan sun sign and a Celtic knot called <i>the thread of life</i> ). | v          |
| Table of Contents |  | v          |
| List of Charts    |  | ix         |
| Acknowledgments   |  | xv         |
| <br>              |  |            |
| Forward           |  | xix        |
| Chapter 1         | <b>The Healing Circle</b>  | <b>1</b>   |
|                   | In the Beginning   | 1          |
|                   | Personal Mythologies   | 4          |
|                   | Foursomeness   | 6          |
|                   | The Template   | 8          |
|                   | The Eight Gates: A Cycle of Change   | 12         |
|                   | Wheels of Meaning  | 23         |
|                   | The Cognitive Mandala  | 28         |
| Chapter 2         | <b>The Unfolding of Reality</b>  | <b>33</b>  |
|                   | The “New” Reality  | 33         |
|                   | Complementarity: The “New” Dualism   | 38         |
|                   | The <i>Observer Effect</i>   | 45         |
|                   | Quantum Psyche   | 48         |
| Chapter 3         | <b>The Mystery of the Circle: Complementary<br/>Opposition</b>   | <b>53</b>  |
|                   | In the Beginning   | 59         |
|                   | Plexing the Circle   | 65         |
|                   | The Penultimate Plex: The Ritual Cycle Around the Circle   | 70         |
|                   | The Healing Circle of Personal Mythology   |            |
| Chapter 4         | <b>The Dynamics of Change</b>  | <b>73</b>  |
|                   | Before the Beginning   | 73         |
|                   | Chaos, Order, and Complexity   | 74         |
|                   | The Complex System   | 80         |
|                   | Attractors, Repellors, and Change in Complex Systems   | 84         |
|                   | Fractals   | 86         |
|                   | Dynamic Change and Healing   | 91         |
|                   | The Healing Circle as Fractal  | 100        |
|                   | Looking Forward  | 101        |
| Chapter 5         | <b>Development: A Complex Dynamic System</b>   | <b>105</b> |
|                   | In the Beginning   | 105        |
|                   | Human Development  | 109        |
|                   | Development, Complexity, and Initial Conditions  | 136        |
|                   | A Recitative Coda (of Charts)  | 140        |

|            |   |     |
|------------|---|-----|
| Chapter 6  | Personal Mythology  | 143 |
|            | The Mythopoesis of Biography  | 143 |
|            | Mythology and Personal Myths  | 146 |
|            | Personal Mythology as a Complex System                                      | 152 |
|            | The Personal Mythology  | 155 |
|            | How Change Happens  | 167 |
|            | Other Paths   | 169 |
|            | Discovering the Personal Mythology  | 174 |
| Chapter 7  | Quadratic Process: Working with the Complexity of<br>the Personal Mythology | 181 |
|            | Quadratic Process   | 181 |
|            | Cycles of Healing, Cycles of Life   | 182 |
|            | Making Changes  | 182 |
|            | Identity and the Self   | 185 |
|            | Quadratic Process: Plexing the Personal Mythology                           | 188 |
|            | Patterns of impasse   | 192 |
|            | The Change Process  | 196 |
|            | Differential Therapy  | 199 |
| Chapter 8  | A Healing Circle Compass  | 211 |
|            | In the Beginning  | 211 |
|            | Stations of Development   | 216 |
| Chapter 9  | Rituals: The Enactment of Myth  | 253 |
|            | Thresholds of Change  | 253 |
|            | The Structure of Ritual   | 260 |
|            | Kinds of Ritual   | 265 |
|            | The Healer and the Healing Circle   | 273 |
|            | How Rituals Work  | 280 |
| Chapter 10 | Psychodrama: Psychotherapy as Spontaneous Ritual                            | 289 |
|            | In the Beginning  | 289 |
|            | Definition of Psychodrama   | 293 |
|            | Change in Psychodrama   | 294 |
|            | Leadership : Differential Directing   | 304 |
|            | Some Psychodramatic Strategies and Techniques                               | 309 |
|            | Psychodrama and the Healing Circle  | 323 |
| Chapter 11 | Shamanic Psychodrama  | 325 |
|            | Non-Newtonian States of Mind  | 325 |
|            | Altered States of Consciousness   | 328 |
|            | The Way of the Shaman   | 339 |
|            | Shamanism and Psychology  | 355 |
|            | Shamanic Psychodrama Training   | 357 |
| Chapter 12 | Interpenetrating Mythologies: Creation of the<br>Social Reality             | 363 |
|            | The Group as Patient  | 363 |
|            | Wedded Wheels: The Pairing of Personal Mythologies                          | 365 |
|            | The Self Organization of Human Systems                                      | 382 |

|            |   |            |
|------------|---|------------|
| Appendices | Appendix 1 : Rites of Continuity Checklist            | 401        |
|            | Appendix 2: Varieties of Continuity (Attachment)      | 403        |
|            | Appendix 3: Rite of Separation Checklist              | 405        |
|            | Appendix 4: Varieties of Separation (Differentiation) | 406        |
|            | Appendix 5: Rites of Transformation Checklist         | 407        |
|            | Appendix 6: Varieties of Transformation (Spontaneity) | 409        |
|            | Appendix 7: Rites of Incorporation Checklist          | 411        |
|            | Appendix 8: Varieties of Incorporation (Wholeness)    | 413        |
|            | Appendix 9: Lunar Events                              | 415        |
|            | Appendix 10: Lunar Phases                             | 417        |
|            | Appendix 11: Witches Wheel                            | 419        |
|            | Appendix 12: Yin and Yang                             | 421        |
|            | Appendix 13: Personality Spirals                      | 423        |
|            | Appendix 14: Seasons of Disease                       | 425        |
|            | Appendix 15: NLP Eyemovements                         | 427        |
|            | Appendix 16: Psychosexual Development                 | 429        |
|            | Appendix 17: Nierika: The Mirror                      | 431        |
|            | <b>THE HEALING CIRCLE BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>                | <b>435</b> |



# List of Charts by Chapter

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Forward  | Chart 1. The Quartered Circle   |
| Chapter 1. The Healing Circle                                  | Chart 2. The Four Seasons<br>Chart 3. The Seasons of Life<br>Chart 4. Master Chart<br>Chart 5. The Celtic Eightfold Year and the Eight Trigrams of the <i>I Ching</i><br>Chart 8. The Ultimate Purposes<br>Chart 7. The Archetypal Sources<br>Chart 8. The Ultimate Purposes<br>Chart 9. The Biological Bases<br>Chart 10. Love Medicine<br>Chart 11. Spiritual Meaning<br>Chart 12. Identity Measurements<br>Chart 13. The Historical Origins<br>Chart 14. The Transformations<br>Chart 15. The Archetype of the Self<br>Chart 16. Mosher's Mandala # 1  |
| Chapter 2. The Unfolding Reality                               | Chart 17. Old and New Sciences Compared<br>Chart 18. The Laws of the Physics of Consciousness<br>Chart 19. Mosher's Mandala # 2   |
| Chapter 3. The Mystery of the Circle: Complementary Opposition | Chart 20. The Cycle of the Seasons<br>Chart 21. Parental (Therapeutic) Functions<br>Chart 22. Consequences of Good Enough Experiences During First Cycle<br>Chart 23. When Things Go Wrong<br>Chart 24. Four Functions of Consciousness<br>Chart 25. Dependency Tools<br>Chart 26. Core Elements of the Healing Process<br>Chart 27. How Therapy Heals<br>Chart 28. Mental Processes<br>Chart 29. The Four Virtues of Nirvana<br>Chart 30. Personal Existence<br>Chart 31. The Half Lives<br>Chart 32. Chronological Template<br>Chart 33. The Cycle of Ritual<br>Chart 34. Mosher's Mandala #3 |
| Chapter 4. The Dynamics of Change                              | Chart 35a. Mandelbrot Set<br>Chart 35b. Mandelbrot Set<br>Chart 36. Systems Classification<br>Chart 37. Bifurcation Attractor<br>Chart 38. Thom's "Sheet with a Pleat"<br>Chart 39. Anne Hale's Sociometric Cycle © 1987 with elements Mosher's Healing Circle<br>Chart 40. The Transition Zone between Chaos and Order<br>Chart 41. Polarity Perceiving<br>Chart 42. Mosher's Mandala #4   |
| Chapter 5. Development: A Complex Dynamic System               | Chart 53. Mahler's Model of Development<br>Chart 54. Expressive Modes of Spontaneity<br>Chart 55. Patterns of Adult Attachment<br>Chart 56. Globe of Perception   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | Chart 57. Innate Releasing Mechanisms                                     |
|   | Chart 58. Dependency Issues Chart 59. Core Infant Negative Affect         |
|   | Chart 59. Core Infant Negative Affect                                     |
|   | Chart 60. Key Issues  |
|   | Chart 61. Development of Ambivalence I                                    |
|   | Chart 62. Development of Ambivalence II                                   |
|   | Chart 63. Development of Affect   |
|   | Chart 64. Body/Mind Issues  |
|   | Chart 65. Key Defenses  |
|   | Chart 66. Areas of Human Activity   |
|   | Chart 67. Healthy Behaviors   |
|   | Chart 68. Passive Behaviors   |
|   | Chart 69. Stages of Discounting   |
|   | Chart 70. Living Skills   |
|   | Chart 71. Development of Object Relations                                 |
|   | Chart 72. Developmental Credo   |
|   | Chart 73. Development of Self Esteem                                      |
|   | Chart 74. Spiritual Paradigm  |
|   | Chart 75. Beliefs in Healthy Relationships                                |
|   | Chart 76. Behaviors in Healthy Relationships                              |
| Chapter 6. Personal Mythology   | Chart 77. Personal History Criteria                                       |
|   | Chart 78. The Four Functions of Myth                                      |
|   | Chart 79. Four Kinds of Personal Myths                                    |
|   | Chart 80. Identity Measurements   |
|   | Chart 81. Survival Mythologies  |
|   | Chart 82. The Mythopoesis of Psychotherapy                                |
|   | Chart 83. Ways Mythologies Change   |
|   | Chart 84. The Myth of Paradise  |
|   | Chart 85. The Myth of the Eternal Return                                  |
|   | Chart 86. The Heroine's Journey   |
|   | Chart 87. The Hero's Journey  |
| Chapter 7. Quadratic Process: Working with the Complexity of the Personal Mythology | Chart 88. The Four Sociometric Positions                                  |
|   | Chart 89. Pattern II, the Incongruity Measurement                         |
|   | Chart 90. Map of the Eight Patterns                                       |
|   | Chart 91. Patterns of Ricochet  |
|   | Chart 92. Patterns of Reversal  |
|   | Chart 93. Beginning Therapy (Incongruity)                                 |
|   | Chart 94. Mid Therapy (Incongruity)                                       |
|   | Chart 95. Ending Therapy (Incongruity)                                    |
|   | Chart 96. Therapeutic Process of Abandonment Trauma                       |
|   | Chart 97. Therapeutic Process of Betrayal Trauma                          |
|   | Chart 98. Therapeutic Process of Disempowerment Trauma                    |
|   | Chart 99. Therapeutic Process of Chaos Trauma                             |
|   | Chart 100. Ritual Threshold Crossing Requirements of the Quartered Circle |
| Chapter 8. A Healing Circle Compass   | Chart 101. The Four Seasons   |
|   | Chart 102. The Seasons of Life  |
|   | Chart 103. The abandonment half-life                                      |
|   | Chart 104. The Eight Stations of Development                              |
|   | <i>Gate 1: Keeping Still—the Isolate Measurement</i>                      |
|   | Chart 105. Isolate Measurement Ricochet                                   |
|   | <i>Gate 2: The Clinging—Unreadiness to Incorporate New Self</i>           |
|   | Chart 106. The Unready Reversal   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <i>Gate 3: The Joyous—the Positive Star Measurement</i>                       |
|  | Chart 107. Positive Star Measurement Ricochet                                 |
|  | <i>Gate 4: The Creative—Reluctance to Take One’s Deserved or Earned Place</i> |
|  | Chart 108. The Reluctant Reversal   |
|  | <i>Gate 5: The Gentle—the Star of Incongruity Measurement</i>                 |
|  | Chart 109. Star of Incongruity Measurement Ricochet                           |
|  | <i>Gate 6: The Abysmal—Paralyzing Fear of New Challenges</i>                  |
|  | Chart 110. The Paralyzed Reversal   |
|  | <i>Gate 7: The Arousing—the Rejectee Measurement</i>                          |
|  | Chart 111. Rejectee Measurement Ricochet                                      |
|  | <i>Gate 8: The Receptive—Hesitancy to Receiving New Selfness</i>              |
|  | Chart 112. The Hesitant Reversal  |
| Chapter 9. Rituals: The Enactment of Myth                    | Chart 113. The Sexual Template  |
|  | Chart 114. The Structure of Ritual  |
|  | Chart 115. Elements of the Ordeal   |
|  | Chart 116. What Rituals Provide   |
|  | Chart 117. Four Kinds of Ritual   |
|  | Chart 118. The Four Catharses   |
|  | 1. Movies that model rites of separation:                                     |
|  | 2. Movies that model rites of transformation                                  |
|  | 3. Movies that model Rites of Continuity                                      |
|  | 4. Movies that model Rites of Incorporation:                                  |
|  | Chart 119. Asking for Rituals   |
|  | Chart 120. Ritual Plot Elements   |
|  | Chart 121. Sample Rituals   |
|  | Chart 122. Four Basic Therapeutic Attitudes                                   |
|  | Chart 123. The Human Brain  |
| Chapter 10. Psychodrama: Psychotherapy as Spontaneous Ritual | Chart 124. The Canon of Creativity  |
|  | Chart 125. Four Types of Failed Spontaneity                                   |
|  | Chart 126. The Four Forms of Theater  |
|  | Chart 127. The Psychodrama Process  |
|  | Chart 128. Ritual, Therapy and Psychodrama Table                              |
|  | Chart 129. Leadership Styles and Functions                                    |
|  | Chart 130. The Warming up Table   |
|  | Chart 131. Strategies and Techniques  |
|  | Chart 132. Interventions for Working at a Distance                            |
|  | Chart 133. Accommodation Structures   |
|  | Chart 134. The Cannon of Creativity and the Healing Circle                    |
| Chapter 11. Shamanic Psychodrama                             | Chart 135. Comparison of Shamanic Journey State with Other Trance States      |
|  | Chart 136. Basic Perinatal Matrices (Stages of Delivery)                      |
|  | Chart 137. Matrix of Basic Perinatal Data                                     |
|  | Chart 138. Transpersonal Experiences  |
|  | Chart 139. Shamanic Trance Body Postures                                      |
|  | Chart 140. Basis of Shamanic Experiences                                      |
|  | Chart 141. Shamanic Skills  |
|  | Chart 142. Einstein—Lorenz Transformation                                     |
|  | Chart 143. Relationship of Energy to Velocity                                 |
|  | Chart 145. The Human Energy Fields  |
|  | Chart 144. Positive—Negative Space/Time                                       |
|  | Chart 146. Four Subtle Energy Bodies  |
|  | Chart 147. Higher Spiritual Energies (Morphic Fields)                         |
| Chapter 12.  | Chart 148. Processes of Relating  |

Interpenetrating  
Mythologies: Creation of the  
Social Reality

Chart 149. The **Complementary Pattern**  
Chart 150. The **Replicating Pattern**  
Chart 151. The **Crossed Pattern**  
Chart 152. The **Mixed Pattern**  
Chart 153. Co-therapists in Supervision  
Chart 154. Candace's Path  
Chart 156. Betrayal Mythology (Joylessness)  
Chart 157. Disempowerment Mythology (Powerlessness)  
Chart 158. Chaos Mythology (Mindlessness)  
Chart 159. The Four Aspects of the Sociomatrix  
Chart 160. The Four Sociometric Positions  
Chart 161. Telic Valences  
Chart 162. The Phases of Tele  
Floor Design from Shamanic Vision that led to the Healing  
Circle

Appendices

- 1 Rites of Continuity Checklist
- 2 Varieties of Continuity (Attachment)
- 3 Rites of Separation Checklist
- 4 Varieties of Separation (Differentiation)
- 5 Rites of Transformation Checklist
- 6 Varieties of Transformation (Spontaneity/Creativity)
- 7 Rites of Incorporation Checklist
- 8 Varieties of Incorporation (Wholeness)
- 9 Lunar Events
- 10 Lunar Phases
- 11 Witches Wheel
- 12 YinYang
- 13 Personality Spirals
- 14 Seasons of Disease
- 15 NLP Eye Movements
- 16 Psychosexual Development (Freud)
- 17 Nierika: The Mirror

# Acknowledgments

This book had its birth in the death of my mother when I was seven years old. I asked “Why?” and I have never stopped asking.

Years later, I proposed a workshop marrying the consuming interests, myth and healing, of my two careers, teaching literature and practicing psychotherapy, to the program committee of the 1986 Conference of the Federation of Trainers and Training Programs in Psychodrama, Sociometry, and Group Psychotherapy. Little did I know that their acceptance of my presentation, called “Myth Takes: Psychodrama as a Ritualized Enactment of Personal Mythology,” would initiate a journey to my Irish roots and the Work of my life. The material in this book first took shape as a packet of handouts accompanying a slide presentation entitled “The Healing Circle: Myth, Ritual, and Therapy” that I presented a year later at the 1987 Federation Conference.

Many people helped me on my way. The tip of the iceberg: James MacDonald, Northrop Frye, Christopher and Travis Mosher, Rusty Steele, Pat Jarvis, Leon Fine, Michael Harner, Shirley Barclay, Patsy Stanley, Zerka Moreno, Willard Foolbull, Cathy and Reginald Littlebrave, Stanley Krippner, Dale Richard Buchanan, and Claudia Brigid Yukman Mosher; my clients and trainees (whose efforts to grow taught me much about the interaction of personal mythology, rituals, and the healing of the soul that I believe psychotherapy is all about); the spirits of Eric Berne, Joseph Campbell, Carl Jung, and Jacob L. Moreno; and the Collective Unconscious, which touched me with the archetype of the soul and changed the direction of my life.

I cannot say whether I know or want to know why yet, but my Mother’s death means so much more to me than when I began. And without her passing, I would not have written this book.

—John Raven Mosher  
July, 2009



The significant problems we face cannot be solved  
at the same level of thinking we were at when we  
created them.

— Albert Einstein



# Forward

The great challenge of our time is to find metaphors that include rather than exclude.

— Harvey Arden and Steve Wall  
*Travels in a Stone Canoe* (1998)

Repeated throughout *Cycles of Healing: Creating Our Paths to Wholeness* is the image of the quartered circle. Ancient quartered circles like the Celtic Eightfold Year Cycle and the Native American Medicine Wheel, along with their modern versions are found on many continents, at the center of many cultures. Wherever they have emerged, quartered circles have symbolized the inclusion of all reality within a cycle of wholeness.

Just as the modern western world conceives of itself within a particular physical universe theorized by Sir Isaac Newton, ancient and indigenous civilizations understood their existence in relation to their conceptions of the forces of the universe. They understood the quartered circle as representing a cycle of change charged by the solstices and equinoxes, and the interrelatedness of other dualisms. The four seasons, the four directions, and corresponding myths about deities and humankind were associated with the thresholds of the quartered circle. Rites of passage and other rituals reenacted the shared myths. The fundamental difference between ancient or indigenous and modern scientific world-views of reality is that we see the physical as split off from the spiritual. The ancient quartered circle represents the crossing of the horizontal axis of the temporal world and the vertical axis of the transcendent.

Although in the post-Newtonian Western world we have learned to accept that science is based upon proof and beliefs are based upon faith, in effect the authority of the scientific has become a belief system or modern myth. Humans cannot help but make meaning. We conserve our truths in cultural artifacts like myths and enact them in our daily rituals. The ancients told myths of supernatural forces to make meaning of their existence; in the Western world we tell scientific myths. People may believe in other explanatory systems, but the essential myth of the modern Western world

since the Enlightenment derives from Newtonian physics and the scientific method.

We rely on empirical evidence. The laboratory with its measuring devices is used to isolate empirical truths. We learn this means of truth seeking in elementary school. Under the controlled conditions of a lab experiment, the same results can be reproduced. Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Causes produce predictable effects. But not all experiences can be verified in the lab. Our lives, our organizations, and even natural phenomena like the weather, show patterns that cannot be replicated under the controlled conditions of a lab, or those of a therapy office. Yet there is predictability to these unpredictable systems.

The new sciences are addressing these challenges to the Western scientific myth by looking at whole systems rather than at their parts. Chaos theory, like ancient traditions contemporary with the first quartered circles, proposes that all reality as we know it is only the *explicate* manifestation of a holomovement or an *implicate* universe. The nature of this implicate whole is illustrated by the Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, the wave/particle theory of quantum physics. According to this theory the physical universe is made of waves and particles. When we are looking at particles we cannot look at the waves; when we are looking at waves, we cannot look at particles. Taken together, these complementary opposites that contradict each other empirically, constitute a whole larger than the sum of its parts. Wave and particle are complimentary aspects of the explicate world that together manifest an implicate reality. Newtonian physics can reproduce waves or particles in the lab, but not the complimentary aspect of both, or the implicate whole.

The new sciences are relevant to non-scientists because the authority of the classical scientific method extends beyond the disciplines of science. New theories like modern psychology continue to use these classical scientific methods, though they have many of the features of spiritual practices. Modern insurance practices have further quantified and commodified psychotherapy, attempting to reiterate the cause/effect relationship between symptom and cure within an economic system. And yet, when Freud and Jung among others set out to explore the human mind, they were already departing from the Newtonian scientific method by taking as

their subject matter the human unconscious. The eclecticism in modern psychotherapies may be a result of applying the classical scientific method to the complexity of human beings. It also reflects that we are thinking of the self and even consciousness in a great variety of ways. Psychological study ranges from biological studies of human development, to at least 400 models of psychotherapy (Kazdin, 1986), to action therapies deriving from psychodrama, to cultural practices like shamanism, to research into the innate structures for learning in humans as well as other species, and to explorations of spirituality beyond organized religions. These branches of exploration into consciousness itself constitute more than a search for meaning. They represent a perception of reality beyond the prevailing Newtonian categories for describing it.

The many psychotherapies in existence today continue to demonstrate that there are no right answers, no direct measurable cause and effect relationships that can be repeated with the same results. Many kinds of therapy work, but not with the predictability of a lab experiment. The new sciences, quantum physics, chaos theory, complexity theory, and computer technology have made it possible to perceive the reality we are living beyond the linear, empirical, and dualistic ways of thinking the twentieth century inherited from Newtonian physics. These new sciences are showing us what living systems have in common, and how we can observe and anticipate their processes.

*Cycles of Healing* looks at the human being and the healing process through the lenses of the new sciences. Specifically, this book looks at the ways in which people live a personal mythology that has the features of a complex dynamic system. In ancient times when the quartered circle was a living symbol within communities, people lived a shared cosmology of the universe and a shared set of myths about the cycle of life and their place in the universe. In the modern world we begin making personal myths about ourselves in childhood to explain our experiences to ourselves. As we grow up, new feedback from our environment is incorporated into these personal myths, but they are not easily changed from their early patterns. Our personal mythologies retain their initial patterns throughout our lifetimes even as they continue to organize in new ways.

Combined with the language of computer mathematics, complexity theory can read the patterns of living systems like the personal mythology. In such complex dynamic systems, the initial conditions determine the parameters of the system, creating a pattern of development that will repeat. This self similarity will persist during the lifetime of the system, though feedback from the environment and other systems will continue to influence the pattern. When enough feedback occurs, and the pattern becomes chaotic enough (but not too chaotic), a new order emerges, an order without a direct relationship between cause and effect, as if for free.

Empirically driven thinking about therapeutic practice flounders sooner or later because the personal mythologies we live are living systems. No two systems are identical. No two experiences are the same. What works for one client will not necessarily work for another. However, viewed as complex systems, personal mythologies also demonstrate similarities and predictable patterns. Though no two clients are the same, a particular client's pattern will show self similarity at every level, recycling the pattern.

From an initial equation computers can generate a kind of living image of a complex dynamic system that looks something like the roots or branches of a tree. This pattern is called a fractal. If we could feed our own initial conditions—the personal myths by which we first interpret reality—into a computer, we could watch the self similarity of our particular life patterns emerging and repeating and recognize the moments when change and new order were possible. Instead, we have consciousness and self-referencing, the capacity to look at our personal mythologies, to observe the repeated patterns or recycling of early patterns, to recognize what we are missing in our lives, and to feed new experiences and information into our personal mythologies.

The principles of complexity science offer a nonlinear model for reading the unique patterns of each individual life and of our life as a species. When we repeat our familiar life patterns, we are recycling our personal mythologies. When we push against the limits of what we know into chaos or when we are challenged by the unknown or unexpected, we find ourselves coming up with new ways of living. We are experiencing the possibilities of our personal mythologies as living dynamic systems.

The many instances of the quartered circle in this book are essentially a fractal or repeated image of a complex dynamic system. The Healing Circle template represents the recycling of initial conditions and the thresholds at which new order can emerge. The template also makes evident the complementary aspects of the life cycle, whether it is used to look at the seasons or human development. By filling in the template, we can view what it will take for the pattern to be whole, for the person, the couple, the family, the community, and the social reality, to heal.

And so the Healing Circle is at the center of this book, showing the relationships among its parts, because we have come full circle and returned to the holism of ancient cultures by way of the new sciences. We have the technology to measure the measureless, which brings science back in relation to the unseen holomovement understood by ancient cultures as the whole of life, physical and spiritual. Because they depart from Newtonian physics, the new sciences have much in common with ancient cosmologies and the cycles of change the Healing Circle represents. The quartered circle template allows us to see the complementary pairs in the cycle of the complex dynamic system we live as our personal mythologies.

Linear thinking obliges us to see the complexity and similarity of living systems as distinct and separate, like science and spirituality, body and mind, or any other dualisms inherited from the post-Enlightenment worldview. The recurrence of the Healing Circle in these pages might be imagined as transparent circles overlaying each other, telling the same story, repeating the cycle of the whole, whether we live it in its wholeness or not.

Each chapter of *Cycles of Healing* unfolds a part of the story of how change happens in the complex dynamic system of the personal mythology. The story might be summarized in this way:

In the ancient world, the quartered circle represented myths associated with the seasons and rites of passage cued to the seasons. For modern man there is no shared cultural mythology, but we continue to live according to myths in the form of personal mythologies. The quartered circle represents a whole life cycle, or a Healing Circle that allows us to observe our apparently linear lives as a recycling of our per-

sonal mythologies at many levels. (*Chapter One: The Healing Circle*)

The Healing Circle represents a holistic view of reality, showing the unseen complementaries of our time bound lives by providing a template for viewing life cycles. Chaos theory and quantum physics, similarly, propose a holomovement based on the seen and unseen or the explicate reality of Newtonian physics, and a greater implicate reality. (*Chapter Two: The Unfolding of Reality*)

The Healing Circle can be used to constellate (plex) the parts of any topic, and thus discover the unseen complementaries and the larger whole. (*Chapter Three: Plexing the Circle*)

The personal mythology not only unfolds in cycles, it has the features of a living system. Complexity theory provides a way of recognizing and predicting the patterns of living systems. They retain self similarity to their initial conditions, respond to feedback from the environment, and, on the verge of chaos, self organize in new ways. (*Chapter Four: The Dynamics of Change*)

The range of psychotherapies available today can be constellated around the quartered circle, and thus be seen as responding to important aspects of the life cycle. Eclectic practice is a movement toward the holistic view of the implicate reality. The Healing Circle shows these disparate practices in their relationship to each other and the personal mythology. (*Chapter Five: Developmental Perspectives*)

The Healing Circle shows the incomplete patterns of our individual cycles, or the half-lives, we live. Depending upon our initial conditions, we live a personal mythology of Abandonment, Betrayal, Disempowerment, or Chaos. Each of these mythologies has its particular associated compensatory behaviors, strengths, and challenges. (*Chapter Six: Personal Mythology; and Chapter Seven: Quadratic Process*)

We can alter the recycling of our personal half-lives by intervening with our own spontaneity and drawing upon the un-lived possibilities of the whole cycle. One of the therapeutic ways of releasing and enhancing our spontaneity is psychodrama. This action therapy makes use of the techniques of ritual, the complementary aspect of myth. Psychodrama

can reactivate the personal mythology as ancient rituals reactivated the shared cultural mythology. In addition psychodrama as a form of group therapy provides a community of witnesses to share in the remaking of the personal mythology and ritual, so that the protagonist (the one whose story is being enacted) can reexperience and (re)create connections with the human community. (*Chapter Eight: Rituals: The Enactment of Myth*; and *Chapter Nine: Psychodrama: Psychotherapy as Spontaneous Ritual*)

Like the ancient practice of shamanism, psychodrama uses our capacity for regression and the techniques of ritual to recover the individual to the group thereby healing the community. The practice of Shamanic Psychodrama allows this aspect of psychodrama to be fully realized. The states of consciousness accessed through trance and regression can lead to expanded consciousness, beyond the ego, the culture, and the limits of time. Consciousness is ultimately at home in the implicate reality. (*Chapter Ten: Shamanic Psychodrama*)

This healing process generates a greater social reality as personal mythologies, between couples for instance, are examined and recreated to bring people with fuller lives in relation to each other. (*Chapter Eleven: Interpenetrating Mythologies: Creation of the Social Reality*)

Simple forms are not easily discovered or described. And yet once found we wonder how we missed them all along. The Healing Circle is a simple form like the principle of perspective in art, or the discovery of the quantum leap in physics, or the grammar that generates an entire language. The correspondence between this ancient symbol and the complexity of the personal mythology makes it possible to apprehend possibilities for change and healing and to create new paths to health and wholeness.

I have read *The Cycle of Healing* many times in the process of editing. As an editor I have had the opportunity to engage with an extraordinary theorist and practitioner, whose knowledge and intuition are deep enough to comprehend science and spirituality as complementary aspects of reality. As a poet, I appreciate the wisdom of relating parts to whole that this book teaches. As a beginning psychodramatist, I am learning how to imagine what it would take for a person to heal, and the steps toward that process. As a reader, I have found each reading, each cycle 'round this book

richer than the last, promising an even deeper reading to come.

—*Brigid Yukman*

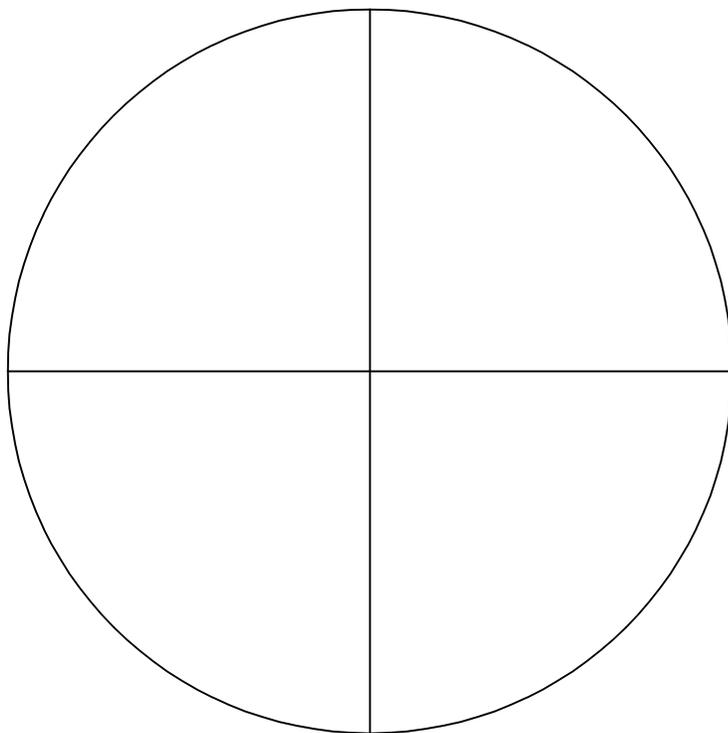


Chart 1. The Quartered Circle

## Story Water

A story is like water  
that you heat for your bath.

It takes messages between the fire  
and your skin. It lets them meet,  
and it cleans you!

Very few can sit down  
in the middle of the fire itself  
like a salamander or Abraham.  
We need intermediaries.

A feeling of fullness comes,  
but usually it takes some bread  
to bring it.

The body itself is a screen  
to shield and partially reveal  
the light that's blazing  
inside your presence.

Water, stories, the body,  
all the things we do, are mediums  
that hide and show what's hidden.

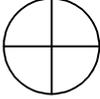
Study them,  
and enjoy this being washed  
with a secret we sometimes know,  
and then not.

—Rumi



## Chapter 1

# The Healing Circle

The equal-ended cross, surrounded by a circle, a pattern found in many countries, is taken as the oldest symbol of consciousness,  of integration. Our consciousness splits life into qualities, and so we know the tension of opposites, the basic differentiation. But the opposites are also the cross and you; if steadfast enough we may feel the stillness at the centre, and if acceptance is possible, our own arms encircle us and we contain our pain.

—Florida Scott-Maxwell, Jungian analyst  
*The Measure of My Days* (1968)

### In the Beginning

The Healing Circle is a pattern of self organization that came to me in a shamanic journey three years before I used it as an organizing metaphor for a presentation. Returning to ordinary reality from the journey state, I was so impacted that I drew the image in a notebook. I was not yet conscious of its full significance to my work. The complexities of emergent self organization would have to wait another ten years to become part of the whole meaning of the image. It awaited emergence at the edge between the order and chaos of my life. Here is the dream journey:

I am shooting up into the heavens until I push through a membrane of clouds. Up here there are towers spaced around as far as I can see. I look around and think: “There are no living beings up here.”

Suddenly, the sky above is filled with birds—great black birds. There are thousands. I call up and one comes down to me. He is manlike when he lands. Black feathers and beautiful expressive golden eyes. I ask if there are helping spirits up here. He nods yes. I ask him to show me around, and he takes me up on his back and we fly higher in a sky still filling with the enormous black birds. They come from the south and fly north. Passing through an energy membrane, we reach a second level, where the birds are soaring.

Dodging through the big creatures, we push through another membrane, like an intestine skin, opaque, and stretchy. We enter a third level filled with swirling colors. At first it is chaotic, then I see that these are colorpeople swirling and dancing. I am filled with delight. Suddenly, a funnel of orange color spinning counterclockwise hovers over me and touches the top of my head with its tail. I taste mandarin and strawberry. Then it comes into me. I feel wonderful. Ecstatic.

I notice that I am someplace else. The Bird Guide is gone. The colorpeople are far below me. I can see them flickering beneath gray slate plains that I realize is another one of those membranes. I do not remember passing through it. Everything is gray. I am terrified. I do not belong here, and I begin to plummet. I descend through the levels of the colorpeople and the birdpeople (who are still flying south to north in great numbers), until I reach the cloud towers, where I float quietly.

Then a beautiful yellow haired woman beckons me to come to her tower. Accepting her invitation, I circle the tower sunwise. There are four windows, facing the four directions, and I enter from the south through a wide window.

Inside, it is shady, and a warm, steady wind blows in through whatever direction I look out. On the floor is a painted circle. The four winds blow through the center circle of the circle and down to the earth below.

The woman silently serves me an herbal drink that is very refreshing. When we finish, we stand up and she takes my hand and walks me around the painting on the floor, starting from the north and ending at the west. From there she smiles and motions all around the circle again. Then we bow to the four directions as the drums sound the call to return to ordinary reality.

As I said, I copied down the design immediately; but I need not have worried about forgetting it. From that moment on, I saw the world differently. Where had all the quartered circles been that I was now seeing? From the sublime stained glass windows in churches to the mundane manhole covers I now noticed on the streets, I was seeing them everywhere. And each time I saw one I had another new insight about—whatever I was thinking about!

Soon after my shamanic journey to the upper world, I had the design painted on a drum I used for ceremonies in workshops. For three years I felt the meaning of this image vibrate to me through the beat of the drum. As a symbol on the drum it gave focus to communal healing rituals.

The partial significance of the pattern emerged three years later when I was casting about for a quick way to organize a great deal of experience and material that I had gathered over twenty-five years on the subjects of myth, ritual, and therapy. As one of the principal organizers of a conference for trainers and training programs in psychodrama, I felt responsible for filling in at the last minute for a presenter who had been unable to come. But how would I represent the whole of twenty-five years of study, professional experience, and adult living in a two and a half-hour session? Language is linear and terribly inadequate to expressing life experiences rife with intuitive leaps, emergent patterns, recycling repetitions, and unexpected connections.

Under the stress of having to improvise at the conference, I saw the quartered circle as a way of ordering what had been emerging from my experience. By surrendering to the gift from my journey, the vibration of the image emerged into meaning through words and actions revealed to those attending the workshop. We were galvanized. It was a magical experience. We could have continued for the whole day.

From this point on, my transformation accelerated. I began to learn something new every day about the meaning of my upper world gift. The image of the quartered circle acted as a kind of generator of new perceptions that sent me out on quest after quest to find explanations for the intuitive truths emerging every day. Also I felt compelled to share this knowledge. Initially, my workshops focused on myth, ritual, and therapy, particularly psychodrama. I would not find the vocabulary for this process until I found quantum physics and chaos and complexity sciences. From the four page hand-out I prepared for the emergency fill-in workshop, emerged a slide presentation, a handful of articles, a training program, and this book.

My experience as a therapist and healer had already taught me that each person lives a personal mythology. In earlier times, a shared mythology connected people, and rituals organized the individual's journey through the transitional phases of life. Healers brought the individual and the community back into connection with their shared vision of reality. This is still true in many "modern" cultures today, not just in "primitive" ones. It is most likely to occur in formally or informally organized subcultures like churches, clubs, and gangs.

However, in our modern world the experience of reality is fragmented. The dominant belief system in Western culture derives from the Enlightenment “cosmology” of Newtonian physics which describes the physical reality of the universe as disconnected from human events and intention, operating like a mechanical clock. In this mythology, spiritual life, or the whole of which human life is a part, is divided from human events as well. God is the watchmaker who set the world going and then removed himself.

Descartes gives voice to the scope of human consciousness in this scheme with his “I think, therefore I am,” expressing an equally radical split between the mind and body. The God of this mythology is a distant *deus ex machina*, the universe a clockwork, and humankind a machine of muscle and levered bone, a mental life of conditioned responses. This universe is knowable and mystery is simply the (temporarily) unknown. The spiritual has little place in this mythology. Before the end of the nineteenth century German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, could seriously say: “God is dead.”

The atomization and mechanization of the material world has led to fragmentation in the spiritual realm. Ritual connects members of a community by uniting the material and the spiritual. By disinheriting the modern world of spiritual dimensions, the Enlightenment mythology despiritualized ritual and diminished its power to heal. With the exception of the scientific method, our modern rituals are unconscious or at least not as fully intentional as they can be. Intentionality is an integral part of any healing.

Of course not everyone believes that “God is dead.” Christianity, for example, resists the scientific explanations of things, but supports the dualism of a spiritual versus material split. The fragmenting constructs of the Enlightenment philosophies are only now being sufficiently challenged by people’s experiences of non-Western cultural practices in medicine, for example, or quantum physics in science, to alter the ways they have conditioned us to think of reality and ourselves.

### **Personal Mythologies**

In the absence of a unifying cultural mythology, we live personal mythologies. Unlike a linear model of development or a particular myth (such as Freud’s use of the Oedipal

myth), a personal mythology is a collection of interconnected stories. Most of these stories we have consciously adopted or crafted to explain our experiences of living to ourselves or to explain ourselves to others. However, the most important stories are usually unconscious. They are stories that have self organized outside of our conscious awareness around a few central themes that bring meaning and purpose to our lives. These stories operate invisibly and generate the recurring patterns of our successes and failures in living.

Our personal myths determine our individual experience of reality. When our internal and external realities are largely congruent, they operate optimally. We can become aware of our personal myths when external reality impinges upon our internal reality, when they no longer work to organize reality for us, or when they are incongruent. Out of such chaos new order can emerge. Our lives seem to be linear as time and language seem to be linear. But it is easy enough to recount experiences of life and time that cannot be forced into linearity. Our lives are like poetry, in which the repetitions and patterns of language deepen the meaning of the linear sentence. The courses of our lives are cyclical. Even biologically, we repeat ourselves. We recycle the stages of our early development as we go through subsequent beginnings, connections, challenges, and reconstructions.

As a template rather than a prescriptive, linear model for human development, the Healing Circle allows us to observe our apparently linear lives as a recycling of our personal mythologies at many levels. By seeing the recurrence of our personal myths around a cycle instead of as some pathology or repetition compulsion, we can begin to investigate how they have organized the range of behaviors or possibilities for living available to the self. The Healing Circle is a template which locates the transitions from one phase of development to the next, indicating where, according to our personal mythologies, we are likely to get stuck because we are without the skills or emotional experiences to make these transitions.

As an ancient symbol of the whole of reality, the Healing Circle also represents personal mythologies in relation to other life cycles—those of other persons, other cultures, other life forms, and the whole of a physical and spiritual universe. It thus represents individual life as a microcosm of the whole of reality and its unfolding possibilities for interconnectedness with the whole of life. This perspective is

in itself healing. It releases us from linearity and time and recovers what we cannot see: joy when we feel grief, anger when we feel powerlessness, our connectedness to others when we feel isolated. The Healing Circle can direct consciousness to an awareness of a fuller life.

### **Foursomeness**

I knew of the quartered circle before I came to understand my work in relation to it. The quartered circle, or Healing Circle, is one of the oldest symbols of humankind, originating in our prehistory and occurring across cultures (Jung, 1984). It has been, and still is in some cultures, a symbol for the sun, the life force, the world tree or *axis mundi*, the human form, the earth and its four cardinal points of direction, fecundity, sexuality, the uniting of male and female, a protection to ward off evil, and the *unus mundus*, the one-continuum, portraying both the timeless and time-bound orders of existence. It is still omnipresent in contemporary secular Western life in the guise of advertising images, picnic tables, windows, and manhole cover designs (like doorways to the underworld).

What is the significance of four? As a number it is unique among numbers. From two, four offers a common goal for three different mathematical processes—adding (two plus two), multiplying (two times two), and exponential growth (two squared) (Walter, 1998). And after four, “number must either travel the linear path of discrete units or the analogue path of doubling/exponential growth” (Walter, 1998). Yet the recurrence of the following foursomes and the quartered circle itself are compelling evidence of the power of the pattern to organize human experience.

The quartered circle has been used to map a variety of meanings in relation to a whole. We have four limbs. Geography and space are measured in four directions. The seasons are a cycle of four. Developmentally there are four stages: The One, the Dyad (Mother and Child), the Triad (Mother, Father, Child), and the Quartet (Child, Mom, Dad, the World). Reality has been imagined as being based on four elements: fire, earth, air, and water.

Mythologies have been organized around the number four. Four rivers flow out of Eden. Pythagoras identified the Tetraktys, a mystical entity, and the fundamental number.

The circle in the four-cornered square, *quadratura circuli*, was a symbol for the ultimate aim of medieval alchemy. There are the four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. In 1950, Christianity included the Virgin in the Divine realm (through the doctrine of the Assumption), thus tweaking the Trinity into a Quaternary.

Albert Einstein's model of the universe has four dimensions. There are four distinct forces in nature: the gravitational, the electrical, the weak (beta decay) interaction, and the nuclear. And there are four nucleic acids that constitute DNA. Carl Jung argues that the four functions of consciousness split unconscious content into four perceivable aspects of experience: something that exists (*sensation*), is distinguished from other things (*thinking*), is pleasant or not (*feeling*), and its nature more or less known (*intuition*). Within differing cultural belief systems the number four, often represented as a quartered circle, has been a set of coordinates for apprehending the whole of reality.

As a symbol for apprehending wholeness the Healing Circle corresponds with emerging descriptions of reality, notably, from quantum physics and complexity theory. Looking ahead to the next chapter, quantum physics describes fundamental reality as an uninterrupted whole (an implicate order) which unfolds into observable parts (an explicate order) in ordinary reality. This unfolding remains a mystery, yet strong experimental evidence suggests a theory that consciousness is an integral part of it (Goswami, 1993; Herbert, 1993). Complexity theory hypothesizes that this unfolding is "order for free," (Kauffman, 1993) a function of the interconnectedness (somewhere between 2.01 and 3.99 points of relationship) among parts of a complex dynamic system. This would suggest that the quartered circle is especially suited as a measuring device for such systems, like human beings and the complex systems they generate.

This chapter focuses on the most familiar metaphors of the Healing Circle and their extensions into the human life cycle. This is the information from my study of myth, ritual, and therapy that I started with. In Chapter 2, I will introduce you to the information from quantum physics and chaos and complexity sciences. In Chapter 3, I will demonstrate how to use the Healing Circle to explicate an issue. And in Chapter 4, I will describe chaos and complexity theories more

fully. In the rest of the book I will return to personal mythology, ritual, and the cycle of healing.

Though the Healing Circle is itself a blank template, it bears the traces of its use in ancient cultures. I will begin to associate some of our modern experiences with those that have clustered within and around the four quadrants and the four transitional phases of the Healing Circle. The Healing Circle has much to show us about the nature of healing and the complexity of the personal mythologies we live by. As a therapeutic tool it can facilitate the conscious use of rituals which structure intentional change. It is not a theory but a blank template that has functioned in many cultures to give an image of a whole reality, spiritual and physical. It is an instrument for showing us how ritual and therapy can heal.

### **The Template**

The Western world has separated itself from the cycles of nature philosophically and technologically. The use of the quartered circle may offer healing in part because it is a return to a relationship with nature akin to those of indigenous cultures. But even for those of us living in the “modern world” the seasons have not lost their affective power nor have we lost our relationship to the cycle they repeat.

We may be able to have air-conditioning in summer or central heating in winter, controlling the effects of the seasons, but we have not, as yet, lost our connection with them. They continue to move us. They surround us through cultural artifacts, symbols, memories, and, of course, stories. While the characteristics of the seasons vary from latitude to latitude, the cycle of the seasons and its repetitions within us are still deeply familiar and perhaps even more affecting for us in the modern world when we find ourselves in harmony with them despite our ways of forgetting them.

The Healing Circle might first be understood as a template. As an ancient model it is usually referenced to the cycle of seasons. The alchemists of the middle ages saw it as a representation of the self. The seasons are still a familiar metaphor for the recyclings in our lives. Just as the earth undergoes a continuous recycling of the seasons, from the beginnings of **spring**, through the **summer** harvest, the challenge of the cooler, shorter days of **fall** into the cold incubation of **winter** back to spring’s rebirth, so also do our

lives and our lives' endeavors continuously recycle, with variations, round upon round, offering both the hope of change and the security of repetition.

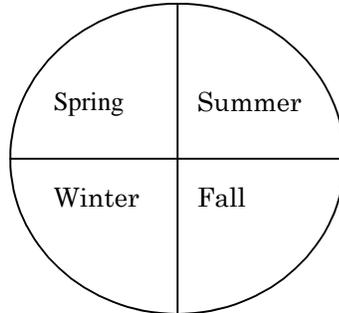


Chart 2. The Four Seasons

Spring, the new beginning, is the **protective holding environment**. Summer, the ripening, **is the meaningful connection with significant other(s)**. Fall, the preparation for winter, is the gradual **challenge toward mastery**, requiring a separation from the dependency on significant other(s); and Winter, the incubation, is the time for internalizing new structures, theorizing, and building updated **models of reality**. Human development over the life span can be seen through the template of the healing circle. Early stages of our development are largely time driven, pushing us forward stage by stage whether we complete them or not.

To grow a self, the newborn human's developmental template requires a springlike protective holding environment, a meaningful harvest of connections to significant other(s), a gradual challenging towards mastery within a specific setting, and a fluid modeling of reality. If these requirements are not optimally met, the newly emerging self makes adjustments to get enough of what is missing or just to survive. These adaptations influence how development unfolds.

These adaptations, then, affect the Healing Circle template, influencing all future recycling of developmental sequences. Unresolved developmental issues are reactivated as we recycle around the template or as we reencounter a situation requiring under developed skills. A developmental glitch in the Spring quadrant, for example, would be activated each time we cycled through Spring or each time we began some-

thing new, like a dependency on someone. Evolution has thus created a failsafe mechanism assuring that we might discover our eventual wholeness.

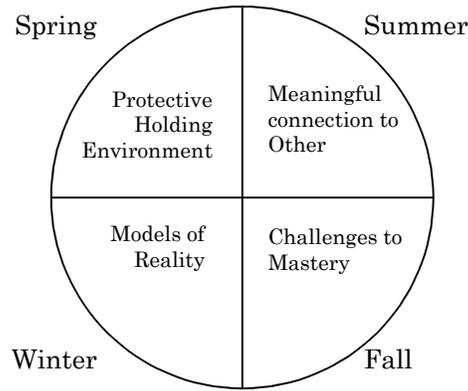


Chart 3. The Seasons of Life

The quartered circle makes apparent some of the characteristic feelings, issues, images, symbols, and demands of the eight phases (the four seasons and the four threshold crossings). The seasonal quadrants are metaphors for periods of time-bound life; thus each season has its own dominant characteristics and stabilizing processes. The thresholds (transition zones) are marked by the solstices and the equinoxes. Thus, in the crossing from one stage to another, we are momentarily released from time. These time liberating moments are often the time for rituals in many cultures.

We might think of ritual in a preliminary way as identifying a threshold between chaos and order. Joseph Campbell (*Masks of God*, 1968) defines ritual broadly as a standardized system of both stereotyped (closed) and spontaneous (open) behaviors and communications that manipulate human emotions and energy toward a preset or predictable end result. Therapeutic rituals pertinent to the four threshold crossings into the four seasonal quadrants of our lives' progress can draw on our habits and our spontaneity, directing them toward the necessary adaptations of living.

In other words, therapy can heal by offering us rituals for passage across the thresholds that are most difficult for us. Based on developmental stages I will discuss more thoroughly in a later chapter, the "predictable end result" of

the ritual threshold crossing between Summer and Fall is **separation**; between Fall and Winter, **transformation**; between Winter and Spring, **incorporation**; and between Spring and Summer, **continuity**.

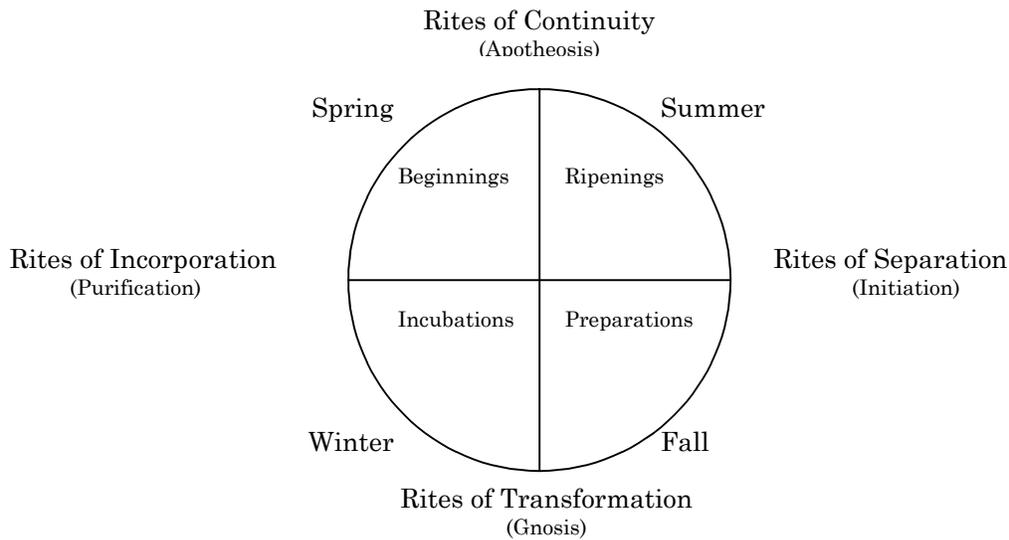


Chart 4. Master Chart

In the Healing Circle pattern, the solstices and equinoxes generate the four general kinds of rituals. These celestial events are significant markers in myth and ritual through the ages and cultures of human beings. Monuments have been built to measure and commemorate them.

Stonehenge in England seems to have been built to use the summer solstice, as was the Great Medicine Wheel in Wyoming. Both these structures are quartered circles. While the specific purposes of Stonehenge are lost, we can imagine that the Great Medicine Wheel was part of the Plains Indians' ceremonials involving the Sun Dance, a profound celebration of thanksgiving, growth, prayer, sacrifice, and cultural renewal still conducted today during the time of the summer solstice. Easter, a vernal equinox celebration, and Christmas, a winter solstice celebration, are familiar examples.

Indigenous cultures organize their rituals around the cycles of nature. Typically, colonizing cultures made use of these calendars referenced to the seasons, substituting their

own rituals and holy days. I believe our connection with the cycles of nature and the rituals around them are projections onto nature of our human desire to know the whole of reality and to be participants in it. Thus the cycle of the seasons maps our own; repeatedly we make it our story.

### **The Eight Gates: A Cycle of Change**

Many traditions have used the segmented circle to hold the complexity of living. Among some Native American tribes, the Spider, who with her eight legs is the weaver of all the infinite possibilities of creation, renders the web of life. Her legs represent the eight gateways of spirit—the four winds of change and the four directions. Many of you are familiar with the horoscope of astrology, another segmented circle. While it divides the circle into twelve segments and circles around counter-clockwise, it still represents a rich reservoir for complexity. In *Tao of Chaos*, Katya Walter (1998) demonstrates that the *I Ching* is essentially a complex dynamic system utilizing the same universal order of complementary chaos that DNA uses. The eight gates are represented by the eight trigrams of the “Old Family Mandala” of the *I Ching* (later expanded to sixty-four hexagrams). In keeping with my own roots, I will extrapolate the eight gates of growth by using the Celtic Eightfold Year (King, 1994; Murray, 1988).

Some things fit the quadrants by way of their association to the seasons; others belong to one quadrant or another because of their contextual relationships with each other. The same can be said for the elements assigned to the four boundary areas. Each of these eight phases of living has a “gateway” to it. Taken as parts to a whole, each gate marks both a passage of space through time and an entry into the implicate order or spirit world. I want to give you a flavor of each of the eight gates through a synthesis of a variety of mythic materials referenced to the four quadrants and the four dividing and quartering threshold crossings where rituals can organize changes. The Celtic eightfold year of the eight gates is a metaphor. In lived lives, we may be going through multiple processes simultaneously, like beginning a new relationship, making a job change, incubating a short story, and being elevated to the presidency of our professional organization, all in the same month of July. The quali-

ties clustered in the gateways around the calendar are touchstones rather than absolutes.

### *Gate 1: Keeping Still*

On the calendar, this gate occurs on February 2, and was called *Imbolc* by the Celts, Candlemas or St. Brigid's Day by the Christians and Ground Hog Day by others. This day celebrated motherhood and childbirth and the flow of milk. In the most dreary and depressing of our winters, the unlimited potentials for rebirth are incubating in virgin purity like crystals in stone. Pregnant virginity symbolizes the eternal fire that purifies the self making ready for the rebirth to come with the Spring. The fires have not died; an ember of the new beginnings is discovered.

The imagery and symbolism of this gate are the wombs of growth: the labyrinth, the cave, the automobile, the Medicine Wheel, the pathless forest, the classroom—all wombs with views—in dreams and personal mythology. In its dark aspect there can be wombs without views—prisons, dungeons, deserts, coffins, and the countless cul de sacs and eddies in the stream of the life cycle. In every process, from living a life to learning something new, like tying a shoe, there is a time needed for rest and renewal, during which new behaviors experienced will be catalogued, assessed, and evaluated for future use in our behavioral repertoire. Most of this takes place out of conscious awareness, but we need time in isolation away from external stimuli to do it.

In the cycle of the seasons, this is the Winter quadrant, from winter solstice to the vernal equinox. This is the dead of winter, where we surrender to the cold, the dark, the seasonal slowdown of activity, and our own need for introspective self evaluation. Time hangs heavy upon us, like snow on the rooftops; where incubating our new potentials, like seeds in the ground, often feels more like laying fallow in the frozen mud; and when we can get cabin fever waiting for spring.

This is the Great Mysterious, indeed. Philosophically, we are experiencing the mystical view of life, wherein all things are interconnected. The archetypes occurring in myths emerging from this gate include the Hermit, the Teacher or Great Master, the Fool, the Prince or Princess (especially on the return run from a major test), and the Virgin (sometimes

pregnant) Goddess (like the Virgin Mary or Saint Brigid). Thematically, these are the stories of Paradise Regained, when a compassionate Self empathetically understands the connectedness of all things, a Self so expansive it can role reverse with the Universe or any part of it.

Throughout the so-called Dark Ages, the Alchemists spent a lot of time, when they were not trying to make gold out of the four elements, seeking the mythical philosopher's stone—the touch of which had magical healing powers. In this so-called Modern Age, we seek such magic in ideas and knowledge. And to tell the truth, there is a kind of philosopher's stone in the power of an idea and/or ritual procedure. Such structures can transform emotion, change behavior, expand wants, or reframe a conceptual universe. These kinds of structures are the essence of the Winter quadrant and they have tremendous power to hinder or heal. Much of therapy is discovering the hindering structures and prescribing or developing the healing ones.

### *Gate 2: The Clinging*

On the calendar, this gate comes in late March. It is the Spring Equinox, the day when the hours of light and darkness are equal. This gate celebrates the return of the sun by exploring the theme of rebirth and renewal in the groups we belong to, the family system, or our communities, large and small. The family, however, is the first soil our self-seeds encounter. This is a time when the personal myths that inhibit or enhance the possibilities of our emergence become manifest. For one reason or another, we decide that we are too bad, wrong, sinful, worthless, stupid, inconsiderate, macho, feminine, or what have you, to be accepted—or not.

Special attention is directed to the ways we purify ourselves in order to become incorporated into the communities to which we belong. This is a time of ritual cleansing of the inevitable accumulation of unexpressed feelings, misunderstandings, secrets, and hurts, intended and unintended, that human beings seem heir to. It returns us to a state of relative innocence regardless of our age and experience. Moreover, after a winter's worth of incubating and integrating, the new and changed version of oneself is ready to emerge into new adventures, ready for anything, including self acceptance. If one is not ready for this, rites of incorporation are at hand to help. These are rituals, like Lent, that purify the self of con-

flicting beliefs and behaviors and that clear the way to a birthing of a new belonging.

Sometimes, the traumatic events that place us in this quadrant are thrust upon us. A formerly Catholic client comes for help for sexual impotence. Everything had been fine until he and his wife decided it was time for a baby. This story unfolds: As a teenager, he impregnated his girl friend. They secretly had the baby aborted at a clinic, separated, and went on with their lives. Although he felt some guilt, he believed that they had done the right thing. Later work uncovers deep loss and unexpressed grief over the death of a beloved grandfather when he was five and considered too young to attend funeral services. The loss of the baby had activated this unexpressed grief and he began to work this through.

Eventually, the following curative ritual for the last baby is designed. He is to find a symbolic object to represent his aborted child, who he felt was a son. He is to carry this object with him at all times for six weeks (the length of time the fetus lived), during which time he is to abstain from sexual activity. He is, on the other hand, to talk to this object (his son) daily. At the end of the six weeks, he is to create a funeral ceremony for his son. Three days later, he is to resume sexual activity.

We have many purification rituals: Sweat lodges and showers, grueling physical workouts, mikvahs and brises, baptisms and penances, amends and atonements of all kinds. Much of therapy is the cleansing of unnecessary garbage and the incorporation of information so that new energy can be claimed for life. Some movies that illustrate this passage are *The Abyss*, *Aliens*, *How to Make an American Quilt*, and *Nell*.

### *Gate 3: The Joyous*

On the calendar, this is May 1. The Celts called it *Beltane*, and it was a fertility celebration. Thematically, it is concerned with new beginnings. *First* days at school, *first* best friends, *first* fights, *first* failures, *first* dates, and the *first* inklings of our life's purpose. This is the time to determine to what degree and quality these first experiences have effected our other beginnings in life.

In the cycle of the seasons, this is the Spring quadrant. All images of new beginnings point to this gate. Images of Paradise, the Golden Age, Abundance, Perfection, and the

Gift (receiving what your heart desires) abound. It is about love, support, and nurturance. It is the time of the Mother (and Child), the Nurse, the Caretaker, and the Demi-Gods or –Goddesses.

Nurturance is not just being nice. It is a complex set of behaviors (feelings, wants, actions, and beliefs) that require knowledge of the recipient, a sense of timing and appropriateness, and a matching of stroke, stroker, and strokee. Nurturance nourishes the growth of new babies and new beginnings. It involves a sense of what's enough on the part of the giver and the receiver, and the receiver must have done the necessary incorporations and purifications to believe in deserving the nurturance given.

This is also about becoming a King or Queen of the May. You have integrated some important life experiences by incubating them for a period of creative isolation. And you have accepted the consequences. And you have also found significant others to affirm them in you.

What happens next? You get to be a star! You get to express yourself the best you can and the people around you take delight in and nurture that self expression. This is the attraction of the star position. However, people who are not stars will want to get close to you for a little of your sparkle. People want you to keep expressing yourself as you have been without changing or they want you to grant them their wishes. Somehow the piper has to pay, and the warm milk and honey showered upon you starts flowing the other way. You are nurturing them! Your achievements become an obligation for continued performances. And everybody wants to bask in the shine of your sparkle. And you feel all alone and, yes, isolated (again).

That is the repulsion of the star position. Among the pre-Roman Celts, kingship was a terminal disease. A king might be ritually sacrificed for the future of the clan (Frazer, 1961).

This gate explores the natural history of the positive star position and some of the attractions and repulsions of that role. In the cycle of selfness, we all need to pass through the star position to fuel up for the rest of the journey of the eternal return around the Healing Circle. We all need to be King or Queen—for a day.

#### *Gate 4: The Creative*

On the calendar, this gate is the Summer Solstice. It happens in late June and is the celebration of the longest day of the year. Balance is the theme of this gate: Balance, continuity, the breath of life, and the half heard, half felt call to adventure that lures us onward and out of balance again. Investiture to King or Queenship, our elevation to the peak, is the back-story of a reawakening to the nature of wanting, the experience of joy (transcendent connectedness), the pain of disappointment, and the essence of the spiritual.

The mystery of why we begin to feel trapped by the very things we yearned for is embedded in the cycle of the seasons: after the solstice, only one day of glory, the days begin to shorten, the long night begins to return. And our *wants* have turned into *have-tos*. And the people who have thought that we were great feel very demanding in their admiration. Well, to hell with them, we might want to say. Unfortunately, before we can let go of that to which we are holding fast, we must accept, acknowledge, and understand all that we have and are and our investment in it. We learn very early in life that glory at the top is not that easy to let go of, no matter how trapped we feel. This gate, therefore, focuses on the rites of continuity that help us own our investment in ourselves and our things and separate the two so that we can move on.

The rites of continuity within our own community also set our place in the community so that we may connect with others and cooperate productively in the affairs of the group. Rites of continuity bring about Apotheosis, which is a term that describes what happens when Clark Kent slips into the phone booth and exits as Superman. Apotheosis means exaltation to divine rank or status. In the human context, it means rising to and claiming publicly the growth and values of our stages of development throughout our life cycles.

Rites of continuity include receiving awards, crowns, medals, and degrees. Family dinners, potlucks, and potlatches can be rites of continuity. The production and presentation of art to a community or the implementation of new skills and personal myths acquired through the hard work of personal growth are also rites of continuity. *Contact*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Resurrection*, and *Secrets and Lies* are movies that tell stories of rites of continuity.

*Gate 5: The Gentle*

On the calendar, this gate comes in late July or early August. The Celts called it *Lughnasa*. This is the harvest time, and a time for mourning. Yet the focus is on peak experiences, those fruits of living that make life joyous. This gate explores personal peak experiences and ways of sharing them within our communities. On the circle of the seasons, this is the Summer quadrant. This was also the time of the Celtic games, chariot races and swordplay, and the time when trial marriages for a year and a day could be declared.

With the discovery of agriculture, human beings could count on a steady and frequently surplus food supply to harvest. With locally dependable abundance, we shattered the mirror of the hunter-gatherer lifestyle that the environment presented to show us who we were and what we were on this earth to do. Since that time, we have been creating models to mirror ourselves, and each model that we have created shatters as our experience of reality changes, giving birth to new aspects of our human nature. From the Cosmic to the Family levels, mirrors are shattered and pasted back together again in a myriad of ways.

Through this gate, we encounter Paradise Lost. This is the time of the Trickster, the Clown, the Betrayer, and the Dark Double, Mr. or Mrs. Hyde. It is the time for the call to adventure, where the perceived incongruities of our existence spur us on to seek redemption. One of the biggest tricks in life is the illusion of the endless summer. Where there is summer can fall be far behind?

This gate is about breaking out of the illusions of life in order to expand our awareness to view our lifepath as less stable but richer with possibilities. And the gods come, invoked or not. These new possibilities intrude upon our awareness whether we like it or not. These calls to the adventure of new growth can be hard or soft, but we perceive them as betrayals, and we look for culprits to blame.

*Gate 6: The Abysmal*

This gate is the Autumnal Equinox. It comes in late September. It deals with rites of separation that initiate us into the mysteries of true maturity. Just as the sun with-

draws, making way for winter, our Mothers (and all of our *alma Maters*) withdraw from us (or we from them). We struggle with feelings of betrayal, fear of failure, and behavioral paralysis, and we resist the thrust towards our own identity and the death of our dependence. We must negotiate our way towards our personal quest for identity. Rites of separation include being stripped of our clothes, belongings, gender, and/or status, being made carriers of our community hope, and/or being placed in seclusion. In primitive cultures, these rites of passage were what marked a youngster's passage into full community membership as an adult. They often involved mutilation of some kind (circumcision, scarification, tattooing, hair cutting, bloodletting) to mark an external change on the body to correspond to the inner change in the psyche. They involve loss and letting go of the old, and the instruction of the initiate in new information, new ways of thinking, and new skills. All members of the community are expected to be initiated and to pass this test successfully.

In modern culture, we have few if any rites of passage. The ones we do have are neither universal nor always passable. Driver licensing, sporting tests, military service, or graduation from school are not enough to balance the losses. Naturally, we therefore resist losing and letting go.

The kite that flies is the kite that offers resistance to the wind. Similarly, the person that grows best is the one who offers resistance to the pressures for change. This resistance is the doorway to unresolved issues from childhood, unexpressed feelings in the present, illnesses, accidents, blame frames, numb outs, and you name its. The pressure to change comes both from ourselves and from others in our lives who want us to work harder, express more feelings, love better, work less, be cleaner, smarter, or whatever. All of this makes great sense and value from their point of view—and some of it makes sense from our point of view. The energy between what's right for them (the wind), and what seems right to us (the kite) runs down the string to the Self that Holds Everything: The Kite is Flying! Sometimes it's great fun; then again, at other times, lightning strikes. The outcome is greater self knowledge and identity, because we learn what we want and need for ourselves. Then we can do or learn to do what we must to get what we want and need.

This gateway explores the joys and pains of resisting the pressure put on us by the world, our friends and family,

and our own inner parts. The more we resist, the longer the process, but the greater the reward. Rites of separation help us transform our identities and claim new roles in our communities. Some movies that illustrate rites of separation are *Fly Away Home*, *Into the West*, *King of the Hill*, *National Velvet*, and *The Wizard of OZ*.

### *Gate 7: The Arousing*

On the calendar, this gate occurs on November 1, the festival of the dead. The Celts called it *Samhain*, the Christians, All Saints' Day, and today secular folk focus on the day before, Halloween. This is the Fall quadrant. In Celtic times this could be the time that one was called upon to endure pain or death courageously in order to maintain the kingdom. An important archetype is the Hero's journey into the underworld (the unconscious), his or her near-death ordeal, and the return to the light of day with new resources.

This gate conveys images of death, pain, and courage: Abduction, Dreams, a Journey to the Underworld, a Night-Sea Journey (maybe in a Whale's Belly), Brother/Sister Battle, Dismemberment, Crucifixion, and the Sacrificial Death. It involves the slaying of dragons on a road of physical trials and tests of wit. One encounters witches, trolls, ogres, the Antagonist, and many magical and unexpected helpers. Within the context of the cultural mythology, the stories of Persophone and her mother, Demeter, Gilgamesh and his beloved Enkidu, Jesus and his apostles, and Ripley and Newt (from the movie *Aliens*) are relevant. Individually, we all have dark passages in our lives just as important to our personal mythologies as these cultural myths are to the cultures that birthed them.

This gateway deals with the experience of rejection and with how rejection, as part of the cycle of ongoing personal development, invites personal growth. We also experience "stuckness," where the movement in the cycle has eddied and flowed back upon itself, when the fear of rejection causes us to stall our journey. At the same time, it is a doorway to positive personal change and self transformation. One of the by-products of all the tests and struggles is the development of new skills and competencies. We eventually become what we have done. These are the stories of the Quest for Redemption.

*Gate 8: The Receptive*

On the calendar, this is the Winter Solstice. It comes in late December. The Celts called it *Yule*, the Romans, Saturnalia, and the Christians, Christmas. One of the results of winter is to keep people at home around the fire telling the stories that carry the meaning and purpose of life and the rules and roles of living in their particular culture. Interpersonal relationships are often sorted out in this time of restoration as well. The Winter Solstice, the ultimate story night, is the shortest day and the longest night of the year. As the beginning of the return of the sun, it is also the threshold of transformation, after which the seasons will unfold in their familiar form but with renewed content. It is time to come in out of the cold, winterproof our living spaces, and prepare for changes of an inner sort. This is a time of core changes. To prompt these changes, we engage in rites of transformation. A rite of transformation is a ritual of healing that assists the celebrant in changing some condition that prevents attainment of a desired state of being. It brings about the death of the ego and the rebirth of the self.

The changes take place in the beliefs, the personal mythology, of the celebrant. At some point when you are out there all by yourself (rejected by one and all, including yourself, and totally helpless to do anything about it) you surrender. You stop all the fussing and put your trust in some other power to move on. Miracles occur when choices are reduced to one, the unknown possibilities. You are completely free; with nothing left to lose, you have everything to gain.

Rites of transformation generally involve four basic themes. One is resolving the feelings of betrayal and guilt through Father (or Mother) Atonement. Two is uniting our inner male and female in a Sacred Marriage. Three is the theft of a myth changing lesson from the jaws of death in the underworld through Mother (or Community) Atonement. Four is the elevation of the hero or heroine to a new state of being through Apotheosis after the death of his or her ego-bound fears and desires.

These rituals help us to change at a deep, cellular level of knowledge (*gnosis*). Thus they require an intensification that can be called a *blood* sacrifice. This does not mean that we shed actual blood but that we surrender some ego grasping understanding of others, the world, or ourselves, grieve

its death, and embrace the reborn shivering self. Evidence suggests (Grof, 1988) that in order to cross thresholds into altered states of knowing, barriers need to be passed, from the cultural conserve of the existing personal mythology to the spontaneously experienced, uncharted possibilities, usually through stimulation (not too much, not too little). These are the opportunities to close the gap between our ideal and our actual self-images. This theme is regularly presented in literature and in films like *Braveheart*, *Breaking the Waves*, *Cool Hand Luke*, *On the Waterfront*, and *The Shawshank Redemption*.

Chart 5. The Celtic Eightfold Year and the Eight Trigrams of the *I Ching*



## Wheels of Meaning

The following are nine quartered circles fully eight-plexed (discussed in Chapter 3). They represent my effort to make a complete plexing of some of the elementary issues of being human and the personal myths we humans construct to make meaning of our existence. These charts demonstrate the advantage of circularity over linearity by simultaneously showing the complexity of a theme with all its complementaries, commutables, and orthogonals (discussed in Chapter 2 and 3). They incorporate the linear and transcend it.

Moreover, they can be rich diagnostic tools (as can any eightplexed chart) by allowing you to compare yourself to the ideal to understand where your personal mythology has taken you. Typically, there will be patterns of inclusion and exclusion of thresholds and quadrants as well as seasons of strength and vulnerability.

These charts are intended to help you begin to look at experience through the quartered circle, for patterns in your own life as well as life itself. They trace the complete cycle of several themes, themes we are likely to see only partially. Again, the various parts on the circles are not absolutes, nor is their place within quadrants or on the thresholds. I will begin with an overview of the meaning of the eight gates. Each of these elements of meaning at the gates are broken out in the following pages, beginning with Gate 1, *Archetypal Sources*.

Chart 6. Wheels of Meaning at the Gates

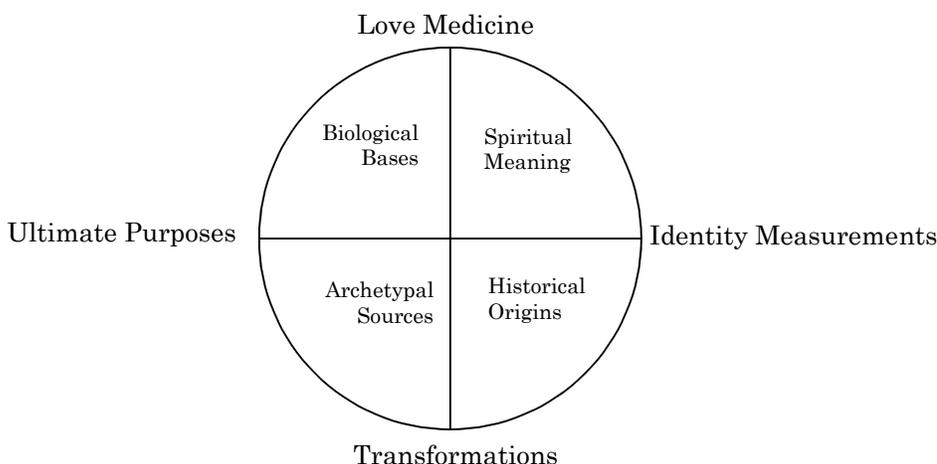


Chart 7. The Archetypal Sources

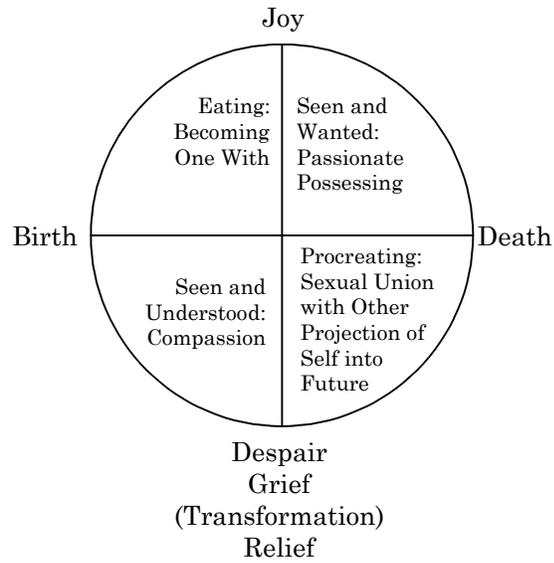


Chart 8. The Ultimate Purposes

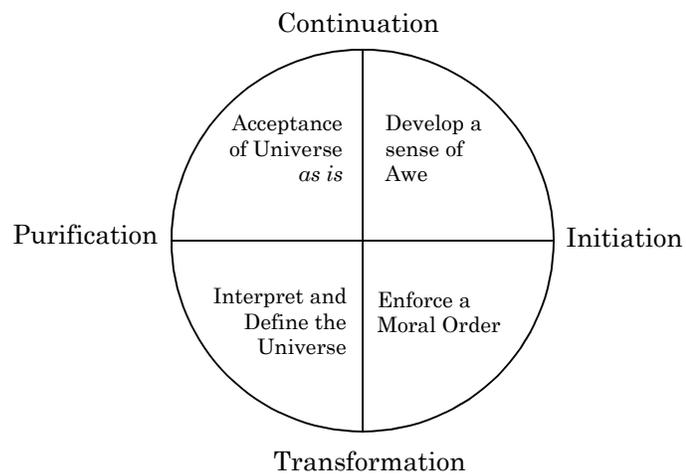


Chart 9. The Biological Bases

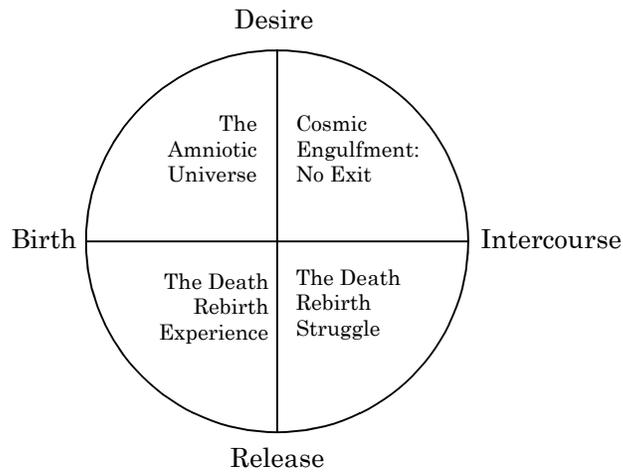


Chart 10. Love Medicine

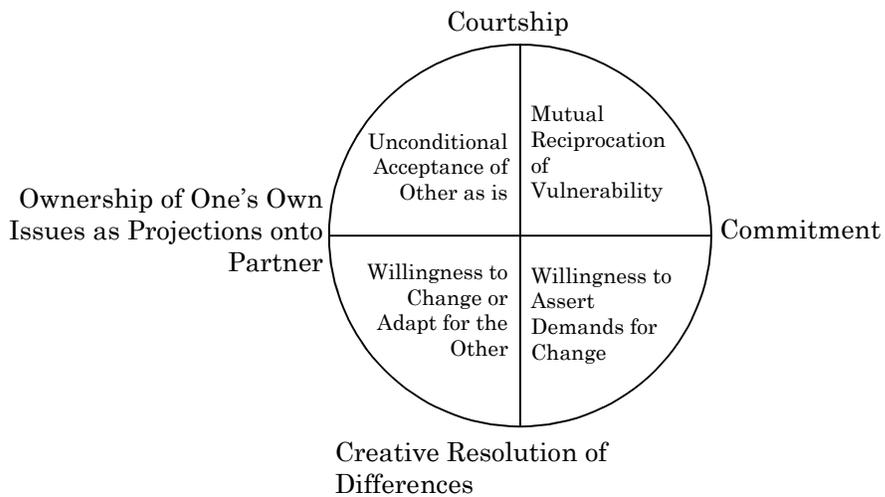


Chart 11. Spiritual Meaning

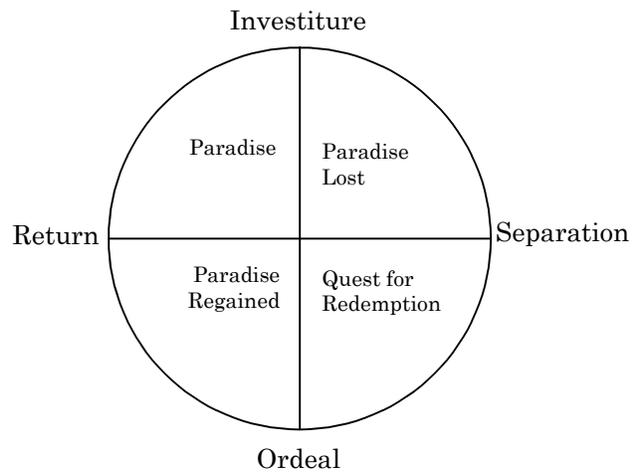


Chart 12. Identity Measurements

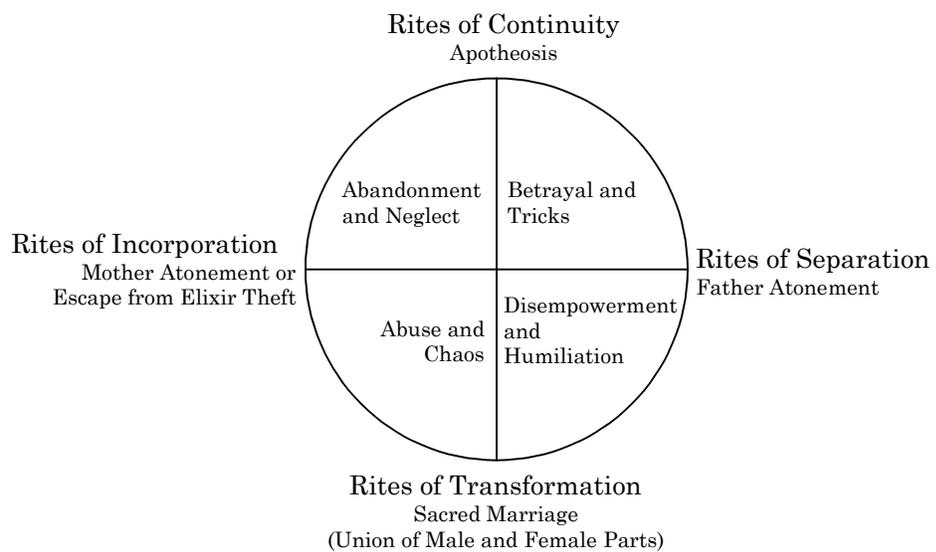


Chart 13. The Historical Origins

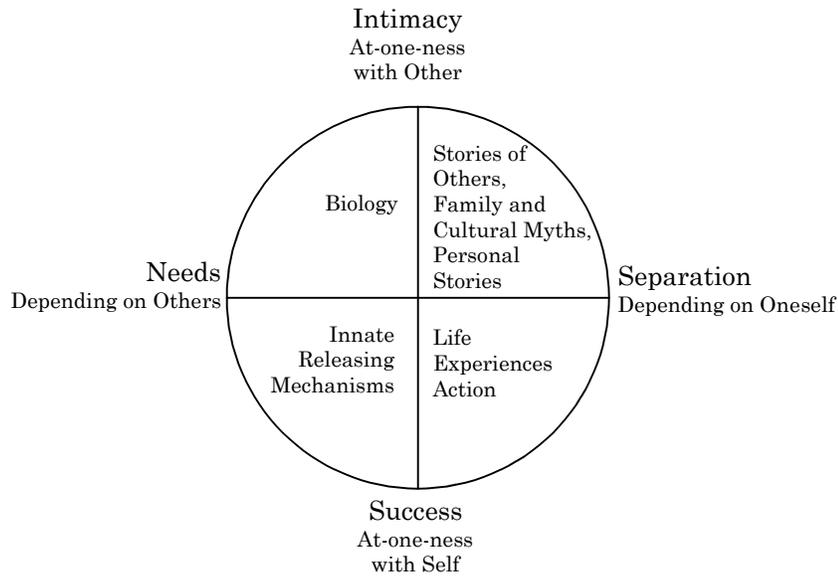
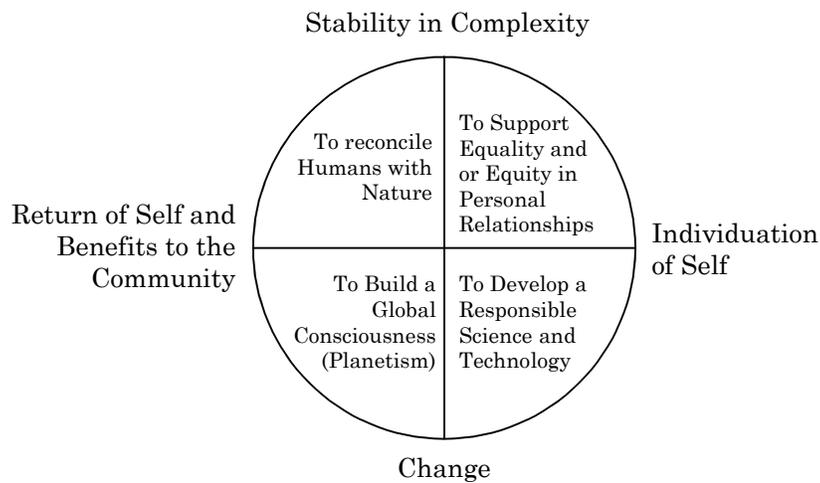


Chart 14. The Transformations



## The Cognitive Mandala

The Healing Circle suggests that life follows a cycle rather than a linear or chronological calendar. We recycle our personal mythologies at many levels and in all the quadrants. The eight gates of the Celtic year locate these recyclings in the process of the cycle of seasons and within cultural cycles referenced to them. The metaphors of the new beginnings of spring, the fruitfulness of summer, the foot dragging decline of fall, and the life in death of winter can be applied independent of the actual time of year. The beginning of something marks its springtime.

The Healing Circle shows us what the cycle can be and gives meaning to the process. The ways in which the Circle has been used offer a rich integrated cultural lore on which we can draw to intuit the relationships of parts to whole in our experience of life. But, in fact, the quartered circle is a blank template around which any issue can be explored. The relationships of the four quadrants and the four thresholds remain the same while the contents can be anything that can be factored into these relationships.

To the degree that we can tune our consciousness to the dynamic flow of universal life we will participate optimally in the evolutionary thrust of the universe and in our own lives; what is above, after all, is what is below. The healing the circle points to is the reconnection of the parts of a whole. We will connect with the beings around us—the other men, women, children, as well as the minerals, the plants, the animals, and all things that exist. We will live more spontaneously and creatively balanced between the weight of stultifying stability and the pull of chaotic change. The Healing Circle is a tuning fork for consciousness.

The power of the Healing Circle as a meta-pattern or instrument for attending to the patterns of life is manifold. Through the Healing Circle we can see complexly enough to observe some of the dynamic systems which make up a person. It is applicable in multiple settings. It recovers us to our physical and cultural relationships to the cycle of the seasons.

As a symbol, the Healing Circle has for centuries affected the human mind and spirit across cultures and con-

sciousness. As a structure it divides and connects the apparent polarities that make up the whole of experience. While the Healing Circle differentiates phases of our life cycles and the points of ritual crossing, it also offers an image of wholeness, providing a perspective on the thresholds at which we may experience the possibilities of life. The word *heal* comes from the Middle English word *helen*, which means “to make whole” or “to care about.” The delivery of wholeness is the gift of the Healing Circle.

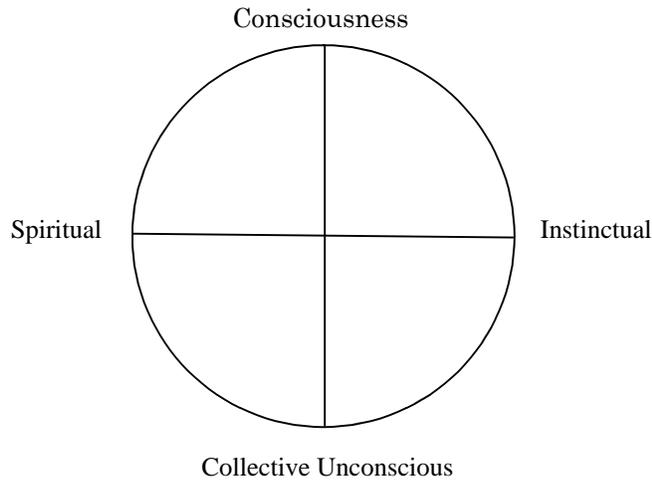
Mandalas are symbols of the unity of the self. They are an archetype of wholeness. Mandalas unite masculine angularity with feminine circularity. Angularity is separating. Circularity is bonding. Mandalas are symbols of wholeness. According to Carl Jung, mandalas appear in dreams in times of stress, indicating a need for unity and a new emergence of the Self.

The quartered circle is the archetype of the self. Archetypes are empirically derived postulates contained in the collective unconscious of all human beings (Jung, 1969). Archetypes act like instincts in their capacity to shape conscious contents by regulating, modifying, and motivating them through distinctly numinous, spiritual effects. They manifest themselves only through their ability to organize images and ideas unconsciously. Once established, the conscious mind continues to elaborate the gnosis of the symbol.

Jung’s studies suggested that a human mind is determined by complementarity, a subject coming in the next chapter. Consciousness complements unconsciousness and vice versa. They stand as opposites. The play between them and the functional balances achieved among their self similar properties determines the reality we experience unfolding.

According to Jung, equivalent opposites are necessary conditions inherent in the act of cognition (Jung, 1978). Without them there is no cognition! The interplay and balance of opposites into functional union is a prerequisite for wholeness.

The Healing Circle (what Jung called a quaternion, Jung, 1978) consists of two contrasting mutually attracted pairs of opposites that form the fourfold basis of wholeness. Thus, in this permutation of the circle:



#### 15. The Archetype of the Self

I call my Healing Circle a “cognitive mandala.” On one level this is an oxymoron, cognition being of consciousness and mandalas being of the unconscious. But it suggests best how to be with regarding the Healing Circle: intertwining the two consciousnesses is the trick. The interplay of cognition and intuition will produce the best results.

“Mandala” is Sanskrit for *circle*. In the East, sacred mandalas are a spiritual tool drawn and/or meditated upon to help the practitioner focus consciousness on the implicate order of the universe. A “cognitive mandala” activates the mind, offering guidance, order, ideas, energy focusing, intuition prompting, and entrancement. “Cognitive” refers to the fact that it is made of words and ideas. Each word refers to a complex body of knowledge and with familiarity becomes a key stimulus of that knowledge. Closing this chapter is “Mosher’s Mandala #1.” I hope that as a result of this book you become familiar with the quadrants of the Healing Circle and the process of using it to bring the parts of a theme into their relationship with a whole. In other words I hope that the use of this mandala will come to have meaning for you as a cycle of healing.

With the Healing Circle I am invoking the mystery of the mandala. I am harkening back to Stonehenge, Druid

groves, and Native American Medicine Wheels. I call upon the spirit behind the Tetraktys, the alchemists' *quadratura circuli*, the Rose Window of the Chartres Cathedral, and Black Elk's sacred hoop of nations. In *Number and Time* (1974), Marie–Louise von Franz, describes mandalas as portraying . . .

. . . both the timeless and the time bound order of existence. While the timeless order seems to relate to the general concept of acausal orderedness in the physical and the psychic realms, the time bound order refers more to peripheral phenomena, such as synchronistic happenings, that are creative acts in time. The timeless acausal orderedness lies at the base of all transmittable information and cognition processes operating in man, and the time–bound synchronistic phenomena underlie those individually experienced messages of the unconscious which can only be adequately interpreted by the individual.

Those “synchronistic phenomena” are the personal myths, moments lifted out of time and connected to the timeless. At the same time that they point us toward the acausal orderedness, they keep us tethered to time. The Healing Circle is anchored in the cycle of the seasons of our lives, in the seasons of the year and the years of seasons from our entry into this phenomenological world to our exit from it. Lao–Tzu, in *Tao te Ching*, reminds us that while we shape clay into a pot, what matters most is the emptiness inside that holds whatever we want it to. We work with “being,” he says, but it is the “non–being” that we use. The Healing Circle is similar. It is not the particular thing that we fill the empty quadrants with that matters—it is the space for the non–being, the template of the quartered circle that we use. We work with the “explicate” reality, but it is the “implicate” reality that we use. I shall now turn to quantum physics to further explicate the structures of fundamental reality that the Healing Circle apprehends.

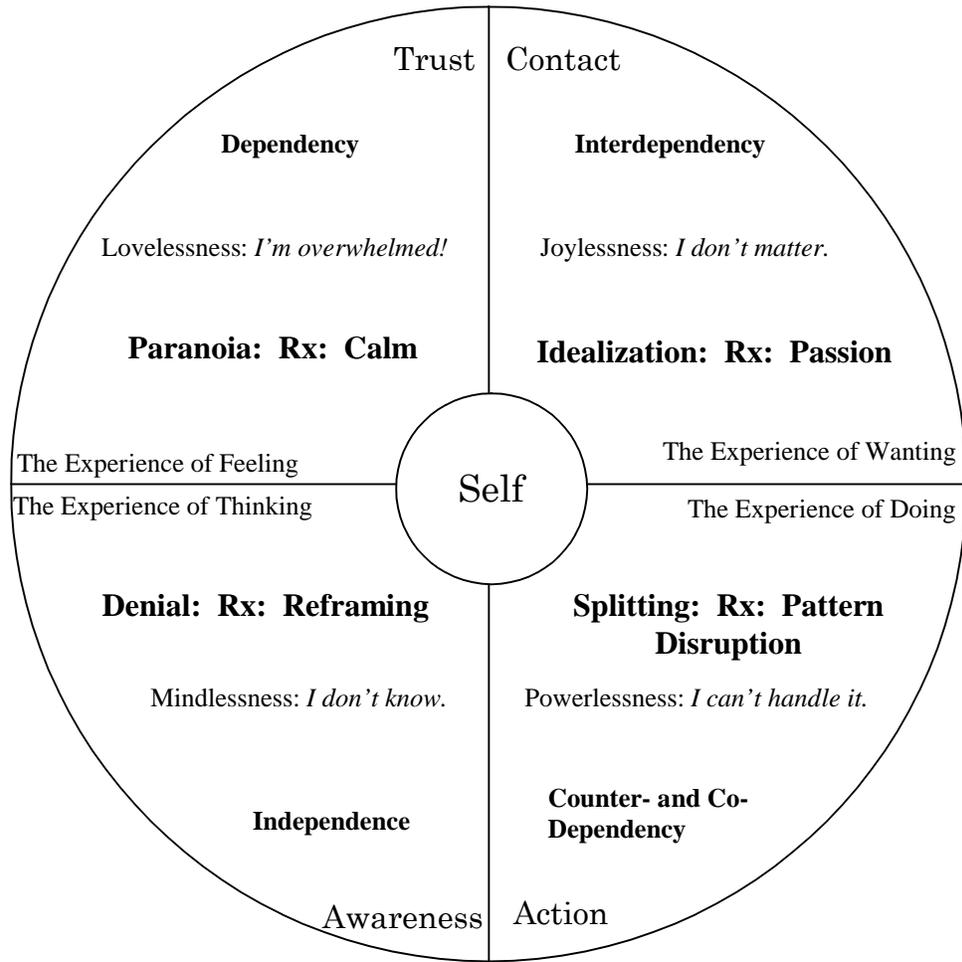


Chart 16. Mosher's Mandala # 1, Self

## Chapter 2

# The Unfolding of Reality

It was the destiny of the scientific mind to destroy magic beliefs and to pay with the loss of spontaneity, imagination, and a divided philosophy of life. But the cycle will repeat itself although we cannot return to the magic world of our ancestry. We will produce a new magic on a new level. Science will lead us to it.

—J. L. Moreno, *Psychodrama, Volume II* (1975)

### The “New” Reality

When I was a boy of ten, I made a thrilling discovery of divinity, what I called *Making God in the Elevator*. One boring Minnesota Sunday in midwinter while visiting my maiden aunt Helen (who was really pretty exciting), I wandered off to explore her apartment building. The elevator in her building was an old one that hummed loudly in its courses.

Experimentally, I hummed along with it, putting myself into trance as I rode up and down the vertical axis of the building. Eventually, I found the harmonic to the elevator’s tone and I was awestruck when I clearly heard the third tone pop into existence. I thought the other hummer was God!

Over and over I hummed God into existence, until, filled to bursting with wonder and joy, I flew into my aunt’s apartment to tell her what I had done.

My aunt Helen, born in Ireland, had no trouble appreciating the presence of the spirit world in the elevator. To me, two beings, the elevator and myself, each with a voice, singing together invoked a third voice, and therefore a third non-material being, a spirit being.

Later on in high school physics I learned about the science of harmonics. What was the reality? The scientific or the spiritual? The explicate or the implicate order? I could not make up my mind which was the truth, and both were beautiful, so I decided to accept both. To get the most from this book, I invite you, too, to find a way to accept both.

In the beginning, I saw the quartered circle as a chronological and developmental structure to reduce my uncertainty as a therapist. It worked well, as many ideas, expe-

riences, and theories share “seasonal” or developmental aspects. Yet as uncertainty about where we (the client, family, and/or group, and I) were and what we could make new together lessened, others unfolded. Should I really become protective of the protagonist (the person working through an issue) who wants to encounter his issues with an annihilating father? Would some other approach be more healing? My intuitions said that the obvious was often not the optimal choice.

These deeper uncertainties led me to quantum physics from which I not only developed a deeper respect and understanding of uncertainty but I also incorporated the illuminating principle of complementarity. It is the principle of complementarity that lifts the mere clock face off the quartered circle to reveal the “new reality” of the Healing Circle underneath. It is the principle of complementarity that unifies science and spirit.

Near the turn of the last century, when Freidrich Nietzsche asserted in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* that “God is dead,” the whole underlying structure of Western culture had died, and a new way of seeing reality had taken over. Reason and enlightenment had triumphed over faith and superstition. In physics, it was thought that everything had been pretty much done except for a few minor anomalies. Science had triumphed over the mysteries of nature. The Marquis de Laplace’s clockwork universe (Çambel, 1993) was on the brink of arrival. According to Pierre Simon de Laplace:

We may regard the present state of the universe as the effect of its past and the cause of its future. An intellect which at any given moment knew all of the forces that animate nature and the mutual positions of the beings that compose it, if this intellect were vast enough to submit the data to analysis, could condense into a single formula the movement of the greatest bodies of the universe and that of the lightest atom; for such an intellect nothing could be uncertain and the future just like the past would be present before its eyes.

—A. B. Çambell, *Applied Chaos Theory:  
A Paradigm for Complexity* (1993)

Such a deterministic world would allow for “no uncertainty, no chance, and no choice, no freedom, and no free will” (Çambell, 1993). Thus we may take relief in the last one

hundred years of this millennium, for we have seen the knowledge in the world more than doubled. The pace of change fueled by this increasing volume of information carries us like river rapids headlong into the twenty-first century. Whole new sciences unimagined a hundred years ago have spun into being with corresponding new techniques. As the century has unfolded, we have seen the emergence of the extraordinarily successful quantum physics, computer science, ecology, nano-technology, psychology, systems theory, chaos theory, and complexity science. These new sciences, particularly quantum physics, psychology, and complexity see a universe fundamentally different from that seen through the Newtonian/Cartesian principles of the classical physics:

The old science portrayed a physical universe of separate parts bound to each other by rigid laws of cause and effect, a universe of things related by force and influence. The new science gives us the vision of an entangled universe where everything is subtly connected to everything else. Influences are felt in the absence of force or signal; correlations develop spontaneously; patterns emerge from some order within. Where the Newtonian scientist reduced everything to its component parts and a few simple forces acting upon them, the quantum or chaos scientist focuses on the new properties or patterns that emerge when parts combine to form new wholes. A universe where nothing new or surprising ever happens is replaced by a self organizing universe of constant invention. The scientist learns that this fact or that part cannot be isolated from its overall environment or context, the way holism replaces reductionism and the wholes are seen as greater than the sum of the parts. In the new science, organized simplicity gives way to self organized complexity.

—Ian Marshall and Danah Zohar, *Who's Afraid of Schrödinger's Cat?* (1997)

Of course, this so-called second scientific revolution (the first was sparked by the likes of Copernicus and Galileo; Kepler; and Francis Bacon in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) does not invalidate classical science. Clockwork physics works well with clocks and other ordinary objects. It accurately predicts the motions of large bodies, like planets and automobiles, and it enables us to build skyscrapers and spaceships. But it “breaks down, roughly at the boundaries of

the very small, the very large, the very complex, and the subjective” (Marshall and Zohar, 1997).

Human development, human attachment, love, and relationships, and the human mind are better understood through the new science than the classical. Quantum physics, cosmology, dynamical systems, and human consciousness—these are the boundary regions in the edge between order and chaos. Given that human beings and their living processes are both very complex and subjective, Freud’s grand desire to make psychology a classical science was doomed to failure. On the other hand, his invention of analysis, which introduced self reference into the field of psychology, was the initial condition that sparked understanding of the complexity of the psyche.

It is a theme of this book that quantum and chaos sciences open the way to a “new science” of psychology. The human psyche is a complex dynamic system. Taking meaning from it by the application of classical science formulations and techniques is like trying to eat soup with a fork. We get the chunks but miss the savory essence. Shifting from the old order to the new is more difficult than we might imagine. It is not as if we have had our vision corrected by contacts. It requires a major conceptual reconstruction, as if, born blind and deaf, we must be healed. To assist this reconstruction of consciousness, the following chart, inspired by Bruce West and Bill Deering’s *The Lure of Modern Science: Fractal Thinking* (1995), may be helpful:

|                    | <b>The Old Science</b>                               | <b>The New Science</b>   |
|--------------------|--|--|
| <b>Reality</b>     | Reality is absolute and quantitative                 | Reality is relative and its qualities are as and may be more important than its quantities         |
| <b>Objects</b>     | Euclidean objects exist in time and space (locality) | Fractal objects exist in time liberated phase space (nonlocality)                                  |
| <b>Measurement</b> | Measurement fixes quantitative values                | Measurement changes qualities  |
| <b>Outcomes</b>    | Outcomes are deterministic, predictable, and certain | Outcomes are indeterminate because of deterministic chaos and the Heisenberg uncertainty principle |

|                  | (The Old Science)   | (The New Science)   |
|------------------|---|---|
| <b>Foci</b>      | Focused on isolated parts; a whole is the sum of its parts  | Focused on holism; a whole (having emergent qualities) is greater than the sum of its parts   |
| <b>Processes</b> | Processes are linear, continuous changes determined by laws of cause and effect   | Processes are nonlinear, abrupt, dramatic changes effected by indeterminate polycases or acausal relations  |
| <b>Truth</b>     | Dualistic (Cartesian) either/or truth; the opposite of a truth is a falsehood   | Complementary (wave/particle simultaneity) both/and truth; the opposite of a truth is another truth   |
| <b>Summary</b>   | A detached observer generates hierarchical categories of objects quantitatively established in time and space by objective linear analysis to a reduction of reality to a few simple laws and principles, a reality of “organized simplicity” | An interactive observer effects an observed dynamical system established in fractal (nonlinear, nonlocal, and self similar) dimensions and phase space by both analytical and intuitive, associative, analogical reasoning and pattern recognition to an identification of unique “self organized complexity” |

Chart 17. Old and New Sciences Compared

The new sciences are reaching beyond their disciplinary boundaries into what has been understood in Western culture as the domain of spirituality. The complex question of whether therapy can heal might be rephrased more simply as “how does change or even creation happen?” Both religion and science have attempted to answer these questions. The new sciences seem to be coming closer to reframing the deep spiritual insights of the past. The old magic is gone forever, but there is something new, exciting, awesome, and inherently creative unfolding. In this and the next two chapters, I will relate the new sciences to the Healing Circle, particularly quantum, chaos, and complexity theories. I will show how these new sciences better describe how people develop, change, and heal. I will describe how the new sciences already inform therapeutic interventions. They describe how the Healing Circle functions as an image of wholeness and completion.

Our working definitions of reality itself represent how we understand the nature of living systems and change in the universe. Thus, Freud described the mind as a hydraulic mechanism, the conscious ego struggling to keep the lid on the unconscious id, like a pressure cooker. As Danah Zohar summarizes in her book *The Quantum Self* (1990), “throughout history we have drawn our conception of ourselves and our place in the universe from the current physical theory of the day.” The theories of quantum physics, chaos, and complexity are exploring new ways to describe the nature of change in dynamical systems as complex and diverse as the weather, politics, the stock market, biology, the environment, fundamental reality, and the human psyche.

Theories of the linear development of the human psyche cannot always account for how people heal or much less why spontaneity and creativity are possible. The Healing Circle allows us to look at ourselves and our personal mythologies as dynamic processes, what the sciences of chaos and complexity call *complex dynamic systems*. Systems not essentially different from any other such systems—biological, social, or mathematical—in the universe. As a lens for consciousness, a “cognitive mandala,” the quartered circle, like a cross-haired rifle scope, zooms us in on the tracks of our life processes emerging at the edge of chaos and order, a record of the implicate order passing into the explicate.

### **Complementarity: The “New” Dualism**

Quantum physics describes the inner workings of the subatomic world, the *quantumstuff*, that makes up the more familiar material world of physical phenomena. While quantum physics is the most successful theory of physical reality yet developed (in the laboratory, its success rate is 100%), the unreconstructed consciousness of the Western mind prevents us from understanding and incorporating the new concepts and awareness it provides (Herbert, 1985; 1993). The polarization of dualism in Western culture, that underlies hundreds of years of analytical, categorical thinking, has done more harm than good. The whole edifice of classical science flourished under the separation of matter and spirit, and prompted the separation of science and religion. As well as extraordinary achievements in Newtonian, mechanistic physics, polarized thinking has created a proliferation of

other sciences that have little to say about consciousness, spirituality, or the sacred.

In religion, despite differences in doctrine, the polarization of duality persists in the concept of a world ruled by the antagonistic forces of good, championed by God, and evil, advanced by the devil. Human beings, then, have two basic natures, the spiritual and the physical, good and bad, respectively. In politics, the polarization supported years of colonization by more “civilized” countries of more “primitive” countries. In psychology, the polarization led to the view that mind and body function separately, without interchange. This accounts for the amazing persistence in the face of daily evidence otherwise of our linear attitudes about time like “the past is the past; just get on with it” or “I’m not a child any more; I just have to get over it.” It also seems that one term of the polarized dualism is always of greater value. For example, in philosophy the world according to dualism is explicable as two fundamental entities: mind and matter. René Descartes, the father of Cartesian philosophy (and an important contributor to the development of mathematics) puts it in a nutshell in his *Meditations* (Zohar, 1990):

I rightly conclude that my essence consists in this alone, that I am a thinking thing . . . . And although . . . . I have a body with which I am closely conjoined, I have, on the one hand, a clear and distinct idea of myself as a thinking, non–extended thing, and, on the other hand, a distinct idea of my body an extended, non–thinking thing; it is therefore certain that I am truly distinct from my body, and I can exist without it.

This Cartesian split between mind and body also establishes a split between logical thought and alternate experiences of reality like intuition, sensation, dreaming, and so forth. These are the very holistic experiences useful to apprehending the new sciences. While our shared sense of reality is based upon what we can explain in the world (its meaning), we have experiences all the time that we cannot explain. The fundamental polarization of Western thought has relegated such experiences to the realms of the spiritual and the aesthetic, maintaining science for the explanation of measurable, predictable causes and effects.

As quantum physics asserts, it is not reality that is polar. The ultimate nature of physical reality is an undivided

whole in perpetual flux (Bohm, 1980). It is the kind of consciousness with which we usually approach it that polarizes things. The explicate reality around us is designed for polarity and depends on it. Behind the explicate, however, shimmers the wholeness of the implicate order. Yet without polarity, without the divisions into subject and object, into knower and known, knowledge itself is impossible.

While sacrificing certainty, quantum physics restores wholeness by healing these polarized splits. The Principle of Complementarity, introduced in Chapter 1 as essential to the unfolding of the Healing Circle dynamics, describes reality as both wave and particle, quantum and classical. When we observe the wave aspects of reality, the particle aspects “disappear;” when we observe the particle aspects, the wave aspects “disappear.” The “observer effect” asserts that what we see is determined by what we “intend” to see. In therapy, for example, if we focus on our client’s history, our relationship fades into the background; if we focus on the relationship, the history fades (Zohar, 1990). Yet both continue to exist.

Like our client’s history and our relationship with him or her, the quantumstuff of the universe is both wavelike and particlelike simultaneously, not polarized, either/or, but complementary. Werner Heisenberg articulated the Uncertainty Principle, whereby wave and particle descriptions of being preclude one another. Furthermore, when we fix our attention on one, the nature of the other becomes indeterminate. We cannot say anything about it except that it is there, “unobserved.” Because of this complementarity, fundamental reality is always fuzzy and uncertain. Of course, quantum physics did not make this so; complementarity has always existed as a function of experience.

It is time to explain more about the implicate and explicate realities. David Bohm, a quantum physicist, decided to resolve an elementary contradiction between quantum and relativity physics. Quantum theory sees reality as discontinuous, nonlinear, nonlocal, and noncausal while relativity theory sees reality as continuous, linear, local, and causal. Looking for an underlying unification, Bohm found *wholeness* (Bohm, 1980). Both theories hold that the universe is an integral whole and that the laws of physics apply on every level, from micro to macro.

The essence of the universe is, according to Bohm, *holomovement* (1980): the fundamental reality consists of an

unbroken wholeness, an undivided flowing movement without borders, stretching across the universe and beyond, unlimited by space or time or the speed of light, each part of the flow replicating the totality of the flow. Because of the wavelike nature of quantumstuff, it is an undivided whole. Wave properties superimpose themselves upon one another, adding and subtracting their peaks and troughs, making for unity. For example, we could select out of the “undivided whole” of street noise, car horns, brake grinds, human speech, and bird tweets, depending upon our measuring devise (a MIDI program on a multimedia computer, for example). When we put all the sounds together again—street noise! There are two aspects to the holomovement: the explicate order and the implicate order, which like wave and particle, only appear to be distinct.

The explicate order of the universe is the physical phenomena available to our senses, empirically observable and measurable, and their various technological extensions through applications of machines, math, mechanics, and cause and effect. Classical Newtonian physics works quite well in the explicate order; it consists of “entities which are outside of each other, in the sense that they exist independently in different regions of space and time and interact through forces that do not bring about any changes in their essential natures” (Bohm, 1980). Each explicate entity is bound by space and time. The explicate order is determined by local cause and effect. The explicate order unfolds from the implicate.

On the other hand, the implicate order is not readily available to objective analysis, seems to be interconnected in ways different from cause and effect, and yet is the source of the explicate order. All the possibilities of explicate entities are enfolded in the implicate order. It is liberated from time and space and may be described as the *eternal now*. The implicate order is indeterminate and nonlocal, thus effects can be generated instantaneously from afar without any apparent exchange of force or energy. Matter incarnates spirit. Entities concretize possibilities.

Thus, the things of the phenomenological world unfold from the indeterminate possibilities of the implicate order as they manifest in the explicate order. Once entities become explicate, they enter the realm of classical physics and can be determined by cause and effect. In this model, consciousness

seems to be a key factor in the creation of the explicate universe. In this book I will not try to discuss the intriguing issue of *whose* consciousness is doing this, but it is clear that the human mind stands on the border between the implicate and the explicate orders. Human consciousness may well be a biological tool for interacting with the implicate order (Bohm, 1980; Friedman, 1994; Penrose, 1989, 1994; Zohar, 1990, 1994, 1997). This interaction could be a kind of measurement act, an observation, that creates reality.

Bohm also identifies a third elemental part of reality. In addition to the implicate order, which is like the ocean, and the explicate order, which is like the foam on the waves of the ocean, there is *meaning*. Bohm suggests an emergent, inherent quality of meaning in the fundamental reality itself. To turn a phrase, the implicate reality explicates itself. This is similar to the cognitive scientists' definition of the unconscious as the embodiment of meaning—the emergent knowing out of electrochemical, molecular, and muscular processes of the human body. Bohm proposes a tripartite structure of reality: matter (explicate), energy (implicate), and meaning. According to Bohm:

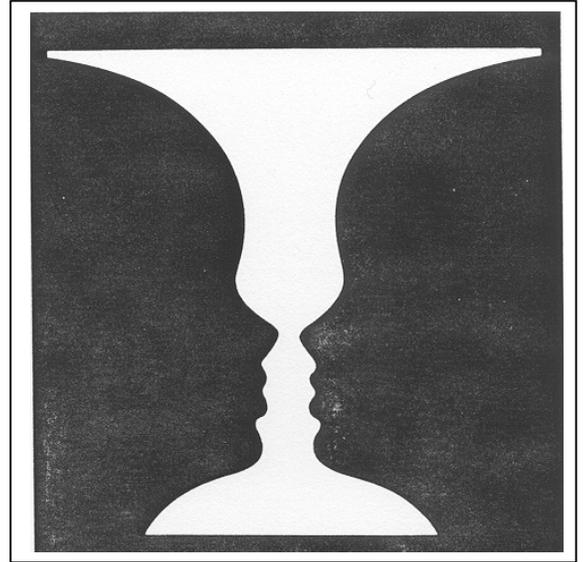
Each of these basic notions enfolds the other two. This implies, in contrast to the usual view, that meaning is an inherent and essential part of our overall reality, and is not merely a purely abstract and ethereal quality having its existence only in the mind.

David Bohm—*Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (1980)

Complementarity redefines dualism to enfold the idea of dual vision. The wave and the particle, the implicate and the explicate, are not polarized opposites, mutually excluding and conflicting. They are interactive though not simultaneously observable. The existence of the one presupposes the existence of the other. Which view of reality predominates depends on the *observer effect*, usually a function of what the observer expects or wants to see. Human consciousness seems to be able to engage with both the explicate world of measurable and observable phenomena (with the senses and their extensions) and the implicate undivided wholeness that underlies it and from which it unfolds (particularly through *intuition* and *knowing*). According to Bohm, music may be a direct window to the implicate order where meaning, matter,

and energy unite in wholeness. Phenomena like music allow us to experience that the implicate whole is more than the sum of its parts.

Complementarity itself is a doorway. While our normal senses are focused on the explicate reality, we sense the implicate reality as well. We have access to altered states of consciousness, dissociative states, near death experiences, hypnogogic states, dreams, fantasies, mystical unions, art, synchronicities, and other doorways beyond the polarities. It is rare that we can see the whole constituted by complementarity. Consider the illustration to your right. Focus first on the *white* portion. Now shift to the *black*. Try to look and focus on both together. Consider what you would have if you took away the *white*—or the *black*. The whole image would disappear without the “polarity.” It is a challenge to consider both at the same time. If you are like most people, you will go into a slight trance state in those moments that you can succeed in seeing both simultaneously. (Try defocusing and “softening” your eyes when you look.)



For example, in the field of biology we see complementarity everywhere: The sperm and the egg, male and female, even the very nervous system itself. The central nervous system is a binary system, consisting of the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems. The parasympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system is activated by the need to receive. It is passive, receptive, experiencing, vegetative, energy storing, and marked by open sphincters and flexor muscles. The sympathetic division is active, giving, energy depleting, marked by closed sphincters and extensor muscles. One could say that the parasympathetic system is the receptive, “feminine,” aspect and the sympathetic system the active, “masculine,” aspect of our biology. In very real ways we are all both “feminine” and “masculine.” For certain, many of the most important processes of our lives are marked by the alternation of these two divisions of the nervous system.

In sex, for example, the body is first in the control of the sympathetic division. At the point of orgasm, there is a thrilling switch, and the parasympathetic division kicks in.

In therapy, this dual functioning of the autonomic nervous system is essential. In fact, therapy could be defined as the therapist's management of the client's anxiety. In effect, the client asks the therapist for help for something that is causing her (or him) distress and she wants the therapist to relieve it. The client gives the therapist the power to increase or to decrease her distress under controlled conditions. So anxiety builds, muscles tense, fists clench. When the therapist intervenes with an appropriate intervention (a therapeutic ritual), the client is relieved, muscles relax, tears flow, joy returns.

Our perception of complementarity is all important. It is the key to healing. Use of the Healing Circle drives the system to wholeness, because the holistically directed healer knows how to identify and use the encrypted complementarities embedded within the clients' partial presentations of what troubles them. When we see a polarized duality rather than complementarity, the whole that the parts complete is lost. Psychology in general has also been taken up with the dialectic regarding the polarized dualism of the human experience of reality. Many concepts of psychology are dualistic in structure. For example: the id and the ego, the unconscious and the conscious, subject and object, health and pathology, the individual and society, and the therapist and the client, to name a few. These examples are much more rewarding and therapeutically useful when they can be seen holistically.

Such polarized dualities may be seen as an intellectualization of the universal human experience of ambivalence and our tendency to polarize under stress. The dualities of good and evil, pleasure and suffering, meaning and meaninglessness, and Life and Death, have been the domain of philosophy and religion at least since the beginning of history. Today quantum physics takes up where philosophy and religion left off and returns them to wholeness (Capra, 1975; Tipler, 1994; Wolf, 1996; Zukav, 1980).

Quantum physics takes us out of the polarized dualism of Newtonian/Cartesian science and proposes new experiences of reality and ourselves. To the Western trained linear consciousness, the whole idea of undivided wholeness, of wave/particle simultaneity (and a host of other formulations) is difficult to grasp. Here are a few of the quantum possibilities (Herbert, 1985, 1993). The world obeys a non-human

kind of reasoning (and we will probably never really understand it). Reality is, as already stated, an undivided wholeness, which denies the classical analyzability of the world into separately and independently existing parts. Then again, reality is two-fold, consisting of potentials (probability waves) and actualities (particles) singled out by the act of measurement (observation).

Confounding reason, reality is created by observation. Observing consciousness creates reality, and the content of consciousness is the ultimate reality. Reality can also be manifold, consisting of a steadily increasing number of parallel universes, created upon the occasion of each measurement act (observation). When several outcomes are possible, even though only one is measured, all the others actually occur in parallel universes. Quantum physics can include classical physics, but classical physics cannot include the phenomena verified by quantum physics. Once entities become explicate, they become more determined by cause and effect and subject to the other slings and arrows of classical physics, including decay and death. Then, perhaps, the energy unfolds back into the implicate undivided wholeness and returns home.

### ***The Observer Effect***

The act of observation or measurement is thought to effect the quantumstuff such that it enters the phenomenological world, taking on a particular measurable attribute. “A measurement of a quantum state,” writes Roger Penrose, “occurs, in effect, when there is a large magnification of some physical process, raising it from the quantum to the classical level” (1994). Penrose defines a measuring apparatus as a “delicately poised system that can use a tiny quantum event to trigger off a much larger classical-scale observable effect” (1994). The instruments of a “delicately poised system” or “measuring device” might be a mathematical formula, a controlled experiment, or a human system such as consciousness or vision. Zohar (1990) reports, for example, that “biophysicists working on the retina discovered that the nerve cells in the human brain are sufficiently sensitive to register the absorption of a single photon (mirroring the passage of an individual electron from one energy state within the atom to another)—and thus sensitive enough to be influenced by the

whole panoply of odd quantum-level behavior, including indeterminism and nonlocal effects.”

This observer effect in quantum physics has correlates in human lives. The self-fulfilling prophecy is an example. The idea that the observer creates reality reframes the context of therapy as well. It is the therapist’s task to help the client re-connect to the implicate universe. Over-focussing on the content of the client’s issues (an approach favored by short term therapies) keeps the client locked in his explicate world. By focusing on the *pattern* of the story, what I call the personal mythology, the therapist opens the way for the client to return to the implicate universe of possibilities. Therapy often involves observing explicate roles (sub-selves), whether conscious or not, then enfolding them back into the undivided whole of the Self. In its measurement act, ritual, like the Healing Circle, organizes consciousness. As we shall see later, a ritual builds through stages of concentration and attention, a training in observation, that allows the celebrant to locate the fulcrum of change—the unseen possibilities—between the two orders, explicate and implicate, providing the leverage for transformation.

But the implications of the observer effect for the human psyche and healing are actually even more profound. The content of consciousness is the ultimate reality because it is consciousness which focuses on wave or particle, the explicate systems of explanation or the further implicate reality beyond them. Consciousness creates reality. Quantum physics has been described as the physics of meaning. According to many physicists, quantum physics brought consciousness to matter (Goswami, 1993; Radin, 1997). In other words, quantum physics is a way of thinking about the union of the explicate and implicate realities. According to Fred Alan Wolf (1984),

All physical, religious, and psychological differences may eventually be seen as aspects of the laws of quantum physics. This may lead to startling new realizations about feelings and energy, intuition and wavelength, sensation and physical location, thought and time. If you think, you experience time. If you feel, you experience energy. If you intuit, you experience wavelength; and if you sense, you experience space. That is, sensation and thought are internal dimensions just as space and time are external dimensions. Feeling and intuition are internal qualities just as energy and wavelength are external qualities.

Fred Wolf calls these the “laws of consciousness.” I put this material into the quartered circle:

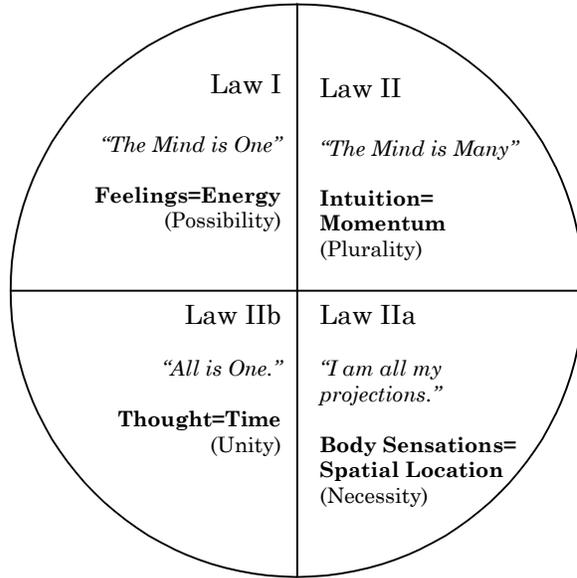


Chart 18. The Laws of the Physics of Consciousness

Albert Einstein, who developed the theory of relativity and who was a major contributor to the development of quantum physics, was very uncomfortable with the undivided wholeness and nonlocality of quantumstuff. He argued that the problem was with the incompleteness of the theory. He could not accept the idea that atomic events were, in effect, uncaused: “I cannot believe,” he once said, “that God would play dice with the Universe” (Herbert, 1993). I find the determinism of the classical physics, however, to be less useful in the healing of psyches than the indeterminate randomness of quantum physics. Heinz Pagels explains:

If you want to build a robust universe, one that will never go wrong, then you don’t want to build it like a clock, for the smallest bit of grit could cause it to go awry. However, if things at base are utterly random, nothing can make them more disordered. Complete randomness at the heart of things is the most stable situation imaginable—a divinely clever way to build a stable universe.

—Nick Herbert, *Elemental Mind* (1993)

When we experience a reality by directing our consciousness, we are disturbing the universe because we are creating a particular combination of potential realities: The one we come to know and the currently unknowable other realities encrypted in the complementaries. It is the task of the healer to decode its complementaries, helping the client to create a larger, less certain, yet more complete world of greater complexity and more choices.

### **Quantum Psyche**

Obviously, the Healing Circle is not about the implicate order as opposed to the explicate order. It is about both. It is about how the two correlate. More to the point, it is about the boundary between them, that edge of emergence of self organization that humans straddle through the function of their consciousness. It is concerned about some of the tools, like myths (the *products of living*) that we have created to give us the illusion of stability in the unfolding holomovement of an evolving universe and rituals (the *processes of change*) that we use in those moments when the chaos of possibilities inherent in the implicate order seem to intrude into ordinary reality.

The constructs of the explicate and implicate orders, and their relationship to one another are very useful for the practicing therapist. When I went to graduate school, most of what I studied were elements of this explicate order of the universe. From behaviorism to psychodiagnostics, things seemed straightforward, exciting, and powerful. Causes and effects were the order of the day. Then when I worked with my very first client, his diagnosis had a way of getting in the way as much as helping. And my behavioral interventions had unpredictable outcomes, sometimes more useful than the behavior change. I had encountered the implicate order of the universe and entered the realm of chaos, fractals, and complex phenomena, like personal myths.

How does a therapist help a client move from the explicate reality to the implicate and back again to the explicate? Oddly, this is fairly easily done—if the client is open to the implicate reality and is not attached to a particular outcome, like feeling happy or getting a partner back. The implicate order appears to be indeterminate; predictability is

limited to the everyday explicate order. The first thing to do is to develop *intention*, the outcome of focused concentration and attention on an issue. Intention transforms. As we explore the possibilities involving an issue, we participate in the creative flow of the universe. Every mental image we create pictures another reality, and from among alternatives generated by our creativity, we make a choice about which one will be our next measurement device.

The second thing is the conversation, an enactment of complementarity. Nothing is more surprising than the relief that one feels just from talking to someone who listens. But the healing process is more than just listening. The new sciences suggest that two totally different complex systems represented by the client and the therapist are profoundly reconnected. The conversation, the dance of subject and object, helper and helped, self and other, also joins the holomovement of the undivided whole. At times the roles even reverse, and the client helps the therapist. Healing occurs when we can help the client access his connection to the implicate, undivided whole. Yet we connect too; healing is shared.

The revisions of classical physics that quantum physics has demonstrated no longer differentiate between the human system and others in the universe in the same ways. While quantum theory suggests that human systems, including consciousness itself, might be read as aspects of a dynamic between chaos and order, the implicate and the explicate reality, they also suggest that the human system is responsible for producing realities out of quantumstuff through acts of observation. These measuring acts of observation are potentially infinite, that is, nonlocal and nonlinear as well as unlimited in quantity. We are as infinite as the creator God, who, in the classical science model, is withdrawn from creation. In the quantum universe we create reality through our acts of consciousness. The more intentional these acts of consciousness, the more responsible we are for the realities we create. Paradoxically, at the moment of transformation we must surrender intentionality to the powers of emergent self organization.

This may sound absurd, but there have been widespread reports in the national media that brain scans of depressive patients have shown physical changes in the neurology of their brains as a result of therapy. For another example, Larry Dossey (1993) reports on medical experiments

testing prayer. A prayer is the focusing of intention around the request to a higher power to produce a miracle. In one of these experiments, over one thousand serious heart attack patients were selected at random to be either treated with prayer or not, in addition to traditional medical treatment. Neither the patients nor their doctors knew who was chosen. Those treated had their names submitted to prayer groups (multi-denominational) from around the country. The results were significant. While the death rate between the two groups was similar, the rate of other health concerns was significantly different. The group supported by prayer needed fewer drugs and medical procedures, had fewer complications, and were generally healthier more quickly and for a longer period of time.

More far out, a recent article by Garry Cooper in *Family Therapy Networker* (1997) reports that the Princeton University's Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research Laboratory (PEAR) has "eighteen years of accumulated data showing that human beings can affect computers just by thinking about them, even from thousands of miles away." They report:

'The basic processes by which consciousness exchanges information with its environment also enable it to bias probabilistic systems and thereby to avail itself of some control over its reality'. . . The actual mechanism may have something to do with . . . 'the concepts of observational quantum mechanisms, most importantly the principles of complementarity and wave mechanical resonance, as fundamental characteristics of consciousness.'

On a personal scale, I had a disturbing and profound dream nearly thirty years ago while in graduate school in Detroit. My father had been involved in an automobile accident in Sacramento and was in stable condition in the hospital for observation:

I am running through an earthquake shaken city with my father. We are being chased by something very dangerous. We leap over gaps in the road, dodge falling objects, and avoid piles of burning rubble. Our pursuer gets closer. Finally, my father takes my hand and leads me through a fissure in a wall to relative safety. The dark creature chasing us passes by for now. Then I realize that my father is gone. I see him getting

smaller and smaller in the distance. I call out to him until he winks out like a firefly in the night.

I awoke immediately with a feeling of dread. I looked at the clock and it was 3:37 in the morning. Very disturbed, I called my parents' home in California and got no answer. Two hours later, I received a call from my aunt (my father's sister) in Detroit telling me that she had just been told that he was declared dead at 3:37 that morning. This dream and memory, by the way, are as vivid today as if they had just happened.

Quantum science's descriptions of the fundamental reality indicate an equally profound revision of our concepts of spirituality. An expanded consciousness of the implicate order would include the varieties of religious experiences humankind has documented and witnessed and named within the explicate order. No longer a polarized system, body and mind or body and soul would have to be thought of as equally, undividedly, delicately poised observing systems. The physical energy of the body, the changes in the body, and changes in consciousness would mean profound changes to the whole set of systems which constitute the human being and reality itself.

The central directive of the observer effect is to participate in creating reality responsibly. This brings me back to the Healing Circle. The Healing Circle focuses consciousness in particular ways. As stated earlier, human consciousness perceives both the explicate world of measurable and observable phenomena and the implicate undivided wholeness that underlies it and from which it unfolds. The Healing Circle is the template of the underlying order of reality. It is a way, therefore, of organizing the discrete and separate events and experiences of the phenomenological world into resonance with the underlying, undivided whole.

The Healing Circle also affirms the inherent sacredness of all things, which might be defined as their interconnectedness with the implicate order, the Ground of All Being. By putting us in resonance with the nature of fundamental reality, it softens the tendency to see/create fragmentation in the phenomenological world, a process that leads to interpersonal as well as international misunderstanding, exploitation of people as objects or enemies, and the desecration of the environment. It presents techniques of psychic "measure-

ment” (the rituals are the measuring devices) to create new “personal realities,” that I will call personal myths in this book.

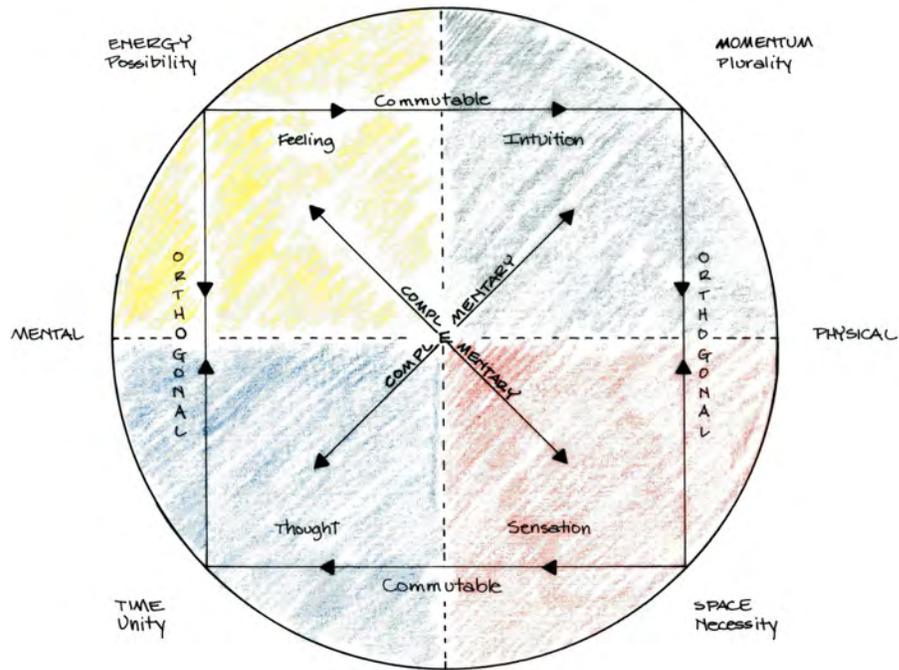


Chart 19. Mosher's Mandala # 2, Quantum Psychodynamics

## Chapter 3

# The Mystery of the Circle: Complementary Opposition

You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the Power of the world always works in circles, and everything tries to be round. Everything is done in a circle. The sky is round, and I have heard the earth is round like a ball, and so are the stars. The wind in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back to where they were. The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where Power moves.

—Black Elk, *Black Elk Speaks*

The fundamental form of process is cyclical movement, the alternation of success and decline, effort and repose, life and death which is the rhythm of process.

—Northrup Frye

### **In the Beginning**

Human beings live in time and the timeless. The meanings that we make of our experiences encrypt the complementary aspects of existence, holding them in character, plot, and symbol. Our unique choices transform the wave functions of our possibilities into particulate existence. Complementarity “particularizes” our lives while preserving the wholeness to which we can return. The Healing Circle is a window to the fundamental reality. It is a window to wholeness. The quartered circle incorporates the arrow of time and the timelessness of the deeper complementarity of reality. It provides a structure for apprehending both systems holistically: the unfolding of systems in time and their underlying timeless complementaries that determine what explication actually unfolds from the implicate order.

The quartered circle is both complex and simple. It is a picture or archetype of fields of probability, of acausal or-

deredness. The four seasons are more than an apt metaphor for the process of human growth and living. We often think of experience in fours, but when this perspective is missing the making of a quartered circle can help us find the whole of which a given perspective is a part. As a model of the interconnectedness of the implicate reality, the seasons are a template around which four seasonal aspects of an issue or idea can be unfolded. The Healing Circle illuminates relationships.

The seasons of living cluster the space and time variables of life. The vertical axis points to the summer (above) and winter (below) solstices, the points of greatest disequilibrium in the earth's cycle around the sun. The horizontal axis points to the spring (left) and fall (right) equinoxes, the points of greatest equilibrium in the earth's journey. These axes mark the thresholds of the four seasons. The thresholds thus created between the seasons call for ritual procedures honoring the seasonal changes in ourselves. These thresholds cluster energy and momentum variables that establish the vectors of interconnection among the seasonal quadrants.

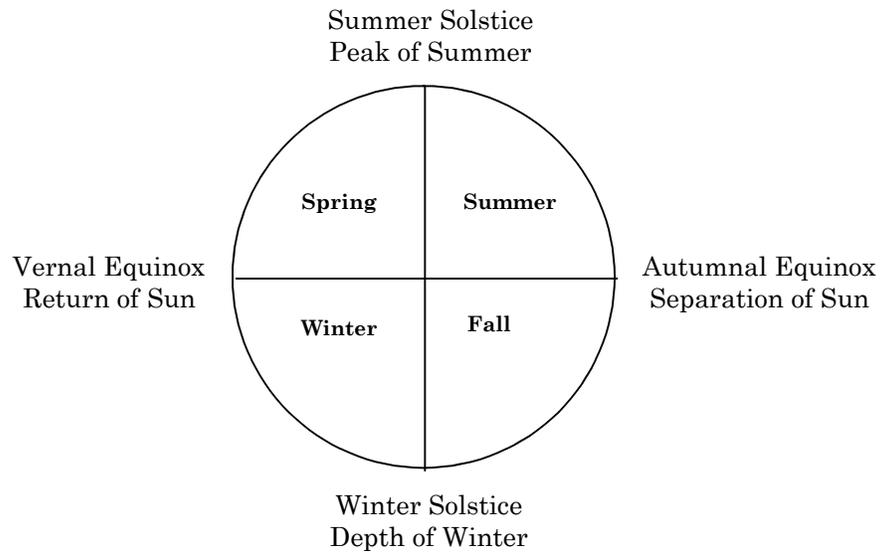


Chart 20. The Cycle of the Seasons

The Healing Circle forms a dynamic, living matrix of our unconscious and conscious functioning. What we do with a complex idea around the circle interrelates with what the interwoven parts of that idea do to our consciousness. We can see wholes and the parts simultaneously. We can participate in the meaningful union of opposites.

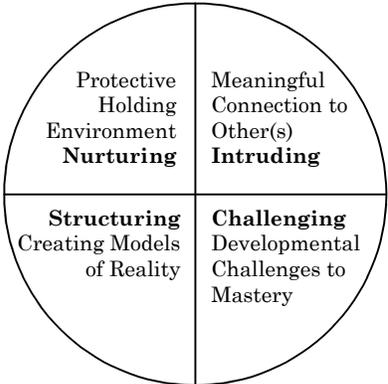


Chart 21. Parental (Therapeutic) Functions

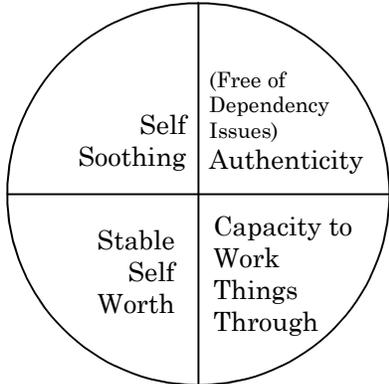


Chart 22. Consequences of Good Enough Experiences During First Cycle

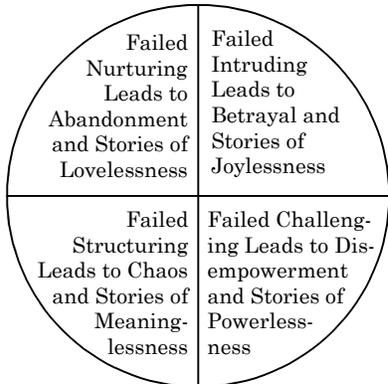


Chart 23. When Things Go Wrong

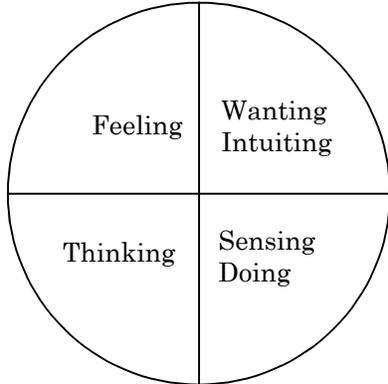


Chart 24. Four Functions of Consciousness

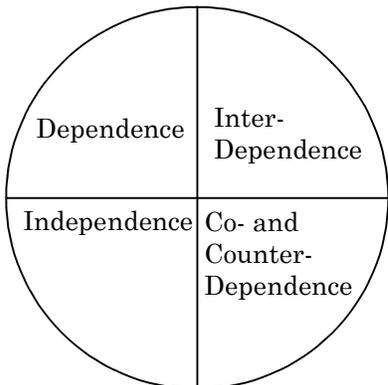


Chart 25. Dependency Tools

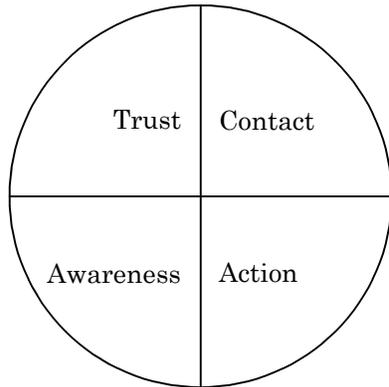


Chart 26. Core Elements of the Healing Process

Here are some further examples of quartered circles to introduce the relationships among the quadrants.

When a child's upbringing provides good enough experiences in the four early stages or seasons of development, the consequences are an ability to care for the self and heal. The child who is sufficiently nurtured (held, rocked, comforted, fed) is receptive to the subsequent stage of intruding (peek-a-boo, saying no, setting limits). Later, parents (or therapists) provide challenging (age appropriate lessons to learn skills like walking and talking, learning to take care of oneself) and ultimately the structuring of reality (how to calm oneself in bed, the names of things, how to create meaning, how to reason and express feelings). This child will learn self-soothing, authenticity, and a capacity to be dependent, independent and interdependent. She or he will be prepared through successfully meeting parental (or therapeutic) challenges to work through things and maintain a stable sense of self worth. Where nurturing, intruding, challenging, and structuring are inadequate, instead, the child will experience lovelessness, joylessness, powerlessness, or mindlessness in the respective quadrants.

Adequate parental or therapeutic input will facilitate the four functions of consciousness: feeling, wanting/intuition, doing/sensation, and thinking. The tools for dependency will be appropriately developed, ranging from a capacity to be dependent, to one for interdependency, to one for co- and counter- dependency, to one for independence. And as life events erupt, threatening the functions of any quadrant, the core elements of the healing process will be available: trust, contact, action and awareness.

These examples not only make sense, they also demonstrate the kind of relations among the quadrants of the Healing Circle. These relationships can be **Commutable**, **Orthogonal**, **Complementary**, and **Complete**.

Relationships that are **commutable** share qualities that can be observed at the same time. They are essentially the same though accidental attributes are different. Spring and summer are commutable in that there is more daylight than darkness, and vice versa for fall and winter, where there is more darkness than light. Similarly, Nurturing and Intruding are commutable. Distinct as they are, they share the qualities of an interpersonal closeness in which the child's needs are met without him or her having to do anything.

**Complementary** relationships express a dual focus on two things that appear to be opposites. These two things appear mutually exclusive and cannot be held in consciousness simultaneously. Yet together they constitute a whole. Spring and Fall are complementaries. So are Summer and Winter. Like the particles and waves of light, these foci cannot be simultaneously observed, yet the observation of one creates its “opposite.” In quantum physics, the wave and particle aspects of light are complementary. While they cannot be observed at the same time, but they are aspects of the same quantum stuff. They also interact. In complementary “opposites,” there is a kind of necessity or correspondence. Looking back at the seasons, given the tilted rotation of the earth around the sun, spring, the part of the orbit that brings the earth closer to the sun, presupposes fall, the time when the orbit takes the earth away from the sun. The unobservable complementary is said to be encrypted (enfolded) into the observable one. Because of the tilt of the earth’s axis in its orbit around the sun, the seasons spin through an alternation of commutable and complementary relationships to create an ebb and flow of equilibrium and disequilibrium that underlies human development.

Referring to sample charts 21-26, nurturing and challenging are complementaries. There is a necessary relationship or correspondence between the two apparent opposites. Whereas nurturing is characterized by trusting interpersonal closeness, challenging functions through interpersonal distance. Trust in another person is encrypted in the self-trust required to face a challenge. Inversely, the capacity to let go of the self, a capacity for receptivity and merging, which the infant learns from sufficient nurturing, has encrypted within it the challenge of action. Yet for a healthy person, being nurtured or giving nurturance is not experienced as a challenge; and being faced with a challenge or presenting a challenge is not experienced as nurturing, no matter how necessary or empowering the successful mastery might be. In fact, as the Healing Circle illustrates, the experience of a challenge as nurturing or nurturing as a challenge would be diagnostic of developmental trouble, of something gone awry. The Healing Circle shows these complementaries to be unified, parts of a whole, in the unfolding and interrelated process of holomovement.

The word **Orthogonal** describes relations that collide and bounce off each other. *Ortho-* means *straight* and *-gon*

means *angle*, and *orthogonal* refers to things at right angles to each other. They are essentially different, locally non-interactive, and cannot be observed at the same time. Spring and Summer have more daylight than darkness; Fall and Winter have less daylight than darkness. Because of the global holism of the Healing Circle, orthogonality frequently enlightens and surprises; it highlights hidden aspects of the related fields. Intruding (Summer) and challenging (Fall) are orthogonal: Intrusion is interactive, challenge is singular. Yet intrusions are challenging and challenges intrusive.

Orthogonal relationships are created by the unexpected, by what we would term *traumatic*. Relationships among the seasons of life are complementary and commutable, providing they are contiguous. There can be shocks as we pass through the equinoxes and solstices, but usually we know when to expect them. After all, some of our oldest archeological sites appear to be devices to anticipate, predict, and venerate these times. The orthogonal transitions are symbolized by the day and night, light and dark, good and bad, conscious and unconscious experiences that can turn a time around one hundred and eighty degrees. On the Seasons Cycle this is generally represented by the two halves separated by the line between the equinoxes. Later, when we encounter the generation of personal mythology, we will see how orthogonal shock can effect our lives.

And finally, relationships are considered **complete** where everything is included and nothing is excluded that is part of the system. All complementaries are decoded and commutables and orthogonals accounted for. Completeness implicates holism. The Healing Circle and quantum physics are both systems for apprehending completeness, the whole that would not be knowable from the point of view of complementarity, commutability, or orthogonality alone.

Developmentally, Self and Other begin as commutables (symbiosis), differentiate into orthogonals during the separation/individuation process, then reconnect interactively as complementaries through projective identification (a necessary process to help us truly know ourselves), and, finally, when we have internalized a structure for it all, we will have completeness (that is, wholeness). The simpler the system, the more it will commute, and thus stay the same. Our expectations are built on the perception of simple systems. The more simple the system, the more reliable are our

expectations, and the more difficult it is for us to apprehend the underlying complementarity. Expectations pave the road to hell and constancy is an illusion: commutability is only a part of the whole. Many of our personal myths, our created stories, are commutables, observed to make sense of our lives. Nevertheless, for every observation there will be a repression of complementary observations. These complementaries are encrypted in our hopes and dreams, our cultural myths, our symptoms, both physical and psychical, and our projections, horrific, human, and divine. Orthogonals, the impossible, are the doorways to understanding. Sooner or later we maneuver ourselves face to face with the impossible. The impossible usually turns out to be that which we could not see before, being blinded to complementaries by what we knew already. When we run into an orthogonal, we plunge into phase transition: That which we knew we no longer have and that which we have bumped into is impossible!

### **Plexing the Circle**

I call the factoring of aspects of an idea around the quartered circle a *fourplex* or an *eightplex*, depending on whether four or eight phases are identified. The stem *plex* is from the word *plexus*, which is from the Latin word *plectere*, “to braid.” A plex is *a complexly interconnected arrangement of parts*. One can create a fourplex for the seasonal quadrants or the thresholds between them. An eightplex refers to a factoring that includes all eight spaces of the template.

Like the Healing Circle itself, plexing a theme can be simple and/or complex. To plex a theme requires both reason and intuition—and a good working vocabulary that can sort out connotating interferences. The Healing Circle can plex any theme by indicating the whole of which it is a part. A theme can be assigned to a quadrant using the touchstones of the seasons. It will have associations with one more than another, though depending upon the context of the issue it might be assigned to an alternative quadrant. So, for example, as a new beginning in the human life cycle, “birth” could belong to the spring quadrant. But if birth is in the context of human development it would more likely be placed in the winter quadrant and the circle would be plexed differently.

If the term for one quadrant is established the next step might be to think of its complementary. Complementaries are a special kind of polarity. One end of the pole “com-

pletes” the other. The quantum physicist, Niels Bohr, once said, “the *opposite* of a correct statement is a false statement. But the opposite of a profound truth may well be another profound truth.” In this statement, the second example, the opposite of a profound truth, might also be stated, “the complementary of a profound truth is another profound truth.” “After spring comes the summer” is a correct statement. One season follows the other. The folk wisdom that “A gentle spring makes a turbulent fall” may be a profound one, because it is connecting the two complementary seasons in a way that completes a whole, both in terms of the laws of nature and the two metaphors.

Once the first set of complementaries for a theme is established a four part sequence may establish itself. The seasons or the circle are archetypes that influence reason and intuition to see the wholeness of complex things. Of course, the second set must be tested for complementarity

In general, activities of the first quadrant, Spring, have to do with new beginnings and undifferentiated oneness; of the second quadrant, Summer, with the harvest of the fruits of our labors and meaningful contact with others. The third quadrant, Fall, introduces multilevels of complexity: We must handle competently all manner of challenges and coming endings. We must make preparations for the descent into the little deaths of getting bored with what we have done, needing to move on and learn new things, having to let go of the old first, and otherwise dealing with processes of recession and preparing for winter. The fourth quadrant, Winter, has to deal with the structuring of pattern and metapattern and the laying fallow of our internal fields so that new possibilities can come into being.

Next, the set of four can be adjusted according to the other two kinds of relationships that obtain in the quartered circle: commutables and orthogonals. Commutables are qualities of a system that can be observed at the same time. Commutables are not polarities. They are sequential, linked in a change process in which one part flows into the other. They are essentially the same even though accidental attributes are different. Spring and summer are commutables because they are the time when there is more daylight than darkness. In essence, commutability is linear change. The sequences *spring to summer*, and *fall to winter* are on-going commutable relationships.

Moving to an abstract theme, the seasons can be used as a metaphorical map. If the theme is **How can Therapy Heal?** one might begin with **the relationship between therapist and client** which research has shown is the most important aspect of therapy (*Consumer Reports*, 1995; Seligman, 1995). Since this is a meaningful relationship with an other it could be placed in the second quadrant, Summer. Its complementary is in the fourth quadrant, Winter. The process of this quadrant, as the repeated use of the Healing Circle demonstrates, is using new information to remodel reality. We might label this quadrant **self teaching** or **the incorporation of teachings**.

By sorting the commutables around these complementaries and testing them for their own complementarity we can generate a fourplex for the theme of **How Therapy Heals?** something like this: **Awakening to the Possibilities of Life** (Spring), **meaningful interaction between therapist and client** (Summer), **differentiation** (Fall), **incorporation and self teaching** (Winter). Of course, this same theme could be plexed differently—with different terms and with different emphases in the quadrants.

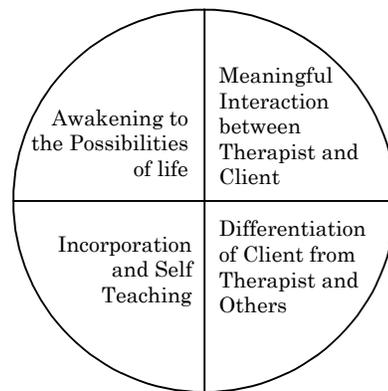


Chart 27. How Therapy Heals

It is clear that **client/therapist interaction** and **differentiation** are orthogonal (at right angles—180 degrees—to each other, as are **awakening to the world** and **incorporation and self teaching**. The two pairs are mutually exclusive, the first because the nature of the interaction between client and therapist is one in which the client depends upon the therapist whereas the therapist does not depend upon the client. For differentiation to begin the relationship must become more equal. The state of awakening to the possibilities of one's life is perhaps one of openness, receptivity,

vulnerability, and wonder; whereas the incorporation of self teaching requires the intentional mental activity of ordering and structuring what is already present.

To cross an orthogonal threshold, in this case to go from the “client/therapist interaction” (dependent concern for an authority’s assistance) to “differentiation” (seeking one’s own goals and purposes), or from “incorporation and self-teaching” to “awakening to the possibilities of one’s life,” requires a redirecting of focus and energy. There is a world of difference between self teaching and having the beginner’s mind of wakening to the world. The great difficulty in crossing orthogonals lies in the redirection of energy required to leave the known and return to the unknown. In cultures across time and space, rituals of separation and incorporation especially assist these crossings.

To put this in terms of the seasons again, the points of equilibrium, occurring at the spring and fall equinoxes, when the day and night are equal, establish an orthogonal relationship along the horizontal axis between the Spring and Summer quadrants above and the Winter and Fall quadrants below. Basically, the orthogonal relationship generated by the equinoxes is one of discontinuity, where an on-going process abruptly shifts by achieving a temporary balance and equality between before and after. The solstices, on the other hand are unbalanced extremes (summer’s longest day, fall’s longest night) that plot an ongoing arc of passage. The solstices and equinoxes are the points in the cycle where we seem to “stand still,” and then move on again but differently. They are also the moments at which greatest change is possible because they bring us out of chaos or deadening order into a complex state. It is out of the fuller consciousness of the implicate reality that new order can emerge.

I would like to offer three more common experiences in plexing themes around the Healing Circle. If we take the theme of **Mental Processes**, what is the beginning? Babies and their bonded other exist symbiotically; mother and child are more one than two. Presumably, the baby does not separate him (or her) self from his “Mommy,” but sees her as an extension of himself. Adults who retain a capacity for this symbiotic mental process are able to achieve a **Mystical Union** or merging with other objects or people. So we will put this term in the Spring quadrant. Now we find the complement to this state to put across from it in the Fall quadrant.

A complementary to Mystical Union might be the **Synthesizing of Experience around a Core Identity**. This is not a polar opposite to Mystical Union but the completion of the whole it suggests. We will place it in the Fall quadrant. Another plexer might think of some other complement to Mystical Union—like *Separate Reality* or *Concrete Operations*, either of which would fit too. The Healing Circle is a system of relations—a kind of “theory of relativity.” It is based on the principle that all things are interconnected. This means that the connections perceived are determined by the connection that the perceiver has with the perceived. Or, as Joseph Chilton Pearce (1973) would say, “the world viewed changes with the world view.”

What about Summer and Winter in this circle? What foursome is suggested by the complementaries? After symbiosis, in human development, the infant “hatches” with the emergence of **Diacritical Consciousness**. This is the painful and joyous awareness of the *Me* and the *Not Me*, which is the basis of our consciousness of complementarity itself and logical, digital reasoning. It is also the basis of an awareness of **Wanting** the apparently external *Not Me*, thus anticipating a desire to return to the state of Union. This birth of consciousness therefore is also the birth of desire and it goes in the Summer quadrant. The complementary of Diacritical Consciousness may be an inner sense of the whole gestalt, the underlying structure of reality (where nothing is wanting) which may be called **Structuralization** or **Transmuting Internalizations**. Transmuting internalizations are experiences (in totality or in part) that we have integrated into our internal personal conscious and unconscious minds such that we experience them from within as a part of who we are. This goes in the Winter quadrant.

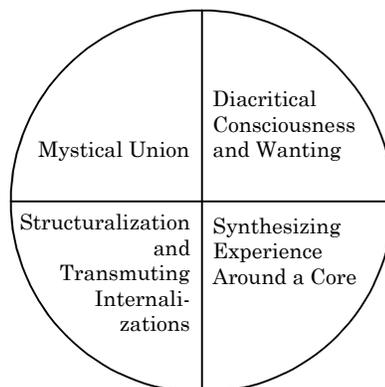


Chart 28. Mental Processes

Sometimes plexes come ready made. The Four Virtues of Zen Nirvana, for example, are immutability, purity, personal existence, and joy. I would begin by placing **Personal Existence**, the sense of *I am me*, in Fall, the season of the psychological birthing of the human self. Its complementary, **Purity of Being**, the sense that *I am I (and Nothing Else)* goes in Spring. Developmentally, upon differentiation, the infant experiences the joy in the discovery of the other, the desire to be with them, and the need to avoid loneliness. So **Joy with Other(s)**, a sense of *I see you!*, goes in Spring's commutable, Summer. Its complementary in Winter (and also flowing from the Fall's sense of *I am me*) is **Immutability of Being** *who we are*, the sense of the Constant Self. It looks like this:

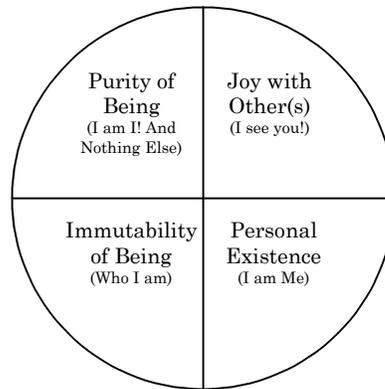


Chart 29. The Four Virtues of Nirvana

The Healing Circle is a nested model. Each quadrant of the Healing Circle encloses circles within circles. It may be helpful to look at the healing circle as a hologram. As in a hologram, the complete image is present in each and every particle of the healing circle. There are microcycles nested incrementally into macrocycles, like Chinese boxes, a tiny one inside a small one, a small one inside a medium, a medium inside a large, a large inside a huge one, and so on. Each part has the potential for sub-plexing. Each quadrant has cycles within it and we go through our personal process at every scale.

**Personal Existence** is an interesting example of this. If we arbitrarily assign it to the spring quadrant, what comes next? According to the developmental process, personal existence would commute to **Interpersonal Contact**. The complementary of Interpersonal Contact could be the **Sense of Self**, that intuitive sense of a larger containment of ego and

instinct . The complementary of Personal Existence could be **Personal Identity**. After cross-checking for commutability and orthogonality the result might be this:

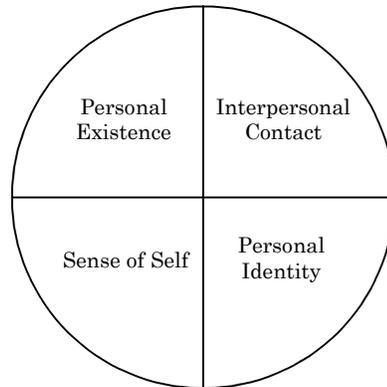


Chart 30. Personal Existence

### **The Penultimate Plex: The Ritual Cycle Around the Healing Circle**

I have alluded frequently to rituals and ritual processes. There is a whole chapter ahead delving into them. However, this is a good place to plex ritual while the associations of the process of plexing are warmed up.

Like a compass that organizes the surround by quartering the directions, the Healing Circle helps us find our way in the sea of possibilities. As we go through experience we have a partial view; we go in one “direction.” The healing circle is a method for recovering the whole to which our partial experience—if only temporarily—blinds us. Whatever we are experiencing in winter, or figuratively speaking, as a “winter” in our lives, is part of a cycle. The recovery of this perspective can help us get back to seeing our lives as a whole and seeing that whole in synchrony with the larger whole of experience itself.

Plexing a theme around the Healing Circle heightens awareness of the seasons of living. It teaches us that all experience has an inherent wholeness that we can know and that living is a nonlinear process. Losses, for example, make way for new beginnings. In time, our confidence in the com-

plementarity of reality allows us to feel joy in spite of pain, as well as pain in joy. As *Ecclesiastes* asserts, *he or she that seeketh wisdom, seeketh grief*. We can perhaps be reassured that aging is not a betrayal by the creator, but an opportunity to cycle through the seasons of living to find satisfaction, wholeness, and wisdom. There is a season for everything, and each round of the cycle provides renewed opportunities to sort through the process towards fulfillment of being.

Because the thresholds deal with orthogonality, plexing them is more difficult than plexing the seasons. Plexing is about the form, not the content; the structure, the field of energy, rather than the content within the field. In plexing, the content is important only insofar as it informs the field. The Healing Circle is an archetypal form. According to Carl Jung, it is the archetype of the self. When we plex the circle, we order the stuff of human lives and life within the dynamical systems of energy, tension, and relatedness with the form itself.

Complementarity suggests that commutability and orthogonality emerge spontaneously from these relationships in the circle. This means that the “meaning” or qualities of the vertical axis are unobservable and separate from the “meaning” or qualities of the horizontal axis. In short, they are not always obvious. Therefore, the axes must be related rationally (which includes logic and feeling) to the context of the overall theme of the moment and particularly to the ritual cycle as well as the complete cycle of seasons and thresholds. Truth is not guaranteed and must be tested by experience.

The four threshold crossings from one seasonal life process to another are symbolized by the moments when the earth is momentarily “still” in her circuit around the sun. These still points are the winter and summer solstices (*solstice* means “sun standing still”) and the spring and fall equinoxes.

While the relational dynamics that charge the daylight seasons (Spring and Summer) and the dark seasons (Fall and Winter) are between complementarity and commutability, the relational dynamics that charge the threshold between the daylight and darkness halves of the circle is between complementarity and orthogonality. The passage between them is dark and difficult; they correlate to the conscious self and the unconscious self.

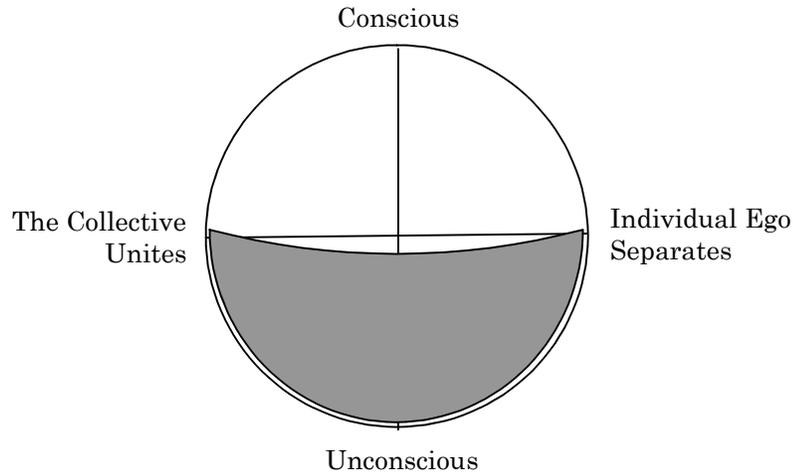


Chart 31. The Half Lives

The Healing Circle is like a shield between the self and the implicate chaos of possibilities, a shield taken down from our hearts and looked at as if seen in a mirror. Perhaps the first spiritual polarity that humankind projected onto the environment is that of the sky above, frequently perceived as male and the home of the ancestral grandfather, and the earth below, usually female and home of the grandmother or mother earth goddess. The person standing between, linking them in the present moment, had, looking out to the horizon arms outstretched, a right hand and a left and a head touching sky and feet touching earth. I like to think of the lone human being, standing on a hilltop, as the first felt orthogonal cycle.

Within many cultural traditions, ancient and modern, the solstices and equinoxes have been identified with four kinds of ritual. I will have a great deal to say about rituals in a later chapter. I will broach the subject now in order to describe further the threshold crossings that the orthogonal and commutable relationships of the Healing Circle represent. In general, rituals help us cross the thresholds between seasonal phases. Crossing over commutable boundaries like Spring to Summer or Fall to Winter is easier than crossing the orthogonal boundaries of Summer to Fall or Winter to Spring because the orthogonal crossings require a refocusing of energy and attention. Each kind of ritual has a time and place in life and on the circle. Sometimes the seasons are too broad a stroke to be helpful and a finer duration is more helpful, as below:

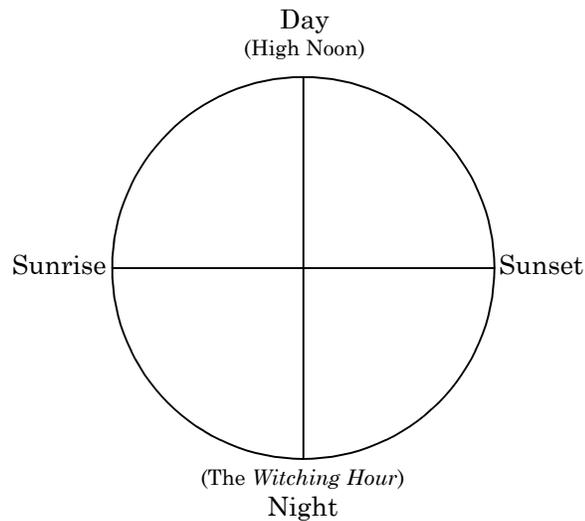


Chart 32. Chronological Template

Beginning with the Sunset, the “end result” of the movement of the sun from day to night is separation. The sun seems to “go away.” In the larger cycle of the Earth around the sun, it is actually the Earth that “goes away” from the sun, creating longer and longer nights until the longest night of the winter solstice. Thus the autumnal equinox marks the Rites of Separation, also known as the *rites of passage or initiation*.

In traditional rites of passage, the celebrants (initiates) are removed from everyday affairs and attachments, usually in groups of youngsters coming of age in the same year. They are then instructed in how to behave in new ways, including how to feel, want, act, and think. They usually undergo an ordeal that often involves pain and sometimes mutilation, which changes them physically. They then return to the community as new beings, usually adults. All must undergo them, none will fail.

As Gaia, the leading character in Michael Tobias’ *Voice of the Planet* (1990), says: “Fire precipitated the earliest rites of passage.” Control of fire is the birth of technology and modern mankind; it sets us apart. Fire extends the day into night, the summer into winter, and the spirit into the psyche. In myth, fire is associated with the gods. Humankind received fire from the sacred animal spirits (Raven, Kingfisher) or demigods like Prometheus who stood midway be-

tween Sky and the Earth. Yahweh speaks to Moses from the burning bush; the Holy Spirit descends to the Apostles in tongues of fire. The control of fire and the contemplation of flames were the first ritual **Training of Attention and Concentration**, the purpose of Rites of Separation.

Moving on to Night, the “end result” of the *Witching Hour* is transformation. There are many rituals of transformation, and we are usually clued to them by the presence of the cruciform symbol, the sign of the cross, the apparent triumph of the line over the circle, of redemption over tragedy, history over the cycle of nature. When the Earth retreats from the sun, winter sets in, and all things go to ground. The powers of the Earth are strong and earthly and material concerns seem to have sway. Death and decay seize the day. Yet things that seem to be dead or dying are in fact being reconstructed from within.

Rites of Transformation focus on deeply internal changes, changes in consciousness or mindfulness. After surrendering to his or her deepest darkness underground, the celebrant achieves *gnosis*, superior wisdom, knowledge of mysteries or the recognition (“re”-cognition) of spiritual truth that rises up from the depth of his or her inner resources. The ultimate change is from mere adulthood to wisdom. The purpose of Rites of Transformation is the **Cultivation of Wisdom**.

Yet the cycle continues. The Earth returns to the sun. Rites of Incorporation celebrate Sunrise, springtime, and new beginnings. The celebrant, like the seedling, is washed of its husk and emerges new born from the birth waters. The son returns to his father, the daughter to her mother, the hero, bearing gifts, to his or her community, or the soul to its inner union of line and circle, male and female. This threshold is marked by the vernal equinox, the beginning of spring. The purpose of these rituals is *purification*, and they are essentially **Methods of Emotional Clearing**.

As the day progresses, the warmth of High Noon arrives and the celebrant comes out into the open air to receive his or her due. The summer solstice, when the Earth is closest to the sun’s warmth, marks the time for Rites of Continuity. These are rituals that celebrate that which is highest and brightest in human nature: The *apotheosis* of the celebrant.

Apotheosis means the act of raising a person to the status of god, like the Blessed Virgin rising up bodily into heaven. In more human terms, it represents the glorification of ideals. Nowadays, apotheoses are represented by the likes of Superman (from mild mannered Clark Kent to the caped crime fighter through the turn in a phone booth), rock stars, and the pursuit of excellence. There are, of course, ceremonial coronations, confirmations, ordinations, and graduations (which many people skip as superfluous). The Nobel Prize, however, remains an honored apotheosis.

Rites of Continuity affirm and extenuate a **Rigorous System of Ethics** within the culture. They have to do with honor, altruism, and social morality. People who are honored by Rites of Continuity are more likely to continue acting honorably. All this material can be put together within the system of the quartered circle eight phase space:

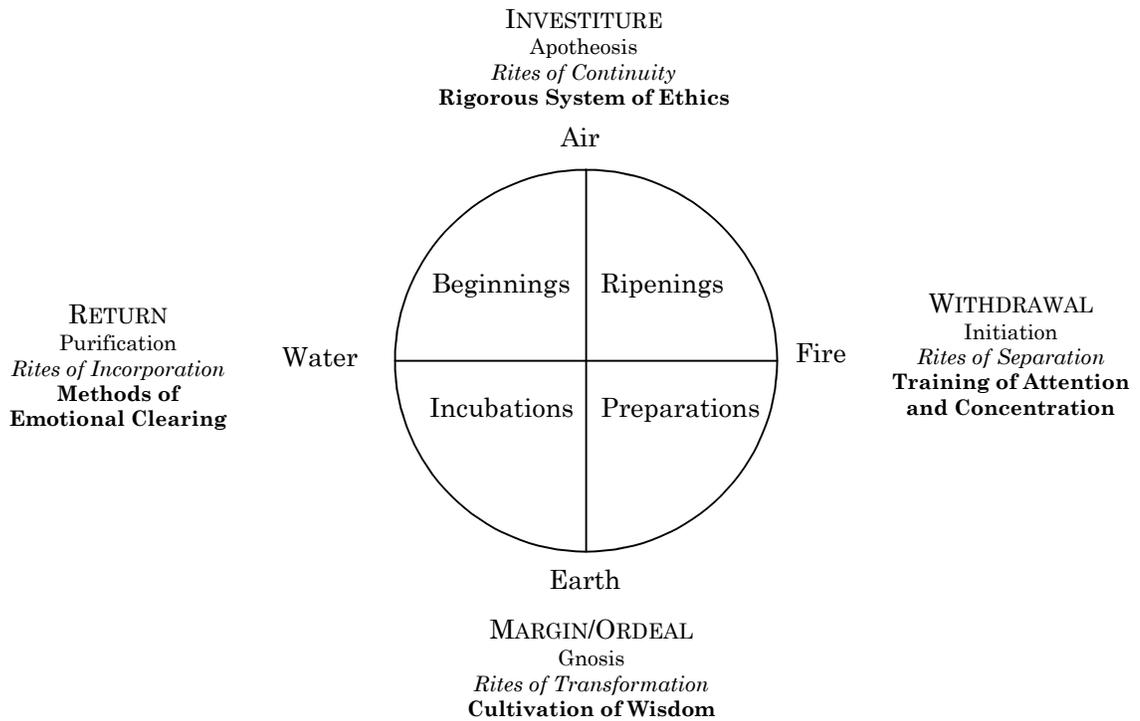


Chart 33. The Cycle of Ritual

### The Healing Circle of Personal Mythology

The Healing Circle apprehends both developmental time and the “eternal” timelessness of myth by holding the four part reality. Early childhood development is the tem-

plate for the personal mythology; personal myths are the stories of our development. Human development is also affected by the cultural myths that organize the culture we grow up in. Myths, personal or cultural, are stories of the development of consciousness. Challenges to the continuance or quality of our existence force us to make choices in our lives as the quantum participant observers we are. These choices profoundly effect the unfolding of our unique perception of reality. Possessing completely different consciousness, no two people experience the same reality. And no one escapes the responsibility for making meaning.

Erwin Schrödinger devised the cat-in-the-box paradox (known as the EPR paradox) in 1935 to help understand the role of the conscious observer in creating reality. A cat is in a box that has a 50/50 chance of releasing a lethal poison. Until someone looks in the box all possibilities exist (a condition Schrödinger mordantly described as “smeared”); in effect the cat is alive and dead. Once someone opens the box, becoming an observer, the wave possibilities collapse, and a particle is released. The cat is either alive or dead. At that moment, the observer decides whether the cat is alive or dead and so does the cat!

At a quantum level, the level of micro reality, observation determines reality, and we have no idea how a particle decides to be a whole wave or a particle. On a macro level, the one that we live on anyway, the cat’s decision is important too. It is much easier believing the cat can make decisions. If the issue is a little boy and an annihilating father, it is more complex. The child decides to live; the father decides the boy is “dead,” an object to be used. The boy creates a personal myth of this experience that allows him to function in the world, but in a limited way. His myth carries within its complementarities the seeds of his redemption. The father, too, has a mythology that limits his perception of the “aliveness” of his son. And the father, too, has the seeds of redemption encrypted in the complementarities of his personal mythology. But both decisions effect the unfolding of reality. Events in our lives push us to determine the nature of our reality. Yet every choice encrypts the unchosen possibilities. Thus, in the complementarity of life, we measure our identities and preserve our possibilities.

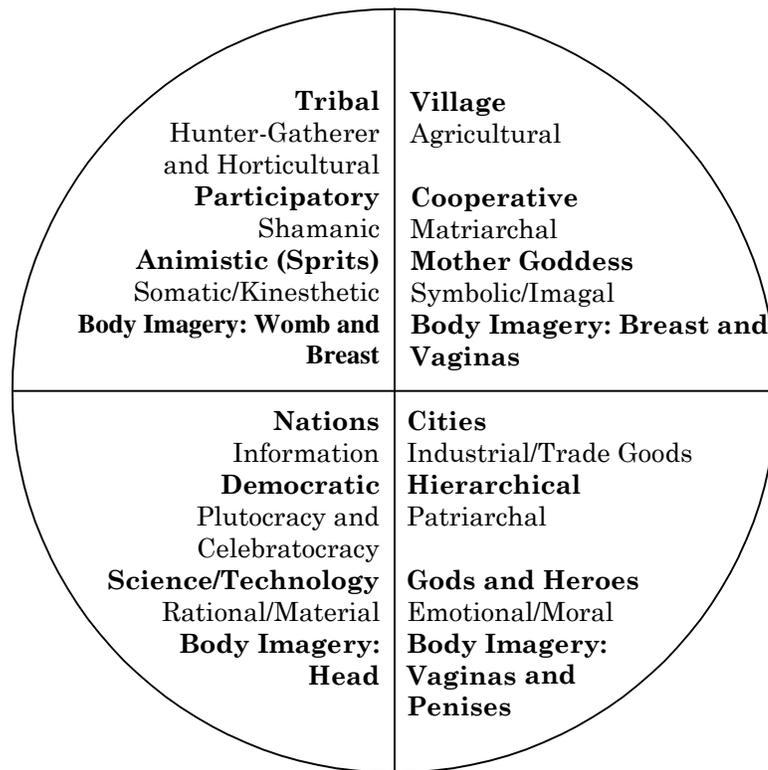


Chart 34. Mosher's Mandala #3

## Chapter 4

# The Dynamics of Change

These motions of life have direction. Life moves toward wholeness. It seeks coherence. This is a journey of paradox that pursues a clear direction. It is paradoxical because the path seems first to move away from wholeness to developing a self that is unique and alone. But even the creation of unique selves is an example of coherence. Every self makes sense. It creates a world and an identity that feels coherent to itself. From infinite possibilities, it chooses what to notice and how to respond. All living things create themselves by this sense-making process of perception and response. . . . Life pursues a path of differentness to a destination of wholeness. . . . Life coheres into selves and systems. In its great cohering motions, life is a poet. It brings together seemingly separate elements to create and discover new meaning. Life moves, creating more of itself in the unlimited space of wholeness.

—Margaret Wheatley and Myron Kellnor-Rogers,  
*A Simpler Way* (1996)

### Before the Beginning

Before the Healing Circle, before the implicate and explicate realities, before complementarity, I was a psychodramatist. In training others how to direct psychodramas, I asked the question: *Can spontaneity be taught?* Spontaneity is an elusive something that emerges in the process of a psychodrama that makes the moment magical. I had learned spontaneity, but teaching it was something else.

Thus I began looking for materials that might shed light on how processes caught fire and changed people. I stumbled upon Mitchell Waldrup's book *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos*. The word *emerge* caught my attention. Although I had curiosity about *order* and *chaos*, they sounded rather Biblical to me. *Complexity* was—and is—a mystery.

From the first, it became clear to me that J. L. Moreno was a pre-complexity theorist. His ideas about spontaneity and the emergence of creativity read like a variation on the theme of self organization. His struggles to explain the

meaning and functions of tele in how people interact and form groups are clarified by complexity theory.

I am convinced that chaos and complexity theories are the vanguard of the new sciences. In less than ten years, the number of books on the theories has grown from a few to hundreds, many of them applying the theory to such diverse fields as economics, chemical dependency, imaging software, organizational development, and medicine. Complexity theory enfolds psychodrama and sociometry into the Healing Circle and explains the process of dynamic change and healing.

### **Chaos, Order, and Complexity**

The cultural myths of Order emerging out of Chaos are at least as old as human history (Abraham, 1994). But the actuality is more awesome than mysterious. The new sciences describe a reality that “wants to” connect. Elementary particles “want to” come together into more complex structures. Electrons “want to” make their quantum leaps to new more optimal states of being. In cosmology, the expanding universe has evolved from a dense undifferentiated mass to myriad of complex galaxies.

In biology, survival of the fittest is only half of the story. The other half is that organisms evolve to a state of optimal disorderliness called complexity, a state poised between stability and change, where new order emerges spontaneously (Kauffman, 1993). “Life seeks order in a disorderly way,” summarize Wheatley and Kellnor–Rogers (1996): “Life uses processes we find hard to tolerate and hard to believe in—mess upon mess until something workable emerges.” This complexity is everywhere, so ubiquitous that we do not notice it any more than the air we breathe, if reasonably clean. Yet from mundane moments of choice making to sacred flashes of intuition, we have all experienced emergence of new order from seeming disorder.

Nowhere does the need for cognitive reconstruction become more necessary than in the study of chaos theory and complex dynamical systems. Research (Cosmides, 1989) has shown that reasoning is context dependent. The subject matter we are asked to reason about seems to regulate how we reason. This is a consequence of “form defined” explicate reality. However, when we are asked to reason about a subject

for which we have no or few categories of comparison, we are at a loss. Perhaps a poet is prepared to comprehend the reality of complexity theories; the rest of us are held more or less captive by linear thinking about reality and mechanistic science. “The mechanistic image of the world is a very deep image, planted at subterranean depths in most of us” (Wheatley and Kellnor–Rogers, 1996). Some of our deep perceptions are simply habits of seeing and experiencing that translate into behaviors and some are culturally embedded beliefs about the nature of the world. Both effect the reality we observe.

From quantum physics, we know that the observer effects reality. As Margaret Wheatley and Myron Kellnor–Rogers put it, “every act of observation loses more information that it gains. Whatever we decide to notice blinds us to other possibilities. In directing our attention to certain things, we lose awareness of everything else. We collapse the world of possibilities into a narrow band of observation” (1996).

Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (1992) note that what we observe around us is more influenced by who we have decided to be than what is objectively there. What the eye picks up from the outside, for example, only accounts for twenty percent of what we use to create perception. The other eighty percent is comprised of information already stored internally as a function of who we are. Thus “every change is fostered by a change in self-perception” (Wheatley and Kellnor–Rogers, 1996). This is why all meaningful change requires the development of conscious awareness, which is our tool to engage with the process of self organization. To change conscious awareness we have to break into that internal eighty percent.

When I refer to chaos in this book, I am referring to the technical term, *deterministic chaos*, not the word used in everyday conversations to complain about disorganization, inefficiency, carelessness, and messy living rooms. Deterministic chaos means the integral presence of randomness where the parameters of the system evolve according to probability rather than deterministic cause and effect (Çambell, 1993).

This leads to uncertainty in making predictions. The chaos in the new science is neither evil nor randomly haphazard. The stuff of human existence does not fall around the Healing Circle in classical chaotic random; nor is it placed

there merely because that is “the way it has always been done.” The universal drive towards complexity and multiple options, human development, complementarity, uncertainty—these dynamics operating at the edge between chaos and order—direct the patterning of human lives.

When I refer to chaos in this book, unless I indicate otherwise, I refer to the possibilities ebbing and flowing within the interlocking web of multi-causes and effects. It is as if there were, indeed, a first cause; there seems to be an intentionality within the implicate universe. It seeks energetic optimal organization. Optimization does not involve perfection, it involves the intrusion of the implicate into the explicate, and the transcendence of the explicate reality back into the realm of the implicate. I will demonstrate that the human psyche is a spontaneously self organizing dynamic system poised on the edge between chaos and order, capable of both infinite bursts of evolutionary change and constructed periods of frozen stability.

Human consciousness is self referential, and is thus nonlinear. A person can be successful in childhood. Later when faced with a failure, that person can refer back to the earlier success. The outcome is unpredictable. The past success can be a resource or a rebuke, depending upon its relationship to other life experiences from the past or in the moment. Each self reference is an iteration of the past recycling into the present. The quartered circle is a representation of these recyclings.

Before I demonstrate this, a little history about chaos is in order. Of course, the classical scientists knew that chaos existed, but religious and scientific dogma prevented them from doing much with it. Newton himself tried to discount chaotic influence in the solar system by proving its stability (which remains unproven to this day). Henri Poincaré won a prize in 1889 proving that previous scientists, Newton and Laplace among them, had failed to prove the stability of the solar system. In the process he invented several new branches of mathematics: dynamical systems theory, differential topology, global analysis, and qualitative dynamics, along with the theories of chaotic attractors and bifurcations (Abraham, 1994). To solve some of the math problems required millions of computations, so the actual application of this new math had to wait for the invention of the computer to quickly work the iterations of the problems. The first ap-

plication of chaos math was done by Edward Lorenz in his study of the weather (Lorenz, 1963). I recommend James Gleick's *Chaos: Making a New Science* (1987) for the full story.

Chaos theory directs a scientific study of the metapatterns of nature. *Metapattern* means *a pattern of patterns, a "pattern that connects" diverse elements across space (disciplines, species, cultures, etc.) and time (evolution of life, ideas, civilization, etc.)* (Bateson, 1979). Metapatterns identify self-similarities across the boundaries of explicate reality. They lead the way back to the implicate order. Chaos scientists have learned that while chaos in nature is unpredictable, it is determined. Chaotic systems are not random. According to Julien Sprott (1993), a researcher of plasma physics and nonlinear dynamics, "chaos theory reconciles our intuitive sense of free will with the deterministic laws of nature;" chaotic systems "follow rules, but even simple rules can produce extreme complexity."

What makes for the transition, the sudden radical change from order to chaos or chaos to order? As scientists explored the new territory of chaos, a fascinating discovery was made. At the frontier or edge between chaos and order, neither entirely dissolving into chaos nor settling into stable order, were the processes of dynamic systems. At a certain point of complexity between chaos and order, systems became spontaneously self-organizing. Such systems are called complex, and the study of them is the new science of complexity (Bak, 1996; Bar-Yam, 1997; Brown and Novick, 1983; Çambell, 1993; Capra, 1996; Casti, 1994; Cohen and Stewart, 1994; Gell-Mann, 1994; Lewin, 1992; Mainzer, 1996; Mitchell, 2009; Sabelli, 1989; Waldrup, 1992; Walnum, 1993; and Williams, 1997).

As a metascience, complexity theory has been taken up across disciplines by many fields—biology (Dean, 1997; Kelso, 1995), computer science (Holland, 1995, 1998), economics (Peters, 1994), history (Abraham, 1994), meteorology (Lorenz, 1993), organizational development (Stacy, 1996; Wheatley, 1994), psychology (Mahoney, 1991; Van Eenwyk, 1997)—in other words, any field which studies systems. In the simplest terms, a system is a set of causes that combine to produce a result (Flynn, 2001).

It must be remembered that chaos and complexity theories are not yet "sciences." They form a loose structure of

intense scientific exploration along many fronts. While chaotic systems abound, actually determining the specific qualities of chaos and its presence is difficult. Furthermore, the mathematics to describe chaotic and complexity processes is still being developed. There is not even an agreed upon explicit definition of complexity. And the processes of complexity are named differently by different theorists, who must come up with something to call what they study. At this point, it is not even clear which theory, chaos or complexity, is the part and which the whole.

The advantage of complexity and chaos theories is that they provide a language and imagery better than any theories before them to explain what it is that “leads to predictability (similarities) and uncertainty (dissimilarities) with regard to behavioral, social, and cultural outcomes” (Dean, 1997). They help explain “the vast diversity and the universal similarities which exist between individual people, societies, and cultures” (Dean, 1997). Cultural differences aside, according to Alan Dean (1997) “it can be asserted with confidence that no two individuals will experience the external world in exactly the same way.” Even though identical twins raised separately share remarkable similarities, they still generate different outcomes.

In the rest of this chapter and throughout the book, I will present how chaos and complexity theories inform our sense of being human in the world. These theories help us understand how one abused child might become an abusing adult while another equally abused sibling might not. Or how one intervention can work with one depressed person and not with another.

This is for several reasons. First, human beings and all their doings are complex dynamical systems, thus subject to sensitivity to initial conditions. No two people are ever going to begin any process in life identically, and very small differences in initial input can result in very large differences in later outcomes. Second, people are not merely passive recipients of external forces; they create their own environments (Plomin, 1994). Third, intelligence generates the causes of its own behavior: “once intelligence has evolved in a species, then thereafter brains have a causal force equal to that of genes” (Plotkin, 1994). Fourth, the exercise of intelligence generates changes in neurophysiological structures

during an individual's lifetime in response to experience (Edelman, 1992).

It may seem to devalue our humanity to describe human beings as complex systems like all other complex systems in the universe. However, it is the complexity dynamic that makes for the extraordinary diversity of people. Every person is a generator of unique self organization and the outcome is the intensely personal mythology that is lived by each one of us.

According to Gerald Edelman (1989, 1992), our unique assemblage of individual and subjective experiences are subtly different from anyone else's because the same synaptic pathways which underpin neural structures are never repeated between individuals. This leads to differences in the formation of neural maps upon which perceptual categorizations are based. If these maps are different, so too will be the global maps which establish the value centers of the brain. This then effects higher consciousness and self awareness. "Collective participation and sharing of events both behaviorally and linguistically do not imply an equality of shared meanings, values, and interpretations placed upon those events by the self" (Dean, 1997). To a large extent, we are each a "distinct and separate initiator of our own being-in-the-world" (Dean, 1997). Edelman summarizes:

Once a self is developed through social and linguistic interactions on a base of primary consciousness, a world developed that *requires* naming and intending. This world reflects inner events that are recalled, and imagined events, as well as outside events that are perceptually experienced. Tragedy becomes possible—the loss of the self by death or mental disorder, the remembrance of unassuageable pain. By the same token, a high drama of creation and endless imagination emerges.

—Gerald Edelman, *Bright Air, Brilliant Fire: On the Matter of the Mind* (1992)

I believe that it is a complex process such as this that generates what I call the personal mythology, the collection of personal beliefs and values by which we "name" and "intend" in our lives. Personal myths affect the evolution of maps of consciousness. Changing the personal mythology changes the neurophysiology of the brain by changing neuronal pathways of less effectiveness to new more effective

ones. and these changes can become a part of the genetic inheritance of subsequent generations.

The process of myth making and the effects of properly enacted rituals that change those myths may be transmitted more genetically than culturally. The personal mythology provides both flexibility, in its creative response to perceptual events, and stability, in its genetic perpetuation. Complexity seems to be closely tied to evolution. Current research (Kauffman, 1993) suggests that the direction of evolution is towards greater and greater complexity, a complexity that exists in structures self organizing at the edge chaos, at the boundary between order and chaos.

### **The Complex System**

Complex systems are evolutionary. They may look stable for a while, but change can happen suddenly, catastrophically, and unpredictably. These systems are all around us, but “proving” that they are deterministically chaotic is no easy matter, although we often know intuitively that a system is “alive.” Sometimes we cannot determine complexity until the system is perturbed. In the tropics there are insect colonies where the members have such specialized roles that, when in the colony, they together appear to be a single flowering tropical plant. When disturbed, they fly off in all directions. Human beings appear to be very stable, but we are complex dynamic creatures optimally dancing the tightrope between stability and chaos just the same. Perturbations in our life space usually result in new behavior rather than death or psychosis.

In chaos and complexity theories, chaos means that “the output of a deterministic system is so complex that it mimics the output generated by a random mechanism” (Liebovitch, 1998). This does not mean that the system is driven by disorder, randomness, or chance. Paradoxically, the deterministic chaos is generated by a few very simple rules. Here is a formal definition of deterministic chaos according to Cambell (1993):

Systems that upon analysis are found to be nonlinear, non-equilibrium, deterministic, dynamic, and that incorporate randomness so that they are sensitive to initial conditions, and have strange attractors are said to be chaotic. These are

necessary but not sufficient conditions. For a system to be chaotic, the Lyapunov exponent must be positive.

I will parse out this definition beginning with the *Lyapunov exponent*. The Lyapunov exponent is a mathematical measurement of the information lost and gained during a chaotic episode, suggesting that positive entropy exists in the presence of chaos. Entropy generally means that a system is breaking down; a positive Lyapunov exponent indicates positive entropy, which means that the system is self organizing and therefore building up. Lyapunov exponents also confirm the presence of a strange attractor and thus fractal dimensions. More about these in a few paragraphs.

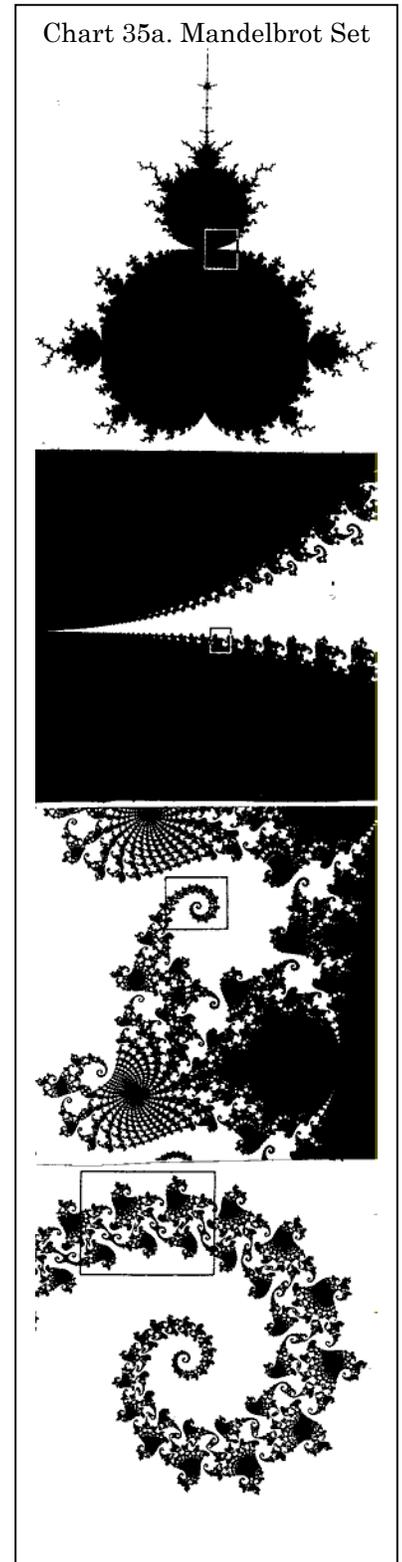
*Nonlinear* means that “output is not directly proportional to input, or that change in one variable does not produce a proportional change or reaction in the related variables” (Williams, 1997). In other words, “cause and effect are not proportional. A small effect can have significant consequence, a major effort might yield very little” (Cambell, 1993).

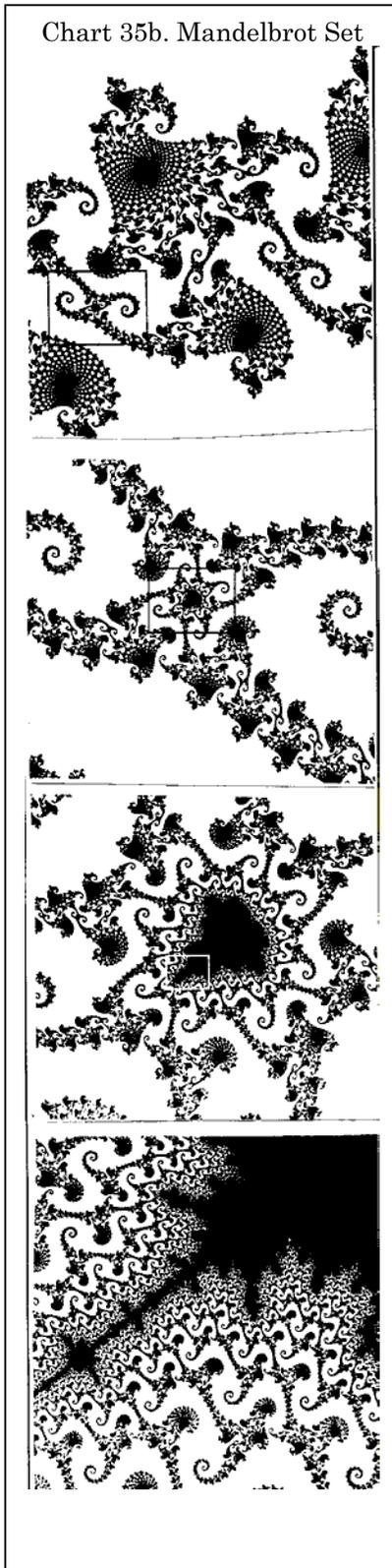
*Nonequilibrium* means that the system is dissipative, that is, it is open and that it loses information (order, energy, life) over time. Because the system is open, it may also take in energy or matter too.

*Deterministic* means that while there are causes, for example, simple rules of the system, they are not, however, related linearly to effects. The actual relationship between cause and effect is uncertain in deterministic systems. Thus the effects are unpredictable in the long term. Moreover, the output of a chaotic system is fed back into the system for further generations of output, and it is this iteration that incorporates randomness. Iteration is a mathematical process whereby the results of a computation are fed back into the source equation and the calculation repeated over and over as feedback to the system.

*Dynamic* means that the system changes or evolves over time.

*Randomness* means that there are bifurcations, that is, abrupt, dramatic changes due to small perturbations of a parameter of the system.





The *strange attractor* is a term from chaos theory. The configuration or pattern into which a system eventually settles is called an attractor. A pattern in which the values or outcomes never cross or repeat themselves (Liebovitch, 1998) is called a *strange attractor*. The strange attractor is regularly irregular. The system is always doing something new yet it confines itself to the overall pattern. The Mandelbrot Set, an image of the simple equation  $z^2+c=$  **some number**, is shown on pages 81 and 82 (Briggs and Peat, 1989). The views start out from very far away and zoom into closer and closer observations of the object, marked by the white rectangle. Notice the self similarity, particularly the sixth zoom, where the original structure begins to re-emerge. The seventh image is 127 million times magnified. No matter how far we dig into the fractal, to deeper and deeper levels, it continues to unfold infinitely. The squaring of the  $z$ , by the way, indicates self reference. Self reference makes for complexity by relating each new solution to the past solutions of the computation. All the solutions taken together constitute a whole, called the strange attractor.

Before complexity theory, three classes of systems were identified (Lewin, 1992). Class I, the fixed point system, is very stable and its parts have only one interconnection. An example is the way a marble will settle in the bottom of a bowl. Its attractor is the fixed point. Class II, the periodic system, is alternating or oscillating and its parts have only two interconnections. Examples are alternating current and breathing. Its attractor is called a limit cycle. A cycle indicates a cause that comes and goes or changes direction regularly (Flynn, 2001). Class III, the chaotic system, is very unstable and its parts have more than four interconnections. These systems are drawn to chaotic attractors. An example could be the avalanche of apples at the grocery store after the toddler has pulled one from the bottom of the display.

Complexity theory focuses on the missing boundary, systems whose parts have two to four interconnections. This is the edge between chaos and order. Complexity science proposes a Class IV system, the complex. These systems are drawn to strange attractors or

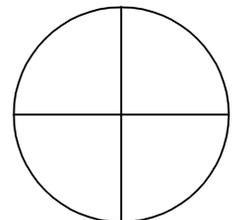
fractals. As such they have non-integer dimensions (2.01–2.99, 3.01–3.99). Interestingly, the three (3.00) part systems (like prey, predator, food supply) form a special form of limit cycle called a torus, which looks like a doughnut. To summarize, Class I and II systems are stable. Class III systems are unstable. Class IV, complex systems, are adaptive and operate at the edge of chaos and therefore generate “order for free” (Kauffman, 1993; Lewin, 1992). In these systems, order emerges spontaneously, as if “for free.” The following table depicts these classes:

|                         | Class I     | Class II    | Class IV               | Class III |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Name</b>             | Fixed Point | Periodic    | Complex                | Chaotic   |
| <b>Behavior</b>         | Stable      | Alternating | Self Organizing        | Unstable  |
| <b>Interconnections</b> | 0–1         | 2           | 2.01–2.99<br>3.01–3.99 | 4+        |

Chart 36. Systems Classification

Just as order can deteriorate into chaos, chaos can lead to order (Kauffman, 1993; Prigogine, 1980). Complex systems can be said to be in transitional phases. While this transformation is happening they become complex systems, transitional in the sense that they are in a dynamic relationship between chaos and order. Their emergence is recorded in fractal geometry as patterns. They are nonlinear (i.e., their process cannot be entirely predicted). One of the reasons for this is that complex dynamic systems exhibit an extraordinary sensitivity to their initial conditions. Very slight differences in starting points can result in enormous differences in the unfolding life of these systems. The system will constantly reconstitute itself in relation to its initial conditions. The patterns of a complex system’s emergence become predictable because they repeat, but, again, the progress of the whole system cannot be predicted.

Unlike systems which can be measured with linear math and Euclidean geometry, complex systems, because they feed back into themselves, require nonlinear math and fractal geometry (and thus the computer to do the millions of computations) to be scientifically observed and measured. Feedback is another reason the progress of complex systems cannot be entirely predicted. As the system changes, its new



Limit Cycle



Strange Attractor

parts continually affect its existing parts. The system is also affected by feedback from the environment in which it occurs. Even in a large complex system like the weather, it is hypothetically possible for the flap of a butterfly's wings in Mexico to set off a hurricane in the Gulf (Lorenz, 1963). However, because initial conditions are virtually impossible to determine with the weather, we will never find the butterfly to pin the guilt on. Fractal geometry can measure complex systems because it measures nonlinear space, the wrinkles or in between planes of a system. This measurement appears through computer programming as beautiful kaleidoscopic patterns, as in the Mandelbrot Set seen earlier.

Because the human psyche is itself a nonlinear, complex, dynamic system, the personal mythology is also. I believe that understanding one's personal mythology, making the unconscious conscious, increases self reference and moves the self system into Class IV behavior at the edge of chaos. Until then, the self system works very like a periodic process, alternately seeking self confrontation and then escaping it, locked in the linear plot of our core myths. Sometimes it may even break down into a fixed point process like depression or fly apart into a chaotic process like psychosis. By observing the nonlinear pattern of the overall personal mythology through the Healing Circle, we increase complexity and approach wholeness.

### **Attractors, Repellers, and Change in Complex Systems**

To really understand the power of the strange attractor we must first understand phase space. We can imagine any dynamic activity as having a set of possible states. The term phase space is a spatial metaphor for this aspect of dynamic activity. Phase space is the playing field of dynamic phenomena. In life, it is the city, the forest, the bog—the ecological system within which a complex entity exists. In math, it is an abstract state represented by coordinates and plotted out. Values of a system eventually fall into a particular region of possible values within the complete phase space that is called an attractor, as if it attracted like a magnet. Generally, these attractors are contractions of energy. Systems in nature are attracted to energy valleys and move away from energy peaks. By contracting energy, attractors level it out and regulate it. The energy peak is called a point

repellor. The point repellor amplifies energy, stepping it up and disrupting the system.

Looking at it in the extreme, one can imagine a relatively rugged landscape where all the couch potatoes roll down the hillsides into the valley basin (the basin of attraction) while the relatively few fitness freaks push themselves up to the peaks. The individual energy required by the couch potato is minimal, yet the total energy filling the basin is vast. The individual energy required by the fitness freaks is great, yet there is relatively little total energy at the peak. Perhaps only the energy of one brave climber. Paradoxically, neither extreme is complex. They are both, in fact, fixed point attractors. Attractors and point repellors give shape to the healing circle.

Technically, if the dimensions of the attractor are non-integers (i.e., 1.21 or 3.42), it is a fractal. So far chaos and complexity theory has distinguished three basic kinds of attractors. If the dimensions are integers, the object is an *attractor* (the marble resting at the bottom of the bowl), but not a fractal. If the fractal dimension is low (usually under 4), the object represents deterministic chaos and is a *strange attractor* (the “alive” system or the Mandelbrot set). If the fractal dimension is high, the object is a *chaotic attractor* (the toddler and the apples). When the object represents random chaos, the phase space will eventually be filled up by the output, rather than being attracted to a particular region or form. In deterministic chaos, the system arrives at the complex order of the strange attractor. Phase space is not filled up, but depicts the strange attractor.

The powerful thing about the strange attractor is that it is an image of wholeness. It represents all the infinite values of the system simultaneously and could be understood as an image of that system’s Moment or eternal now. The nonlocality of quantum physics manifests itself in everyday reality in this way. It is an image of the implicate order giving birth to an explicate object. According to James Gleick (1987):

Phase space gives a way of turning numbers into pictures, abstracting every bit of essential information from a system of moving parts, mechanical or fluid, and making a flexible road map to all possibilities. Physicists already worked with two simpler [than strange attractors] kinds of “attractors:” fixed points and limit cycles, representing behavior that reached a steady state or repeated continuously. In phase space the

complete state of knowledge about a dynamical system at a single instant of time collapses to a point. That point is the dynamical system—at that instant. At the next instant, though, the system moves. The history of the system can be charted by the moving point, tracing its orbit through phase space with the passage of time.

Strange attractors can only be measured by fractal geometry, the geometry of nonlocality. Fractal geometry is a way of studying metapatterns, which are the strange attractors of complex systems whether they are biological, emotional, social, or intellectual. Fractals show the underlying determinism, the strange attractors or metapatterns toward which systems are drawn, in the dizzying complexity of nature. A fractal is a way of seeing the implicate order, because like phase space a fractal is a way of incarnating the infinite possibilities. A fractal is a phenomenological record of the intersection of the implicate universe in all its deterministic chaos and the explicate order of all our measurements. As John Briggs and F. David Peat write:

There is a new realization spreading across science—that randomness is interleaved with order, that simplicity enfolds complexity, complexity harbors simplicity, and that order and chaos can be repeated at smaller and smaller scales—a phenomena the scientists of chaos have dubbed “fractal.”

—*Turbulent Mirror: An Illustrated Guide to Chaos Theory and the Science of Wholeness* (1989)

## Fractals

Fractals can be thought of in terms of objects in space, like coastlines, ferns, nerve cells, or airways in the lungs, or processes in time, like voltages across cell membranes, heartbeats, behaviors, and personal mythologies. All these (in fact most natural objects), have similar qualities. When the unit used to measure them is smaller, the dimensions of the fractal get larger. For example, I run around a lake in my city. The linear distance of the jogging path is 2.83 miles. If I were to measure the actual coastline of the lake with a yard stick the distance would be different. If I were to measure the same coast line with a one foot ruler, the distance would be larger, because less of the coast line would be linearized. If I used an “inch stick,” the distance around the lake would be

larger still. The value measured depends on the resolution or scale used. This is called *scaling*. For example, we can pay attention to the sentence structure, the immediate motor behaviors, the personal history, or the life pattern of the client. Whatever the scale, the basic structure of the objects studied remains the same. This is called *scale invariance*. They have infinite levels of parts, and the smaller parts resemble the larger parts. This is called *self similarity*. Thus if we notice that a client speaks in long, careful, complex, perfect sentences, we might discover that he or she has a problem with perfectionism in the smaller part of day to day living and a core personal myth of betrayal in the larger part of living a life. Perfectionism is a common struggle in betrayal myths.

Classical physics predicts results from initial conditions and laws. Phenomenon in the explicate order follow these predictions or they are linearized until they do. But through advances in chaos and complexity sciences and computer programming it is now possible to feed back computations into an original equation and thus view the fractal record of the effects of the presence of feedback within systems. The fundamental kinds of feedback operating within systems are positive and negative. These kinds of feedback continuously affect the structures of complex systems.

If we think of our lives as linear, according to the principles of classical physics, that is, we leave out the effects of feedback and our own interactions with the environment. We look for cause and effect relationships to explain our feelings and what happens to us. This is reassuring to say the least; one way of predicting life. But it also assumes that the self remains a constant rather than a dynamic changing system. According to this thinking the initial conditions of the self's development would be inalterable. It assumes that when we encounter the same crisis we will behave the same. It assumes that we cannot change the past and that the past predicts the present and future. A linear model of psychic development cannot account for healing because it does not account for change. Neither can it account for spontaneity, because like the change in weather initiated by the butterfly wing miles away, spontaneity breaks the laws of classical physics and linear thinking.

If we take feedback into account, seeing human beings as highly sophisticated complex systems of complex systems—biological, psychological, cultural and so forth—the

possibilities of change and spontaneity come into view. Like other complex systems, we do remain sensitive to our initial conditions, and this is the sense in which they cannot be changed. However, everything that happens to us, whether intentional on our part or as a result of our interaction with the physical and social environment, affects the whole system. Each new experience is fed back into the whole of our experiences and a new whole is “computed.” Even when we encounter the same crises, we are a dynamic set of forces operating between chaos and order on the verge of self organizing in new ways. Anything can happen. Especially if intentionality is involved. Intentionality, by the way, does not always have instantaneous results, as we all know. Sometimes the self system needs to move from periodicity or random chaos to the complexity state.

In the Healing Circle, the cycle around the circle is the attractor of the complexity of human experience. The quartered circle is a map of the territory of the Healing Circle phase space, not the territory itself. Deterministic chaos is easier to control than stable systems. Complex dynamic systems are quite sensitive to small adjustments to their parameters. Researchers have discovered that chaos can be controlled without having to alter the system completely. What they discovered was that they could lock a random characteristic of the chaotic system into periodic behavior. The system is tweaked rather than undertaking major changes that might compromise the objectives of the system (Ott et al, 1990). Complex systems maintain a dynamic stability which allows for both imperfections and tweaking.

Thus the mundane and often iterated activities of the four dimensions of human consciousness, feeling, wanting, doing, and thinking, are like neighborhoods on the map. These represent territories that are attractors of habituated behaviors acquired in a lifetime to affirm the personal mythology and to resist and regulate change through a “negative” feedback loop. Even though it is called “negative,” the feedback is not “bad.” It just regulates the energy contractions and expansions and blocks other possibilities, much like a thermostat regulates the heat output of a furnace within certain specified limits. There is value to stability.

In the social realm, negative feedback is generated by all the tangible and visible groupings of which society exists, illegal or legal. The system of laws and rules used to guide a

particular group determines the specific feedback, which comes as order, dependability, judgments, criticisms, and social consequences (financial riches, jail, celebrity status, death, etc.). In any group, one of the most powerful forms for negative feedback is isolation. In the psychological realm, examples of negative feedback are habitual, routinized behaviors, certain “emotional” expressions, like psychological numbness, disconnected “histrionic” displays, anxiety, terror, rage, and depression, delayed traumatic stress disorders, critical self-talk, rigid beliefs, and addictions. Negative feedback stabilizes.

On the quartered circle map, the four kinds of rituals (separation, transformation, incorporation, and continuity) are like street signs of the territory of human existence. They mark the four directions. The four directions of momentum (driven by conscious intention) are the energy peaks, the point repellors. Point repellors induce change. Energy is generated in the system by a “positive” feedback loop. Again, this is not a value judgment: it is not “good” feedback. It is feedback that amplifies energy, producing irregularity or change. An example is the squawk produced when a microphone is brought too close to its amplifier.

In the social realm, positive feedback is generated through goal directed, intentional choices. The positive feedback comes from the greater complexity of social organization thus generating greater “success” for all members. In the psychological realm, positive feedback is generated by intimacy, honest social interaction, self-interest, and self expression to witnesses or the community. The positive feedback is experienced in spontaneity and feelings, feelings that are personally owned in the moment: appropriately directed and adequately expressed expressions of love, hate, anger, sadness, grief, fear, joy, and excitement. Positive feedback transforms.

Iteration is the name for the process of self referential recycling. We are faced with iterative complexities every day. Iteration is feedback involving continual re-absorption or enfolding of all that has come before. We might have decided, for example, that *No one is trustworthy* based on our previous life experiences. Yet eventually this belief—a central core of a personal mythology—will feedback upon itself resulting in unpredictable results. Thus *If no one is trustworthy then neither am I so what I believe is also untrustworthy and therefore*

*invalid.* The changes that can emerge from this transformation of belief can range from insanity (chaos) to deciding to trust (order). These self-referring iterations lead to the edge of chaos—an increasing of energy, a warming up leading (hopefully) to insight, enlightenment, and creativity. Waking consciousness is like a point guard leading the way through the trackless jungles, forests, deserts or seas of life. Feedback, both “negative” (you should not do this) and “positive” (this is unknown—do something!), stirs the underlying chaos—the nonlinear aspects of our total states of consciousness. Soon messages come, calls to an adventure or a death: Insights, premonitions, feelings, intuitions, dreams, creative leaps, synchronicities, paradoxes—all requiring a re-stabilization of the system with heightened complexity.

### *Recycling and Scaling*

Fractal geometry describes the tracks and marks left by the passage of dynamical complexity, like the awesome branch and root systems of the giant oak tree. Mountain ranges, clouds, waves, ferns, the human nervous and circulatory systems, and the personal mythology are all fractals. They have common qualities. They show stable progressions and discontinuous transitions (called bifurcations or catastrophes). In short, they show the patterns emerging from the activity of complex systems affected by the feedback activity of basins of attraction and point repellors. The patterns registered as fractals show that complex systems have self-similarity and scaling properties. That is, the pattern of the overall image will repeat at every scale. All human experience, being self-referential, can be seen as a complex system, with the personally unique relationship between order and chaos replicated on different scales throughout a person’s life cycle. Because of the self-similarity and scaling qualities of complex systems, these patterns will manifest themselves over and over in varying life situations and scales of focus.

The repetition and recycling of parts of the system keeps the personal mythology operating consistently in the unconscious. It is thus that the way a person enters a room, interrupts a conversation, unconsciously structures sentences, chooses vocationally, fights (or not), flees (or not) may all be replicated pattern markers. Because our personal mythologies hold the patterns for these activities, changes in the ways we read our personal mythologies can alter the whole

system, the meanings life has for us. As our developmental templates are effected by ritual reorganization of the parts of the self, change is possible.

Furthermore, individuals interlock with others to form social networks which, like the individual human being, are complex dynamic systems between explicate and implicate dimensions. Thus complexity science has been used to study groups and organizations. The analysis complexity theory offers of complex systems suggests that therapy can profoundly affect social reality. As parts of a whole we each effect the dynamic of the whole.

The nonlinear and nonlocal relationships the new sciences describe are particularly relevant to understanding how the use of ritual in therapy can alter the meanings life has for each of us. Though wounded in the past, undergoing a ritual in the present can alter the whole personal mythology, at every scale. If consciousness rather than physical laws alone produces reality, the remaking of reality and the spontaneous act of intention take on great significance. Ritual is particularly structured to make these acts possible. It both recognizes the story line of a particular personal myth as a closed part of the system and opens the door to our spontaneous acts of creativity that can modify the open system of the personal mythology as a whole. Rituals open us to the implicate reality and other possibilities of being. The place of ritual in the activity of quantumstuff, including the interaction of consciousness and physical reality, would be to organize energy. Therapy, ritual and healing depend upon something like the quantum leap—the slightest perturbations in initial conditions, for example, grow exponentially with time. It does not take very long for changes even at the quantum level to become manifest at the macro level (Hobbes, 1991).

### **Dynamic Change and Healing**

When complexity sciences talk about the short term unpredictability and long term consistency of complex dynamic systems, it is helpful to remember that we human beings are complex dynamic systems, as are our families, work groups, villages, towns, cities, states, nations, and the international community. While a complex system is unpredictable, there are certain parameters of importance:

1. Short term change is frequently over estimated.
2. Long term change is frequently underestimated.
3. The more specific the prediction, the less likely it is to be correct. It is safer to predict that marriages that cannot handle aggression will end in divorce than it is to say that Bob and Mary, who cannot fight constructively, will divorce.
4. Past performance is an undependable predictor of future results.
5. The most reliable predictions are those that follow established trends. Predictions follow basins of attraction. If we can identify the qualities and geography of the strange attractor of a dynamic system, we can anticipate the flow of that system but not the specific emergent changes.
6. If a person's, couple's, or group's behaviors are generally predictable, there is or will be a problem sooner or later. Human beings are complex dynamic systems for which general predictability is uncharacteristic.

—Adapted from Robert X. Cringely's "The Five Rules of Prognostication" (1998)

The complex dynamic system is designed to be remarkably adaptive at the same time that it has consistency and identity over time. This is why such a system is actually easier to control than a stable, simpler one. We are not generally bouncing off the pricks and arrows of fortune like a linear pinball in a machine. We are replete with checks and balances (like depression or shock) to prevent such disruptions. And if this becomes too stable, we have been gifted with boredom and curiosity to stir things up. Yet the case of Patty Hearst, who was kidnapped by and turned into a gun wielding member within a week of the Symbionese Liberation Army, shows that rapid chaotic change of the whole identity is possible.

On a larger level, stable families can be thrown into chaos at weddings or funerals, times when membership of the system is disrupted. By the same token, chaotic, "dysfunctional" families can spontaneously generate emergent order under the same conditions. Even internationally, the end of the cold war and the complete breakup of the Soviet Union is another example of sudden transformation. Healthy human beings and human systems are operating optimally in the complexity groove and when they do they are remarkably resilient. When a person breaks into chaos we need to be careful, returning them to stability, then to optimal com-

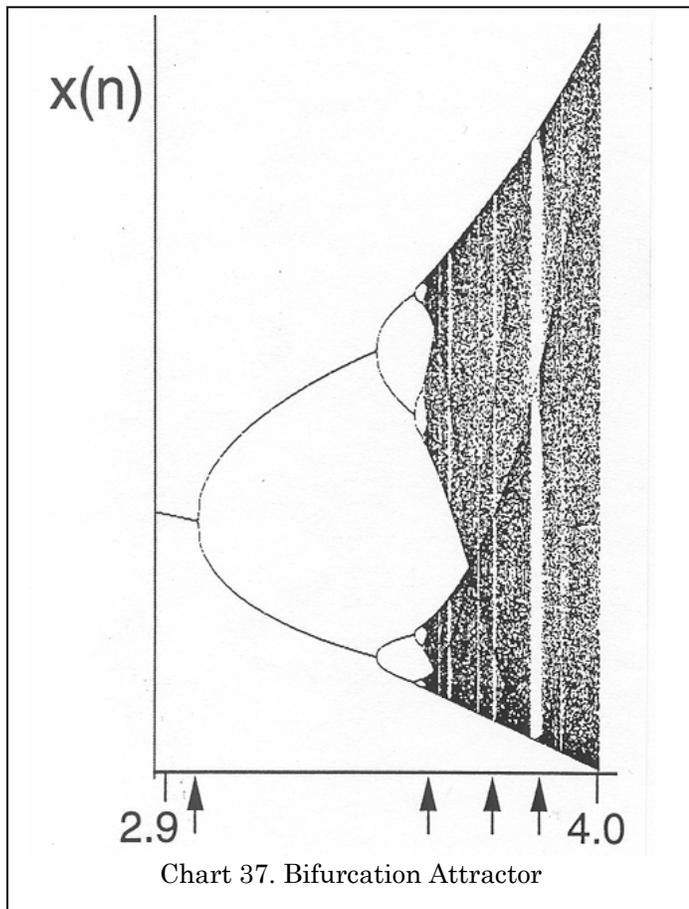
plexity. When that person is stuck in a stability rut, on the other hand, carefulness can be counterproductive. We need to push them up into complexity, sometimes by way of a little controlled chaos, as in a healing ritual or psychodrama.

When randomness strikes a complex dynamic system it can create new directions in which the system can grow. The “fluctuation, randomness, and unpredictability at the local level, in the presence of guiding or self referential principles, cohere over time into definite and predictable form” (Wheatley, 1994). If order is for free, then we do not have to be the orderers, struggling for control of reality.

Instead of striving for control, order, and safety, we can seek the chaos in a system. We can intentionally nudge a person (family or group) to the edge of chaos and into the complexity space. We can save our ordering and controlling for when the client needs it because he or she is flooded into random chaos (due to a sudden death of a loved one, post traumatic shock, or psychosis, for example). We know that a person’s self system is periodic when the same thing happens over and over again regularly. We know it is chaotic when a small stimulus produces a huge outcome, like falling in love at first sight. Or, conversely, when a huge stimulus produces a small outcome, like a rape resulting in obsessive or depressive or denying behavior in the victim.

Pathology, argues John Briggs (1992), may be viewed as a loss of the “natural” background chaos in the mind or body. Or, conversely, it can be seen as an increase in the random chaos, exceeding the boundaries of the complex dynamic system’s capacity to handle deterministic chaos. When the balance shifts too far in the direction of order, certain kinds of heart attacks, epileptic seizures, depression, or some self destructive habit may emerge; aspects of the system become phase-locked. On the other hand, too much random chaos can produce chronic fatigue syndrome, psychosis, or dissociative identity disorder. I believe that humans naturally have multiple personalities, part personalities, and roles (a life time of introjects transmuted into selfness). Dissociative identity disorders occur when the interlocking web of feedback among the multiple parts breaks down (or never got established). In summary, pathology could be described as “dysfractional.”

On a personal scale, we can help people process feelings by moving them from the linear expression of blame or



complaint to the nonlinear expression of anger or grief. We can help them toward more powerful decision-making, given the quantum power of intentionality and focused observation of reality that creates new realities.

All decisions put the stability of a self system at risk in some way. The image of a bifurcation attractor is very much like that of a decision tree. Too many options results in a move from deterministic to random chaos, as you can see in the bifurcation chart to the left (from Liebovitch, 1998), where  $X$  equals time and the bottom line,  $B$ , equals choices. The single line, the fixed point attractor of a possible choice, arises at 2.90 or so as the  $B$  line. The choice emerges at the  $B=3.00$  value where it represents a period two attractor. Some-

where between 3.40 and 3.50 on  $B$  the bifurcation reaches a period four attractor (often the best time to decide).

After another period doubling (now a period eight attractor) the onset of chaos begins, and at  $B=3.569946$ , the chaos of possibilities fills the phase space. When the time to decide arrives: we will do it (1) or we will not (2). At the next doubling, the period four attractor, the next choices, whatever the content of the decision, involve doing it (1) and liking it (3) or not liking it (4) or not doing it (2) and liking it (5) or not liking it (6). We have jumped from two choices (1 and 2) to four (3, 4, 5, and 6). At the next bifurcation there are eight choices, none as clear cut as before.

There are still windows of opportunity for choices (indicated by the “white” in the phase space) that pop up, but mostly there is confusion. Most people who struggle with choices take too long to make a decision and need help to move from random chaos back to complexity (deterministic chaos).

Some avoid conscious choices altogether, letting their lives happen to them, more or less. They will hold off making plans for Friday Night until the last minute (in case something better comes along, i.e., the “right” decision). Others choose quickly between the “either” or the “or” and hope they can live with the result. Yet others go to the period four attractor and evaluate the pros and cons of doing and not doing and then make a choice. More miss the point and move into chaos. The missing link is often knowing wants, without which “real” choice is near impossible.

We all strive for equilibrium in our lives. What constitutes equilibrium will be unique to each person, determined by their genetics, their history, and the vagaries of their personal mythologies, the meanings they generated to explain their most important experiences.

The personal mythology is a powerful strange attractor that helps us know needs, identify wants, recognize alternatives, and evaluate them consciously before we plunge into chaos. As we make more evaluated choices—not an easy task—we engage in the Class IV system of choosing available to conscious beings. We participate in deterministic chaos which can lead to entirely new order, thus resetting a new, more complex level and state of equilibrium.

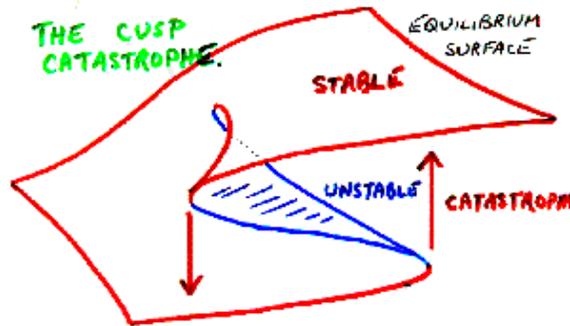
The human dynamic system is pushed to complexity by the degree of choice available to each person as determined by their personal narrative autobiography. Each real choice is a bifurcation attractor that moves through awareness of choices of simple complication at the period two attractor to the doorway to complexity of the period four attractor. Simple choices lead to small predictable changes; complex choices lead to unexpectedly large effects.

Rene Thom, who developed topological catastrophe theory, generated seven strange attractors he called catastrophe surfaces (Thom, 1975). He was interested in showing the lay of the land, so to speak, of endogenous (i.e., psychological) factors internal to societies and their members.

One of his catastrophe surfaces is another look at bifurcation. Equilibrium is a fixed point attractor. When two equilibrium levels exist at the same time and are held by the same state variable—for example, any choice point—the catastrophe surface is a cusp or, colloquially, a “sheet with a pleat.” This is a different picture of the effect of choice, one

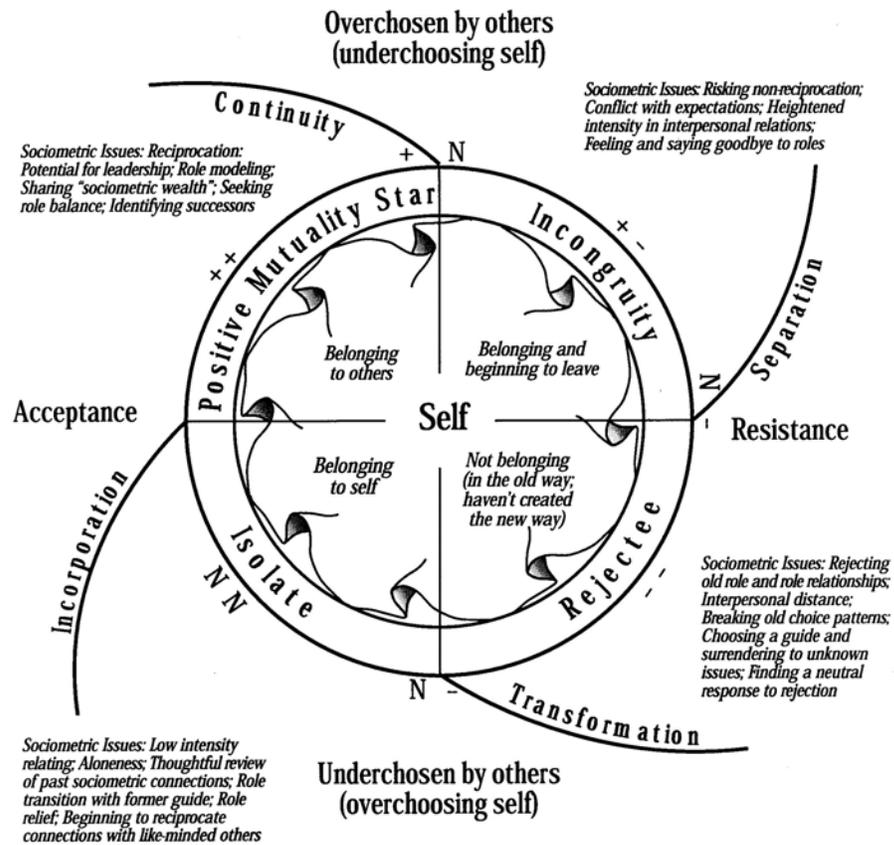
depicting the cumulative effect of choices by members of a whole social group:

Chart 38. Thom's "Sheet with a Pleat"



Anne Hale's beautiful rendition of the Sociometric Cycle incorporates Thom's cusp to depict an image of how decision making may operate from gate to gate.

Chart 39. Anne Hale's Sociometric Cycle © 1987 with elements Mosher's Healing Circle



When we direct a ritual (Chapter 8) or a psychodrama (Chapter 9), the protagonist, the director, the auxiliaries, the audience—all are making on going choices. We cannot plan for, control, or even replicate what happens once the system reaches the spontaneity of the complexity space (Remer, 1997). In the process of warm-up to action, we are informed by the clues emerging from the complexity dynamics of the client's self system. The ritual actually experienced may be something different from that which we originally imagined happening. By trusting the emergence of complex dynamic processes, we prevent the disasters of the Procrustean bed. (Procrustes was an over linear robber in Greek mythology who measured his victims on a bed in his Inn. If they were too tall, he cut off their legs; if too short, he broke the bones in their legs with a hammer and stretched them until they fit.) All our techniques are a means to make real choices about real relationships by removing barriers, placing in proximity, unfolding new information, encouraging selfness through intentionality and decision making, and creating the conditions for creativity, the emergence of new order.

We can effect the complexity of a group. Complexity can be measure by the number of specialized functions and the centralization of control. J. L. Moreno, the creator of psychodrama, also developed the first functional complexity tool for working with groups (Moreno, 1978). Sociometry, which I will discuss in detail in Chapter 11, measures a group's functions (criteria) and centralization of control (cohesion). Fifty years before Benoit Mandelbrot coined the term, Moreno saw the "fractal" nature of human beings and human systems. He saw the human being as a self having emerged as if "for free" from the roles incorporated in development. He saw a group as a collection of human beings, out of which an identity around particular criteria (parameters) emerges. He then saw groups as linked into a psychological geography like a fractal of brotherhood.

According to complexity sciences, all systems connect by symbiosis or competition (Arthur, 1994). Moreno called it the tele of attraction and repulsion. When strange attractors (Moreno called them sociometric networks formed around criteria) are introduced into a group, they create networks of dependency. When a replacement of a member occurs near a base of dependency, like a parent or a very controlling leader, the collapse of the group into chaos can be quite large. Re-

placements of members at the end points of the dependency network cause little disruption. The expansion or collapse of diversity in coevolutionary systems (i.e., a group) is heavily conditioned by how dependencies are structured.

Moreno’s science of sociatry is a science of diversity development, articulating a technology for accessing and healing the structure of groups by increasing connectedness and equality of access to sociometric wealth (choices). Moreno recognized that groups become healthier when connections among the members are distributed across the membership. When connections are focused on too few “stars,” the group is vulnerable to collapse into chaos when the star is removed or replaced. Moreover, if there are few connections, or access to connections is blocked, groups will be subject to chaotic episodes, such as social or physical violence. Groups with more diversity, that is, more functional roles and access to them, become even more diverse and creative. As complexity sciences would say: “Diversity itself provides fuel for further diversity” (Arthur, 1994).

For Moreno, psychology was a religious revolution and all therapeutic formats were analogous to religious rituals. He felt that the theory of interpersonal relations was born of religion. He opened *Who Shall Survive?* (1978) by declaring that “a truly therapeutic procedure cannot have less an objective than the whole of mankind.” The relationship between science and religion was one of Moreno’s prime concerns. “Compared with the depth of my religious ideas,” he also wrote in *Who Shall Survive?* (1978), “my scientific discoveries were rather simple and naive.” His position was that science and religion were two ends of a stick; there was no conflict between them. The stick itself was spontaneity.

| Implicate Order◁         | Complex Dynamic Systems | ▷Explicate Order           |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| ☉Spirituality (Religion) | Spontaneity             | Science□                   |
| ☉Chaos                   | Complexity              | Order□                     |
| ☉Freedom (Changes)       | Choices                 | Structure (Stability)□     |
| ☉Me (Selfness)           | Us (Community)          | Not Me (Other)□            |
| ☉Sociomatrix             | Social Reality          | External Society□          |
| ☉Open (Spontaneous)      | Ritual Form             | Closed (Stereotyped)□      |
| ☉Subjective              | Ambivalence             | Objective□                 |
| ☉Mind                    | Consciousness           | Body□                      |
| ☉Eros (Connectivity)     | Action                  | Logos (Discrimination)□    |
| ☉Creativity (God)        | Spontaneity             | Cultural Conserve (Robot)□ |
| One End◁                 | The Stick               | ▷The Other End             |

Chart 40. The Transition Zone between Chaos and Order

It is clear that there is a pattern here. The possibilities of the implicate order are realized in the explicate order through the action of complexity dynamics (in the transition zones) that can simultaneously effect both extremes of these complementary orders of reality. This tripartite process can be understood within the Healing Circle. When the oscillation between implicate and explicate operates with the ambivalent (polarity perceiving) qualities of consciousness, a cycle of four is generated. Ambivalence itself generates simultaneously attractions towards and separations from:

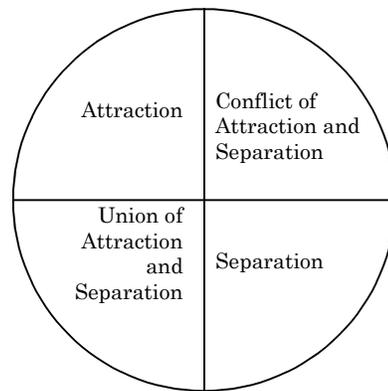


Chart 41. Polarity Perceiving

In human life, as in all dynamic, complex systems, the vitality is in the number, variety, and flexibility of interconnections among the acting agents within the system: The more connectivity, the more complexity; the more complexity, the more spontaneity and creativity. Looked at as a whole, from the origin of the universe until now, life is in fact a process of perpetual novelty. To the degree that we can tune our consciousness to the dynamic flow of universal life we will participate optimally in the evolutionary thrust of the universe and in our own lives; what is above, after all, is what is below, “fractally” speaking. We will connect with the beings around us—the other men, women, children, as well as the minerals, the plants, the animals, and all things that exist. We will live more spontaneously and creatively balanced between the weight of stultifying stability and the pull of chaotic change.

### **The Healing Circle as Fractal**

To my mind, qualities of fractals describe qualities of human existence. I see the nonlinear Healing Circle as a fractal model of the complex dynamic system of human life. The linear template of the quartered circle eight phase space is a “measuring” device for implicate reality. As quantum physics demonstrates, “measurement” makes reality.

Once consciousness has looked at reality through the quartered circle and filled in the template, the fractality of the Healing Circle becomes obvious. It displays the characteristics of fractals as defined by Briggs (1992) in his book: variability, general dependability, moment to moment unpredictability, interconnectedness through positive and negative feedback, and scaling (replication, recycling, or other self similarity on many scales of magnification). Like light, which is simultaneously wave form and particle, but which can only be seen one way at a time depending on your intention and tools, so also human life is simultaneously implicate and explicate. The Healing Circle, through the four seasonal dimensions and the four elementary directions of the eight phase space recovers this relationship. The process of human life alternates between stability and change. Stability is regularity, constancy, and sameness, not immobility. Immobility, stuckness, rigidity—these are sure signs that a discontinuous change is afoot, that the flow of seasonal change is over, like a calm before a storm.

A linear model of human development cannot account for how people heal or why spontaneity is possible any more than the linearity of time, or the cause and effect relationships of time and space can account for the wave aspect of quantum reality or the effects of nonlocality. Thus I continue to point to the Healing Circle as a template. The Healing Circle model makes the tension between both faces of the complex, dynamic system, order and chaos, apparent. The chaos in a complex, dynamic system can shake things up, creating new directions in which the system can grow. In human life, transition zones are marked by ambivalence and choice. When these are present, consciousness draws upon the chaos of possibilities and leaves the staid order of habitual ideas, feelings, wants, and actions to unfold into new regions of dynamical complexity.

The Healing Circle eight phase space brings into view the nonlinear system of the personal mythology. As a fractal record of our conscious and unconscious meaning making, our personal mythologies hold the secrets of our strengths and our weaknesses and what we can do about them. This complex system is so webbed with interrelating processes of negative (stabilizing) and positive (transforming) feedback that, while the overall pattern remains fairly constant, small positive changes can become amplified into unexpected fragmentation or transformation. The Healing Circle is a template for identifying the missing complementaries of our self organization and for directing us toward greater complexity and possibilities for living. Rather than a model for discovering pathology it is a compass for identifying the missing parts of the whole life we might live through proactive creativity.

The new sciences give us new tools to reach a new awareness of wholeness, one that incorporates not only the constancies but also the disturbances and perturbations of our lives (Butz, 1997; Butz, Chamberlain, and McCown, 1997; Remer and Betts, 1998). There is room for the unique personal mythology of each person, the meaning each of us has made of our walk on the landscape of our lives. The new sciences help us to understand the complexity of consciousness and reality and help us to see more clearly the nature of change and healing. They reacquaint us with the wonder and mystery of reality. In a sense, we can take the explicate reality that we observe, measure, and manipulate as a fractal record of the unfolding of the implicate reality into existence.

## **Looking Forward**

In the last ten years, studies in brain, mind, and human development show clearly that the brain is a complex system, having multiple layers of component parts capable of chaotic behavior (Siegel, 1999). These studies robustly demonstrate that the complexity is not just about isolated individuals, but about socially interacting human beings effecting one another. According to Daniel Siegel (1999), “the human mind emerges from patterns in the flow of energy and information with the brain and between brains.” Further-

more, “the mind is created within the interaction of internal neurophysical processes and interpersonal experiences” (Siegel, 1999). To put it even more clearly, experiences, particularly interpersonal relationships, and especially those between child and parent, shape the genetically programmed maturation of the nervous system, thus the structure and function of the brain and the emerging behavior of the individual: “The mind emerges from the activity of the brain, whose structure and function are directly shaped by interpersonal experience” (Siegel, 1999).

Studies focusing on memory distinguish between implicit and explicit memory, aspects of memory that echo some of the distinctions between implicate and explicate reality in the Healing Circle theory. The implicit memory is present and operating at least from birth. This kind of memory does not require conscious processing during encoding and retrieval. It includes behavioral, emotional, perceptual, and perhaps somatosensory memories, as well as core unconscious generalizations about the nature of reality. When we retrieve implicit memory we are unaware of remembering. Implicit memory forms the foundation of our subjective sense of ourselves: “We act, feel, and imagine without recognition of the influence of the past on our present reality” (Siegel, 1999).

Explicit memory becomes increasingly operative and effective from about two years of age and then throughout life until old age. This kind of memory is the result of conscious focusing of attention and processing during encoding and retrieval. When we retrieve explicit memory, we have a subjective sense of recollection. There are two kinds of explicit memory, semantic (factual) and episodic (autobiographical). We assure long term memory of things by consciously incorporating them into an autobiographical narrative that holds a sense of the self through time.

Our basic sense of the world is generalized from our earliest experiences and it is maintained in implicit memory. Experience falls upon the ground of implicit memory like mustard seeds. Through active mental sorting and dreams we evaluate the crop of experiences. As we develop, our brains become capable of language and explicit memory. We name, evaluate, and store facts (semantic memory) and create autobiographical narratives (episodic memory) of the self across time. Autobiographical narrative holds the sense of

who we are. This is what I have called our personal mythology. Very early, preverbal experiences enter implicit memory. Overwhelming, traumatic experiences continue to do so throughout our lives. To the extent that we can bring implicit memories to consciousness, we can add them to the personal mythology we live by.

Crucial to studies of brain, mind, and human development has been research into memory and the effects of trauma on the brain in terms of its storage and release of the information about a traumatization. When we are traumatized, aspects of the experience bypass conscious thought and become part of the implicit memory. Research is showing that healing from trauma involves accessing the implicit memory and bringing forward—through uncontrolled (flashbacks) or controlled (therapeutic) reenactments—so that the trauma can become part of the narrative autobiography or personal mythology (Flannery, 1987; Greenberg and van der Kolk, 1987 a and b; Harber and Pennebaker, 1992; Levine and Frederick, 1997; Terr, 1990; van der Kolk, 1987a; van der Kolk, 1987 b; van der Kolk and McFarlane, 1996; van der Kolk, McFarlane, and Weisaeth, 1996). There is some evidence that this is also true of some of the earlier, preverbal acquisitions of implicit memory (Fromm and Smith, 1989; Miller, 1981; Seligman, 1975; van der Kolk, 1987 a). In the Healing Circle, the living dynamic complex system of the self through time, represented by the personal mythology, emerges from the complexity space between the chaos of the implicate reality (implicit memory) and the stability of the explicate reality (explicit memory). As will be developed in the rest of this book, the Healing Circle is a hypothesis of developmental trauma and its healing.



Chart 42. Mosher's Mandala #4

## Chapter 5

# Development A Complex Dynamic System

### **In the Beginning**

The implicate order is an undivided wholeness in flowing movement, a state of unending flux of *enfoldment* into the implicate wholeness and *unfoldment* out to the explicate order (Bohm, 1980). Entities unfolding from the implicate order are bound by a force of overall necessity as they enter the world of classical physics. This “force of overall necessity” is found, for example, in human development.

Our biology can be seen as one of the sources of movement around the healing circle; it moves us through life in cycles. Like the turn of the seasons, this biological force of necessity can be seen as a template for our psychological cycles. In fact the healing circle is an archetype of the developmental template that is genetically programmed in each human being. Development is both linear and complex (Thelen, 1992). Thus, while the vicissitudes of nature and nurture are mediated by the dynamics of self organizing complexity, the biologically determined developmental timeclocks unfold for each of us, and their effects are replicated throughout each of our lives. They are a *force of necessity*.

The evolution of the human brain that is capable of self referencing transcends the purely biological. Self referencing guides our psychological development and leads to the self organization of personal myths that script our lives. The biological actuality of human development in the explicate order anchors in time the personal myths and supporting rituals (subjects of coming chapters) of the time-liberated implicate order. It is our self referencing (our capacity for looking at the patterns of our lives for example) that allows us to actively reconstruct the outcomes of the developmental process, changing our personal myths and thus our lives.

We become co-evolvers of the complexity of our own self-system, liberating ourselves from the arrow of time and linear cause and effect. We intentionally enter the complex

state between chaos and order described in the last chapter. We step into recurring states of disequilibrium (chaos) and equilibrium (order) in human development, and by doing so, we can initiate new patterns of thought, feeling, wanting, or doing.

The last chapter prepared us to see the self as a set of complex processes that leave a fractal record reflecting self-similarity at every scale. In this chapter I hope to show that we can see more about human development by viewing it as a complex state than has been possible within the traditional dualisms such as that of mind and body.

Classical science focuses on the particular, thus breaking reality into many specialized disciplines. Complexity theory is a meta-theory. It focuses on the self-similarity in complex dynamic systems. Thus disciplinary boundaries do not prevent the meaningful association of similarities across these boundaries. This break with dualistic thinking is significant for understanding states of expanded consciousness and further discussion in later chapters on the efficacy of ritual in producing spontaneity and change.

This chapter will look at the initial conditions of our consciousness, as inseparable from our biology. Our unfolding from the implicate order, according to biological necessity, occurs as the many complex processes of the human system come into relationship with our environment, particularly the parental relationship and culture. Our earliest experiences create a template for expectation. Therapeutic intervention in this early template later in life, particularly where the parental relationship has failed, can bring us to fuller consciousness, or, potentially, a fuller enfolding back into the implicate order as we realize more of our potential.

Development is both a set of processes, operating within varying parameters and instigated by multiple causes, and a set of outcomes. Biological development is an unfolding dance of organisms whose genetic possibilities interact with and receive feedback from their environment over time. In spite of the arrow of time, there is a bi-directionality to development that encourages us to think that the past has not passed.

Indeed, the regressions, repetitions, and recyclings of outcomes back to their initial conditions or beginnings are a common feature of most psychotherapies. It does not take

much self-referencing to agree with Edna St. Vincent Millay that “it’s not true that life is one damn thing after another—it’s one damn thing over and over” (source unknown).

The healing potential of recycling is particularly apparent in the design of human bonding. Human attachment seems to be innate and biologically determined. Yet it combines with feedback from our experiences of living to become a truly unique map of our capabilities for loving. Often that map leads us down the same relationship roads.

On the other hand, as robust as the attachment pattern of childhood are throughout our lives, they are open systems, and thus open to changes. For example, the complementary processes to infant attachment behaviors are the care-giving behaviors of the first significant other. Care-giving is a different set of behaviors triggered by the attachment seeking ones. Thus a caregiver’s attachment deficits can be healed through the giving of care. There is a way out of the “over and over.”

From the point of view of outcomes, development is “a progressive series of changes that occurs in a predictable pattern as the result of an interaction between biological (nature) and environmental (nurture) factors” (Salkind, 1985). According to their complexity of being, living creatures share in exploratory behavior and learning which affects the process of their development. Thus there are aspects of our being, activated by the very process of living, which take us beyond our genetically coded biological time clocks.

Especially in human beings, outcomes are affected by learning. We revisit our pasts and the more we experience the encrypted complementaries of the stories we have created about ourselves, the more we can effect outcomes. By retelling our personal myths, we make new meaning. To give you an idea of this bi-directional dynamic, I will share a psychodrama I did that changed the outcomes of my early attachment template:

The issue I presented to the group was my inability to grieve. The director of the drama invited me to set up the last time that I had intensely experienced this difficulty. Soon I had created the scene of my father’s open casket the night before his funeral. I stood frozen and inarticulate before him; my chest seemed encased in concrete. The director invited me to select someone to role-play the concrete band around my

chest. In role reversal as the concrete band, I learned that I had been a part of John's life since he was one and a half years old.

Invited then to create an experience that could represent the cause of my grieflessness, I built a crib scene. I was trapped in my crib and I could not get out. Mommy and Daddy were in their room and would not come. Before going into this scene, the director asked me to explore why I was trapped. A story unfolded: I was a crib scooter. Standing at one end of it, I could rock back and forth, scooting the crib across my room, over the threshold, and down the hall to my parents' bedroom door. So we enacted this. Using a big cardboard box somebody found, I scooted joyously about the stage.

Then Daddy came and put a lid on my crib, encaging me. My fear, rage, and loss were intolerable. No matter how desperately I protested, when I role reversed with my mother or father, I refused to come: "Johnny must learn." When I would become quiet, my director encouraged me not to become resigned (she called it the "little death"): "Continue if you can." After what seemed an eternity, Mommy finally came. In role reversal as her, I burst into Johnny's room and roughly placed my hand over his mouth, simultaneously squeezing his nostrils shut, suffocating Johnny into submission. I was horrified when the person role-playing my mother handled me as I had shown her.

Offered a chance for a corrective emotional experience, I chose to have someone play baby Johnny while I, as my current adult self, entered the scene, stopped my mother, and expressed my outrage to her and my father (for his passivity). Then I took little Johnny into my arms. I comforted him and told him that I had learned to care for him and protect him. I assured him that he was going to make it to adulthood and that I loved him. Then I got to be little Johnny and experience the whole scene from the other end. People in the group then shared how they had been affected by my work. Several purged pain that they had about the inevitable betrayals and thoughtless cruelties from their parents or trusted ones.

I presumed that this piece of work was a metaphor representing my feelings as a child. My little brother had just been born and I imagined that the loss of my mother's attention was acute. Also neither my father nor any of my siblings grieved the death of Mommy when I was seven. Three years later I told my oldest sister about this psychodrama. When I got to the part about mother suffocating me, my sister burst into tears, eventually explaining: "Oh, John, I'm so sorry. I used to do that to you too!" The lid, she remembered, was chicken-wire on a frame. I have been able to express grief ever since.

## Human Development

In the last century, especially in the last fifty years, the unfolding of human beings from conception to death has been studied closely. Moreover, the increase in longevity has demanded studies in aging and life span development. Especially interesting has been data made possible by new technology for studying brain development of babies as they are exposed to experiences. *Time Magazine* (February 3, 1997) featured an article by Madeline Nash reviewing studies in infant development which assert that “the debate that engaged countless generations of philosophers—whether nature or nurture calls the shots—no longer interests most scientists. They are much too busy chronicling the myriad ways in which genes and the environment interact.”

Patterns of self-similarity have been observed. Human beings, given enough safety and freedom, seek to find their highest level of functioning. In the interaction between the natural endowment and the personal history, the first three years are the most important. In brain development, the first year is most important. By age two, the child’s brain contains twice as many synapses and consumes twice as much energy as the brain of a normal adult. Brain growth draws to a close around the age of ten, and by age eighteen, the brain has declined in plasticity but increased in power by ruthlessly destroying its weakest synapses, preserving only those that have been tempered by experiences (*Time*, February 3, 1997). There are biologically timed windows of opportunity for growth and development connected by periods of consolidation. Furthermore, this development is multi-faceted. David Stern (1985) has already identified around a hundred lines of development, each having its own developmental story.

Until recently, Western thought has tended to conceptualize development as linear. In truth, it is both linear and circular, as we shall soon see. Human growth processes are observed to be “seasonal” and to be replicated and recycled redundantly (Carter and McGoldrick, 1988; Levin, 1988; Levinson, 1978). Neither parents nor babies being perfect, all humans endure traumatic events from birth on throughout the life cycle. In their quest for fulfillment, humans store developmentally impinging trauma (in forgotten memories, in their bodies, in their habits, in their dreams, waking and sleeping) and continually seek conditions from later environ-

mental conditions to reconnect with earlier development failures in order to set them right (Fromm and Smith, 1989).

Human development is both an ongoing process and a progress toward distinct levels. On the whole it is a complex dynamic system, comprising many complex dynamic systems, yet some aspects of development are determined linearly. Developmental markers lead us to talk about these levels as steps of development. Four principles govern the developmental steps:

1. Several lines of development may occur simultaneously, but they each progress according to a biological time clock and through the same steps.
2. Each step, while having its own particular characteristics, contains elements of each of the others.
3. Each step is sequentially built upon the one before it.
4. A problem in one step is carried over into the others, but developmental momentum may obscure problems until later recycling.

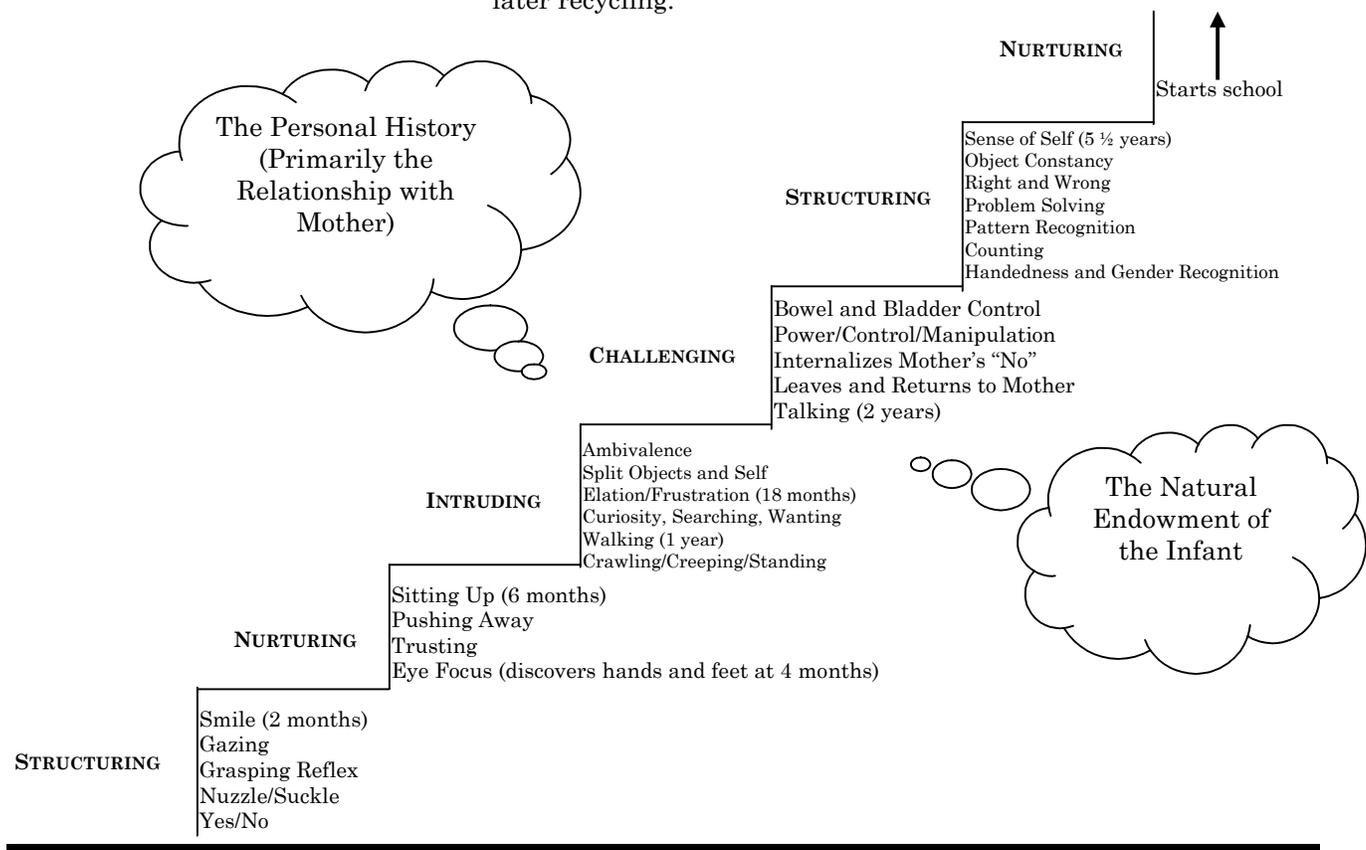


Chart 43. The Steps of Development

The steps of development are a stairway to continued recyclings of nurturance, intruding, challenging, and structuring during the interactions between the primary caregiver and the child. I want to emphasize the undervalued cyclical nature and the related recycling of our “initial conditions” in early development. The force of biological necessity that develops stage upon stage while retaining self-similarity to those early conditions moves us around the Healing Circle. Our development repeats itself with variations. Our beginnings also suggest why viewing life as a cycle can lead to healing. Where we repeat our initial conditions we have the opportunity to intervene in them, to start over. Our “pathologies” can be paths toward fuller consciousness.

In the careful and long-term research into the development of human beings from birth through adulthood that has been going on for the last fifty years, we are now beginning to identify numerous categories of development (Aimes et al, 1979; Brazelton, 1990, 1992; Burkes and Rubenstein, 1979; Erikson, 1980, 1982; Gould, 1978; Greenspan and Greenspan, 1985; Kagan, 1988; Kaplan, 1978, 1984; Karen, 1994; Klaus and Kennell, 1976; Konner, 1991; Krueger, 1989; Levin, 1988; Levinson, 1978; Mahler, 1975; Mahoney, 1991; Masterson, 1985; Miller, 1983; Piaget, 1981; Piaget and Inhelder, 1963; Small, 1998; Stern, 1977, 1985; Thomas and Chess, 1968; Wade, 1996; and Winnecott, 1987).

Four general categories, Adaptive Behavior, Language Behavior, Motor Behavior, and Social Behavior, settle into the four quadrants of the Healing Circle. On the next two pages are four circular views of various dimensions of the development of humankind as they are related to these four general categories. These charts are arranged on the pages so that the categories are in their quadratically defined places (imagine a large circle around the book, with the binding as the vertical axis and a horizontal axis separating the two upper from the two lower charts).

These charts are intended to represent the complexity of human development. You may find it easier to take in the significance of this variety by focussing on one quadrant or even one pointing arrow (they are arranged in approximately the same places on each circle) to see how each category unfolds. These charts depict the first five years around the circle. Whether we regress or progress, echoes of these behaviors appear throughout our lives.

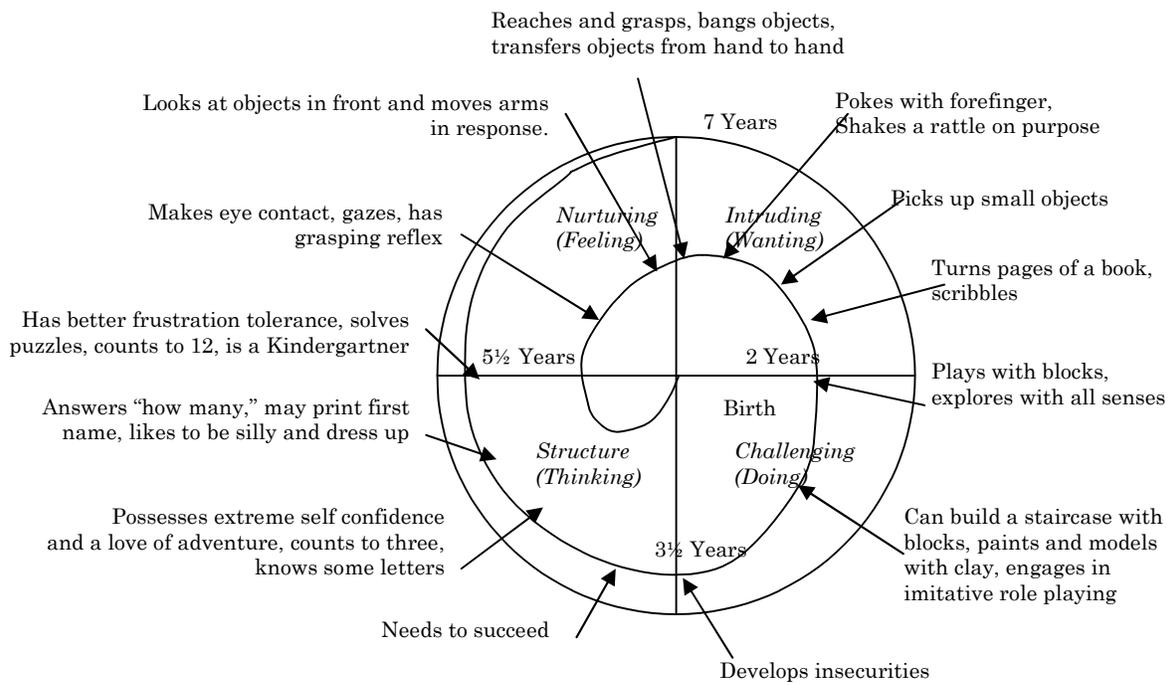


Chart 44. Development of Adaptive Behavior

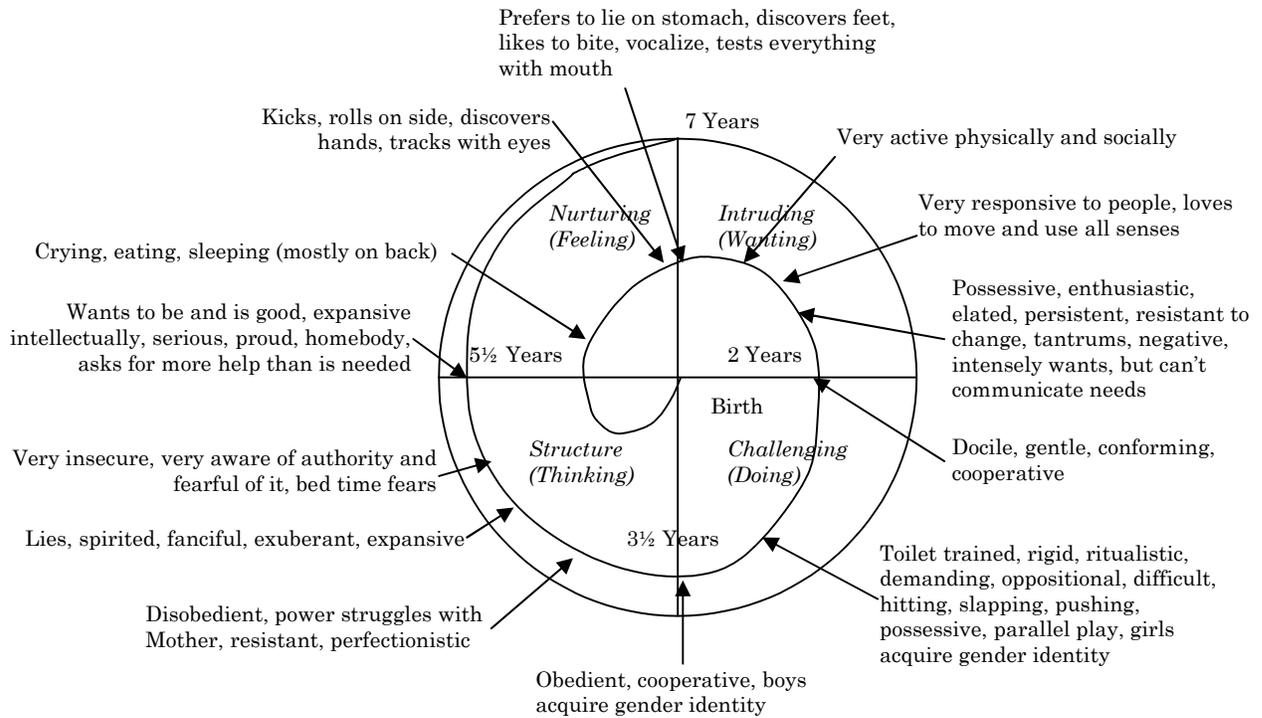


Chart 45. Development of Social Behavior

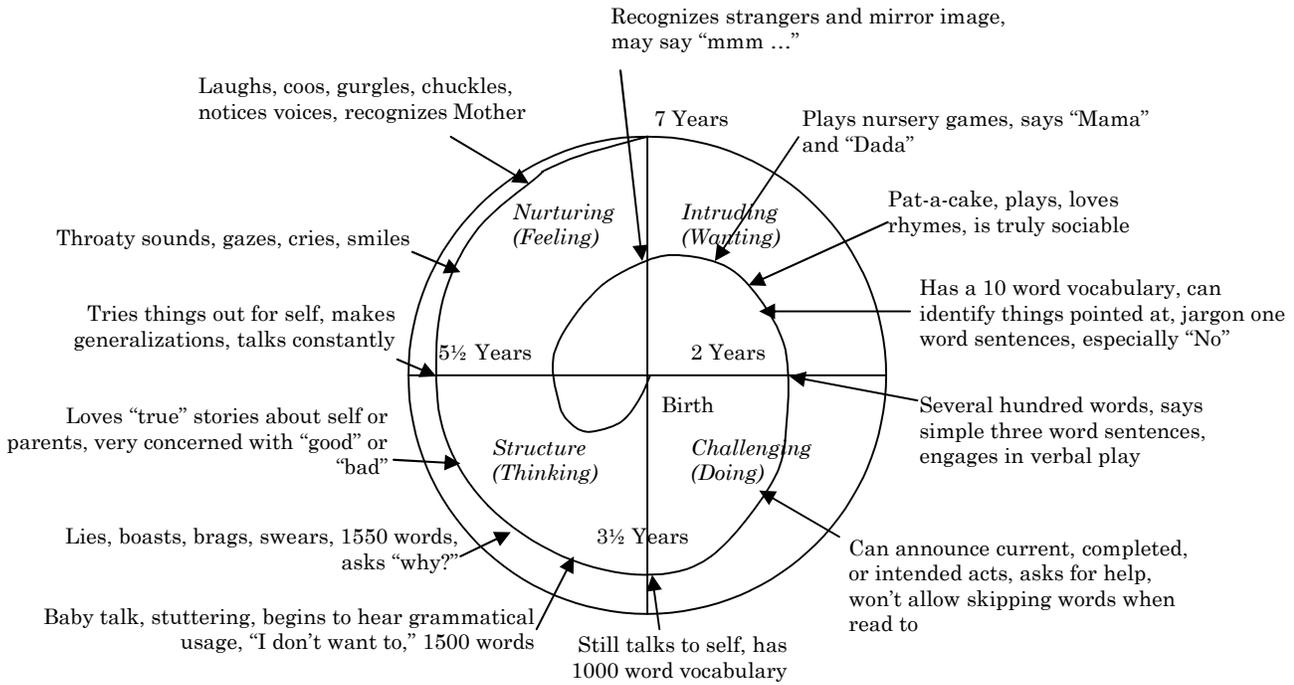


Chart 46. Development of Language Behavior

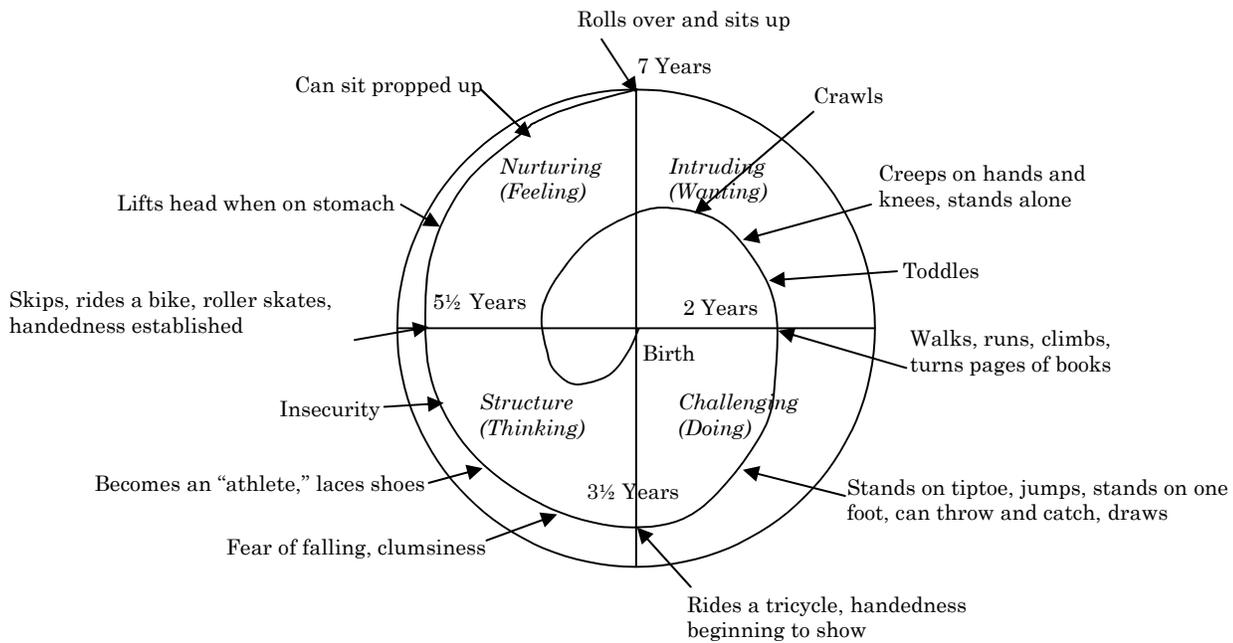


Chart 46

Chart 47. Development of Motor Behavior

In the last twenty years, clinical practitioners of psychotherapy have been developing eclectic practices, demonstrating the need to draw from more than one model and integrate the learnings of each. As yet, there are few rationales for integrating the estimated four hundred different therapies (Kazdin, 1986). In the area of Human development alone there are many models. They differ systematically along the lines of innate versus acquired through nature or nurture. Like the different parts of the body the blind men feel, they must be taken together to know the whole elephant.

A standard college textbook, *Theories of Human Development* (Salkind, 1985) identifies four major categories: The Maturational Models, the Psychoanalytic Models, the Behavioral Models, and the Innate Structures Models. These four categories of theories can be placed on the Healing Circle, divided and quartered by the innate versus acquired and nature versus nurture orthogonal dimensions. Plexing the four major theoretical categories around the Healing Circle demonstrates that taken together these divergent orientations tell the same story of human development or derailment on the path to selfhood that I have been suggesting.

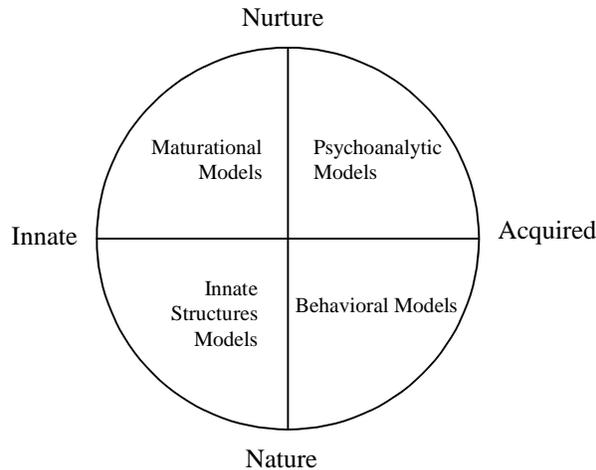


Chart 48. Models of Development

The following survey of these four developmental perspectives in psychology is not to be taken as an introduction to them, as that is beyond the scope of my intention here. What I want to suggest is that each of these areas of therapeutic practice has its unique “season” or approach. Therefore, they can be plexed around the Healing Circle.

Of course, each of these models touches upon the whole, yet each falls predominantly within one quadrant rather than any other. The Healing Circle template reconnects them as parts of a whole, offering insight into the eclecticism of much current therapeutic practice. When the four models are plexed around the quadrants, the Healing Circle makes manifest their affiliations with particular quadrants as well as their relationships to each other and to the complete cycle of healing which draws from all of their strengths.

### *Spring Quadrant: Maturation Models*

The maturational models are based on the idea that development is coded genetically. According to this school of thought the impact of the environment is less important than the biologically timed unfolding. One of the foremost proponents of a maturational model is Arnold Gesell. As a physician, he believed that development was primarily under the control of biological systems and their on-going process of maturation. The environment acts only supportively, making no changes. Gesell was influenced by the recapitulation theory, which holds that ontogeny (the development of the individual) recapitulates phylogeny (the development of the species).

After many years of longitudinal research, the Gesell Institute of Child Development published (Ames et al, 1979) data showing alternating periods of equilibrium (order) and disequilibrium (chaos) climbing a cyclical spiral of increasing stability. These periods begin to be stabilized at age two, settling into a pattern of oscillation by age seven. The whole cycle takes twelve years—give or take two. You may remember that ten is the age that the brain stops growing and begins consolidating. This circling around to fulfill one's self is accelerated at the beginnings and ends of the life span (Ames et al, 1979). The data is reproduced on the next page.

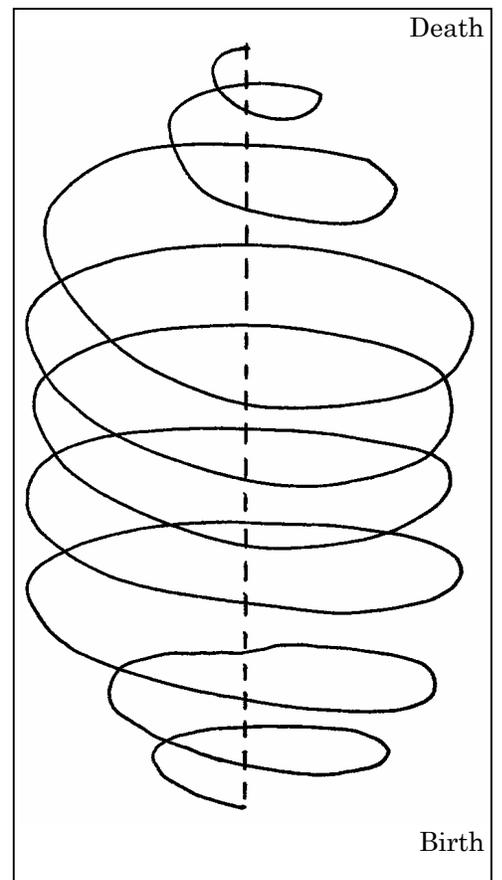


Chart 49. Gesell's Life Span Spiral

Chart 50. Stages of Equilibrium and disequilibrium

| Equilibrium | Breakup | Calm | Withdrawal | Expansion | Transition | Equilibrium |
|-------------|---------|------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| 2           | 2½      | 3    | 3½         | 4         | 4½         | 5           |
| 5           | 5½-6    | 6½   | 7          | 8         | 9          | 10          |
| 10          | 11      | 12   | 13         | 14        | 15         | 16          |
| 16          | 17      | 18   | 19         | 20        | 21         | 22          |
| 22          | 23      | 24   | 25         | 26        | 27         | 28          |
| 28          | 29      | 30   | 31         | 32        | 33         | 34          |
| 34          | 35      | 36   | 37         | 38        | 39         | 40          |
| 40          | 41      | 42   | 43         | 44        | 45         | 46          |
| 46          | 47      | 48   | 49         | 50        | 51         | 52          |

Using the Solstices to mark the phases of withdrawal and the Equinoxes, the times of the year when the day and night are equal, to mark the phases of equilibrium, these Ge-sell Institute figures can be wrapped around the healing circle like this:

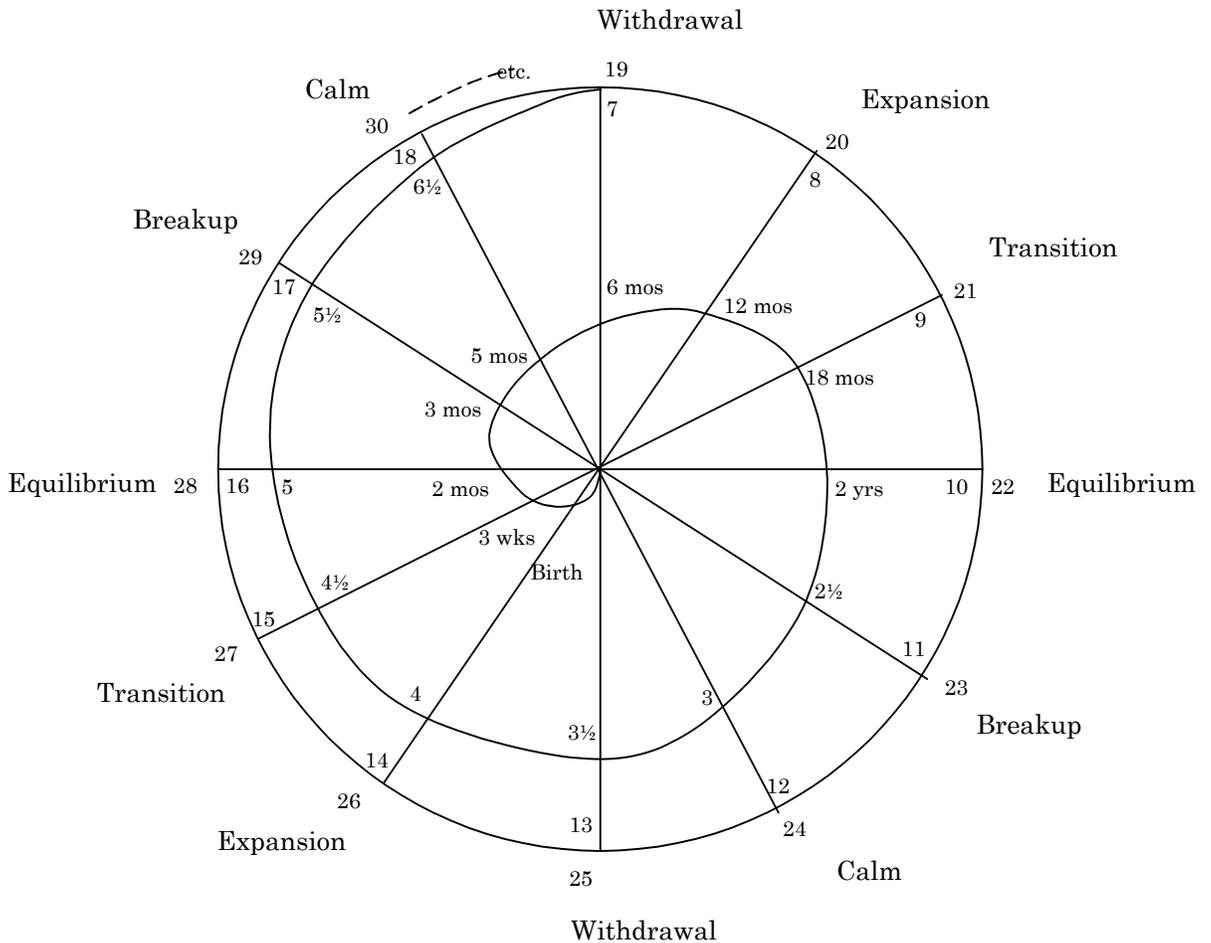


Chart 51. Life Span Spiral Seen from Below

Of course, when it comes to a particular individual's life, this chart can only be a guide. Yet it can be helpful in initial formulations about that particular person's personal mythology. You can see from the chart why the advent of adolescence can feel so familiar to parents: ages two to five are recycled in ages ten to sixteen.

You can also picture how a particular developmental distress may be replicated. Assume that a baby boy experiences "abandonment." This particular baby is put in an orphanage at birth. His first two months are good enough, but as his needs for interaction and a shared bond with a significant other increase, the facilities of the orphanage are unable to respond adequately. When baby boy reaches six, he could well be in trouble, particularly when he goes to school. Then again, more trouble may surface when he is seventeen and preparing to graduate from high school (assuming he has gotten that far). And again, when he is around thirty and entering his full adult functioning, perhaps he is unable to seek help because of distrust in dependency. Or at age forty-two, he sees an irresistible teenager and "abandons" his wife and family for a new lover and a red sports car. The drive to set right the initial condition of abandonment is finally acted out, to the pain of many. This is a fairly benign example of the possible consequences of abandonment.

Recycling is an old idea. It has been around as long as people have wondered why things happened the ways that they do. Recycling is reflected in stories, fairy tales, myths, literature, and the arts. In science it has been difficult to prove because it does not operate along simple classical cause and effect lines. Yet to a parent whose teenager is acting like a five-year-old, recycling is an obvious fact of life. In the new sciences, the dynamics of recycling are tracked by fractal geometry and complexity theory: recycling is a form of self-similarity.

In large numbers and on a broad scale, recycling makes intuitive sense. However, on the individual scale recycling loses its long term predictive power until a diagnosis (identification of a pattern) has been made and confirmed, then it reasserts itself in the present and past. The future, as we know from complexity theory, is an indeterminate maybe. Not all children who are subjected to unrelenting abuse without escape or comfort develop Dissociative Identity Disorders. Yet when an adult whose behavior supports such a

diagnosis enters therapy, the predictability of uncovering untold or unremembered experiences of such abuse is very high. Complexity theory demonstrates repeatedly that the long-term future of complex systems is indeterminate. The power of initial conditions and the self-similarity of complex systems promotes stability of self; indeterminacy supports our hope for transformative change.

Given its emphasis on innate genetics, I place maturational models of development in the spring quadrant of the Healing Circle. They focus on the developmental processes emerging from the initial conditions of the human genetic code rather than the interaction between the child and the primary caretakers characterized by the psychoanalytic models which can be affiliated with the summer quadrant. Yet at the same time the successful unfolding of our biological processes depends upon a good enough nurturing environment, and so there is a commutable relationship between maturational models and psychoanalytic models of development.

#### *Summer Quadrant: Psychoanalytic Models*

Psychoanalytic models tend to see a balance between the influence of biology and environmental experience. They attend to the emergence of the self. Sigmund Freud set the standard for models of this type. His was the first attempt at a systematic and global theory of development. Freud's model attributes the cyclicity of human development to our instinctual drives to meet needs. Once the need is met the drive is gratified until the next time. However, Freud worked with adults, not children, much less babies. Because the Healing Circle makes it possible to see the core personal mythology as a recycling of early experiences, I will turn to a psychoanalytic practitioner who actually worked with babies and the cycle of early development.

Margaret Mahler (1975), a pioneer in the study of the psychological birth of the human infant, carefully observed child development in the context of the maternal-infant dyad—the interaction between babies (genetic possibilities in action) and their mothers (impacting environments on those possibilities). Within months this apparently linear two part system bifurcated into multipart unpredictability. As the developing child had more self, the system switched from a

simple explicate one to a complex and thus more implicate one. Before the babies were two years old, it was impossible to establish explicate cause and effect relationships in their development, and conclusions had to be drawn from inference and associations about the implicate order. The trajectory of life transformed from Euclidean to fractal geometry.

While Mahler is the Grandmother of modern object relations psychology, derived from Freudian psychoanalytic theory, she herself cautioned against using her data as a developmental theory because not one child that she studied fit the stages perfectly. Yet over the years the model has proven extraordinarily useful, and now complexity theory explains why. Mahler’s stages of development shown below provide a detailed description of this aspect of development.

Chart 52. The stages of the psychological birth of the human infant

|                                |   |               |
|--------------------------------|---|---------------|
| Autism                         | Preparing for symbiosis   | 0–2 Months    |
| Symbiosis                      | Mother and infant are two beings in the same envelope   | 2–6 Months    |
| Differentiation                | “Hatched!” Separation begins. Baby sits alone.  | 4–8 Months    |
| Separation/Individuation       | Awareness of the (M)other is the origin of consciousness.   |               |
| Practicing                     | Baby launches out into the world learning what to want.   | 8–18 Months   |
| Rapprochement                  | Ambivalent Toddler approach/avoids mother, wanting both more interaction and contact and more independence. | 18–36+ Months |
| On–the–way to Object Constancy | Child accepts more and more “good” and “bad” sides of mother, self, and others                              | 36–60 Months  |

These stages of development can be eightplexed around the quartered circle. In doing so, two *missing pieces*

have to be added, underscoring how the Healing Circle can bring wholeness to the object of its factoring.

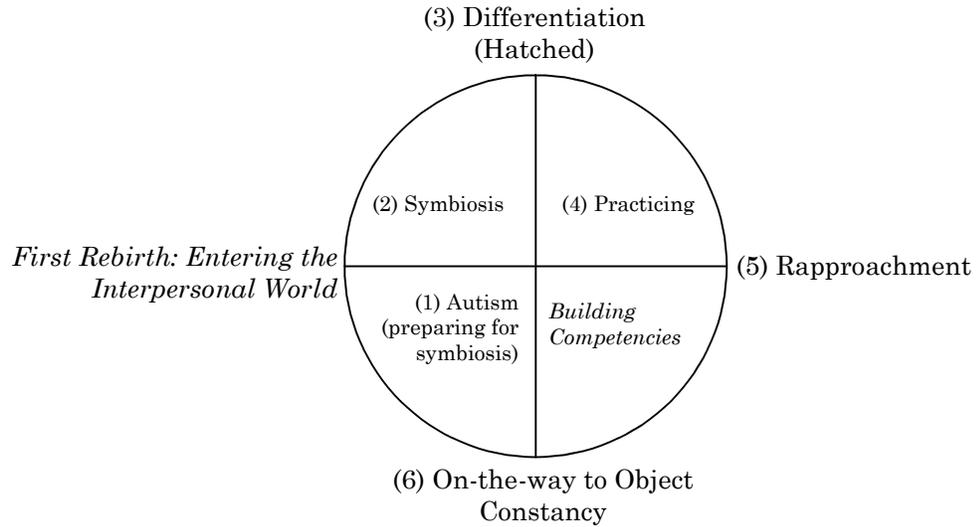


Chart 53. Mahler's Model of Development

Beginning with the first intimations of separateness (and mortality) at around four to six months, during the period Mahler calls *hatching*, the baby begins a journey of development that depends upon a successful navigation through the extremes of good and bad—good Mommy and bad Mommy, good Self and bad Self. The first bifurcation occurs when baby realizes that she (or he) is not Mommy and that Mommy is not her. There are two! The second bifurcation occurs when Mommy disappoints the baby. This disappointing, bad Mommy is split off from the good Mommy and the two do not reunite until later—sometimes much later and perhaps even never. Deterministic chaos has emerged and our cultural habits of thinking about mutually exclusive aspects of duality do not help us reach maturity.

Consciousness itself springs out of complementary opposites. Hatching marks the transformation from coenesthetic to diacritic consciousness. That is, the infant becomes aware of a *Me/Not Me*, an *inside/outside*—in short, the awareness of duality. This is also the stage at which the infant begins the journey toward object constancy, where the structures in his or her head, the images of mother and father, for example, maintain a complex stability that includes the whole of who they are.

The on-going development of object constancy continues throughout our lifetimes. Thus along with consciousness is born uncertainty. The Uncertainty Principle, described in Chapter 2, is expressed and defined by this power of the conscious mind to split and dissect everything into pairs of opposites that can only be considered alternately. It takes an expanded consciousness or an awareness of both ends of the duality—the self referencing which is only possible later in life—to escape the prison of polarity. For the infant, the awareness of duality means the end of certainty, the determined grasp of one end of what seem to be mutually excluding opposites. To refer back to Chapter 2 for a moment—it is not reality that is polar. It is the consciousness with which we usually approach it that polarizes things. The explicate reality around us depends on it. Interpenetrating the explicate order of reality, however, is the enfolding wholeness of the implicate order.

As an approach to therapy, the psychoanalytic developmental models emphasize the qualities of the Healing Circle's Summer quadrant (wanting, intuition, differentiation between self and others, ambivalence, and meaningful relationships with others) over those of the other quadrants. The emergent two-year-old self has a long journey ahead before he or she can reconnect with the oneness of things (the Spring quadrant). First this toddling self must move on to the challenges of Fall, described by the Behavioral Models. She or he will then proceed into the Winter quadrant where the many possibilities of life are sorted, often through innate capacities, and factored into his or her personal mythology.

### *Fall Quadrant: The Behavioral Models*

Behavioral models are complementary to the maturational models. Behaviorists at the extreme argue that the environment is everything; everything is learned. Biology sets the limits of development, but environment determines the kinds of behaviors in the individual's repertoire. There are no "biological stages" of development. "Psychological" considerations are not particularly important either. The stimulus (rewarding, punishing), the response, the conditioning, the reinforcement schedule (continuous, intermittent), generalization, and differentiation, are seen as struc-

turing behavior entirely. Ivan Pavlov, John Watson, and B. F. Skinner developed behaviorism.

In its initial form, behaviorism ignored cognitive processes and therefore seemed (to me) a bit soulless. Under the influence of Bandura, Beck, and Ellis, cognition (both conscious and unconscious) was introduced into behaviorism. Presently there is considerable overlap between modern cognitive-behavioral therapy and traditional psychoanalytic ideas. For example, “both deal with the self-destruction of negative cognitions implied in the negative view of self, the world, and the future” (Roth and Fonagy, 1996).

The behaviorist approach focuses on behavioral interventions in observable behavior. It is in this context that I see J. L. Moreno as a behaviorist and I want to delve further into this area of behaviorism since it will be the foundation of later chapters. Moreno claims to have once compared himself and his work to Freud himself:

“Well, Dr. Freud, I start where you leave off. You meet people in the artificial setting of your office. I met them in the street and in their homes, in their natural surroundings. You analyzed their dreams, I try to give them courage to dream again. I teach people how to play God.”

—Rene Marineau, *Jacob Levy Moreno 1889–1974* (1989)

J. L. Moreno founded the methods of sociometry, psychodrama, and group psychotherapy. Psychodrama and sociometry are behavioral methods. They concretize choices and behaviors in order to explore further possible choices and behaviors. They are about behaving, acting, doing and the consequences upon the actor and those acted upon. Role training and simulation training are prominent behavioral techniques to this day. The rigid behaviorism of the early days (Pavlov, Watson, and Skinner), like the old science of cause/effect relationships and predictable outcomes, attempts to control results. Psychodrama and sociometry, however, are nonlinear like the new sciences that account for chaos, complexity, and quantum effects (like secondary gains). They seek to release us from predictable patterns of behavior into more creative and spontaneous ones.

In his work, Moreno developed a practice for the idea that change in behavior can not only reinforce but also generate psychological, social, evolutionary, and spiritual change. Moreno is not typically conceived of as a behaviorist.

Behavioral models focus on control and therefore on what Moreno called the cultural conserve. Moreno's behaviorism is complementary to that. His focus is on spontaneity and its manifestation, creativity.

Long before scientists developed chaos and complexity theories to understand the relationship between the explicate structure of reality (the order of finite matter) and the implicate network of chaos (the order of infinite possibility), Moreno intuited a dynamic spontaneity between what he called the cultural conserve (order) and creativity (chaos). Moreno saw creativity as the divinity in each of us. His Cannon of Creativity is central to the theory and practice of psychodrama, sociometry, and group process and places them squarely into the realm of what I would call exploratory behavior (or play) shaped by environmental responses.

When Moreno was generating these ideas, complexity theory was only suggested in the new physics being explored by Einstein, Bohr, Bohm, and others. Yet he intuitively identified a state of indeterminacy where order would emerge out of chaos as spontaneity:

It seems to be more stimulating to the present state of biogenetic and social research to assure that there is within the range of individual expression an independent area *between* heredity and environment, influenced but not determined by heredity (genes) and social forces (tele). The s[pontaneity] factor would have in this area its topographical location. It is an area of relative freedom and independence from biological and social determinants, an area in which new combinatory acts and permutations, choices and decisions are formed, and from which human inventiveness and creativity emerges.

—*Psychodrama, Volume I* (1973)

The saga of human life is a complex dynamic system emerging from the interaction of the chaos of the implicate reality with the order of the explicate reality. The areas of interaction, sometimes called *phase transitions* (or transition zones), are highly active and variable. Where some parts of the system are stabilized in a niche within the system, some are deactivating and falling out of the system, and others are over activating and breaking into chaotic disorder. The optimal functioning within the phase transition is flexible, complex, dynamic, and spontaneous. **Psychodrama** *might be*

*seen as a set of ritual techniques for teaching new behaviors that help us across phase transitions.* As ritual functions in life, psychodrama functions to expand our behaviors and bring us into the phase transitions at each of the Healing Circle's four thresholds: continuity, separation, transformation, and incorporation.

Out of simplicity comes complexity. Out of the same simple elements literally billions of individual stories unfold. Psychodrama is a vehicle for the unfolding of these stories. And, in ways too complex to measure in detail, each of these stories interconnects with each of the others in a dynamic and systematic way so that not only are we individually alive, but the whole of human life is alive. As the audience at a psychodrama witnesses, each individual life is like and different from each other life. The likeness is in the underlying structures governing our personal mythologies. The difference is in the unique story and the products of living.

The creative force within us, enacted through what Moreno called our spontaneity (*The Theatre of Spontaneity*, 1973), generates these differences. Moreno noticed that the spontaneity factor was observable and measurable in those moments when something "different" was happening. It was the factor that "animated all psychic phenomena" making them appear "new, fresh, and flexible." Our spontaneity is what takes us beyond the conditioned responses (Behaviorism) or cultural conserves (Moreno) and brings us into the here and now, the moment, where we encounter the unknown with the resources of our creativity, the force of the implicate order within us. Moreno called this Moment of something new coming into birth the *status nascendi*, "the moment of the emergence of a particular social situation" (Moreno, 1951). Focusing on the Moment is holistic; focusing on the outcome of the moment, the product, returns us to the dualistic thinking of cause/effect relationships and a new cultural conserve.

Moreno also identified four characteristic expressions of spontaneity. These expressions of spontaneity correspond to the four elementary parts of ritual: Separation (initiation), Transformation (gnosis), Incorporation (purification), and Continuity (apotheosis). These four expressions are as follows:

1. Dramatic Expression: Spontaneity that activates and energizes the particular cultural conserves while unifying the self, expressing and defining identity. (Separation)
2. Creative Expression: Spontaneity that is a permanent *status nascendi*, full of creative ideas which break up existing conserves and create new forms of art, life, social configuration, knowledge, personal myth, and, pre-eminently, the self. (Transformation)
3. Original Expression: Spontaneity that generates the free expression of the personality that does not change its essence, but which is a unique expansion or variation of personal expression. (Incorporation)
4. Adequate Expression: Spontaneity that generates responses that are appropriate to the situation facing an individual and adequate to meeting its demands. These are intentional responses that apply something new to something old, something old to something new, or something new to something new. (Continuity)

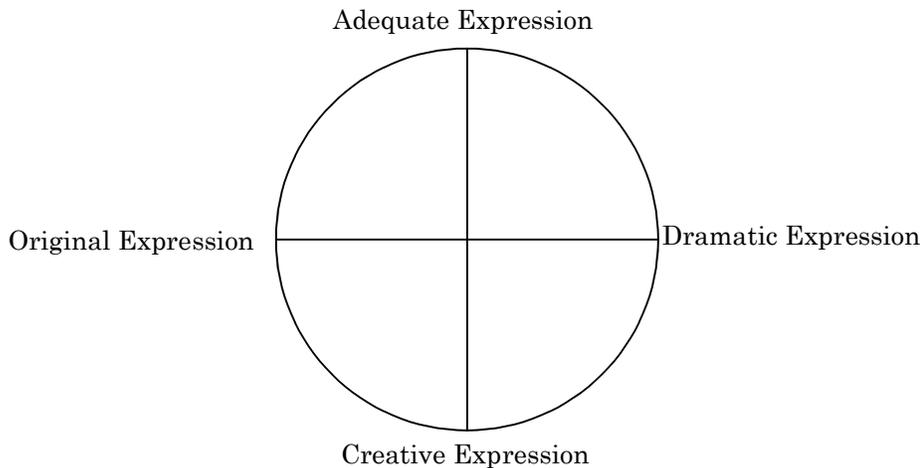


Chart 54. Expressive Modes of Spontaneity

Throughout his writings, Moreno expressed his vision of how spontaneity in the Moment produces the patterns of our behavior, or what he called the cultural conserves of the explicate reality. This relationship between creativity and conserve was his *idee fixe*. His vision was of “a sort of primordial nature which is immortal and returns afresh with every generation, a first universe which contains all beings and in which all events are sacred” (Moreno, 1978). He developed sociometry and group therapy as methods to simultaneously measure and change the interconnections among members of a society. **Psychodrama** is a method of warming up

*individual members of a group to their spontaneity so that they can make the connections necessary for full, complex, and dynamic participation in the mutual co-creative evolution of the group beyond its conserves of behavior into its creativity.*

Complementary to maturational models of development, where the focus is on genetically inherited behaviors, I place behaviorism in the Fall quadrant, characterized by challenge to learned mastery. Behaviorism has demonstrated that new behaviors can be taught successfully. Moreno saw the mastery of roles and actions as a cultural conserve. Moreno conceived of psychodrama and sociometry as practices to lead us to new creative and spontaneous acts beyond the cultural conserve.

### *Winter Quadrant: Innate Structures Models*

The Innate Structures models, notably those of Jean Piaget (cognitive stages), Konrad Lorenz (ethology, fixed action patterns, innate releasing mechanisms, key stimuli), Carl Jung (archetypes of the collective unconscious), and John Bowlby (attachment), hold that stimuli release innate behaviors in us. These models are complementary to the psychoanalytic models in that they discount the causal psychodynamic aspects of the relationship between self and other and focus instead on the neurological structures within the individual and the stimuli that activate them. As part of the environment, the actions of early caregivers are important because they can either release innate behaviors and development or not. I will discuss Konrad Lorenz' ethology (a trans-specific developmental perspective) and Bowlby's attachment theory.

Konrad Lorenz (along with Nikolas Tinbergen and Karl von Frisch) developed the discipline of ethology. Ethology is the comparative study of innate behavior patterns in living organisms, including humans. These patterns of development and behavior are just as reliably characteristic of a particular group as are their physical attributes. Determined by the form and structure of organisms, these behaviors are coded in the genes (Lorenz, 1981). Like other animals, humans have innate behavior patterns. In less complex organisms these tend to be fixed action patterns. In humans, more rather than less learning shapes the emergence of complex

behavior patterns. Walking, for instance, begins as a somewhat dangerous and difficult effort requiring full conscious attention. After time, it becomes so automatic that it can be performed unconsciously, like a fixed action pattern.

Imprinting is another process described by ethologists that is relevant to the circular dynamic of the Healing Circle. Humans have imprint-like behaviors. Imprinting has four qualities that distinguish it from ordinary learning: It has a specific window of time when the learning can take place, a specific context, a key stimulus, and it is driven by development not motivation for reward.

An example is the gosling imprinting on its mother goose. The key stimulus for this imprint is a large moving object. In the wild, the baby goose would most likely encounter only its mother at the specific window of time for the imprinting. In captivity, baby geese have imprinted on dogs, horses, and little girls. Humans, by the way, are effected by the fuzzy, rounded, big-eyed helplessness of the young of many species, including geese. These characteristics constitute a releasing “schema” of key stimuli for human parental care responses (Lorenz, 1981). This is the dynamic behind the movie *Fly Away Home*, about a lonely, motherless young girl and a gaggle of motherless goslings that imprint upon her. She eventually leads them on a migration from Canada to the Carolinas in an ultra light aircraft dolled up to resemble a parent goose. This is a true story.

No discussion of innate models would be complete without including attachment theory, particularly since, like the complex system of the personal mythology, it is a clear instance of an early “story” that evolves over time yet retains its basic plot. Our strategy for how to get what we need persists in our personal mythologies until we sort out real interpersonal intimacy, usually with a life partner, thus changing both strategy and myth. Attachment processes constitute an essential ingredient of our core personal mythology.

John Bowlby (1969, 1973, and 1980) developed attachment theory. Bowlby conceived “attachment as an evolutionary product that organizes interpersonal life from cradle to grave” (Bower, 1997). Infant dependency is a price we pay for our upright stance and our big brains:

As a result, the human infant is born neurologically unfinished and unable to coordinate muscle movement. Natural

selection has compensated for this by favoring a close adult–infant tie that lasts for years . . . The human baby is not isolated but is part of a physiologically and emotionally entwined dyad of infant and caregiver.

—Meredith E. Small, “Our Babies, Ourselves,”  
*Natural History* (1997)

Influenced not only by Freud’s idea that we unconsciously orchestrate adult relationships on the basis of experiences with our childhood caretakers, but also by studies of imprinting in animals, infant failure–to–thrive studies, and Henry Harlow’s experiments with baby monkeys (1958, 1966), John Bowlby argues that the human species made a heavy evolutionary investment in mutual bonds. These bonds constitute “an innate attachment system, consisting of behaviors and physiological responses that weave pairs of individuals into interdependent units” (Bower, 1997).

Attachment is a behavioral control system wired–in biologically. Infants exhibit care–seeking stimuli and “attachment” behaviors that interweave with the adults’ care–giving stimuli and behaviors. These complex behaviors are activated by an innate releasing mechanism (IRM), a neurological structure that requires a corresponding key stimulus. There are many IRMs that make up the attachment bond. To identify a few examples:

- Baby’s cry can stimulate the flow of mother’s milk
- Mother’s milk flow can stimulate baby’s cry
- Babies recognize and prefer their mother’s voices
- Mothers and babies can identify each others smells
- Facial configuration (eyes, nose, mouth) can calm an infant
- Infant configuration (roundedness, helplessness, big head and eyes) can activate care–giver behavior

West and Sheldon–Keller in *Patterns of Relating: An Adult Attachment Perspective* (1994) define a behavioral control system as one that . . .

. . . organizes and directs behaviors or activities to achieve specific *set goals* . . . The set goal of attachment as a behavioral system is defined in terms of a specified relation to a particular other.

The specified goal is *to secure proximity to a specific caregiver*. It should be no surprise that the infant care-seeking and parent care-giving systems are complementary.

Following Bowlby, Mary Ainsworth developed the Strange Situation Protocol (Ainsworth et al, 1978) for identifying and classifying infant attachment behaviors. Year old babies and their mothers are placed in a strange place (replete with baby stimulating objects), they are separated and then they are reunited.

She developed four categories of attachment to describe behaviors demonstrated by one-year-olds across cultures. These are the *secure* (babies who show the most adaptive behaviors throughout the situation), the *ambivalent* (babies who seek reunion with mother but remain angry and resistant), the *avoidant* (babies who show avoidance of proximity with mother during the reunion), and the *disorganized* (babies who fail to show a consistent strategy during reunion but instead show pronounced mixtures of ambivalent, avoidant, and extraneous behaviors). “Almost all subsequent empirical and theoretical work on attachment in infancy is based on Ainsworth’s methodology” (West and Sheldon-Keller, 1994).

The Strange Situation Protocol shows that most infants still have a secure attachment to at least one caregiver. Their mother or another adult consistently responds to their needs, comforts them at times of distress, and provides a safe harbor from which to explore the world. There are, of course, many cultural differences worldwide; however, “in almost all cultures, infants sleep with their parents in the same room and most often in the same bed. At all other times, infants are usually carried. Caregivers also usually respond quickly to infant cries; mothers most often by offering the breast” (Small, 1997). In the United States, on the other hand, “where individualism is valued, parents do not hold babies as much as in other cultures, and they place them in their own rooms to sleep” (Small, 1997).

Bowlby’s theories about the persistence of attachment styles have been largely ignored until recently (Bower, 1997; Gray, 2002; Johnson and Whiffen, 2006; Karen, 1994; Mikulincer and And Shaver, 2007; Simpson and Rholes, 1998; Rholes and Simpson, 2004; Weiss, 1982, 1991; and West and

Sheldon-Keller, 1994). The studies which followed his in the field of attachment theory have continued to show that the initial conditions he identified resulted in long term patterns of relating.

“Bowlby came to understand the first affectional bond of a human infant not as the result of a psychological drive, nor as a result of the search for object constancy, but simply as a result of natural selection: in other words, as an important and necessary contribution to the survival of the species.

—West and Sheldon–Keller, *Patterns of Relating* (1994)

Following Lorenz and Tinbergen, Bowlby believed that the attachment experience began as an innate behavioral control system driven by inherited IRMs to ensure survival. As the child developed, it transformed into a learned response system affected by reciprocal relationships with significant others. “Attachment theory does not define discrete ‘stages’ of development but rather formulates a theory of developmental continuity, built on the elaboration and expression of the internal working model of attachment” (West and Sheldon–Keller, 1994). Like Mahler’s intuition about the psychological birth of a self, Bowlby saw the individual’s attachment process bifurcate from a simple linear into a complex dynamical system.

As the helpless human infant develops into a competent adult, “the function of attachment, the provision of safety and security, remains constant throughout the life span” (West and Sheldon–Keller, 1994) while the mechanisms that achieve that function shift from innate to learned and from complementary to reciprocal behaviors. Security is a fragile thing throughout the life span. Potential loss or increase of security generates on-going adaptations from infancy to our death-beds.

Attempts by many researchers to generate reliable descriptions of adult attachment behavior have resulted in four attachment patterns: *compulsive self-reliance* (adults who are uncomfortable with neediness of and closeness with the attachment figure), *compulsive care-giving* (adults who put others needs first, are martyrs, and provide care with or without requests for it), *compulsive care-seeking* (adults who define life as problems they expect the attachment figure to lovingly solve), and *angry withdrawal* (adults who are angry

at the attachment figure for perceived general unavailability or unresponsiveness).

Of course, attachment theorists were not thinking about the Healing Circle when they developed these patterns. None of their models alone correspond to the seasons of development. However, Mary Main (1985), who developed the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI), includes a *disorganized* pattern in her model to describe adults who exhibit frightened, frightening, dissociated, or disoriented behavior. This pattern combined with West and Sheldon–Keller’s above completes a Healing Circle. Abandonment experiences lead toward *compulsive self-reliance*, betrayal leads toward *angry withdrawal*, disempowerment leads toward *compulsive caregiving/seeking*, and chaotic disorder and extreme abuse lead toward *disorganized* patterns of attachment.

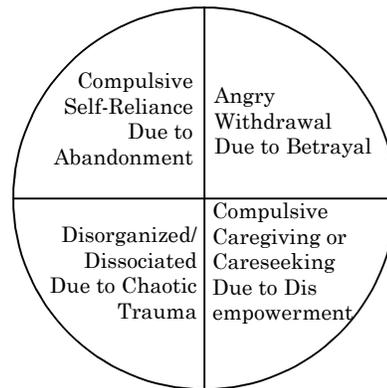


Chart 55. Patterns of Adult Attachment

Recent research has shown that the relations between parent and child and between sexual partners have common qualities (Bower, 1997). They share a need for close physical proximity and availability at times of danger or stress. They also provide a secure base in the world. Separation in both kinds of relationships results in emotional distress. As a “cradle to grave” process, attachment styles effect our relations with anyone whom we deem irreplaceable. Moreover, regardless of how much we have adapted our attachment possibilities through experience and knowledge, when severely stressed, the pattern regresses to its earliest formations. I believe that attachment experiences are a central feature of our personal mythologies.

The capacity for meaning making is an innate neurological capacity. Our brains compose an autobiographical

narrative out of our experiences that enter an affective state that is neither too mild nor too intense. The events that occur before our capacity to self reference are encoded unconsciously, and these are what form the personal mythology. Our personal mythologies carry the coding of our attachment processes. Any change in one will change the other. The personal mythology operates initially like an IRM, but soon it becomes a learned response system affected by reciprocal interaction with the environment. It is a complex dynamical system that fills in for the instinctual behaviors of organisms that have not evolved a self referencing brain.

Self referencing humans have a fair amount of choice regarding the key stimuli and these are built into their personal myths. A friend could not marry a man she loved and who loved her because he was bald and had false teeth. As it happened, her father had a full head of dark hair at sixty (and presumably a mouth full of teeth). Unfortunately, even knowledge of the source of her fixation could not help. They split up. He married someone else; she is still single. The cue to her imprint for loving is too specific. Why this sort of thing happens for some people and not for others is embedded in their personal myths.

As a flexible version of instincts, the personal mythology holds patterns of response behaviors that we can use as we interact with our environment. If we are stumped by the stimuli presented in the moment, or if a key stimuli already embedded in the personal mythology is presented, we can regress into the learned response system for guidance about how to behave. Thus we can regress to earlier stages of development at any time. This regression can be under more or less conscious control.

Many of these behaviors are activated by innate releasing mechanisms (IRMs). We experience release by key stimuli all the time. For example, a man was passing on the possessions of his departed parents in a garage sale. As he went through the stuff, he discovered a small blown glass duck with a broken wing. Something made him pause before finally throwing it in the trash pile.

Later he told a friend about the garage sale and remembered the broken winged duck. Suddenly he began to weep, wishing he had kept the object. He began to remember playing with the duck when he was little. He then associated the broken wings with his own childhood wounds, remem-

bering that he now often thinks of himself as Raven (of trickster/creator fame) pretending to be a mundane crow. The blown glass duck was a key stimulus to his personal mythology. This man had a complex neurological system of memories long forgotten that was activated by the key stimulus of the broken duck. John Kotre has written a beautiful book, *White Gloves: How We Create Ourselves through Memory* (1995), about this process.

Nature has provided recycling for ongoing review of the process of development, and this occurs whether we like it or not. Thus, unremembered traumas are keyed to releasers (key stimuli) like a particular smell or touch or song, opening the door to flashbacks. Sometimes the unconscious will release experiences through dreams and archetypes. We also have conscious associations to remembered experiences, traumatic and otherwise. When key stimuli activate these memories, we can plunge back to the same state of consciousness that we were in when we had the experience.

If we were eight or nine at the time, we can often handle ourselves adequately. If we were preverbal, things are harder. Regression is facilitated by the innate capacity of human consciousness for state dependent learning. In state dependent learning, when something is learned (encoded) in one neuropsychophysiological state, it will be best retrieved under the same state. These are affective states that contain historical, emotional (limbic and conditioned), and response pattern (conscious and autonomic) data. They bring into the here and now the presence of the past.

One of the purposes of psychotherapy is to put this power to regress into the service of the self towards its fulfillment. When we encounter a situation that we struggle with and for which the personal mythology is inadequate, the self system can change. Self organization is emergent at these times. The personal mythology is then changed, and so is our neurology. In this way human evolution is carried forward.

I believe that the Healing Circle itself is a key stimulus to wholeness and to ordering external reality. Research has shown that people mentally construct an imaginary space around themselves based on three dimensions or axes (Bower, 1990). For an upright observer, imagined objects above or below the body running along a vertical axis from head to foot are the easiest to recall. The next easiest to re-

call are objects in front of or behind the body running along one horizontal axis or objects to the right or left on the other horizontal axis. For the upright person, the vertical dimension is defined by the environment, the sky above and the ground below. The horizontal dimensions depend on arbitrary reference points.

As we move about, we seem to be able to best recall and place ourselves within the vertical and one horizontal axis. So it seems that even though we have a globe of perception around us, for practical purposes it shifts down to a two dimensional plane. The two dimensional quartered circle is the symbol of the globe of perception. I suspect that the quartered circle is a key stimulus for the innate releasing mechanism of our neurological way of ordering external reality, so that we know what is up and down, in front of us or behind, or left and right. Knowing where is are in space is crucial for our self awareness.

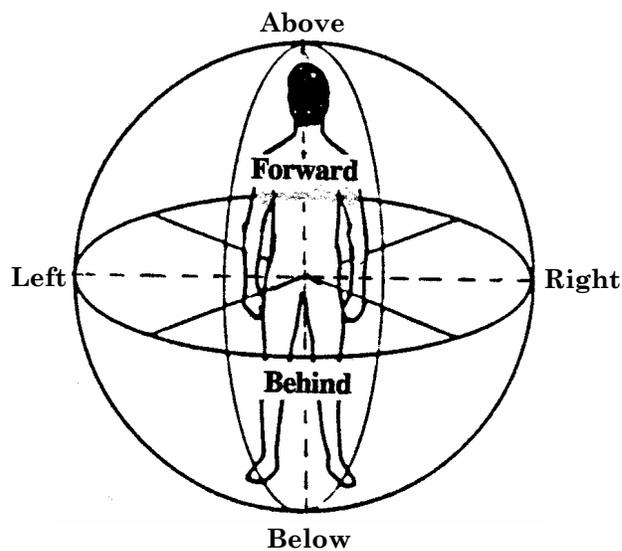


Chart 56. Globe of Perception

Key stimuli that activate human IRMs are biologically coded, like the configuration of the human face or archetypal images. Others, like the blown glass broken winged duck described above, are determined by the personal mythology. Here is a chart of the key stimuli and their resulting action patterns that I have discussed:

Chart 57. Innate Releasing Mechanisms

| Key stimuli   | IRM | Action Pattern  |
|---|-----|---|
| Archetypal image  |     | Archetype of the collective unconscious, sets in motion some individuating process  |
| Complexity: 2.01–3.99 parts interconnecting (except for 3.00)                         |     | Self organization at the edge between order and chaos   |
| Cruciform   |     | Transformation through self sacrifice   |
| Facial configuration  |     | Attachment behaviors to assure care–giver proximity   |
| Globe of Perception   |     | Sense of being in the center of four directions, one vertical axis and one horizontal axis, the quartered circle  |
| Healing circle  |     | Organization of complementary, commutable, and orthogonal aspects into a whole, fourness, union of opposites, nonlinearity, nonlocality, ordering of perceptual reality |
| Infant configuration: roundedness, helplessness, crying, big eyes, large head, gazing |     | Parental care giving, tenderness, physical proximity (face to face), parentese (melodic, vowel rich, high pitched vocalization)   |
| Intense experience  |     | Constructing a story of meaning (not telling story can lead to PTSD)  |
| “Parental” care–giving  |     | Attachment behavior and subsequent patterns of relating   |
| Percussion (drum, rattle)   |     | Percussive drive to altered state marked by intense visions, sensations of flight or other physical phenomena, sense of connectedness                                   |
| Quantum dynamics (associativeness, paradox, intuition, etc)                           |     | Uncertainty, reality construction, synchronicity experiences  |
| Unique (broken duck)  |     | Regression, acting childlike  |

I place the innate structures models in the Winter quadrant of the Healing Circle because these models study our development as it is generated by particular key stimuli which must occur within a particular time frame as genetically defined. This is complementary to the psychoanalytic models which focus on the effects of psychological drives on interpersonal relationships. The innate structures models are commutable with the behavioral models in that they both study behaviors keyed to elementary stimulus/response patterns. The innate structures models differ from the behavioral models in that the patterns studied by the latter are thought to be more conditioned rather than learned, although attachment theory overlaps the two somewhat. Innate structures are orthogonal to maturational models which refuse to identify particular behaviors and instead study de-

velopment as a time released unfolding rather than a stimulus/response pattern.

### **Development, Complexity, and Initial Conditions**

When I was a kid in Lathrope, California (a few miles from Lodi), I lived next to a chicken ranch. There was this fascinating (to an eleven year old) device I would watch for hours, the egg incubator. It held hundreds of eggs and kept them moving enough to keep the embryos viable.

On hatching day, my friends and I would watch and wait, until, finally, one by one at first and then in bursts, like popcorn in the popper, the chicks would emerge. Even with the predictability of the incubator, some of the eggs would not hatch. And every once in a while, there would really be a two headed or three legged monster, a real thrill. Horribly, the other darling chicks would soon peck the misfits to death.

If a fractal is a record of the happenings in the transition zones between order and chaos, then each human being is a bundle of fractals, a fractal of fractals. And each of us was incubated in the complex, dynamic system we call the family, yet another fractal. Besides our own selves, our most familiar fractal is the family.

The family, in all its forms, is a complex, dynamic system. A complex dynamic system is one which has multifaceted, complex, and interdependent parts, subject both to interlocking webs of positive (change inducing) and negative (change inhibiting) feedback and also to scaling, that is, self similarity at finer and finer (or larger and larger) scales. You will remember that the complex, dynamic system shows general dependability and moment to moment unpredictability simultaneously, yet it is more predictable over the short term than it is over the long.

The family is also extremely sensitive to initial conditions; this is why in therapy we look so carefully at families of origin and engage in rituals to bring early childhood experiences into the here and now where we can have another shot at initial conditions. As we have already discussed, initial conditions of complex systems have profound effects on outcomes. Thus, different children of the same parents will have different attachment experiences because the parents and the family as a whole will have changed.

It is not my intention to present a summary of theories of family therapy. The reader is referred to the excellent materials in the bibliography (Andolfi et al, 1989; Bagarozzi, 1989; Beavers, 1985; Carter and McGoldrick, 1988; Guerin, 1987; Imber-Black et al, 1988; Kerr and Bowen, 1988; Napier, 1988; Nichols, 1984; Osherson, 1986; Satir, 1972; Scarf, 1987; Seltzer, 1983; Snarch, 1991, 1997; Wolin and Bennett, 1984).

The family is an incubator for selfness. Each family system has its predictability and its infrequent monstrosities. However improbable it may seem to parents, their most acting out teenagers will, in all probability, end up with the familiar family values.

The Healing Circle defines the family as a group of two or more persons who may or may not co-habitate, who participate in both horizontal (peer) and vertical (unequal) relationships, and who are joined by affection, ambivalence, obligation, and a shared mythology, with interlocking personal mythologies, thus affecting and effecting each other's growth and development emotionally, psychologically, physically, and spiritually.

The Developmental models I have surveyed and plexed on the healing circle are each based on some relationship between the biological "force of necessity" and the environment. The initial environment the child encounters out of the womb is the family. The family shapes the self so that it fits into the cultural system of which it is a part. It is the first soil our self seeds encounter.

It is no accident, then, that myths of culture changing heroes and heroines are frequently family-less in significant ways or that our most dangerous misfits come from too chaotic or too ordered family systems. The family, whether the standard nuclear, the extended, the nonstandard single parent, multi-parent, gay/lesbian parents, foster parent, or the institutional *in loco parentis* variety, is the incubator for selfhood we all encounter.

Both attachment theory and object relations theory call attention to the fact that one of the important skills in the development of autonomy is managing dependency issues. These issues are a central theme of the self in the family system, later on, of the self in the social reality. They figure heavily in our personal mythologies. Every aspect of our

relationship with every person and object in our personal world is potentially influenced by our seasons of dependency. Thus dependency issues recycle around the circle throughout our lives and have their seasons of development and expression. They unfold as follows:

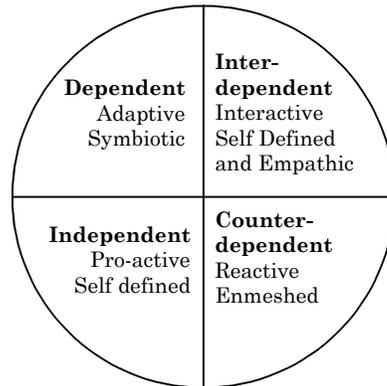


Chart 58. Dependency Issues

In humans, however, it is not just one family we are from. The family is an ever changing system, each member an interlocking part of the whole. Any change in any member changes the whole. As each child grows up, finds a partner (or not) and begins his or her own family, the whole family system changes. Yet this is not all.

The changes can occur at finer scales of apparent significance in the family life cycle. A son decides he hates sports. A daughter wants to be a doctor. A new brother or sister is born (or dies). Mother goes to work. Dad loses his job. Somebody gets sick. Hormones rage or wane. A birthday is forgotten. A family dog is secretly taken to the pound. All these (and more) can effect the whole.

Because families contain two, three, even four generations, self similarity and scaling is often seen across generations. Scaling appears in recycled family and personal myths as well. Behaviors large and small, like success, failure, alcoholism, certain diseases, suicide, first born daughters having firstborn children out of wedlock, depression, anxiety, gestures, figures of speech, incest, abuse, the examples could go on—behaviors are recycled with variations from generation to generation. Much of this behavior is embedded in the roles in the personal mythology, adapted and personalized

from the family and cultural myths that are part of the co-unconscious of the family system.

The Healing Circle points to the commutable, complementary and orthogonal relationships among these developmental models. It suggests that each is only part of a more complete cycle that would incorporate the models of self each developmental perspective assumes or implies. The self that the Healing Circle encompasses has the initial conditions of genetics, such as the maturational models study. This self enters into a familial environment negotiated through the presence of a significant other as the psychoanalytic models assert. The behaviorist models examine this self as it expands and develops further through challenges to mastery; then it experiences itself in relation to environmental, personal, cultural and genetic mythologies or meanings for reality such as that which the innate theories explain.

In more general terms, The Healing Circle makes it possible to view the stages of development as a seasonal recycling, thus indicating where therapeutic intervention may initiate a healing cycle. I presume that the ways people handle life's challenges are learned from birth on (at least) and that they are linked affectively to the complex processes of the developing self over time.

Research (Prigogine and Stengers, 1984) has shown that "selfness" is a dissipative (complex) structure. As the human being develops over time, the consciousness becomes periodically destabilized. The self system is at a bifurcation point. The self "can reduce external exchanges and internal excitation by closing its boundaries (ignoring input, denial), dissolve into chaos (regress), or arrive at some higher level of organization. Transition to a higher level of organization seems to involve accessing new neurological capacities" (Wade, 1996). This process is continued throughout our life times through the recycling represented by the Healing Circle. We must keep hatching ourselves throughout our lives, as our personal mythologies dynamically evolve from change to change, season to season, age to age.

## A Recitative Coda “Variations on the Theme of the Developmental Set”

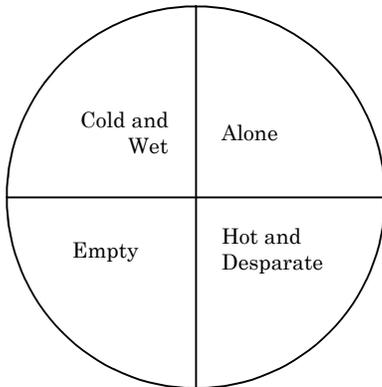


Chart 59. Core Infant Negative Affect

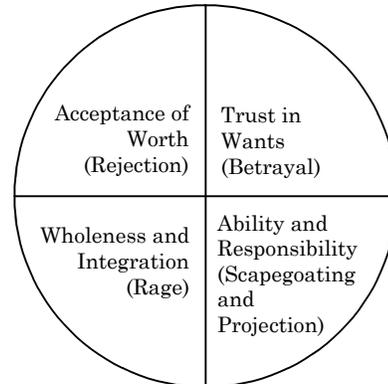


Chart 60. Key Issues

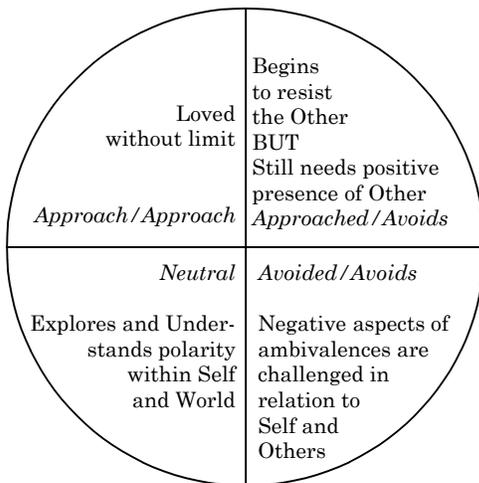


Chart 61. Development of Ambivalence I

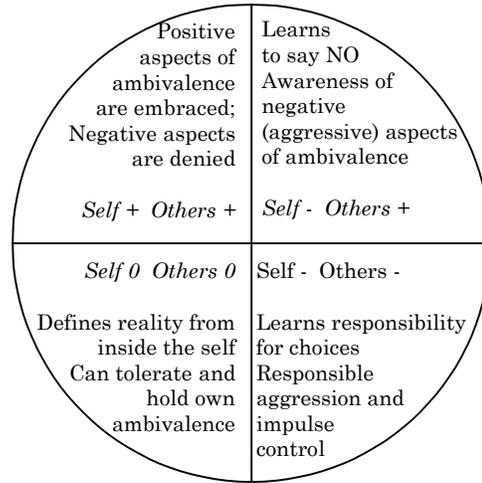


Chart 62. Development of Ambivalence II

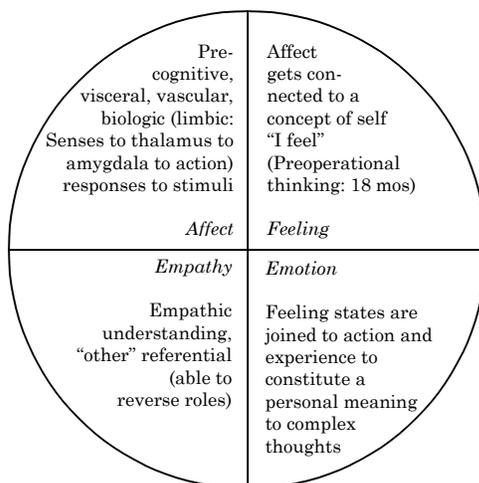


Chart 63. Development of Affect

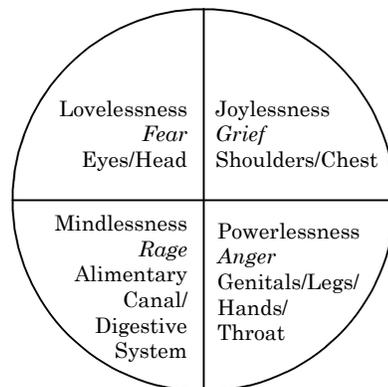


Chart 64. Body/Mind Issues

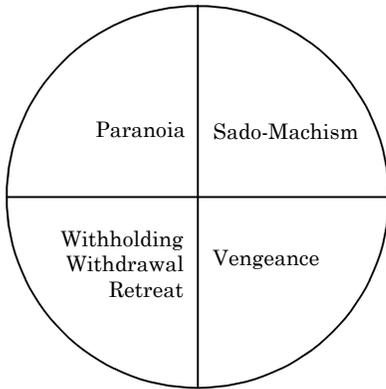


Chart 65. Key Defenses

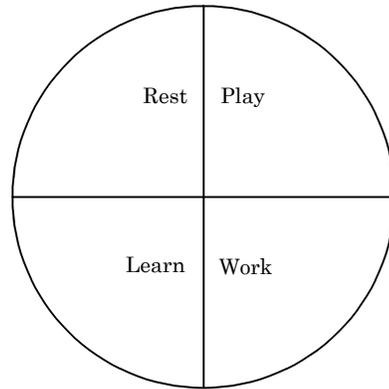


Chart 66. Areas of Human Activity

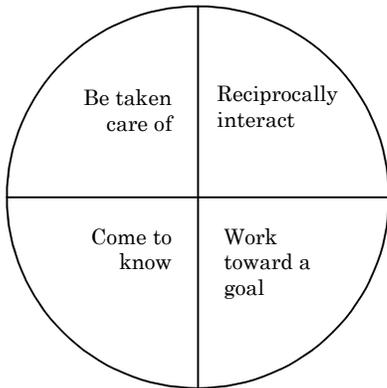


Chart 67. Healthy Behaviors

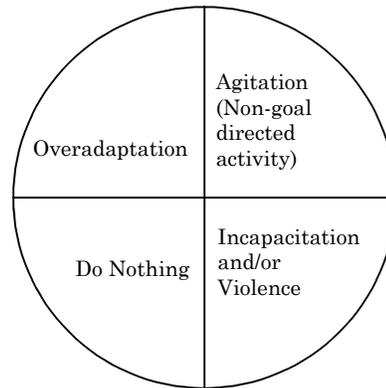


Chart 68. Passive Behaviors

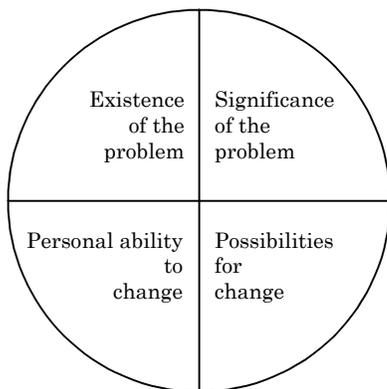


Chart 69. Stages of Discounting

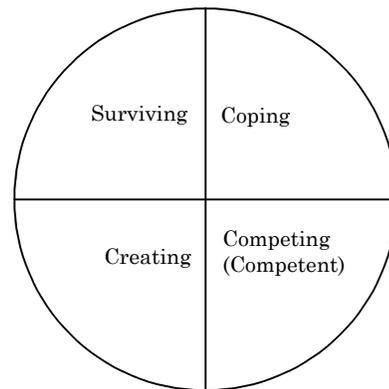


Chart 70. Living Skills

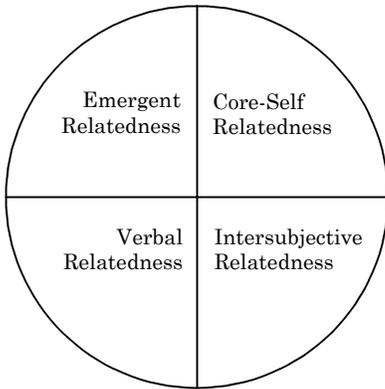


Chart 71. Development of Object Relations

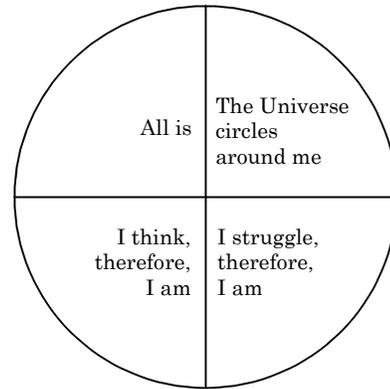


Chart 72. Developmental Credo

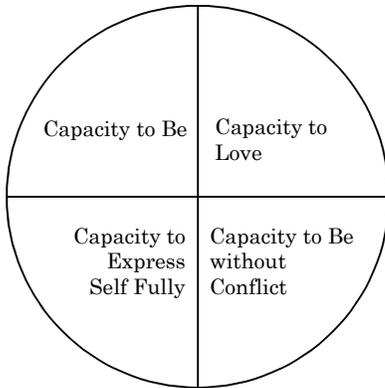


Chart 73. Development of Self Esteem

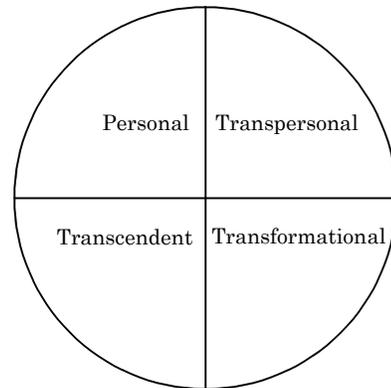


Chart 74. Spiritual Paradigm

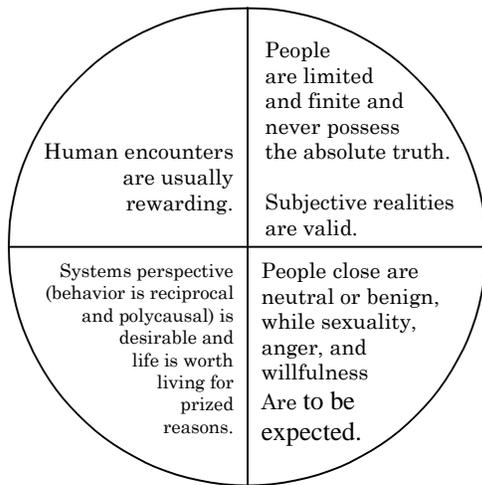


Chart 75. Beliefs in Healthy Relationships

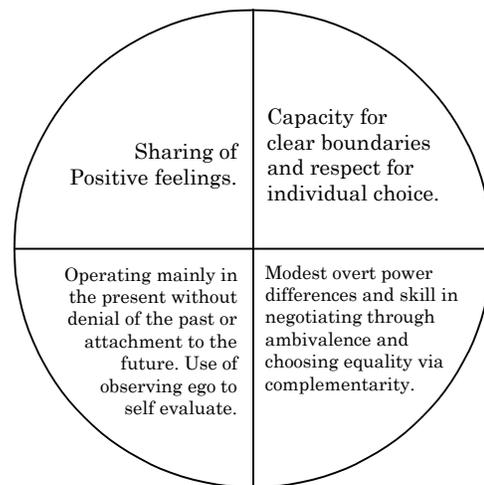


Chart 76. Behaviors in Healthy Relationships

## Chapter 6

# Personal Mythology

For it is out of himself and out of his peculiar constitution that man has produced his sciences. They are symptoms of his psyche.

—Carl Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* (1969)

### The Mythopoesis of Biography

Mine was an Irish family. Although my father's father was German Jewish, his mother was an Irish Scot. And as the youngest child, my mother was born in America of Irish immigrant parents from County Mayo, Ireland. Our family life was benchmarked with stories. All our experiences were rendered into tales, sentimental and humorous, woven of history, drama, and varying portions of blarney. These tales were frequently told to blunt depth of feelings, but they were always listened to with utmost respect, even if told by a child.

One of the tales that emerged from my childhood became a core personal myth. This is the Story of *Little Boy, Lost*:

When I was little, I was always following the golden dust motes—and getting lost. One bright spring day in my fourth year in this world, I walked to a nearby bridge over the Mississippi, carrying one of my Mother's treasured white enameled saucepans with the black rim and handle. Filling the pan were some of my bright orange building blocks. Even though I was terrified of heights, I crept out on the boardwalk of the bridge, trying unsuccessfully to not look at the rushing river water through the spaces between the boards.

At the center of the bridge, my heart in my mouth, I dropped the orange blocks, one by one, into the river far below, watching them sweep away in the current. Then I tossed the saucepan after them, watching it spin whitely away on the dark turbulent water. Somehow, after, I lost my way home. A kind policeman eventually found me. He bought me an ice cream cone and let me wear his hat while he drove me home. I was the envy of the neighborhood kids (and Mother's villain).

This was one of my public family stories. Later as an adult in personal therapy, I “recovered” a memory of riding in the back seat of the family Pontiac fighting with my little brother, Robin. My Father, fed up, slammed on the brakes, pulled the car to the curb, and reached into the back seat to open up the passenger door. “Get out!” he shouted. “If you’re going to be this way, we don’t want you.” In tears, I wandered off, found a nice policeman, who bought me an ice cream cone and let me wear his hat as he drove me home.

While I worked in therapy on abandonment for several months, I questioned the historical truth of this recovered memory. Could my Father have been so cruel and stupid? I found it hard to believe, and I hated adjusting my *Little Boy, Lost* personal myth. Five years later, while gathering images for a slide presentation on personal mythology, I came across a Pulitzer prize winning photograph from *Life Magazine* published at the end of World War II, when I was five years old. It was a photo of a little lost boy encountering a kind policeman (who later became the Chief of Police) during a victory parade in Washington, DC. I burst into tears of grief. I recognized the archetype for my *little boy, lost*, instantly.

I had woven that picture image into my personal public myth about my childhood. I had to incorporate this new knowledge into my evolving personal mythology. Now I questioned the truth of my original story too. Three years later still, I was shocked during a sibling reunion, one late night, after hours of story telling, when my older (not oldest) sister told the following story:

Hey! Do you remember the time Daddy put John out of the car?

We were on our way to California and driving through Montana. It was hot and boring. John, you were nine. You and Rob were bickering in the back seat of the old Pontiac. Daddy slammed on the brakes and pulled to the side of the road. Then he reached back and flung open the passenger door yelling: “Get Out! If you’re going to be like this, we don’t want you.” When you got out, he slammed the door and took off. Rob was grinning like a Cheshire cat, but Alice and I started to cry: “But Daddy! We want him!” After a while, he said he was teaching you a lesson.

After what seemed like forever, he turned around and went back for you. But we couldn’t find you! We were in the middle of Montana! Everything looked the same, and you weren’t by the side of the road learning your lesson like Daddy expected. We all started crying, even Daddy. Daddy had to find the local

sheriff and they called out the Search and Rescue teams. They finally found you keeled over out in the dessert, miles from the highway. The sheriff scolded Daddy. He was the one who learned a lesson that day.

My brothers and sisters started laughing, but I interrupted. “Don’t laugh,” I pleaded, “I’ve been struggling with this for over eight years. I thought I made it up. I felt terrible being left like that. I thought I was going to die.” I wept. After a long silence, my youngest sister tearfully shared how she had felt like that too. Then, one by one, like blocks in the river, each of my siblings shared about the feelings of abandonment and despair they had felt when our Mother died, when our Father changed and was not really with us any more, and when they had been taught lessons on how to behave “or else.”

While my older sisters were certain of their memories of this event, I had no recollection of it at all. This confrontation of memory and alleged history was wonderfully liberating in the end. The relative unimportance of memory and history compared to personal mythology became abundantly clear to me. We do not discover ourselves in personal myths, we make ourselves through them (Kotre, 1995; McAdams, 1993). As Dan McAdams asserts in *The Stories We Live By* (1993), “a personal myth is a sacred story that embodies a personal truth.”

We are an Irish family, and engaging like this was (and still is) rare for us. This experience remains one of the most powerful of my life. It empowered me to relinquish my old story and to reinforce my new personal mythology, a mythology that encourages self-trust, acceptance of doubt and thus vulnerability, assertiveness, and the sharing of emotional truth. Other stories in my life experience, like Irish history, the IRA, Irish Catholicism, and Jesus Christ, interwove with this core myth of *Little Boy, Lost* to direct my choices and behaviors into numerous rebellions, resulting in school-expulsions and job-firings (the last and most career changing when I was thirty-three).

Of course, I had to return to personal therapy to work through my rage at stupid parenting and to learn acceptance of a self-destructive part of me who was willing to walk into a desert to die to teach my Father a lesson. I could at last complete the transformation of *Little Boy, Lost*, the noble sufferer in silence unto death to make a point. I had to create a

new role to transform into, but that is another story I call *Sore Knee the Sioux*, which I will relate in chapter 8.

### **Mythology and Personal Myths**

All human constructions of reality are myths. The search for our personal mythologies described in this book is a process closely related to those of the extended family of Constructivist Psychotherapies. Constructivist theory views human beings as meaning-making agents who individually and collectively create their own realities (Mahoney, 1995). According to Anderson (1990):

Constructivist therapy is not so much a technique as a philosophical context within which therapy is done, and more a product of the *zeitgeist* than the brainchild of any single theorist. These approaches work with a part of the human psyche that is surprisingly neglected in many schools of therapy—the form-giving, meaning-making part, the narrator who at every waking moment of our lives spins out its account of who we are and what we are doing and why we are doing it.

The constructivist approaches share theoretical assumptions:

1. The lives we construct are complex systems and are, at the core, subject to self organizing development.
2. Our life habits are derived from self narratives that can be the focus of psychotherapy.
3. The standard of health is in the internal consistency, consensus, and personal viability of these narratives.
4. Because neither the client nor the therapist can claim greater authority or empirical validity for the meaning of the self narratives, the healing process is conducted in collaborative terms and new story lines are co-created rather than problems being corrected.

There are four nuclear “families” in Constructivist Psychotherapies. The earliest to emerge was Personal Construct Theory developed by George Kelly (1955). Kelly based his theory on the clinical application of J. L. Moreno’s psychodrama theory of roles and enactment (Stewart and Barry, 1991). The second “family” is Structural Developmental Cognitive Therapy (Lakatos, 1974; Guidano and Liotti, 1983;

Mahoney, 1991). This approach describes the “metaphysical hard core” of self assumptions generated by the “unique developmental trajectory that shapes each individual’s personal knowledge of self and world” (Mahoney, 1995). The third “family” is Constructivist Family Therapy (Boscolo, Cecchin, Hoffman, and Penn, 1987; Efran, Lukens, and Lukens, 1990; Hoffman, 1985, 1988; Maturana and Varela, 1987; Selvini-Palazzoli, Boscolo, Cecchin, and Prata, 1980; Tomm, 1987). This approach to families focusses on the interaction of meaning within the family system and generates rituals of change to reconstrue the family stories. The fourth “family” is Narrative Reconstruction (Mair, 1988; Hermans and Hermans–Jansen, 1995). According to Mair (1988):

I want to claim much more than the comfortable platitude that stories are a good thing and should be attended to. Stories are habitations. We live in and through stories. They conjure worlds. We do not know the world other than as story world. Stories inform life. They hold us together and keep us apart. We inhabit the great stories of our culture. We live through stories. We are lived by the stories of our race and place. It is this enveloping and constituting function of stories that is especially important to sense more fully.

I use the term personal mythology rather than self narrative on the principle that if something walks like a duck, lays eggs like a duck, and quacks like a duck, it must be a duck. So called self narratives function, change, and resonate the same numinosity as myths. They share with the great cultural myths the deeply spiritual function of taking us beyond ourselves.

So, I say again, all human constructions of reality are myths. This is a very different way of considering mythology from what you may be used to. Most people think of myths as stories of gods and goddesses from older cultures. My use of the term includes quantum mechanics, Krishna, Christ, Creationism, Evolution, Madonna, Superman, and the collective unconscious. All are mythologies. On an even more day-to-day level, your excuses for being late to work, the diagnosis you got from your family doctor last year, and your mechanic’s explanation of why your car dies on the freeway are all myths. Every book, movie, television program, and job resume is a myth. Mankind makes myths (Franzke, 1989; Hankiss, 1981; Hartman, 1980; Heuscher, 1974; Jung, 1968, 1969; Kotre, 1995; Krippner, 1990; May, 1991; Moon, 1991;

Murray, 1960; Person, 1995; Pieracci, 1990; Seltzer and Seltzer, 1983). We cannot not make meaning of our experiences (Siegel, 1999). We make meaning by constructing a story. The story is a part of a personal mythology, largely unconscious, that directs our lives like a script. All human constructions of reality are myths.

Here are eight ideas I will demonstrate in this and the next two chapters:

1. We all have a personal mythology that defines the boundaries of our spirit and our destiny.
2. This personal mythology is a complex dynamical system of stories (plots, characters, symbols, places, catharses) orbiting a core myth or two of self organized meaning.
3. As a complex system, the personal mythology is inherently tied to the initial conditions of our lives, especially our births, our first years of development, and our attachment to others.
4. The resources (that is, the problems:solutions) and the outcomes (that is, the failures:successes) of living are encrypted in the personal mythology.
5. Our mythology is affirmed through habits; we change through sacred rituals.
6. Personal growth occurs when the unconscious elements of the personal mythology are brought to light and engaged.
7. Some therapeutic interventions are ritual enactments of the unconscious personal mythology.
8. When the warm-up is sufficient, the catharses of such enactments change that mythology, thus redefining the boundaries of the actor's spirituality and life possibilities.

When I refer to the unconscious, I do not refer merely to Freud's repressed seething cauldron, Jung's collective unconscious, or Moreno's group forming co-unconscious. I refer to a concept of the unconscious that includes all three of these and more. Specifically, I refer to the "cognitive unconscious" described by the new cognitive science (Dennett, 1991, 1996; Edelman, 1989, 1992; Gentner and Grudin, 1985; Hoffman, 1998; Johnson, 1987; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 1999; Nørretranders, 1991; Pert, 1997; Searle, 1998; Varela, Thomson, and Rosch, 1991).

In this view, the unconscious is intimately and inherently connected to our biology: our senses, our neural networks, our physical capacities, our movement, and all of our

experiences as individuals and as evolved beings. Of course, the idea of consciousness changes as well. As Lakoff and Johnson (1999) put it, “Conscious thought is the tip of an enormous iceberg. It is the rule of thumb among cognitive scientists that unconscious thought is 95 percent of all thought—and that may be a serious underestimate. Moreover, the 95 percent below the surface of conscious awareness shapes and structures all conscious thought. If the cognitive unconscious were not doing this shaping, there would be no conscious thought” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999).

It is hypothesized that the cognitive unconscious is a complex dynamic system out of which self organized wholes of meaning (affect, cognition, and behavior) emerge as the iceberg tip of consciousness, much like the explicate order emerges out of the implicate reality (Bohm, 1980). According to Lakoff and Johnson (*Philosophy in the Flesh*, 1999), here are just a few of the processes going on in the unconscious second by second during a simple conversation:

- Accessing memories relevant to what is being said
- Comprehending a stream of sound as being language, dividing it into distinctive phonetic features and segments, identifying phonemes, and grouping them into morphemes
- Assigning a structure to the sentence in accord with the vast number of grammatical constructions in your native language
- Picking out words and giving them meaning appropriate to context
- Making semantic and pragmatic sense of the sentences as a whole
- Framing what is said in terms relevant to the discussion
- Performing inferences relevant to what is being discussed
- Constructing mental images where relevant and inspecting them
- Filling in gaps in the discourse
- Noticing and interpreting your interlocutor’s body language
- Anticipating where the conversation is going
- Planning what to say in response
- Swimming in a flow of projections and complementary identifications (transference and countertransference) that help make or break connection and meaning to the process

This list does not even begin to enumerate physiological processes like our emotional responses to the tone of voice, the context of the discourse, the images, memories, or key stimuli accessed and the learned responses activated.

Many partners in conversation engage in a dance of motion with their faces and bodies, leading, following, anticipating, and mirroring the rhythm of the conversational flow. Additionally, these processes are nested in the personal mythology, our context for attributing meaning to our experiences. The personal mythology is in turn nested in the “cognitive unconscious.” The “cognitive unconscious” is nested in the collective unconscious. And all are nested in the psyche. Each conversant is accessing the stories, the plots, the characters, the challenges, the crises, the symbols, and the archetypes of his or her personal mythology. Unconsciously, each compares, contrasts, and categorizes his or her myths with input from the other in order to decide in what ways, if any, to explore the relationship further.

A myth is a set of culturally conditioned key stimuli organized within a story that activates the innate releasing mechanisms (Campbell, 1968) discussed in the previous chapter. Key stimuli, like the cruciform, the protective embrace, the nursing mother, and roundedness, activate inherited neurological structures (IRMs) that enable an organism to respond to a releaser even if it has never been experienced before (Campbell, 1968). A key stimulus is an energy releasing and energy directing symbol (Campbell, 1968). Ducklings bond to large moving objects, chicks flee the shadow of the chicken hawk, and human infants bond to the facial configuration, while human mothers bond to their baby’s cry.

Regarding myths, the mental supports of rituals, and rituals, the physical enactments of myths (Campbell, 1968), the most notable thing about civilization is the erosion of a consensual cultural mythology and meaningful cultural rituals (Feinstein and Krippner, 1988). Now we have a plethora of personal mythologies and a residue of empty cultural rituals to inadequately enact them. We have too many myths and too few meaningful rituals. To live mythically is to seek guidance from our dreams, imagination, and other reflections of our inner being, as well as from the most inspiring people, practices, and institutions of our society. To live mythically is to cultivate an ever-deepening relationship with the universe and its great mysteries.

In the periodic crises of health, faith, identity, and courage that punctuate life, we are called to the adventure of renewing our personal mythology. David Feinstein and Stanley Krippner in their book, *Personal Mythology* (1988), ex-

tend and explore the concept of personal mythology in detail. Personal mythology was found to be the common denominator in a research project in which Feinstein compared new personal growth therapies and traditional therapies (1988). Feinstein and Krippner assert that psychotherapy is today's form of traditional mythology: it is the carrier of the oral tradition. Therapists today perform many of the functions reserved for shamans and priests in earlier times.

Every personal mythology has its personal key stimuli. The family is the first and most profound source of key stimuli. Few people know the conditioning that defines the limits of whom they find attractive, but a full head of hair, or hair of a particular color and style, may be an unrecognized precondition of response to a partner. Or an old photograph can activate the release of an unconscious personal myth.

What, besides key stimuli, engage our personal mythologies? Feinstein and Krippner argue that everyone has, at least, a personal mythology, and that mythology is deeply rooted in feelings, whether we are consciously aware of that mythology or not. So the presence of strong feelings that feel larger than life is a clue to an underlying mythology. Other clues are dreams, other products of the unconscious, and recurring problems. Personal mythologies are self-fulfilling, so a strong feeling of familiarity in an experience, whether that experience be thought positive or negative, is a powerful clue. Our personal mythology, say Feinstein and Krippner, acts as a lens that colors our perceptions according to its assumptions and values. It highlights certain possibilities and shadows others. Unfolding our personal mythology opens us up to a new range of choices, resulting in more creativity and power because personal mythologies can be changed, while personal histories cannot.

If we are lucky, we get to tell our stories. Therapy is the contemporary venue for this. Therapy makes the unconscious personal myths conscious by providing rituals of enactment and transformation. We maintain our myths through the many habits of feeling, wanting, doing and thinking that constitute the mundane validation of our past choices. We change our myths during the sacred moments when our spontaneity rescues us from the crisis of an apparent dead end. When we run out of options, we create change.

Without a single shared cultural mythology and a system of rites of passage, we end up forming our own personal

mythologies at very early ages, only to discover at age thirty that a wounded two-year-old is managing our intimate relationships. Or, lacking a meaningful initiation ritual, we have trouble feeling like a grown up. According to Feinstein and Krippner, attempting to follow a personal myth that is not in harmony with who we are or the world in which we live is painful, and a mythology that is unable to link us to deeper meanings and greater inspiration than we can find in the outer world is often accompanied by a deep and nameless anxiety.

### **Personal Mythology as a Complex System**

The underlying idea behind my own theory of personal mythology is that it is a complex dynamic system, poised on the edge between stability and chaos where order is emergent. The essence of such systems is that they appear complex on the surface, but they are generated by a relatively simple set of subprocesses. The personal mythology is the underlying set of simple subprocesses directing human self-awareness. For practical purposes in therapy, all personal history is myth, with the “narrative truth” more important than “historical truth” (Spence, 1982). Discrepancies between them are worked out through interpretation and deepening awareness of one’s inner life.

For example, a young man serving in Viet Nam during the war realized that he was terrified and could not go out on patrol again. While “on point” he became overwhelmed, running back to his squad leader, who promptly sent him back out on point again. Upon return to base, he requested a transfer away from the “front,” certain that he was a danger to the rest of his squad. Branded a coward in his childhood by his physically abusive father, he was relabeled a coward by his squadmates and his commanding officer. He was reassigned as a guard at the army brig, where he witnessed a side of the war as difficult in its own way as the bush.

Twenty years later, in therapy for posttraumatic stress disorder, he came to understand that it was entirely appropriate for him to fear his father. He learned that his fear in Viet Nam was also appropriate. He learned that it took great courage to return to the point when ordered and that it also took courage to state the truth of his uncontrollable terror—and the danger to his buddies because of it—to his com-

manding officer. He learned that asking for reassignment took courage too.

As his story unfolded, he shared that as a guard in the brig he blew the whistle on abuses in the prison, at great personal risk. He pushed his confrontation of the prison system all the way to reform. "I had to do it," he explained. "My CO could have thrown me in the brig for being a coward. That could have been me getting whacked by the guards." That took courage as well. Eventually, he was able to begin living a personal mythology that included his cleverness at protecting and preserving his innocence in childhood, his courage to tell the truth, and his altruism in fighting the prison abuses.

There are four criteria for transforming our personal history into personal myths:

1. Traumatization: Distortions, deletions, additions, and missing pieces of reality due to early conclusions about the world and decisions about how to survive in the face of the inevitable traumas of existence. (Initial Conditions)
2. World View: The adopted world view that effects the way we interpret objects, events, interactions, and our subjectivity. (Internal Parameters)
3. Sensorium: Each individual's personal sensory apparatus. (External Parameters)
4. Recycling: Wisdom, creative recycling, or the compulsion to repeat the past till we get it right. (The Strange Attractor)

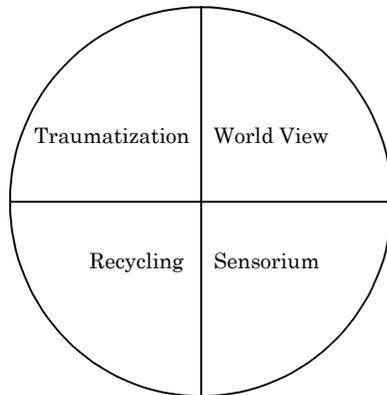


Chart 77. Personal History Criteria

D. W. Winnecott, a pediatrician and psychoanalyst, believed that each child born was like a seed with internal programming for the final shape of what he or she was to become (Fromm and Smith, 1989). The drive to complete our-

selves is inborn and irresistible. However, disasters and obstacles upset the natural unfolding of self. Mother may suffer from post partum depression and be unable to bond with her baby. Or Father may be overwhelmed with the demands of work and unavailable or frighteningly cranky when present.

Any of a multitude of the vicissitudes of life, intentional and unintentional, can cause damage. When this happens in childhood, built in self-correcting mechanisms unconsciously direct our adult actions towards finding or creating an environment similar to the environment that we were experiencing during the traumatization. Thus we may pick partners that carry unresolved aspects of one or both parents, so that we can reclaim blocked aspects of ourselves.

Traumatization and recycling are fundamental to the continuity of our personal mythologies. As the survey of developmental perspectives in the last chapter proposes, it is natural and developmentally programmed that one's personal mythology be reviewed and renewed, often unconsciously. The various ways in which the personal history is stored become points of access for re-entering the personal mythology and changing it. Events similar to the original traumatization, the discovery of holes in a memory, a challenge to our world view, a sensory experience which invokes the early trauma, or a re-encounter with the traumatic scene through psychodramatic ritual, for examples, can begin the process of healing and remaking the personal mythology.

A personal mythology is a constellation of feelings, desires, behaviors, and symbols (beliefs and images) that is organized around core themes. Personal mythology is a subset of the larger field of Mythology. Therefore, the personal mythology addresses one or more of the Four Primary Functions of Mythology, as explicated by Joseph Campbell in *The Masks of God* (1968):

1. Reconciliation: To reconcile our waking consciousness with the mystery of life. Creation stories, for example, function in this way. They account for why the world and our experiences of it are as we find them. Stories of unexpected success, fulfillment of dreams, and returns to paradise also serve this function.
2. Inspiration: To inspire an awe of the mystery of life. This fosters the centering and unfolding of the individual in accord with him or her self, culture, and world. Conversion narratives of orphans, saints, heroes and heroines function in this way, for example.

3. Enforcement: To enforce a moral order of a geographically and historically conditioned social group. Stories like that of Moses leading the Hebrews out of Egypt in the *Book of Exodus*, later adopted by other groups such as American slaves, have functioned in this way.
4. Interpretation: To interpret and define an image of the universe. Eschatological narratives—stories about what comes after death, such as the New Testament gospels, function in this way. They interpret the meaning of all experience and what is beyond experience.

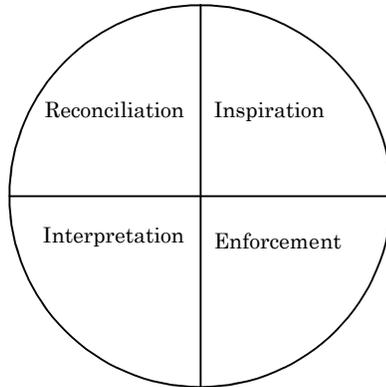


Chart 78. The Four Functions of Myth

### The Personal Mythology

Personal myths are a synthesis of the four functions of myth at many levels of consciousness, the “cognitive unconscious,” and the collective unconscious. In traditional cultures myth functions in these ways for the whole community and rituals are organized around the shared myths to revive their power. Cultural myths distill the dreams of a particular people from a particular place and time. Those cultural myths with a broad application, like the cultural hero, survive across cultures because they originate from the innate archetypal structures of humanity.

In the quest for spiritual satisfaction, we make our own personal myths to direct our paths of existence. The personal myths function just like cultural ones and in place of them. The personal myths echo themes and characters from the larger cultural ones, usually naively and without foreknowledge (since innate archetypal structures drive the myth-making). In traditional cultures, the cultural myths formed the story line of the rites of passage to assist members moving from one stage of life to another. In modern civilization, personal myths try do the same thing.

Two things impede the impact of personal myths. First, most people are unaware that they are living out an internal blueprint for their lives. Secondly, there are not enough rituals to support the personal myths even when they are conscious.

The power of ritual has been forgotten or trivialized except for the rituals of science. The “scientific method” is a ritual for quantitatively measuring the explicate reality. Most other contemporary rituals, especially those which measure qualitative aspects of the implicate order, like our satisfaction and fulfillment with our lives, often go unnoticed as rituals and are seen instead as conformity to or rebellion against the status quo. Creativity is seen as the possession of a few artists rather than the birthright of each person.

Many rituals today are haphazard and self created affairs cobbled together by the person desiring change. If we could just pick a more attractive personal mythology and live it out, we would probably do it and we have a perfect Utopia. Unfortunately, as complex systems, personal mythologies are more subject to initial conditions or deterministic chaos than to common sense or simple preference.

The personal mythology is a living system; it persists over time. When a new story is grafted to the existing personal myths, it changes the whole body of that mythology and is itself changed in the process. Yet nothing is ever lost. We cannot erase the experiences and corresponding stories of a lifetime. We can only change the meanings of our experiences by adding to and changing the stories we have created.

Very powerful unintended experiences, like an airplane crash we survive, can break into the system of personal myths. However, to change a personal myth, we usually need a particular type of ritual, which provides the appropriate structure of intentionality so that when intensity is raised to the myth changing level we create the meaning needed for wholeness.

Personal myths can be categorized into four kinds as shown in the chart below. Each of these is progressively more difficult to change. Public myths, the stories we tell others, are the easiest to change. These are “first order” changes: limited, focused, linear changes of cause and effect involving simple accommodations to demands of life. Changing a public myth can be as simple as deciding not to tell a particular

story because the results of doing so are undesirable. These changes are like changing one’s clothes. Yet even first order changes can have deep consequences.

The other three levels of change are “second order” changes: complex, multi-causal (accidental, intended, environmental, conscious, unconscious) changes that self organize unpredictable systemic outcomes. Private myths are stories we keep to ourselves, usually because telling them is risky or difficult. If changing a public myth is like changing clothes, changing a private myth is like cross-dressing in secret. Because these myths are kept hidden, they are also less likely to be changed. They are most often changed through some ritual of disclosure or coming out.

To change a forgotten myth, you have to remember it. Forgotten myths are remembered by reminiscing, by engaging in therapy, through trauma, through activation by key stimuli, through body memories, or from dreams, for example. Once you have remembered a forgotten myth, you soon reconstrue it as a public, private, or core myth.

Core myths are difficult to change because they are unconscious. Changes in the core mythology are transformative of the entire system. In my own mythology, I gradually uncovered a core myth of betrayal. The person who was supposed to love and protect me was unable to do so consistently.

Typically, I began therapy with the conviction that, with the exception of the death of my mother when I was seven years old, I had had a perfect childhood and that my troubles were my own damn fault. Today I know that my troubles are inherently related to my childhood and that I have to take responsibility for them by learning new ways to respond to life. Constructing a new personal mythology was extremely painful and extraordinarily rewarding.

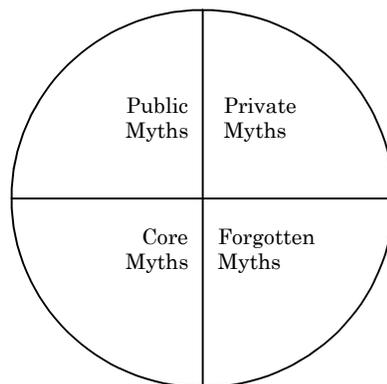


Chart 79. Four Kinds of Personal Myths

Exploring further the four kinds of personal myths, I will discuss their relationship to the healing process. **Public Myths** are the stories we readily tell about ourselves. For example, in reference to my public family myth, *Little Boy Lost*, I presented my public personal myth of the Day-Dreamer, lost in thought, and, coincidentally, wandering off. Public myths include the stories we tell at parties, the answers we make during job interviews, or the explanations (about death or sex, for examples) that we give our children.

These stories are in the foreground of our lives, yet included in public myths are reciprocal background roles we are less likely to acknowledge: The suave seducer and the aloof prince or princess, the hardworker and the slavedriver, or the theocratic law-giver and the uncivilized savage. Every role has its dark side, its shadow aspect, as Jung might say. In the Healing Circle, it is complementarity. We often play both roles in alternate settings. These myths are complementary to the forgotten ones and are, therefore, important clues to the recovery of memories encrypted in the implicate order of the unconscious.

The first things that we see and hear from others are often key stimuli of their personal myths, most immediately, their public myths, but also intimations of the other kinds too. A new client, Rex, appears in a male therapist's office. He is in his thirties, but looks very young. He wears casual pants, a white shirt and a violet tie, and a sport coat. His hair is neither long nor short. He avoids eye contact until his first words upon sitting down: "I'm not really sure why I'm here. My girl friend, Mary, thought it would be a good idea."

Commentary: A Jungian would suggest that Rex was living out a Puer myth. His public myth is that of the good mamma's boy. The youthful appearance, the lack of eye contact, and the passivity about being in therapy suggest a disempowerment trauma preventing maturation. His violet tie and apparent dependency on his girl friend could mean that the difficulty is with his mother. But I am suspicious. That tie, a symbol of manhood, speaks too loudly.

**Private Myths** are the stories that we try to keep private. For example, I maintained the "recovered" forgotten myth about my father abandoning me when I was little as a private myth until my sibling reunion. Another example is the private myth that I held for years about my inadequacy: I was never really good enough. To hide it, I often undertook

tasks I thought were beyond my capacity. Since I succeeded in the tasks, they weren't beyond my capacity, but I was able to shore up the inadequacy role with feeling like an impostor.

Private myths contain our secrets, and usually involve elements of betrayal of the self—by others and ourselves. Because they are created within families we tend to live them in the roles rather than stories: the Alcoholic, the Foundling, the Bad One, Too Good for You, and the Fuckup. These myths are often out of date, because they have been kept out of circulation and re-evaluation. They are complementary to the unconscious core myths and are, therefore, predictive to the traumas that may be healing.

In the therapy situation, usually only in the first session or two, the new client will deliver clues to his private mythology. The client knows these myths. It is sometimes a kind of test of the therapist to pick up on them. Rex, introduced above, only makes eye contact when he reports what the women in his life say. The eye contact is unusual, a kind of challenge.

Commentary: Because I am a male, the challenging eye contact shifts my attention to the father and the possibilities of betrayal. It is as if he both demands and yearns for me to say something about his relationships with women.

**Forgotten Myths** are the sets of key stimuli woven into stories that we have had to forget in order to continue our development or to survive. The unfolding story of *Little Boy Lost* is an example. In therapy, the remembering of these recovered experiences is the source of tremendous pain. Yet they are an important resource for change and transformation of the self. Therapy assists in making these myths public, and many traumas, such as incest, need to be shared and made public as part of the healing. Once these myths become public, they begin to lose their power over us. Herein lies the power of the witness. Because forgotten myths are complementary to the public myths, paying attention to public myths is essential.

Conscious emergence of the forgotten myths will only come later in the therapy process. Often the emergence of forgotten myths is prompted synchronistically. As often as not, this is "unintentional." The therapist makes a remark that comes out of the context of the therapy process, like "Rex, I wouldn't figure you for a tie man," and it opens a door for the client.

Commentary: Rex's puzzled response was that "I never saw my father without a tie on." When I asked why he, Rex, always wore one, he became angry (for the first time), claiming he could wear what he wanted! I now begin hypothesizing about Rex's *trouble with father*.

**Core Myths** are frequently unconscious. These are self organized stories that explain our lives and the public, private, and forgotten myths that direct them. My own core mythology is that of betrayal; a fragment of that personal myth is the story (told in the last chapter) of being caged in my crib.

Often the therapist will know very early on the gist of the core mythology. I have found that sharing this knowledge too soon is troublesome to disastrous. When core myths have been brought to consciousness, often through exploration of the private myths, with which they are complementary, they join the public and recovered forgotten myths as part of the awakening personal mythology consciously lived. Core myths revolve around archetypal plots and characters. A perfectly raised person with no trauma (which may be traumatic, given the human need for some stress for optimal performance) would still individuate through the emergence of highly charged archetypal images.

For Rex, perhaps he limps along in therapy overcoming stalls by infusions of energy from Mary. One day, his older brother, with whom he has had a distant relationship, persuades him to come with him to a Men's workshop and Rex is galvanized.

Commentary: Therapists should beware the enthusiasms of the betrayed. Since his insights came with someone else, Rex may find fault with me. He may, in fact, do what was done to him long ago and "betray" his faith in the therapy. This is when the real therapy begins, however, because the reality of the relationship between Rex and I can now be explored. The father work can begin.

All reality is constructed and all constructions of reality are myths. There are many ways to describe the personal myths within other therapeutic models, although they are usually defined from the outside in while I define them from the inside out. Diagnoses of the *DSM-IV* are impersonal myths on the medical model. A Freudian would be looking for *unresolved oedipal conflicts* with Rex. A Transactional Analyst (Berne, 1972) would be exploring his "Don't Be Better

Than Daddy” and “Don’t Grow Up” *script injunctions*. Transactional Analysis is an excellent orientation to the mythic approach as life scripts are analogous to personal myths.

While the many approaches arrive at different parts of the elephant, the concept of the personal mythology as I am using it joins the archetypal and the cultural with the personal. I prefer a more personal and down home approach to the naming of myths. A trainer of mine once shared his secret to uncovering the underlying metaphor of the coupling process. He thought up or remembered country music song titles for each partner. (His: “You Never See What I Do for You.” Hers: “Home Alone, Broken Hearted.”) I like fairy tales or story titles over Greek myths. Rex is “The Brave Little Tailor finds Daddy and Gets a Life” rather than “The Trials of Hercules.”

Much of our personal mythology remains irretrievably unconscious, but if you change a part you change the whole. This activates a surge of new self organization which emerges into the family, ethnic, national, and world cultures through stories, cultural myths, literature, movies, television, the arts generally—and science, religion, and politics. In other words, these myriad possibilities of human existence keep popping up from the implicate order into the explicate order and personal myths are the eternal fountain of renewal, our intimations of immortality.

### *The Core Mythology*

Early childhood development is the template for the personal mythology; personal myths are the stories of our development. And the story starts very early too. You may be reluctant to accept that personal myths begin to self organize even before the child is verbal. However, noted pediatrician T. Berry Brazelton asserts in his book *Touchpoints* (1992) that by nine months “we can tell by a baby’s behavior whether he expects to succeed or fail at the tasks he sets for himself or that others set for him.” This expectation and resulting behavior persist over time unless addressed. They can come from the environment or the child’s unfolding genetic endowment. Either way, without remediation, the expectation of failure can endure for the whole walk through the landscape of one’s life.

Remember that each quadrant of the quartered circle holds a seasonally related content and that these seasons are

developmentally anchored. All evolving beings, humans included, require some stress (not too much, not too little) to develop optimal fitness for survival. The kinds of things that effect the fitness values of our stories fall into seasonal quarters. Some of these we are born with and our biological time clock delivers them up to us on schedule; some we choose; others are thrust upon us. In over thirty years as a therapist, I have discovered four basic demands of living that effect the fitness values of personal myths. These themes are abandonment, betrayal, disempowerment (sometimes humiliating), and extreme abuse and disorder. The resulting chart is one that I have already presented in Chapter 1:

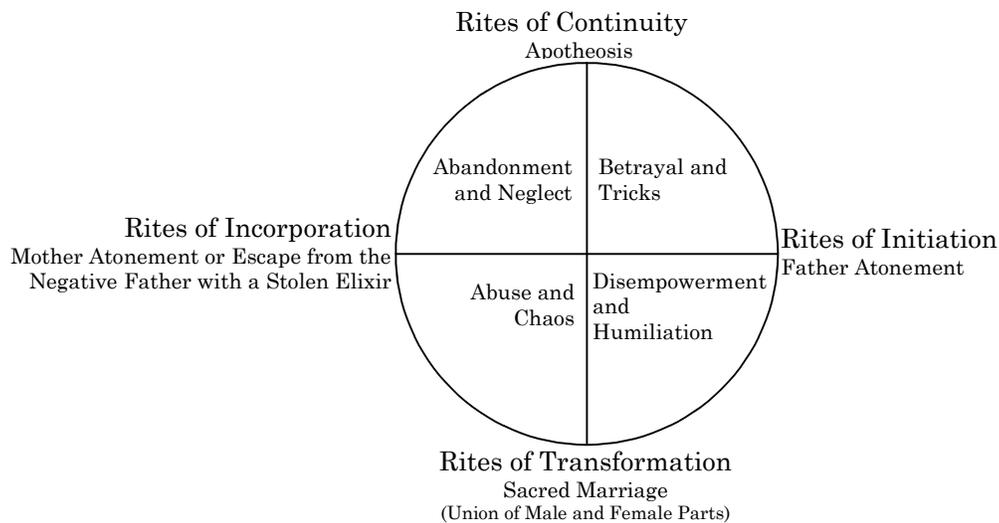


Chart 80. Identity Measurements

One of the more satisfying metaphors in the science of biology is that of the *fitness landscape*. Each genotype has a measurable fitness and the distribution of fitness values over the “space” occupied by all the entities of that genotype constitutes the fitness landscape for that genotype. If the fitness landscape is too easy, too flat, the fitness of the genotype lowers, and the entities carrying that genotype may die out. By the same token, a fitness landscape that is too rugged, too mountainous, will send each representative up a separate peak, and the genotype breaks up into chaos. Again the entities may die out. Both extremes lead to catastrophe. When the fitness landscape is moderately rugged and challenging, entities reach optimal fitness, poised on the edge between order and chaos (Kauffman, 1993). Genetic and environmental

challenges are nature's way of insuring continued self organization and evolution of a species.

We might think of each "story" of a personal mythology as having a fitness value. The story of expected failure has a low fitness value. Other "stories" may have higher fitness values, like a story of altruistic generosity. The distribution of stories and corresponding fitness values over the myth-space constitutes the fitness landscape of the personal mythology. The high values are peaks of high fitness; the low values are basins of low fitness. We are driven by an evolutionary imperative to seek the peaks, thus achieving and maintaining self organization, and to avoid the attraction of the basins. Personal myth fitness landscapes change through internal changes in a story or through co-evolution with the other stories on the whole landscape. They also change through influence from the proximity of other fitness landscapes, that is, the personal myths of significant others (parents, lovers, mentors, therapists, leaders). The fitness landscape is thus a living process, subject to overall change as individual stories or external influences change the whole.

A woman, Mary, came to see me because she felt that she was the "loneliest person on earth." Here is her story:

Once upon a time, a baby girl, Mary, was born to a successful farming family. She was the youngest of three daughters. Two days after her birth, her Mother was notified of the death of Mary's grandfather, her father. With heavy heart, Mother turned Mary over to a nursing neighbor, the mother of another baby, and left grief stricken to deal with her father's death. She was gone for three months.

Mary had little way of knowing that her Mother yearned for her, grieving the loss of her newborn time with her as much as she grieved the loss of her father. Instead, Mary did her best with her surrogate mom. When Mother returned, she was eager to connect with Mary. She even imagined her relationship with Mary as a healing process for the depression she just could not quite shake after her father's death.

The surrogate mother was sent home and Mother settled in for some long deserved care-giving of her daughter. Mary, on the other hand, fell into her own grief over the loss of her surrogate mom. She was inconsolable. Mother felt uncomfortable, then guilty, then angry and rejected. When Mary cried, Mother ignored her (since she would not accept comforting anyway).

Mary began to learn that crying got her less of what she needed than silence. She was better looked after when she

was quiet. Over time, Mary learned not to cry about anything. She also learned to take care of herself, learning to walk at nine months and talk, as well as use the toilet, at eighteen. In fact, the more she took care of herself, the more attention she got. Mother was proud of her special daughter. Mary made her feel good, and that made her more relaxed and comfortable. Mother began delightedly helping Mary learn more. Mary was acting so independent that she did not even cry openly at the age of four when her Mother forbade her to visit her surrogate mother next door.

As she grew older, Mary became a standout in school. People often said of her that she was six going on sixty (or ten going on a hundred). She was an old soul. She tended to be a bit bossy, but she was so accomplished everybody figured, why not? Mary cared for everybody, but few cared about her. She seemed to need nothing.

As it turned out, this core mythology of abandonment had a strong fitness component. Mary's choices took her to the peak, where she was alone. Yet embedded in her story was a loving mother who did not intentionally abandon her daughter. In the course of her work, Mary reconnected with her mother in real life and the two created a deep and satisfying relationship. Mary's "old soul" wisdom allowed her to comprehend the situation and forgive her mother. Mother warmed to this and could hold her head high for the help and encouragement that she gave to Mary as a child. Mary, coming down, and her mother, coming up, met in the saddles between the peaks, where both flourished.

Sometime in our first turn round of the cycle of life, our first seven years, we select a particular identity measurement that challenges our survival, emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, or physically. If the measurement comes very early or involves our physical safety, the hold that the core myth has on us can be very strong.

The enfolding of human lives tends to fall into four basic patterns of survival mythology. While usually living one core myth, people tend to have elements of all four of these mythologies in their lives and in their personal myths. We are more alike than we are different, in spite of our proficiency at finding differences. In terms of the implicate order, every person is a facet of the same diamond. The particular mythology we are determines which facet we tend to interpret reality through; yet we connect to the whole.

The four patterns of survival mythologies are charted below:

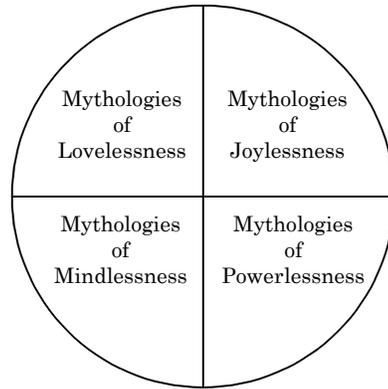


Chart 81. Survival Mythologies

Mythologies of lovelessness are complementary to mythologies of powerlessness. For example, if we have been unwanted and unloved, we are very likely to seek power and control over our environment and our lives. If nobody else will care for us, we have to do it ourselves. Complementarily, if we feel powerless, we seek a secure love base by manipulation of care giving or neediness.

In the same way, mythologies of joylessness and mindlessness interrelate. If we expect betrayal, the least we can do is shore up judgments of innocence and blame so that we are buffered from the deflation of self. Or if we have had the meaning of our world shaken, we learn to manipulate others to survive. Others are not really much good to us except to assure that we get what we think we want. In truth, the path to wholeness takes us through all four seasons of life, once we have broken free of the dominant restricting survival myths.

*Core Myth Complementarity*

Our processes of living are not linear. Take a survival hit and live a traumatized life. This is much too simple. The particular core myth we generate seems to have a complex relationship with the skills and competencies we develop in our lifetimes: And we cannot determine which came first, the wound or the capacities. In his article “The Mythopoesis of Psychotherapy,” Michael Pieracci (1990) reviewed the written narratives of twenty people who had been or were in therapy. While seeking the root metaphor of psychotherapy, he looked for archetypal themes, *ontic myths* (beliefs about

the nature of reality), and the direction of the psychotherapeutic experience. He found many archetypal themes and four ontic myths telling a mythopoetic story of the dimensions of psychotherapy. The four ontic myths were *love*, *identity*, *redemption*, and *acceptance* of aspects of selfness. When we remember that reality is complementary, it is no surprise that the survival mythologies driven by identity measurements are matched with the soul paths of the mythopoetic quests. The stories fell into two broad groups. One group concerned individual *achievement* (the hero or heroine's journey, "masculine energy") and the other group concerned the development of skills, attitudes, and values of relationships ("feminine energy"), which I label *receptivity*.

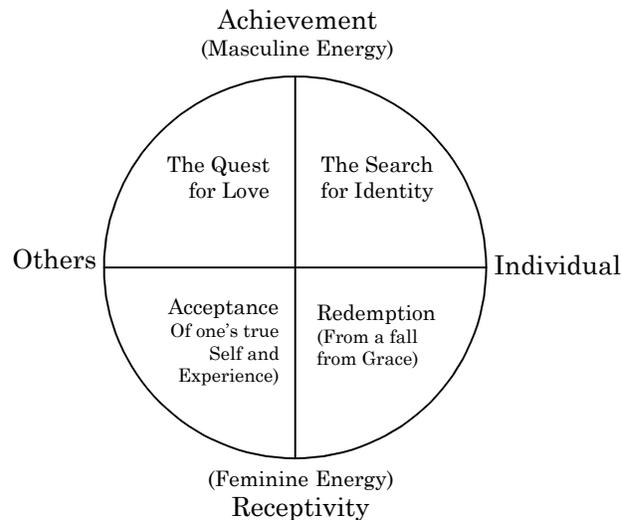


Chart 82. The Mythopoesis of Psychotherapy

The relationship between the mythopoetic and survival cycles is indeterminate. In my own case, my soul path is the struggle for redemption from a fall from grace. Several past life regressions tell a story of my breaches of public trust. In this lifetime, the Christ story has been event shaping. I lost several jobs due to principled sacrifice and had my doctorate blocked due to antiwar activities. On the other hand, the myth I believed about myself has been joylessly surviving betrayal by others. In the cases of clients I have worked with, the relations between the two kinds of core myths are different from my own. Some share the same quadrant in both cycles; some have complementary quadrants; and some have the ontic path, say the *quest for love*, before their survival path, *joylessness*. I have found no un-

derlying pattern. Both core processes are very powerful in our lives.

### **How Change Happens**

Our consciousness processes experiences in such a way that many of our most painful derailments from the tracks of our development are encoded in the archetypes or key stimuli available to our nervous systems. Grief can be physically damaging, even fatal, to a little one. Encoded in a personal myth, the grief can be worked through later when the little one is older and more equipped to handle it. Forgetting protects us.

In therapy, we make the unconscious conscious. I agree with Feinstein and Krippner (1988) that psychotherapy is today's form of traditional mythology: it is the carrier of the oral tradition. From this perspective, therapy is a process for developing essentially private rituals to systematically guide us in discovering, evaluating, transforming and implementing, and our personal mythologies.

Humans are state dependent for learning. When we learn, we incorporate our state of being at the time of learning as part of the whole lesson. My first Tai Chi instructor was first a Master of Kung Fu. He taught Tai Chi as a fighting art, and was fiercely corrective if we strayed a quarter inch off the form. I learned the form with such anxiety that observers remarked that I looked as though I were expecting an electric shock at any minute.

I had to relearn the form from a new teacher, whose first instructions were to move freely about the practice space using Tai Chi movements to the floating notes of his flute. Eventually I learned to relax with the flow of the music and the energy. Then he re-taught me the form. A return to the state of first learning is necessary to relearn lessons and de-traumatize the self. Personal myths are a way of encoding these unique experiences so that they are preserved for working through in time.

The more unique the state of being is at the time of the learning, the more powerful the lesson. It gets imprinted *as is*, and only a similarly unique state of being can offer an equally charged alternative. A ritual organizes this process.

We know that when humans are under unrelieved stress, they reach a point when their higher brain functions freeze up and they must descend to earlier, older brain functions for responses. At this time they are flooded with new energy to resolve the distress. This is the point when survival takes over from concerns for safety. Anxiety disappears and, being liberated, spontaneity directs our creativity. **Spontaneity**, a central concept of psychodrama, *can be defined here as the yoking together of intentionality and self organization.*

A good metaphor for describing the effect of spontaneity in creating new ways for feeling, wanting, doing, or thinking is the concept of the so-called “quantum leap.” According to Timothy Ferris in his *Coming of Age in the Milky Way* (1989):

When a proton strikes an atom, boosting an electron into a higher orbit, the electron moves from the lower to the upper orbit instantaneously, without having traversed the intervening space . . . the electron simply ceases to exist at one point, simultaneously appearing at another.

When we successfully enact a ritual, we step up the energy of the situation. In these moments when the particularity of a personal myth is made incarnate, it could be hypothesized that we enter what modern physicists call negative space/time (Tiller, 1972, 1978). Matter in this state develops negative mass and thus “negative” entropy. **Entropy** refers to *the tendency towards disorder in a physical system*; with negative entropy, order and cohesiveness increase.

Biological systems are unusual in that they display varying degrees of negative entropy while alive (when they die, “regular” entropy sets in rapidly, and with a vengeance). When we enact a ritual of someone’s mythology, we help that person tune into the life force, which is towards greater and greater order-in-complexity.

In Chapter 4, we looked at this from the complexity science’s window. There we learn that in open, dissipative systems, the loss of energy makes way for the incorporation of new elements like food, interconnections, behaviors, and/or information that lead to the creation of new emergent self organized structures for optimization.

The technology of change is ritual. Yet whatever the ritual (and in chapter 8 we will see that there are four kinds), personal mythologies change in four ways:

1. Assimilation: Experiences are redefined to fit existing mythology. The surface system changes, but the mythology remains the same.
2. Accommodation: The conscious mythology is redefined to fit new experiences. The core unconscious mythology remains the same.
3. Identity Crisis: The personal mythology is inadequate to the demands of development and/or the moment and cracks and breaks; the container, the myth, cannot hold the contained, the experiences to be explained.
4. Sacred Renewal: The old myth is released and we become vehicles for a new possibility; we are transformed. The core unconscious mythology is changed.

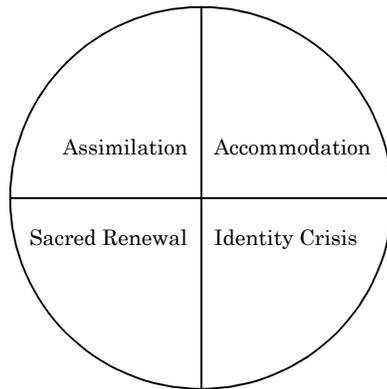


Chart 83. Ways Mythologies Change

### Other Paths

No human being can be defined, ultimately, by one core mythology, thank God. No two personal myths are the same. While the soul paths and the attachment themes of abandonment, betrayal, disempowerment, and chaos are all powerful archetypes, they are not even remotely the whole story. At best they are an overview of the search for and the initial conditions of an unfinished story. They help because they make sense and they feel right. They guide us in understanding our innate capacities for creative living by showing us what we created unconsciously by acting in the moment to

adapt meaningfully to our personal experiences. They are the beginning of our paths to wholeness.

If all we ever did was help people figure out their core myths, we could transform their lives. Yet we would leave them impoverished. They are not even the tip of the iceberg, more like the rising vapor from the iceberg of the total creative output of all living we participate in.

However, if we awaken the Self to the awesome realities of being consciously alive and attuned to our deepest realities, even if only a little, we further a larger purpose of existence. In the service of this, I would like to show four maps (of a multitude) to the territory of personal and cultural mythology. They are all the quartered circles of the Self. These patterns are *The Myth of Paradise*, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, *The Heroine's Journey*, and *The Hero's Journey*.

*The Myth of Paradise* is one of the universal experiences of humankind. Long ago, before now, everything was better (more glorious, cheaper, cleaner, less contaminated). There was a Golden Age, lost through some form of failure or betrayal. Most people turn their childhood into the Golden Age. The Book of Genesis tells this underlying myth.

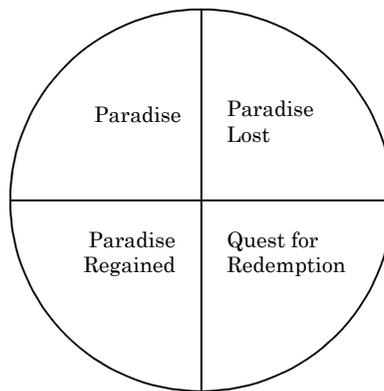


Chart 84. The Myth of Paradise

*The Myth of the Eternal Return* (Eliade, 1960) has its origins in the flow of the seasons and the daily death and rebirth of the sun. An extremely common pattern, it simply affirms that after death comes more life. This myth makes meaning of a cycle of nature. *Walden Pond*, the film *Antonia's Line*, Willa Cather's novels of the soil, *My Antonia* and *O Pioneers*, Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself* all portray this

myth. It shows up in grisly forms as well: the *Aliens* movie series and the *Halloween* horror flicks, for example.

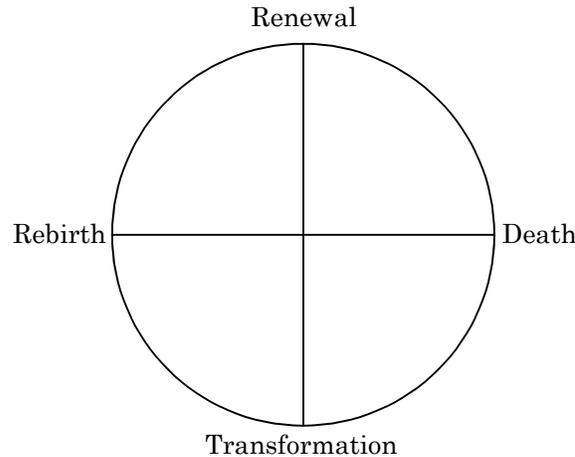


Chart 85. The Myth of the Eternal Return

*The Heroine's Journey* is described by Maureen Murdock in her book *The Heroine's Journey* (1990). Murdock reports encountering Joseph Campbell after one of his presentations. She inquired about the heroine's, rather than the hero's, journey. Campbell replied that he did not think women needed to make a journey. Women, he thought, were already *there*, and that *there* was where men were trying to get. This did not meet with Murdock's reality (nor mine) and she set out on a journey of her own to explore the psychic geography of the woman's journey.

Murdock argues that because masculine and feminine are defined by the patriarchal culture, to seek power women tend to identify with the masculine and separate from the feminine. Whether successful or not, they eventually experience the spiritual emptiness of this and may seek reconnection with the feminine, healing the Mother/Daughter split. This leads to a healing of their inner masculine, allowing for full integration and union of maleness and femaleness. I reproduce here, modified slightly to fit the Healing Circle, her map of this mythic trek:

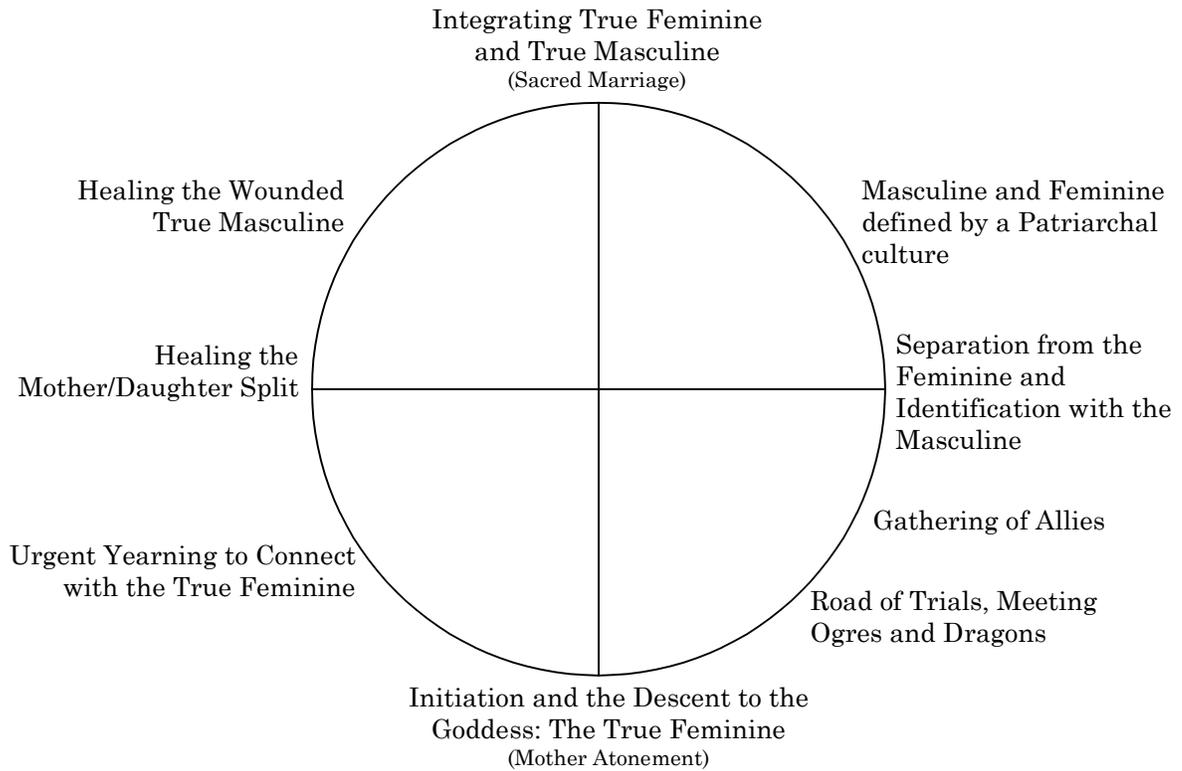


Chart 86. The Heroine's Journey

Joseph Campbell devoted his life to disseminating the ideas of Carl Jung. Jung argued that if there were myths that appeared across cultures and time showing many of the same details (virgin birth of hero, sacrificial death, etc.), then there must be a common factor in humans to account for this. He called it the collective unconscious. In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1966), Joseph Campbell explicated one of these cross cultural, cross time myths of mankind.

*The Hero's Journey* depicts, I believe, the passage of any one of any gender who engages in the "heroic" task of living a fulfilled life, responsive to its challenges. Life calls us to the adventure of renewing our personal mythology. A failed relationship, an extraordinary success, a new child, an unrelenting feeling of boredom, a frightening challenge, someone's death, a depression: these are the calls to the psychic adventures of the twentieth century civilized hero (male or female). You can see from its application to the healing

circle, that the hero's journey, whether she or he, is very like the process of therapy:

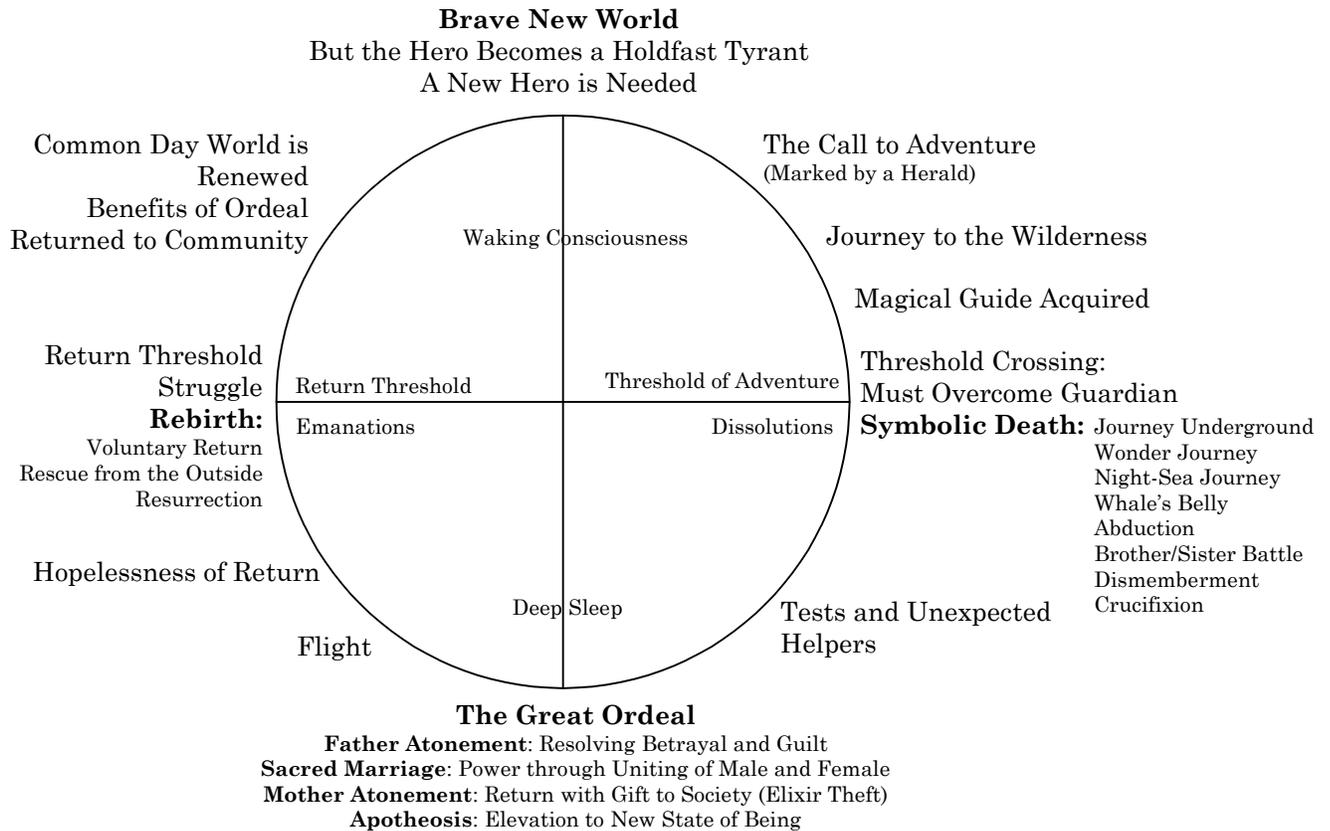


Chart 87. The Hero's Journey

Here's one of Jung's ideas from *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* (1969):

Do we ever understand what we think? We only understand that kind of thinking which is a mere equation, from which nothing comes out but what we have put in. That is the working of the intellect. But besides that there is a thinking in primordial images, in symbols which are older than the history of man, which are inborn in him from the earliest times, and, eternally living, outlasting all generations, still make up the groundwork of the human psyche. It is only possible to live the fullest life when we are in harmony with these symbols; wisdom is a return to them. It is a question neither of belief nor of knowledge, but of agreement of our thinking with the primordial images of the unconscious. They are unthinkable matrices of our thoughts, no matter what our conscious mind may cogitate.

## Discovering the Personal Mythology

Listening is the first requirement for helping people discover their personal mythology. Personal myths are different from historical events. Because both are verbally communicated, they unfold linearly. However, a personal myth has a different effect on both the teller and the listener. It is “dramatic” and involving. Like literary stories (cultural myths), we can hear one (or tell it) over and over and continue to have new responses to it. It remains dramatic and involving. By dramatic, I mean that there is a beginning, a middle, where some change occurs (or fails to occur), and an end. By involving, I mean that the story touches upon universals in being human. History, on the other hand, tends to bore after the first time. In fact, boredom is a great clue that you need to get to the underlying personal myth, the “meaning of it all.”

In listening to the story itself, it is important to remember that all myths have a place in the cycle of the circle. Is this a story about the beginning of something or of impending doom and destruction? The imagery that the tellers express, the dreams they report, even the sentence structure that they use—all point to the underlying structure of the myth. We all have experiences in all four quadrants of the quartered circle; however, we generally tend to focus on a particular quadrant as the Ground Zero of our being. The listener can explore the response that the teller elicits within. Often the dynamic of the communication is designed to create a complementary role elicitation in the listener. Thus, while the speaker tearfully tells of some horrific victimization, the listener wants to persecute. The listener also looks at behaviors in the moment, the minute by minute process of the speaker for clues. Included in this process would be parallel communications through body language, movement, and other non-verbals. If you are a body therapist, the shape of the body is a clue too. If you read energy, another source of myth information is open to you.

In Chapter 4, the unfamiliar idea of the attractor was introduced. The strange attractor that collects millions of events of a person’s life and that gives shape to the implicate patterns of that life is the personal mythology that each person creates as part of the expanding consciousness of psy-

chological development. Because the personal mythology is a complex dynamic system, there will be self similarity at multiple levels of focus in the unfolding themes and behaviors of the teller.

One's personal mythology is a living story. Uncovering the core myths is not the end of the process, but the beginning. Like great literature, which is the cultural mythology of a people, even the simplest story has multiple interpretations, especially when reviewed from different stages in one's life cycle and different levels of consciousness. Also, because of the quantum principles of uncertainty and complementarity, we can never be certain. According to Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, the wave and particle descriptions of fundamental reality preclude each other. Both are necessary for a complete grasp of being, but only one is available at any given time. When we isolate a core myth we are in the particle point of view; when we live, we are in the wave point of view. Since we are living when we look at our myths, there are aspects of self that remain outside them. It will always be fuzzy and paradoxical.

It is more complex: as we change our mythology, we change ourselves. It is not discovery merely; it is true creativity. We can continually make ourselves. Nobody does it by themselves. Yet we cannot do it for somebody else. After being listened to and helped in telling our stories, it is up to us to change the mythology. Therefore it is useful to be able to command many ways of working with our stories.

Frequently, participants of training workshops ask: "How can we continue exploring our personal myths." Here are a dozen ways of encountering your personal myths and strategizing movement towards creation of a holistic *Complete Self*.

1. Notice what happens to you over and over and look for the patterns.
2. Pay attention to your earliest actual memory (not a memory acquired through therapy or through someone else's memories of you, like Mother's or Father's or Lover's).
3. What are your favorite symbols, heroes, colors, fairy tales, movies, books, pets, animals and what are your associations with them? What patterns do you see? Pay attention to self similarity. Bring in powerful archetypes and arche-

typal experiences (i.e., redemption, suffering for the common good, altruism).

4. Pay attention to your enemies. What angers you? Who angers you? What are the themes involved? Pay attention to projections. These dislikes may be unacknowledged characteristics of your personal myths.
5. Look at your basic beliefs. What are they? Make up or enact stories from your childhood that will reflect your beliefs (all of them do). Pay special attention to your expectations of good or evil and your attachments to others. For example, “People are good” (a common belief of many therapists and victims) or “People are bad” (a common belief of policemen and criminals).
6. Identify your (a) Home Base—where you operate from when under stress (which quadrant) and (b) Ground Zero—where you were primarily wounded. Knowing what you do well (your Starting Point) and what you have little control over having or doing or not (your Doorway) will help. Remember that Home Base and Ground Zero are complementaries, and we sometimes confuse them. Remember that we all have wounds in every quadrant, but that most of us operate from a favorite quadrant. Remember that people who have experienced severe traumatization may jump around the circle chaotically. Chaotic jumping is an indicator of severe trauma, the fourth quadrant.
7. Notice whether you are a person who is overly rigid, requiring therapeutic solvent or overly fragmented, requiring therapeutic glue.
8. Do a Lifeline. For example, on a large sheet of paper draw a line. Start at one end with your date of birth: At the other end your projected death date. Fill the spaces in between with events from your life, positive ones above the line, negative ones below, indicating by height or depth their relative intensity. You can even add events that have not happened yet after the present date. Another excellent device is a family genogram covering at least three generations. Look for patterns. Remember that you cannot change your history, but you can change your mythology (the stories you created to explain the historical events).
9. There are probably only one or two to core stories in any person’s personal mythology. If there are two, one of them is usually chaos. Look for the clusters of patterns and find the story in them. Most people have many myth fragments, you will have to put them together into clusters. There will be some that do not fit. Consider them wild card resources. This is your Life Task, what you are here

to do in this lifetime, and only you can do it. Some of our life experiences we are born to, many are thrust upon us before we are ready to deal with them directly. This one we have responsibility for, no one else. We can choose to be aware.

10. Begin to develop Mindfulness. Mindfulness means that your five percent of consciousness is in relationship with your ninety-five percent of collective unconsciousness and that they are known as a whole. Be aware of your Self. Practice meditation, pay attention to what is happening now and how it fits (or does not) your self understanding, and access what you feel, want, do, and think in the moment. Develop your **spontaneity** (*behavior that is creative, connected, adequate, and appropriate*). For example, if abandonment and/or neglect wounded you, know that the moment that you begin something new you will have trouble. Take care of yourself by seeing that you have support, by anticipating your paranoia, by avoiding plunging into action before you are ready, by learning what makes you ready in this particular new beginning.
  
11. Begin to develop your power of intentionality. Maintain a line of awareness with the world around you (discern between accidents and synchronicity). Engage in meaningful ceremony (dedication of energy), prayer (communication with the implicate order), emergent beliefs (action precedes philosophy), and surrender (not “giving up”) to the unfolding process of your inner life. Attend to the Four Doorways of Intentionality: (1) Commitment, (2) Exercising force of will, (3) Determination, and (4) Discipline. At the level of intentionality, a directing of the Self towards what it wants, we always get what we want. The more Mindful we are, the more aware we are of this. But even if we are not mindful, we still move towards what the Self wants; we just feel victimized or lucky. It is valuable to remember that “discipline” and “disciple” share the same root meaning. Thus, to exercise discipline is to become a disciple of your Self.
  
12. Ask yourself at a frequency that helps you such questions as “What am I here for?” “Am I doing it?” “Is it satisfying?” (If it is not, return to your personal mythology! Find the way to leverage into that system of meaning and change it towards more of what your heart desires.) Another way to quest: “What does what I am doing right now tell me about the meaning of what I am doing here?”
  
13. Personal Mythology Questions? Read these questions to get a sense of the difference between history and personal myth, and answer a few of them to discover patterns.

What is the story of your birth?

What is your family's story about you?

Was there anything unusual about your birth?

How were you named? What nicknames have you had? What did/do they mean to you?

What is your ethnic history?

What is your earliest memory?

Did you move as a child? How many times?

Did you have any unusual illnesses or injuries in childhood?

If you had a chronic and painful condition, what would that mean?

How were you disciplined?

Who did you go to for comfort?

What childhood stories did you like the best?

What is your favorite animal?

What animal would you like to be?

What is your favorite novel (movie)?

Who is your hero or heroine nowadays?

What do you most want out of life?

What physical symptoms do you frequently have?

Who do you dislike intensely?

Have you had any life threatening experiences?

How old were you when you became aware of death? How?

Are your parents alive?

Did your parents divorce? Should they have?

What happens over and over?

What would you say over and over to a child to make him/her grow up feeling the way you do?

Were you ever sexually mistreated?

What happened on such and such a date (anniversary of trauma)?

What was your role in your family as a child? What is your role in your circle of friends today?

What is your most familiar feeling and how do you express it?

Who is the worst person in the world today?

What do you like most about yourself?

What are you here for (in this life, on this planet)?

What do you do for a living? What have you done? What would you like to be doing?

What are you best at?

What are the three most important decisions in your life? Why?

What decisions have you regretted or wished that that you could take back and redo. Why?

What habits or personality characteristics have you struggled with the most and wish you could have changed?

What is the worst (best) thing that has ever happened to you?

What is your most important memory (so far) of your adult life?

How have you suffered?

What achievements are you most proud of?

What is the story of your first love?

Who have you loved with all your heart?

Who loves you?

What enslaves you at this time in your life?

Where have you felt at home?

What do your daily practices (a form of prayer) reveal about your personal religion?

Who is/are your God/Gods/Goddesses?

What do you believe and say about life today?

If nothing changes in your life, what will you be in five years?

What would you write on your tombstone? What would others write on your tombstone?

Man, thought Carl Jung, is a myth-maker, and it is our task to determine what myth we are living and live it consciously. For the human species, language and myth-making replaced genetic mutation and instincts as the primary mechanisms by which consciousness and societal innovations are carried forward and secured, both of which are equally necessary (Feinstein and Krippner, 1988). Myths, and their enactments in ritual, are required for the affirmation of the self. They reconnect the self to the prenatal oneness of its origins by emphasizing the samenesses among men and women. They immerse the particular self into the

totality of the timeless and eternal now. They also institutionalize and mark the history of the self, just as historical data (birth certificates, social security numbers, and licenses) document the history of the person. And they provide a vehicle for the activation of the archetypes of the collective unconscious which serve as carriers for our development.

Personal myths are of the implicate order of the universe. At the heart of every mythology, personal and cultural, is the transcendent experience of something beyond the limits of our senses, a sense of oneness with creation. Whether that rests on the unconscious memory of our infancy in the womb or in the arms of a parental god or a spiritual experience of the cosmos depends on the mythology we have constructed to explain our realities. From the moment a person makes meaning of an experience, there is a myth. Beginning in early childhood (the more stress and/or intensity, the earlier) and continuing throughout life, this myth-making continues. These explications of the implicate experience of the life force become the ground from which generally unconscious rituals emerge. These rituals replicate selected elements of the myths of our experience. This replication serves two purposes: It validates the personal mythology and it preserves the possibilities for change.

## Chapter 7

# Quadratic Process

## Working with the Complexity of the Personal Mythology

God is an intelligible sphere, whose center is  
everywhere and circumference nowhere.

### **Quadratic Process**

A human being is a system comprised of systems. Self-similarity can be seen at every scale from our DNA to our bad habits.

Consider the quartered circle. It is a set of four, like so many other biological, physical, and intuitive forms in the universe. The division into four creates the possibility of representing relationships of complementarity such as the seasons and our own DNA. It is an ancient symbol for representing the complex dynamic system of the seasons and the seasons of life. Indigenous cultures assumed the natural and human life cycle were related and even in our contemporary world, literature, philosophy, spiritual traditions and even secular life continues to represent human life in relation to seasonal metaphors.

Our personal mythologies include implicit and explicit memory, the autobiographical narrative, attachment patterns, defensive patterns, and feedback from the environment. They are personal because each person generates one, and they are mythological because they are a vehicle for making meaning of our experience rather than a record of events. The self similarity of the developing mind is demonstrated in the emerging personal mythology.

Quadratic process refers to the way humans live their lives in terms of the deep structure of reality. The quartered circle has represented this structure. A human life unfolds through a co-streaming of innate traits and external factors, and each life is unique. Yet we can isolate the patterns of that streaming—the rough turbulences, the dead ended eddies, the smooth flows, the dry beds.

## **Cycles of Healing, Cycles of Life**

Human beings are an interface between consciousness and reality. To the degree that we become mindful of this interface, we participate in our own unfolding and with that of the unfolding universe. Any intention to observe our being with others, a reality, or ourselves is a spiritual act. In exercising consciousness we become co-creators of the unfolding complexity of life.

Self reference appears to be built into development. Somewhere around fifteen years old, the human being's brain becomes capable of abstract math and self reference (Piaget, 1981). The awakening of self reference is the beginning of any psychic growth.

To look at ourselves is to grow—even if we try not to change anything. The observer effect teaches us that the very act of looking at ourselves changes us. Self reference is the capacity for the subject to look at itself as an object. Of course, the part that is looking is still a subject, so complete objectivity is never possible.

Self reference is a challenging task. Each act of self observation requires the creation of a new observer. Because we are experiencing a complementarity, holding the line between one and the other is difficult and frequently trance inducing. We usually need instruction to self reference well. Teaching self reference is one of the primary functions of many therapies. Self reference as it is configured by the Healing Circle is a spiritual discipline, connecting us to the implicate order.

Objectivity and Subjectivity comprise one of those elementary complementaries, like wave and particle, that slip us into the fundamental nature of quantum reality like a floating leaf entering the mainstream of a river. The Healing Circle assists in self reference by mapping the surround. Like a compass it guides us to where our half-lives lie and where we are in our journeys around the full cycle of life. It holds the subject position while we look at our lives as objects.

## **Making Changes**

Some changes in our lives are like stones dropped into the still pool of self. By these we can then measure the ripple

effect of the changes across the whole life space we inhabit. According to the vision of reality developed by quantum physics, we have a lot to do with the measures we experience.

Consciousness creates reality by observing it. The act of observation is a measure in itself. If we add hopes, dreams, desires, intentions, plans, implementations, and the stuff of human living, the measurements get much more complex. We are creatures of complexity. We not only live on the edge between chaos and order; we need to live there to live fully. Healthy people seem to create stress if their lives are too easy. Without reaching the zone of complexity, our lives lack the rich self organizations that emerge, and our vitality is subsequently diminished.

The Healing Circle enables us to see the recyclings of our personal mythologies. Our personal mythologies are formed out of initial conditions, or our early development. The Healing Circle is a template for identifying the missing complementaries of our self organization and for directing us toward greater complexity and possibilities for living. Rather than a model for discovering pathology, it is a compass for identifying the missing parts of the whole life we might be living through proactive creativity.

The use of the Healing Circle generates different kinds of questions and directs the attention of both the therapist and the client in particular ways. What is missing from the whole cycle in a particular individual's story—needs, wants, doing, or thinking? Or nurturance, intimacy, competence, or solid thinking? Or protection, permission, potency, or permanence? Or spring, summer, fall, or winter? What is he or she good at? What does an individual struggle most with and how does he or she usually compensate for this lack?

Together therapist and client deduce the personal mythology and search out the missing half-life, co-creating a fuller personal mythology that feeds back into the initial conditions to bring about deep change in the whole system. I had a client, Robert, who seemed to get nowhere in his life. He was a therapist himself, with a small practice that would not grow. Robert was a hard working man who felt unwanted and abandoned by his parents. He seldom asked for help, and usually did not recognize his need for any. After several months of working together and clarifying that Robert had no idea what he wanted out of life, I noticed that he usually sat with his hands clenched.

Upon questioning, he discovered that he was unaware that he did this, but when he unclenched his hands he felt anxious. My mind flooded with explanations and psychological rationales for this behavior. Remaining silent, however, I got up and grabbed a handful of birdseed I keep in my office to feed Bird, my companion parrot.

I approached Robert and asked him to hold out his hands, which he did: clenched. I spilled the seeds onto his clenched hands, and as they fell all over the floor I said: “These are the seeds of all the possibilities in your life.” He burst into tears (a first) and buried his face in his (open) hands. In subsequent sessions he began speaking of things he wanted in his life—with unclenched hands and trepidation. Within six months his practice had doubled and he was preparing for a long desired vacation to Costa Rica. In a year he successfully terminated therapy.

This was an intervention that sprang from Robert’s personal mythology of abandonment. To avoid the pain of abandonment, Robert learned early to have few needs and to fend for himself. “After all,” he would iterate, “who else is going to?” Keeping his needs small and his dreams dimmed, Robert lived a tidy life with few complications: No debts, no pets, and no loved ones.

What was missing for Robert was any sense of a higher purpose in life, passion for anything, and connection to other people. When I saw his clenched hands, I immediately understood how he could have so little in life. How could he grab for anything that he wanted with his hands in knots? How could he want anything? Robert was clear that the fear when his hands were open was that he would lose whatever he got by reaching out for it.

Most of us live half-lives, experiencing the same cycle over and over again. The use of the Healing Circle to identify our quadrants of deepest wounding can thus point to the complementary experiences we need to practice. The Healing Circle also brings into relief the entrances and exits to the transitional phases at which deep changes in our personal mythologies can happen. The Healing Circle facilitates eclectic therapeutic practices, bringing into view the need for a complex approach to consciousness because it is itself a complex system.

The essence of what I term the quadratic process is remarkably simple. It is rare that people seeking assistance will come with a clear and obvious need, emotional depth, unambivalent wants, clear objective perceptions of their behavior, and a sense of the meaning of their problem. In these cases, an immediate intervention can be made. However, in my experience, usually some cycles around the healing circle will be necessary.

At the very least, the healer will help clients see how the parts of their personal mythology that they are aware of are related. Moreover, the healer can expose the client to the encrypted complementaries of their awarenesses such as the overfunctioning that is typically complementary to undernurturing or the angry righteousness that defends against the fear of betrayal. Awakening relationships between complementaries reconnects the explicate to the implicate, the part to the whole, and in doing so alters consciousness, increases energy and plants a foot in each universe.

Once you get the idea of the dynamics of the system, using the Healing Circle to extrapolate the personal mythology is actually pretty easy. Some guidelines for using it as a metamodel for therapy are useful. Because the Healing Circle addresses the complementarity of the explicate and implicate orders of existence, it resists reductionistic processes and simple cause and effect thinking. Few things are as they seem when it comes to understanding and healing humankind. When we are dealing with the profundity of human existence, the opposites of profound truths may be more profound truths. The Tree of Human Life is a dynamic complex system with roots in the implicate order.

## **Identity and the Self**

Before going on, I want to clarify the models of identity and self that my use of quantum physics, complexity theory and the healing circle assume. Establishing identity is one of the main outcomes of a personal mythology. Identity is established when we measure our experiences by creating meaning for them. Identity is not nearly so firm as we would like to believe. As with Patty Hearst, our identity can be swept away easily by cruelty, deprivation, and isolation, punctuated by moments of connection.

Identity is a mid-level magnification of what I call the Soul Fractal, the highest level. Identity is a self organizing fractal that brings our various roles to consciousness as a coherent whole. Identity might be thought of as the image reflected by the still waters of the self. It is not the self. The self is an even larger complex system that includes identities. The process of developing the self is the work of our lifetimes, and shifting identities are the stepping stones through the stream of time toward the stillness of eternity.

J. L. Moreno felt that the soul, a higher level of magnification than identity, was not the beginning but rather the end of evolution. He theorized that an infant entered the world undifferentiated from that state. Yet this world was the *matrix of identity* from which the self and its branches, the identities, and their branches, the roles, emerged in gradual stages, as explicate emerges from implicate. Generally, these roles emerge developmentally, beginning with the psychosomatic and ending with the social.

He distinguished three classes of roles:

- **Psychosomatic:** (*physiological*) roles, like the eater or the sleeper
- **Psychodramatic:** (*psychological*) roles, like ghosts, demons, or heroes
- **Social:** like parent, plumber, or healer.

Self examination and/or therapy help us track the emergence of psychodramatic and psychosomatic roles. Often the most difficult issues are embedded in the initial conditions of the complex, dynamic system. Thus eating or sleep disorders, for example, are extremely challenging to get to the beginning of and change. We are generally most conscious of the emergence of our social roles as they are marked by rites of passage.

Because our seasons of existence take place in a social context, our personal mythologies cast us in one of four role clusters for the self in society, called *sociometric positions*. The case studies to follow can each be identified with one of these sociometric positions. According to Anne Hale (1989), these positions cycle around the quartered circle as follows:

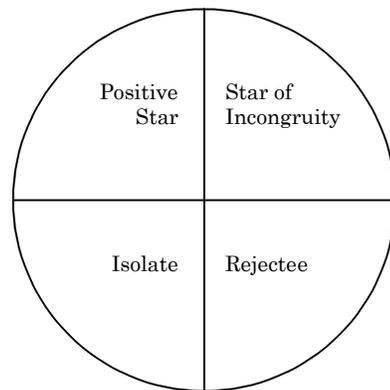


Chart 88. The Four Sociometric Positions

As roles develop overlapping behaviors with one another, they integrate into a unit, a kind of partial self. Eventually, operational links develop among the three classes of roles and they form a unit of identity. An identity is a fractal record of the emerging complex system of the self. As physics has explained, subatomic particles join to make atoms, atoms join to make molecules, molecules join to make organic and inorganic matter, and objects join to make systems of all kinds, ultimately universes.

Similarly, out of smaller clusters of psychosomatic, psychodramatic, and social roles larger sub-identities emerge at the edge between the chaos of the undifferentiated universe and the soul. These clusters of sub-identities self organize as an individual tries new behaviors and lives with the intention to complete him or herself. Action precedes selfhood. The self is an individually developed construct generated by personal choices with all the attendant bifurcations, personal experiences (and their “measurements” into meaning), and the complex dynamic system of the human mind.

I envision that the self is a complex, dynamic system of nested interlocking identities. The Soul Fractal may be an *eternal* complex, dynamic energy system of interlocking selves, sequentially entering and exiting time from birth to death to rebirth. Self referencing would then be a function of that self of the Soul Fractal which is in time. Perhaps we journey from the implicate order of reality to the explicate order and back again, cycling through cosmic seasons.

While the Healing Circle can be used to explore any level of magnification of the Soul Fractal, most of the time we have a narrow focus. We generally prefer one identity or sometimes a particular role within our own personal mythologies, blocking our own access to further identities or roles. Recognizing the un-lived complementaries of our personal mythologies is the first step toward change and the many possibilities of the self. The personal mythology contains them all.

### **Quadratic Process: Plexing the Personal Mythology**

The Healing Circle can be seen as a model based upon trauma to the developmental process. Our personal mythologies emerge from the effects of our experiences on our development. While events and genetics have an effect, “relationships early in life may shape the very structures that create representations of experience and allow a coherent view of the world: Interpersonal experiences directly influence how we mentally construct reality” (Siegel, 1999). I have argued that human beings are complex dynamic systems and therefore we are heavily influenced by the initial conditions of our lives. Research demonstrates that during the first few years, the most important development is that of the brain. Our first relationships and the emotions generated by them directly effect the development of the brain into what some now call mind.

According to the Healing Circle, if as newborns our environment is filled with chaos, dangerous parental inconsistency, or is absent of meaningful structures to internalize, we can develop a mythology of meaninglessness. Or if our caregivers are unable to bond with us, are mis- or unattuned, or neglect us, we can develop mythologies of abandonment. As we enter the world of language and growing independence and mobility, our caregivers may be unable to mirror us, may consistently break their word with us, or may be more focused on what they want for us rather than helping us learn about our own wants. We can develop mythologies of betrayal. And finally, our caregivers may over- or undersupport our emergent competency in the world, or they may even shame or humiliate our attempts at doing things. This can lead to personal mythologies of powerlessness. Of course, if we are exposed to extreme trauma at any time in our lives, trauma that undermines our belief in our world or ourselves,

we may overlay a meaningless myth upon an already existing one.

Ordinarily, as our early development cycle recycles without intervention throughout our lives, we continue to bypass the developmental stages that were lost to trauma. Experience seems to verify the personal mythology we have created, because the myth frames the reality that we are living.

So to begin plexing the personal mythology, I assign names to the major movements of the life flow. The **Home Base** *is the quadrant of behaviors that we revert to under stress.* The **Starting Point** *is the last successful stage on the path of development before derailment and, therefore, usually a safe place to begin the healing process.* **Ground Zero** *is the complementary quadrant to the Home Base and is the indicator of a chronological site of early childhood injury to the self.* Because the person escaping the stress of traumatic injury by fleeing to the complementary quadrant completely misses the next quadrant, that quadrant is called the **Doorway**. It *holds unexplored possibilities for the self.* Here are more complete definitions of the four quadrants of quadratic process. Depending on the trauma, as you will see in just a few pages, the Home Base will vary. The other three configure around the Home Base.

- ❑ **Homebase:** Under stress, we tend to return to our most trusted defense, which tends to be compensatory and complementary to the early childhood trauma that forms the history of the core myth. The Quadrant of overt behavior.
- ❑ **Starting Point:** The last successful developmental stage before derailment (on the issue in question). The quadrant chronologically before ground zero. Movement to the starting point is more difficult if an orthogonal boundary must be crossed as in the betrayal and chaos patterns. The Quadrant of accessible resources.
- ❑ **Ground Zero:** The chronological site of early childhood injury to the self that forms the basis of the core myth. The quadrant complementary to Homebase. The Quadrant of wounding.
- ❑ **Doorway:** The quadrant on the other side of ground zero, moving clockwise, where, after working through the disturbances of childhood development, we can begin to learn spontaneity. Access to this quadrant is indetermi-

nate and experiences there are unaccounted for by the half-life. The Quadrant of discovery and new resources.

For an example, here is a chart and case study of someone phase-locked in the incongruity position:

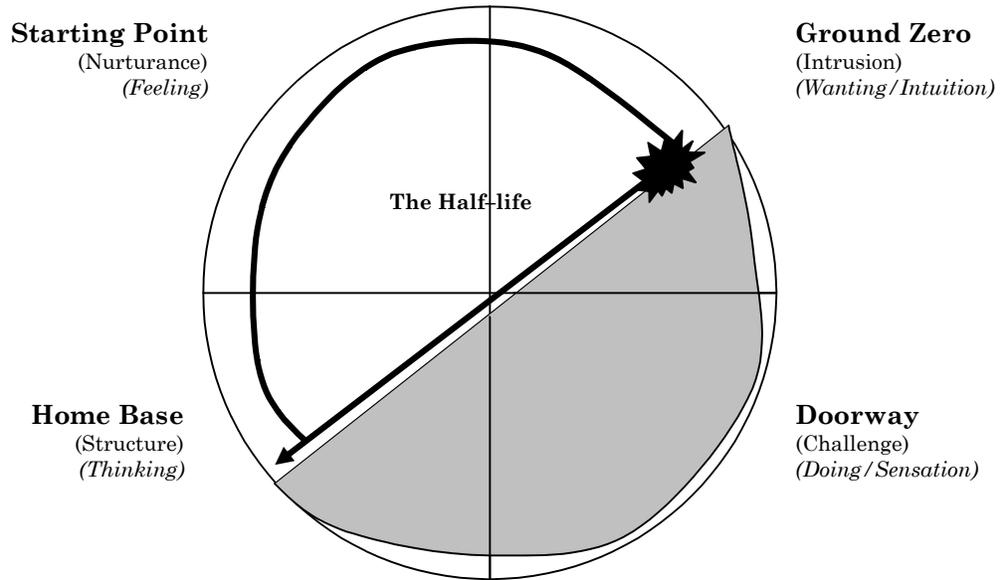


Chart 89. Pattern II, the Incongruity Measurement

You will notice what I call the half-life phenomenon. The half-life projects its complementary unconsciousness into the dark half of the cycle. This is where orthogonality enters the process of growth and change. A trauma causes an orthogonal quantum leap from pain and danger to relief and avoidance. Crossing an orthogonal border is very difficult whether we are going across or returning back. Whenever new trauma or a return to old trauma threatens us with anxiety or pain, our consciousness protects us by making an instantaneous quantum leap to the complementary quadrant, thus slicing away half our possibilities of living.

This apparent “resistance” to working through the trauma prevents continued movement on the cycle. The darkened area on the chart represents experiences that are unsought for and relatively unnoticed when present. Resistance, in my view, is like a sea-anchor in a storm or a tail on a kite. It keeps the ship from sinking, the kite from taking a nosedive. Resistance is an attractor—it levels out the energy

waves so that the person is stabilized. Every half-life splits (and perturbs) two quadrants and bypasses two rites of passage.

The Incongruent's responsivity to experiences within the darkened area, like sorting out ambivalence in relationships (Summer Quadrant II), identifying self-satisfying goals and achieving them (Fall Quadrant III), delighting in success (Fall Quadrant III), or learning from mistakes (Winter Quadrant IV), is underdeveloped. These areas of experience, being "unobserved," are indeterminate, like the unmeasured quantumstuff of the implicate order. The Incongruent may or may not have them, and he or she will not usually notice or care much either way. When a person is in resistance to working through trauma, he or she is literally half alive.

Avoiding involvement with the constructs of our own self systems is a central factor in generating phase-locked half-lives. Phase-locking occurs when the system, traumatized by some change-inducing disturbance, is oscillating between chaos and order. As shown in Chapter 4, between chaos and order are alternating and self organizing systems. Alternation is increased by negative (stabilizing) feedback while self organization is increased through positive (amplifying) feedback. The more experience we have, the more likely we are able to generate positive feedback. If we are young or introduced to an unknown trauma we strive for more stability by attracting negative feedback.

In such circumstances, some pattern of alternation becomes the attractor and the self similarity rule of fractal development drives the system into phase-lock. Phase-locking prevents the completion of the cycle. For example, our identities are embedded in our personal mythology as they are in our dreams. As we are in dreams, we are all the roles in our myths. And yet when we tell our dreams, as when we live our personal mythologies, we withhold identification with most of them, picking a favored or favorite one or two instead. How come? Why snatch scarcity from the cornucopia of abundance?

## A Case Study of a Star of Incongruity

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Subject        | Axel, a 42 year old male, a successful businessman, in “mid–life crisis” is acting out his “right” to finally get what he has always wanted   |
| Homebase       | An overachiever, over–intellectualizer, out of touch with emotions, problems with relationships (well liked but distant; friends say he is generous with things but stingy with self), always has to be right WINTER QUADRANT   |
| Ground Zero    | Frequently feels betrayed, identity problems, does not know what he wants. Encrypted complementaries like low level chronic depression (dissatisfaction with life, something missing, short pleasure at successes, which are never good enough), a history of respiratory illnesses, problems with commitment, problems with boundaries, especially with respect for other peoples’ limits SUMMER QUADRANT  |
| Starting Point | Warmth, empathy, acceptance, nurturant behavior from therapist. Other possibilities: develop awareness of resources (positive memories, educate emotions), build trust in self/others, assign Swedish massage, good nutrition, medical evaluations, enactments of safe, secure, nurturing moments, instructions in savoring successes, and the like SPRING QUADRANT   |
| Catharses      | Transformations will occur primarily from ground zero territory. Resolving issues resulting from derailment during practicing sub–phase of development (inadequate mirroring, unempathetic contact with parents, neglect, parental absence, needs greater than parents’ capacity to meet, or parents’ needs greater than or different from child’s needs, etc.). Typically will need to express anger and set new boundaries with parents and/or authority figures. Needs to “leave home” SUMMER QUADRANT |
| Doorway        | A completely new experience of Fall Quadrant issues (comfort with ambivalence, grief, sexuality, success, aggression, helplessness, triangulation, re–identification of the self) and Alex may in fact not know how when he says so FALL QUADRANT   |

### Patterns of Impasse

Now we will explore the patterns of impasse implicated by the Healing Circle. Just as the Celtic eightfold year (King, 1994) articulates eight gates of passage, so the Healing Circle has eight patterns of impasse. These impasses are moments of self measurement. One of the many analogues to

life from quantum physics (Herbert, 1985), the *pinhole effect*, occurs when electrons are shot through a pinhole to be recorded on a phosphor screen. When the pinhole is larger, the electrons are recorded as particles. But when the iris of the pinhole is constricted, an act of measurement occurs and the phosphor screen records the concentric rings of their wave function. Getting squeezed through a knothole may be a great doorway to the implicate order.

In life, we organize our thoughts, feelings, wants and behaviors to have a “particular” experience of our reality and ourselves. In therapy, as in life, when the constraints (the pinhole) through which we birth our selves are constrained even more, we eventually reach the possibilities of the wave pattern of the implicate order. At the maximum optimal constraint, we are illuminated. Of the eight patterns of impasse, there is one for each of the four seasons of the quartered circle, called *patterns of ricochet*, and there is one for each of the four directions, called *patterns of reversal*. Your personal mythology will determine which of the patterns are easy and which are difficult. These eight patterns fit around the quartered circle, the ricochets on the inside and the reversals at the axis points around the outside. Here is the map of the patterns:

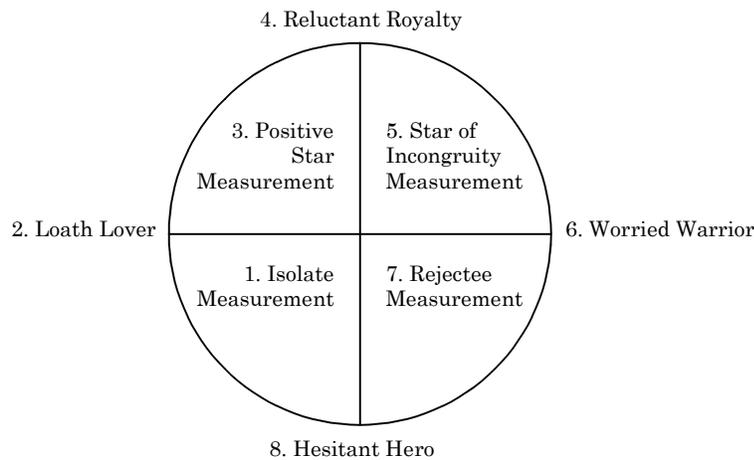


Chart 90. Map of the Eight Patterns of Impasse

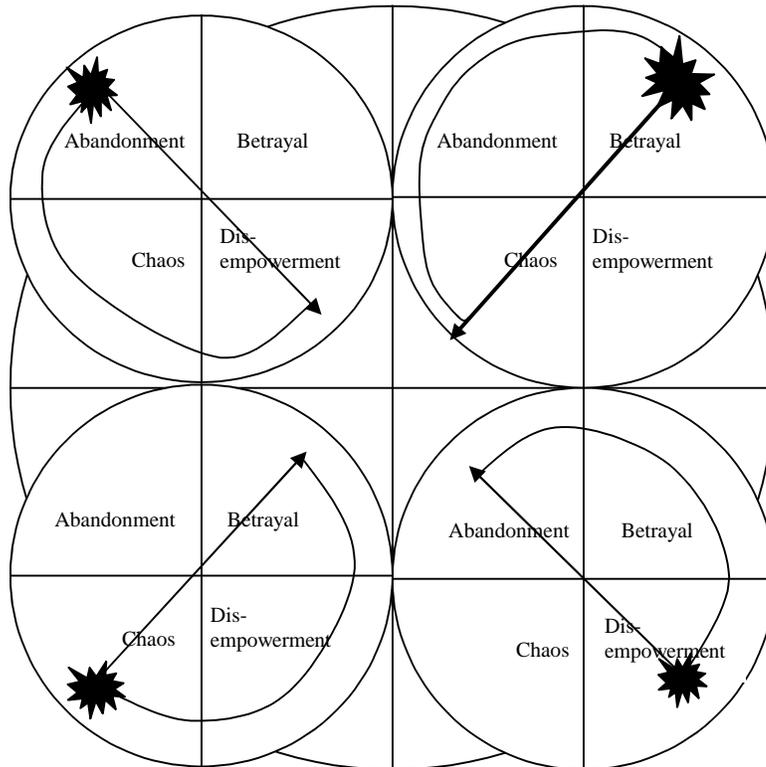
In Chapter 4, I argued that human consciousness is a self organizing complex dynamic system. The quartered circle is a linearized template of the Healing Circle, a self organized complex dynamic system comprised of the millions of events of a human life. In a complex system, a few simple, local rules allow for all the parts of the system to intercon-

nect and relate vitally. In the case of a human life, the personal mythology serves this function more or less adequately. The quartered circle points to a strange attractor of greater complexity. As we experience a more complete cycle through the missing complementaries of our personal myths we discover the rules of a new self organization and our lives become more complex and less complicated.

*Patterns of Ricochet (1,3,5, and 7)*

The patterns of ricocheting relate to the experiences myths are made of, the seasons of existence, and have to do with what happens when we avoid dealing with unfinished business. Patterns of ricochet are attractors that keep energy in bounds and under control. As the person is cycling around a pattern of living, an event occurs (often one unconsciously generated) that activates energy related to an old trauma and—**Shazam!**—that person is ricocheted into his or her complementary quadrant, the Home Base. This movement is instantaneous, a quantum leap. Broken out separately below, you can see the half-life phenomena of each of these experiences by which we measure our own identities. Seen from the perspective of history, rather than mythology, these are categories of personal trauma.

Chart 91. Patterns of Ricochet



It is not yet known why one person's response to stress is to feel abandoned while another's is to feel betrayed. When the trauma occurred during the initial development of those skills, it is likely to recur and come to dominate. Abandonment, for instance, is a very early wound. We can all be abandoned, but not like an infant and not with the same consequences of development. We all experience abandonment, betrayal, humiliation, and chaos and abuse. Nevertheless, we seem to choose a favorite quadrant of the circle from which to initiate our responses and defenses to stress.

*Patterns of Reversal (2,4, 6, and 8)*

Regardless of our core mythologies, in the passage from one phase of living to another, certain intensifications of experience occur as we cross the threshold from one phase, say challenges to mastery, to another, modeling reality. Humans have created structures of behaviors, called rituals, to assist in the threshold crossings. Our lives are filled with official and unofficial rites of passage. But sometimes, regardless of what their core mythologies are, people do not want to squeeze through the knothole: Not me!

Patterns of ricochet arise out of ignorance of possibilities; patterns of reversal arise out of refusal of possibilities. Like patterns of ricochet, there are four patterns of reversal. Patterns of reversal have to do with clinging to the current myths when the call has been made for the crossing of thresholds, the stuff of ritual and change. The treatment is to identify the avoided ritual and help the avoider cross the threshold.

The truth is, we sometimes do not want to move on, to cycle on-ward. Sometimes we are quite comfortable, thank you, doing just what we are doing. Or the prospect of what lies ahead is too disturbing to be easily embraced. Sometimes the attractiveness of what we have is too appealing to release, so we hold fast to where we are.

We need to cross a threshold to continue growing but instead we resist. We cannot move forward. We do not cycle backwards. The thrust of time and development continue to press. So we do a right angle slide along the horizontal or vertical threshold, and we end up on the reverse (complementary) side of the circle.

Because we are purposefully refusing to be where we are supposed to be, we engage in acting out behaviors that are metaphors of that reversed position. Patterns of reversal are quasi-periodic systems whose complexity has been linearized (simplified) by avoidance

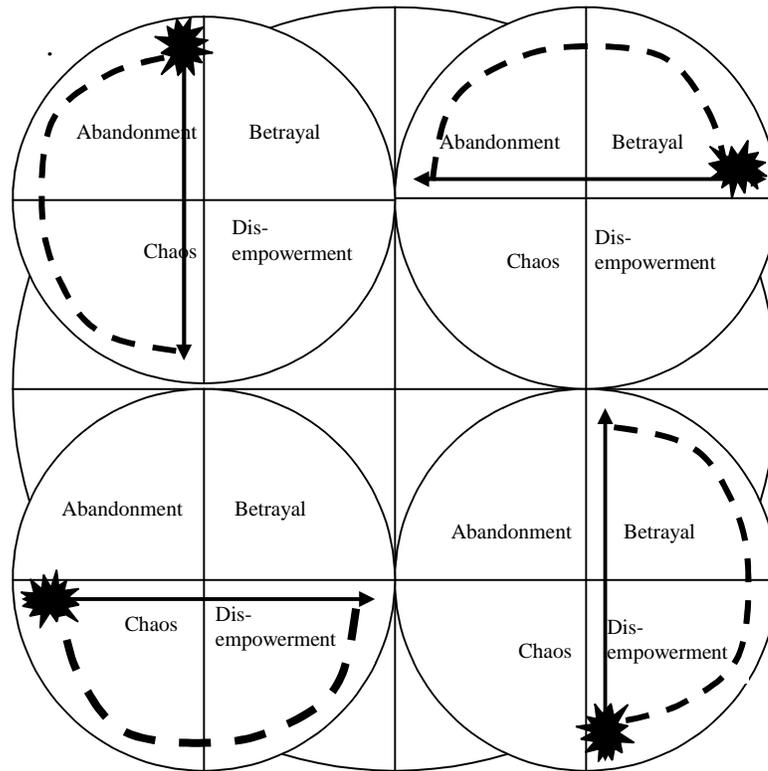


Chart 92. Patterns of Reversal

If you are eager to see these patterns of ricochet and reversal in detail, you will find your desires met in the following chapter, “The Healing Circle Compass.”

**The Change Process**

Human beings are remarkably able to make do with the way things are. After all, at birth, we are one of the most adaptive species on the planet. Our prolonged dependency requires that we detect and respond to the needs and intent of our caretakers. If we succeed, we survive. Luckily we have a marvelous brain which grows phenomenally in the first two years of our lives. Our brains help us establish mind to mind links or inter subjectivity with our caregivers. By two, our brains have more capacity and possibilities that at any other

stage of our lives. Unfortunately, not all caregiver environments are alike. Thus the remarkable ability to make do with the way things are.

Things must get much worse, first before real change can begin. As creatures of habit (rather than instinct), we maintain remarkable denial in order to keep things the way they are. This is confirmed by complexity theory where a dysfunctional system must be perturbed into deterministic chaos in order for new order to emerge.

Research into the change process shows that the positive elements for change increase regularly in relation to a regular decrease in the negative reasons for changing (Prochaska et al, 2002). In their book, *Changing for Good*, Prochaska and his colleagues state a Strong Principle of Change: from precontemplation of change to taking action for change requires a standard deviation increase in positive beliefs and reasons for making the change. Sometimes we must confront denial, thus generating even more resistance to change (negative reasons for changing) in order to create the conditions for real change to occur. Of course, people do come for help in a state of crisis. We must first calm and stabilize them. But this is not true change, as they merely return to the way things are. For real change to begin, we must gradually introduce controlled chaos back into their lives.

### *The Axis Dance*

In applying the quadratic process, we must resist our lifelong training to think linearly and reductionistically. A very important consideration to remember is the remarkable creativity of human beings. We will turn conserves upside down and find the most unique ways to express ourselves. Unpredictable self organization is natural to us, given optimal conditions. We no sooner identify our core myths than we find exceptions. In truth, we all accumulate traumas in all four seasons of living.

Nevertheless, when we seek help for the first time, we usually present problems and issues from our home base quadrant, the quadrant complementary to the core mythology, called ground zero. There may be a few issues from ground zero, but usually they have to be inferred, as the core myths are generally unconscious. During the mid therapy process, issues can come from any quadrant as the whole self

is in transition. Healing is wholeness. If someone comes for help in mid therapy, it is difficult to determine the core mythology if he or she has not determined it already. At the end of therapy, issues emerge mostly from the ground zero, with a few from the home base, just the reverse of the beginning.

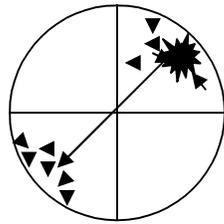


Chart 93. Beginning Therapy (Incongruity)

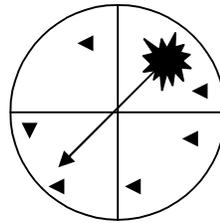


Chart 94. Mid Therapy (Incongruity)

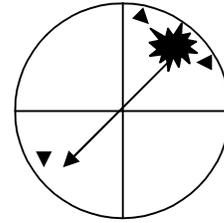


Chart 95. Ending Therapy (Incongruity)

In the beginning of the therapy process, we often have to “dance on the axis.” For example, a person with a core betrayal myth may seem like he or she has a chaos myth some of the time. Over time, by looking at the issues of the other quadrants, you can determine the true core mythology. A person with a betrayal mythology will have much better self-care and nurturing in his or her life than the person with the chaos mythology. Whereas the chaos person will enjoy challenges, the betrayed person dreads them, no matter how many achievements.

Looking to the other axis, the abandoned or disempowered core myths, we solve the question, as before, by comparing the clients’ behaviors in the other seasons of their lives. Thus someone with an abandonment myth will have much poorer intimate relationships than someone with a disempowerment mythology. In fact, these two often find one another because the strength of the disempowered person’s intimacy skills make him or her the only one who can stand the hard driving abandoned ones, while the abandoned ones find their partners loveable in spite of their “uselessness.”

Sometimes the axis dance is what we see first. Regarding the “end” of therapy, most of us regress under stress to the original core mythology regardless of the amount of personal growth we have done. Nothing is ever lost; and we cannot be who we are not. However, changes that we have

made to our personal myths direct alternative paths to spontaneous and timely recovery of grounded selfness.

### **Differential Therapy**

By therapy, I mean the healing of the soul. Given optimal resources of time, money, intelligence, maturity, competence, creativity, reciprocity, love, knowledge, intuition, and so forth therapy is a long process. By differential, I do not mean simply different strokes for different folks. In the Healing Circle, we consider the ways that our differences are alike. Each human being is a complex dynamic system of dynamic systems. Each part of such systems effects the system. Changing one part does not do much. Change a few and the system enters deterministic chaos, where new order emerges for free. Change too many and you simply have random chaos—usually perceived as death.

In applying the Healing Circle model, we must resist our lifelong training to think linearly and reductionistically. A very important consideration to remember is the remarkable creativity of human beings. We will turn conserves upside down and find the most unique ways to express ourselves. Unpredictable self-organization is natural to us, given optimal conditions.

In truth, we all accumulate traumas in all four seasons of living. Nevertheless, when we seek help for the first time, we usually present problems and issues from our home base quadrant, the quadrant complementary to the core mythology, called ground zero. There may be a few issues from ground zero, but usually they have to be inferred, as the core myths are generally unconscious. During the mid therapy process, issues can come from any quadrant as the whole self is in transition. Healing is wholeness. If someone comes for help in mid therapy, it may be difficult to determine the core mythology if he or she has not determined it already. At the end of therapy, issues emerge mostly from the ground zero, with a few from the home base, just the reverse of the beginning.

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### *Cycles of Growth: The Therapy Process*

When we become conscious of what we are feeling, wanting, doing, and thinking, we shift from behaving ritualistically (habitually) to "doing ritual." For example, the person who is measuring him or herself by betrayal may be preoccupied with unemployment, divorce, or what have you, and generally so busy struggling with self and others that the sense of letting go of all previous self definitions and surrendering to a transformation is hardly present. If that sense can be engendered, usually by a healer/therapist figure (like Joseph Campbell on television), the person can participate in a rite of transformation and move on to the recovery room where, in isolation, he or she can integrate the new selfness.

Therapy itself is a ritual. It involves responding to the call for change that comes to us in various ways: confrontation by our self defeating behaviors; exposure of some limiting belief about ourselves, others and/or the world; unexpressed or over-expressed feelings; or the decay, exhaustion,

or death of a dream, vision, or plan for a life. We separate from the everyday mundane reality in our search for a healer/therapist, but we do not really enter the therapy process until we commit ourselves to observing ourselves fearlessly in all our ways. Self referencing is the key to shifting from the quasi-periodic system of the half-life to the wholeness and self organization of complexity.

The “ordeal” of the therapy process begins with the identification of the underlying core personal myth(s) that drive(s) the unfolding of our lives. For example, let us take the client whose underlying core personal myth is one of betrayal, a wounding in the second quadrant of the Healing Circle. The overall therapy process requires a passage from the quadrant of wounding through the unaccessed half-life and then encountering one’s complementary home base roles with new resources. The unaccessed half-life is the liminal phase of the ritual of therapy. It is the margin, the no man’s land, where the changes to wholeness are accomplished.

The protagonist, the journeyer of the therapy, must undergo a rite of separation. He or she must leave the fear, pain, and loss of betrayal as well as the protective alternation of his or her judgments. Then he or she encounters the challenges to a new life, a life without proving the family wrong, him or herself right—or to otherwise explain the world as unfolding from the big bang of betrayal. There may then proceed any length of time (usually longer than the client imagines or wants it to be) during which the protagonist of the therapy will learn the new behaviors of a new life—one not yet actually defined.

Brief solution focused therapy is probably not properly called “therapy.” Consulting is probably a better word. Furthermore, while effective and relatively cheap in the short run, in the long run, it may be counterproductive, particularly when the presenting problem (from the home base) is symptomatic of a need for a deeper level change (in ground zero). Therapy, which is about healing the soul, is blocked. The soul’s urge to heal itself may present louder “calls to adventure,” in short, worse problems.

I will describe the process of therapy using the Healing Circle to achieve more wholeness. To heal is to arrive at a whole person integration of all our quadrants of living. This involves several steps (indicated by the numbered circles in the charts below). One must recognize home base as compen-

satory to ground zero. One must accept ground zero and learn to live in it in spite of anxieties arising out of fears of re-wounding. One must claim the territory of the doorway. Finally, one must encounter and integrate the home base roles and behaviors. There are four phases to Healing Circle therapy.

**Phase One (The Red Zone—0, 1, 2):** The client is uncomfortable from time to time when the (1) home base behaviors do not work as well as usual or when the (0) ground zero generally unconscious experiences are triggered and discomfort rises up from within. But generally the client is able to engage in (2) starting point behavior enough to repress the discomfort. Mind you, the client may be totally conscious of the unfelt and thus unexperienced facts of trauma in his or her life. Therapy is sought for when the unfelt affect of this trauma seeks outlet.

Most people enter therapy when life in the home base becomes intolerable. This can have numerous causes (usually simultaneous). For example, they can have a home base life style that is no longer viable. Or aspects of their core mythology may have surfaced in ways (too intense, too frequent) that they cannot stand. In any case they come for help. The therapist helps them get their life tolerably on track in the moment (1) and (2) begins to uncover the core mythology. Life disturbing concerns have priority, but the personal mythology holds supremacy.

**Phase Two (The Blue Zone—3, 4, 5):** Phase Two begins when the client and therapist have a working hypothesis about the core personal mythology. Clients usually come to the therapy session uncomfortable and leave feeling better. Over and over the process will move from discomfort to comfort through identifying core elements of ground zero (0). If the client is receptive (and the therapist on the mark, of course), the therapy moves to Phase Two, self-referencing, by examining how life's problems are generated by the core mythology. The red rounds will happen over and over until the client begins to anticipate their occurrence in his life. Before therapy, these occurrences are recognized after the fact. In Phase Two, the client learns to recognize them while they are happening.

Over time, the therapist has an idea, metaphor, or archetype about the ground zero and some guesses about how the wounding may have occurred. The therapist may or

may not share these hypotheses with the client. Sharing these early usually does little good and can do harm. Instead, the therapist asks questions and makes interventions to test the hypotheses about the client's half-life. This is generally very powerful and the client becomes engaged in the process of self-discovery.

In the beginning of the second phase, the client comes to therapy distressed and leaves relieved. As this phase matures, the client comes in calm and leaves distressed. This is a crucial time in the therapy. The client may lose heart and want to leave the process. This is a good time to share those hypotheses about the core mythology and traumatizing experiences. The therapist can also give homework to assure that the client is carrying the growth out into his community. This kind of arrangement can also give the therapist feedback regarding the nature of the support that the client has. Except for clients with abandonment mythologies, the therapist may recommend group at this time to help the client implement changes that are trying to emerge. Or the therapist may see a need to see the family or partner of the client in joint sessions.

Telling the client about the nature and flow of the therapy process may also help at this point. Some clients will ask for this information. Some clients bring their learnings into a supportive family (or group) system, and the gains they experience there are enough to sustain them through these hard times. These clients move into Phase Three. Others reach a therapeutic plateau where, not feeling so miserable, they may leave therapy, at the end of Phase Two. If they do, their therapy is incomplete and they may return to therapy later. As Phase Two matures, the therapist engages the client at the starting point (2), that quadrant of living that the client has mastered, and each session involves a ritual healing in the ground zero trauma, a piece at a time.

Phase two moves on to phase three when the client completes the rite of passage from the ground zero into the doorway (3). In Phase Three the client moves into the half-life that he has not yet lived in much and becomes comfortable there (3, 4, and 5). During this phase, issues will distribute throughout the quartered circle, and axis dancing is common. Crises will provoke regression. This is an excellent time for group work.

In addition to doing work around issues, some completely new, the client will also be learning new roles and behaviors for the new whole-life. In the first phase, the client experiences distress after a triggered event. In the second phase, the client experiences the triggering event and learns more about the trigger. In the third phase, the client anticipates triggers to the core mythology while discovering other trauma triggers the original core myth masked.

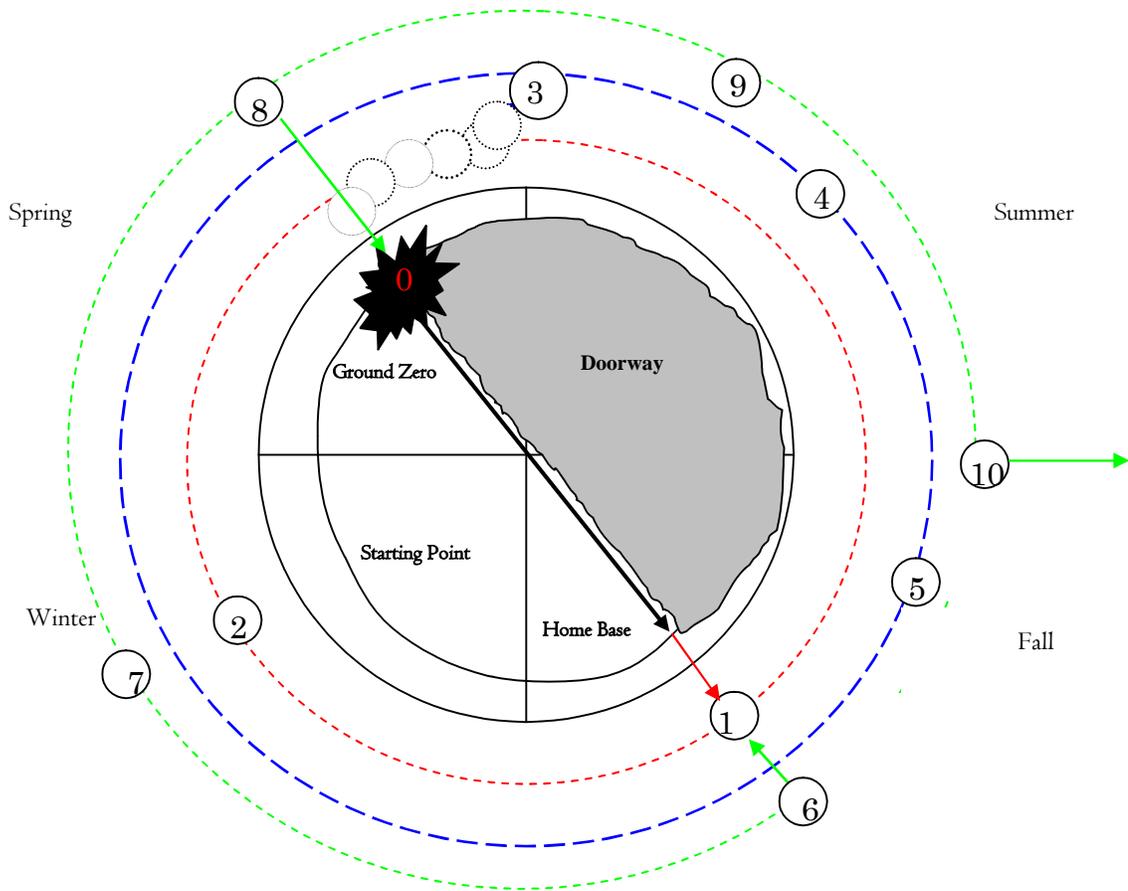
**Phase Three (The Green Zones—6, 7, 8, 9, 10):** Phase three begins when the client encounters the old home base roles with wholeness. Eventually the client must make the rite of passage through the doorway from ground zero to the home base (where, to paraphrase T. S. Eliot, she will arrive where she started and know the place for the first time. This is generally a time of deep grief. Like all grief, it begins with denial of those former roles followed by anger. When the client has completed the grief work, the task of self-acceptance can begin. This is a time of great excitement, even joy. Clients with abandonment myths take the longest to leave therapy while clients with chaos myths will leave quickly. Some need help letting go, some need encouragement to slow down, take stock, and really appreciate their accomplishments. As you can see from the diagrams below, clients are encouraged to complete the cycle that they are on before their final rite of separation.

It is important to remember that life is not linear. Nor is it circular. It is both. When you combine the line and the circle over time, you get the spiral. Life recycles in expanding or contracting spirals. What this means is that these passages, these threshold crossings, come up over and over. We may successfully cross over the first few times, then get bogged down as the demands of adult living become more complex. When we do, we will play out a ricochet or reversal pattern. These phase-locked patterns at worst are mechanically determined, alternating periodic systems. At best, they are quasi-periodic. We have made the complexity of our lives linear again until we have the resources to strive for completion. The object of the Quadratic Process of the Healing Circle is to assist the client through the Doorway back into self-organizing complexity.

See “Leadership: Differential Directing” in Chapter 10, *Psychodrama*, 304-06.

See Appended Charts 96-100.

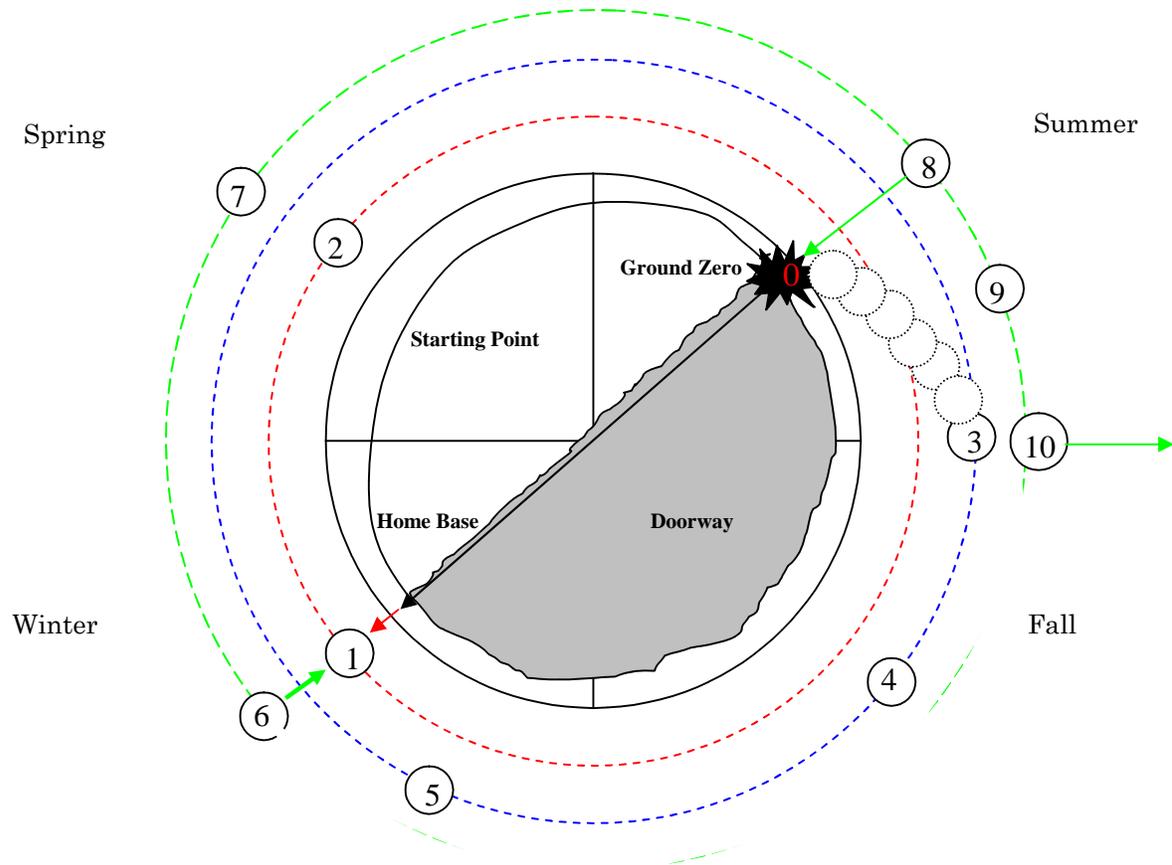
**Chart 96. Therapeutic Process of Abandonment Trauma**



0. An actual infant/child (or anyone else facing a truly new threshold requiring a balancing of self-acceptance and new expectations of others) makes a self-limiting meaning of experiences that are too intense and/or complicated to be incorporated into memory, thus creating (or reinforcing) an archetypal pattern of response to any similar seeming experiences in living.
1. A client enters therapy because compensatory behaviors (overfunctioning and excessive “doings”) are not working.
2. The client uses capacity to think and use of facts to approach healing abandonment trauma.
3. The client recognizes the abandonment as real and as unrelated to her/his personal worth and value and experiences feelings of despair, grief, self-love, worthiness, and any other feelings necessary for completeness.
4. The client experiences relationships reciprocally and intimately and without self-abandonment, thus permitting healthy separation from significant others.
5. The client experiences a new sense of personal empowerment in competence by doing things that matter to her/him personally.
6. The client encounters her/his “human doer” with love and acceptance, thus transforming her or his psyche.
7. The client experiences her/his former half-life with feelings, emotional consciousness, a sense of personal empowerment, self-confidence, thus loving and accepting her/himself in a new way.
8. The client encounters her/his abandoned self and contracts for constancy in self-care, thus balancing self-love and others expectations.
9. The now whole client completes rest of the cycle in healthy relatedness with self and others.
10. The client separates from the therapeutic process.



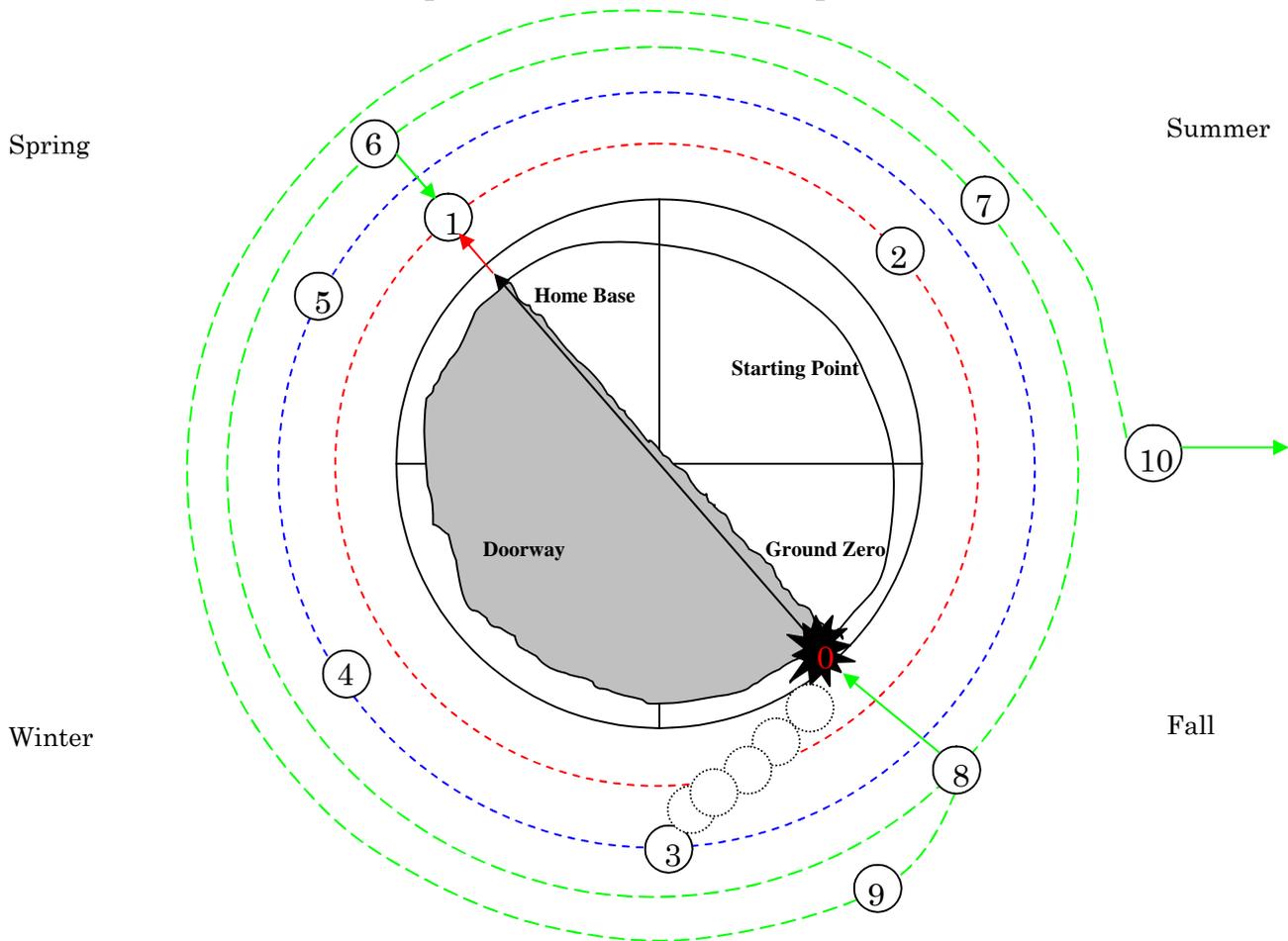
Chary 97. Therapeutic Process of Betrayal Trauma



0. An actual infant/child (or anyone else facing a truly new threshold requiring separation from significant others) makes a self-limiting meaning of experiences that are too intense and/or complicated to be incorporated into memory, thus creating (or reinforcing) an archetypal pattern of response to any similar seeming experiences in living.
1. A client enters therapy because compensatory behaviors of needing to be right and knowing everything are not working.
2. The client uses confidence in self and self-care to approach healing of the betrayal trauma.
3. The client recognizes that there are boundaries between roles in relationships and takes responsibility for her or his only, thus separating her/himself from the betrayer.
4. The client experiences new behaviors without self-critical judgments, thus developing new spontaneity and joy in relationships, a sense of personal boundaries that permits coming and going without anxiety, new competencies as needed, and self-confidence in stepping into the unknown.
5. The client experiences new meanings that emerge for free rather than of necessity.
6. The client encounters her/his righteous regulator with compassion and contracts with self for protection, thus permitting freedom of thinking and intentional incorporation and re-informing of systems of belief to live by.
7. The client experiences her/his former half-life with new awareness open to emergent feelings, true wants, and meaningful purposes, thus enabling appropriately balanced connections with self and others.
8. The client encounters her/his wounded/betrayed self and contracts for consistent self-acceptance, thus assuring reciprocal relationships with self and others.
9. The now whole client completes the rest of the cycle catching (like butterflies) the joys in relating.
10. The client separates from the therapeutic process.



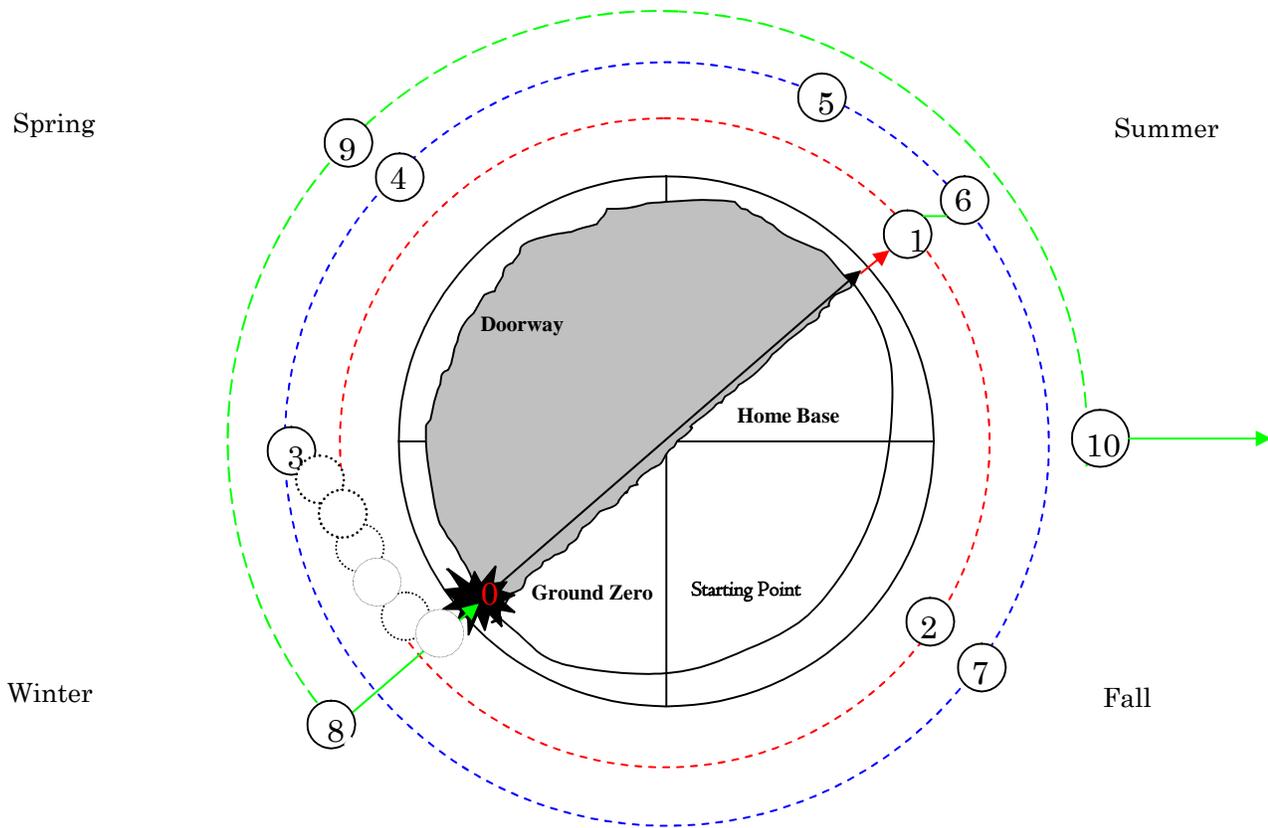
**Chart 98. Therapeutic Process of Disempowerment Trauma**



0. An actual infant/child (or anyone else facing a truly new threshold that requires letting go of an apparently fragmenting and seemingly useless known to surrender with blind faith to a hopefully transforming unknown future) makes a self-limiting meaning of experiences that are too intense and/or complicated to be incorporated into memory, thus creating (or reinforcing) an archetypal pattern of response to any similar seeming experiences in living.
1. A client enters therapy because compensatory behaviors (excessive care giving and/or care seeking) are not working.
2. The client uses relational skills repeatedly to approach disempowerment trauma.
3. The client powerfully re-experiences the disempowering trauma under controlled processes and learns through experience that the humiliations from others were at least as much about them as they were about her or him, thus reclaiming self-confidence and shamelessly empowering her or himself to new competencies and unknown possibilities.
4. The client experiences new models of reality with consciousness and free choices from among old and emergent meanings, thus creating more optimal guides to belief, emotion, and behavior.
5. The client experiences her or his missing self soothing, and s/he receives nurturance when needing support, thus affirming her or his self esteem.
6. The client encounters her or his overly helpful or helpless self and accepts and loves her or him with appropriate unconditionality, thus creating the conditions for interdependence with significant others.
7. The client experiences her or his former half-life with new empowered consciousness and self-confidence, thus assuring reciprocal interdependence with significant other(s).
8. The client encounters and accepts her or his wounded and disempowered self with love and forgiveness, and s/he contracts for consistent presence and protection from humiliation with this self.
9. The now whole client completes rest of a whole life cycle with faith in the inevitably new futures..
10. The client separates from therapeutic process.



**Chart 99. Therapeutic Process of Chaos Trauma**



0. An actual infant/child (or anyone else facing a truly new threshold that demands experiencing fully the emotions associated with a traumatic event so that a new meaning can be created and incorporated) makes a self-limiting meaning of experiences that are too intense and/or complicated to be incorporated into memory, thus creating (or reinforcing) an archetypal pattern of response to any similar seeming experiences in living.
1. A client enters therapy because compensatory behaviors (seeking chaos to order through controlling/manipulating others or situations) aren't working.
2. The client repeatedly uses courage in the face of challenges to approach healing chaotic trauma.
3. The client intentionally, mindfully, and meaningfully re-experiences trauma under controlled processes and integrates dissociated parts of experience, meaning, and self.
4. The client experiences and receives nurturing, support, and belonging and learns how to self sooth.
5. The client experiences new intimacy in relationships based on trust and reciprocity, brings awareness to her or his intuition, and wants for wanting's sake all the other things that emerge in an optimal life besides those that assure safety and order
6. The client encounters his or her charismatic/dissociated self and accepts and loves that self, contracting to stay conscious of the self's needs. To clam the self's fears, and to protect the self from harm from her or himself and anyone else.
7. The client experiences former half life with new, calmer consciousness and the inner knowing the her or his self is not alone.
8. The client encounters her or his traumatized self and contracts for consistent presence and guidance with this self.
9. The now whole client completes rest of the cycle.
10. The client separates from therapeutic process.

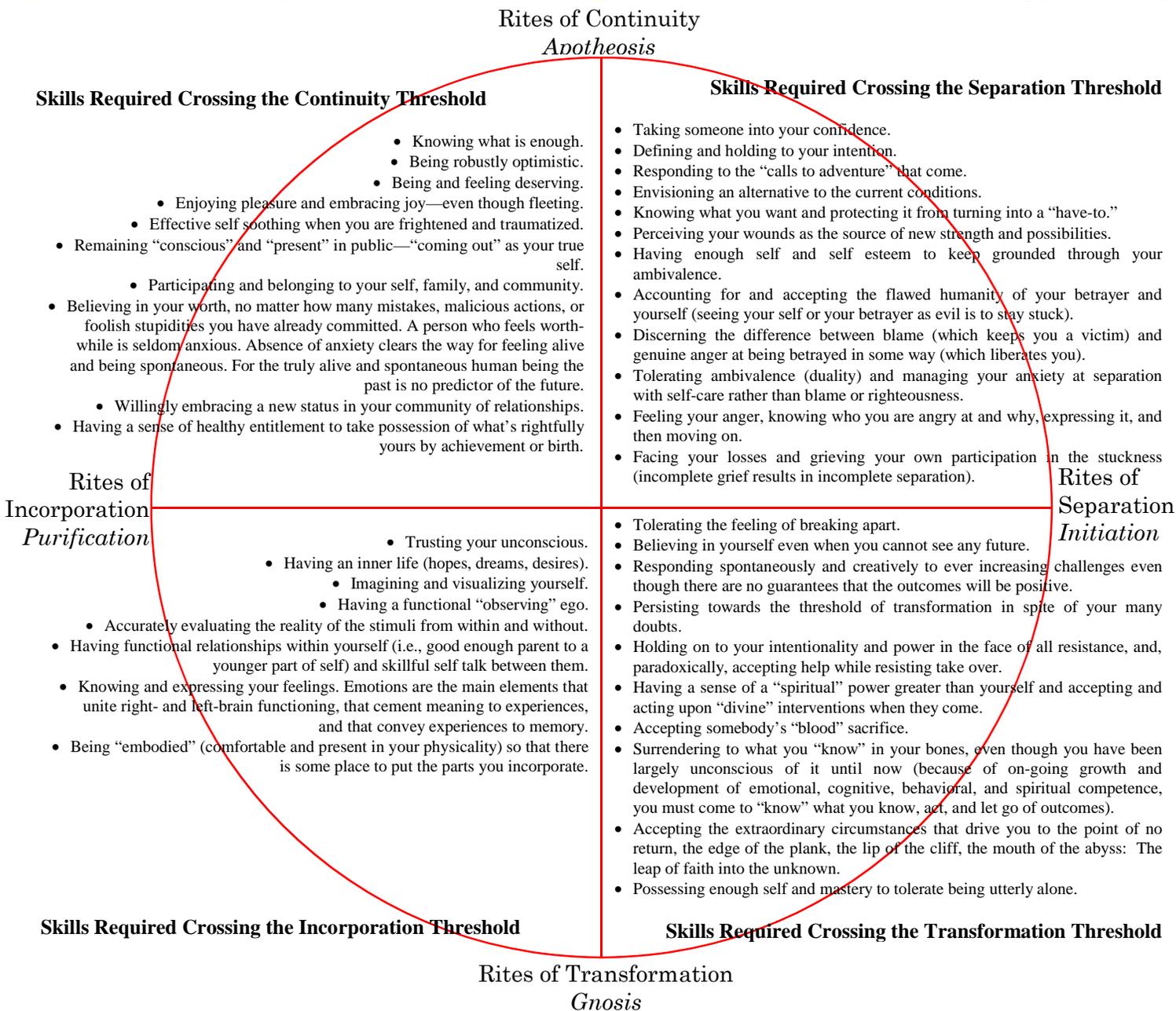


# Ritual Threshold Crossing Requirements of the Quartered Circle

Chart 100

**Quadrant I: Spring**  
 Developmental Stage: **Protective Holding Environment**  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Action: **Nurturing**  
 Develops Feeling Function  
 Relationships: **Dependent**  
 Trauma: **Abandonment and Neglect**  
 Healthy Myth: **I feel loveable.**  
 Adult Attachment Style: **Compulsive Self-Reliance**

**Quadrant II: Summer**  
 Developmental Stage: **Meaningful Connection to Other**  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Action: **Intruding**  
 Develops Wanting (Intuition) Function  
 Relationships: **Interdependent**  
 Trauma: **Betrayal**  
 Healthy Myth: **I want things because I matter.**  
 Adult Attachment Style: **Angry Withdrawal**



**Quadrant IV: Winter**  
 Developmental Stage: **Modeling of Reality**  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Function: **Structuring**  
 Develops Thinking Function  
 Relationships: **Independent**  
 Trauma: **Chaos and Disorder (Extreme Abuse)**  
 Healthy Myth: **I know myself and understand things.**  
 Adult Attachment Style: **Disorganized and/or Dissociated**

**Quadrant III: Fall**  
 Developmental Stage: **Challenges to Mastery**  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Action: **Challenging**  
 Develops Doing (Sensation) Function  
 Relationships: **Counter- and Co-dependent**  
 Trauma: **Humiliating Disempowerment**  
 Healthy Myth: **I can handle things**  
 Adult Attachment Style: **Compulsive Caregiving/Seeking**



## Chapter 8

# A Healing Circle Compass

The chess board is the world; the pieces are the phenomena of the universe; the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature. The player of the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just, and patient. But we also know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance.

Thomas H. Huxley

### In the Beginning

The greatest challenge of our adult lives is to work through the inevitable traumas of our childhoods and to incorporate the resulting lost, dissociated fragments of self into our awareness of our reasons for being, wanting, doing, and believing. This largely unconscious story is called the personal mythology in the Healing Circle dialogue. Its underlying narrative thrust carries us like boats on a river to the unresolved and unincorporated experiences that shape its course.

Each of us is hard wired to create a narrative autobiography that explains the reasons for our life paths and yet contains within it the hidden keys to what is missing. The recovery of lost or under-developed parts is the essence of all healing. Healing is arriving at Wholeness and it is a life long process of Completion. The Healing Circle maps a template of discovery that helps uncover this unconscious river of life.

The rounded, feminine, *holding* circle joined with the angular, masculine, *directional* cross forms one of the oldest symbols of wholeness and unity generated by human kind. This symbol also represents the cycle of the seasons. When we add the two solstices and two equinoxes that separate the four seasons, they make up the eight key passages or gates of the quartered circle.

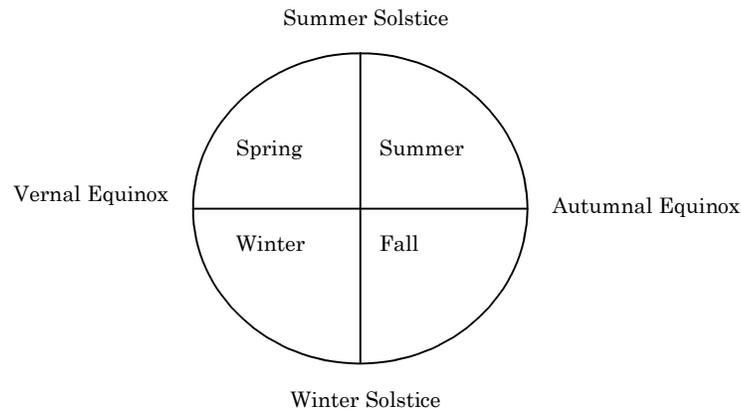


Chart 101. The Four Seasons

Ancient wisdom held that “as above, so below”: thus our human lives unfolded seasonally also. The process of human development over the life span is easily correlated to the seasons. Early stages of our development are largely time driven, pushing us forward stage by stage whether we complete them or not.

To grow a self, the newborn human’s developmental template requires a spring like protective holding environment for all new beginnings, a fruitful harvest of meaningful connections to significant other(s) for emergent selfhood, a gradual challenging towards mastery of stage specific skills for developing independence, and a fluid modeling of new realities for incorporation of new meaning into our self awareness.

Whether these requirements are optimally met stage by stage or not, the arrow of time keeps flying forward. The emerging self makes adjustments to get enough of what is missing or just to survive. These adaptations influence how further development unfolds. This, then, affects qualities of the template, thus influencing all future developmental sequences.

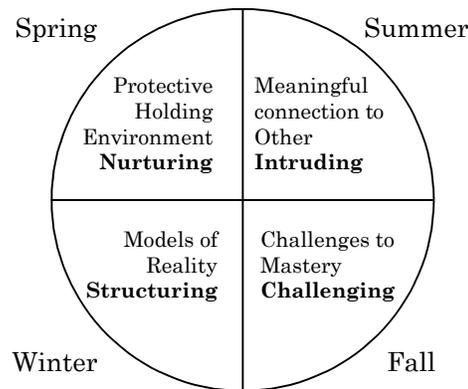


Chart 102. The Seasons of Life

The Healing Circle identifies eight states or stations of development. In each, we are either developing and/or upgrading stage appropriate skills or we are dealing with a threshold crossing to a new set of stage appropriate skills. These passages are time and/or process driven. If all goes well enough (perfection can be traumatizing), we will turn cycle upon cycle in a rising spiral of development until our time comes to pass on to some other state of being.

However, even when all is well, traumas will happen. These traumas create impasses that can block us from half the cycle of the circle until we heal them. Even when we have other contradictory traumatic experiences, our core impasses reframe our experiences to fit our story. These impasses are moments of self measurement (of our requisite skill sets) resulting in our personal mythologies. Our personal mythologies are activated under stress, and their sole purposes are to enhance our strengths and neutralize and preserve our underdeveloped potentials. At these stressful times, we organize our thoughts, feelings, wants and behaviors to have a “particular” experience of our reality and ourselves.

All psychological theories must account for the repetition of behaviors (often self destructive) and the transformational changes and growth that are a part of being human. In the Healing Circle, these are explained by the concepts of recycling, derailments from the lifelong track of optimal, biologically driven developmental processes and stages, and the creative

emergence of each person's personal mythology or narrative autobiography.

Specific traumas or retraumatizations to specific developmental phases threaten us with anxiety or pain. Our brains protect us by making an instantaneous quantum leap to the life experiences represented by the complementary quadrant on the Healing Circle. For example, an infant is neglected and denied a protective holding environment (the Spring Quadrant). Her magnificent brain places her instantly in the mental state of meeting challenges to mastery (the Fall Quadrant) so that she can take care of herself and survive. In doing so, she by-passes half the cycle of experiences represented by the Healing Circle: Part of the protective holding environment, all of the meaningful connection to others, and part of the challenges to mastery become temporarily irrelevant. If the neglect is repeated, our abandoned baby girl or boy can develop a personal mythology of lovelessness, creating a narrative that emphasizes the half-life of doing for connection (part of the Fall Quadrant), thinking about and immersion in the details of explicit reality (all of the Winter Quadrant), and just enough self care to survive (part of the Spring quadrant).

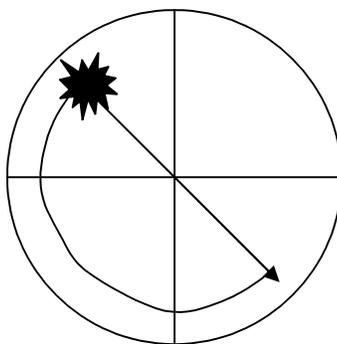


Chart 103. The abandonment half-life

This process can occur, of course, in any quadrant. Because the human brain takes so long to become fully functional and continues developing over the life span, it simplifies things by settling into a temporary half-life where all experiences are explained by the quadrant of most frequent or intense derailment. The experiences outside the half-life are encrypted in the personal mythology, available for later unpacking and incorporation.

In the Healing Circle view, the chronological site of the early traumatic derailments that form the organizing principle of the core myth is called **Ground Zero**, the Quadrant of Limiting (in this case, self care, self love, and self worth). Experiences here shape the narrative of our lives.

The complementary quadrant of experiences our brains quantumly leap to when we are stressed is called the **Home Base**, the Quadrant of Overt Behavior (in this case, doing to become indispensable). Experiences here shape the history of our lives.

Once relieved of distress, we can continue on the cycle, entering the fully lived in quadrant of the half-life, where we have access to the full repertoire of resources pertinent to the particular season of living. This is where we are most confident and where helpers can best reach us. It is called the **Starting Point**, the Quadrant of Accessible Resources (in this case, thinking and data collecting).

In helping someone, we guide them by turning them to their Starting Point for resources. Then we engage with them in the Ground Zero trauma(s), over and over, and eventually explore missed experiences and develop missing skills. Next we facilitate a rite of passage (in this case, a rite of continuity) thus crossing the threshold between the Ground Zero Quadrant and the **Doorway**, the Quadrant of Discovery and New Resources (in this case, reciprocal open relations with trusted others). Optimally, we will continue our helping relationship with them as they cycle through this season with full awareness for the first time. If they experience a derailing trauma in this new life space (a distinct probability), they are likely to revert to their core myth and the familiar Home Base. With prompting we can often get them on track quickly.

Eventually, they will require a second rite of passage, (in this case, a rite of separation) thus crossing the threshold between the Doorway Quadrant and the unfamiliar part of their Home Base. Here they can experience the missed experiences and develop missing skills so that they can cross the threshold between their Home Base and the Starting Point, as if for the first time, with new eyes, new feelings, new information, and new skills. They will have transformed their determined doing into purposeful action. For our abandoned baby, this is the path to wholeness and her or his true release from the Spell of Human Doing to the Richness of Human Being.

### Stations of Development: The Eight Gates Recycled

Many traditions have used the segmented circle, called a mandala, to hold the complexity of living. Among some Native American tribes, for example, the Spider, who with her eight legs is the weaver of all the infinite possibilities of creation, renders the web of life. Her legs represent the eight gateways of spirit—the four winds of change and the four directions. In *Tao of Chaos*, Katya Walter (1998) demonstrates that the *I Ching* is essentially a complex dynamic system utilizing the same universal order of complementary chaos that DNA uses. The eight gates are represented by the eight trigrams of the “Old Family Mandala” of the *I Ching* (later expanded to sixty-four hexagrams by pairing the old family mandala with its counter-clockwise cycle and then noting the unfolding progression of line by line changes).

Of the eight gates, there are four *patterns of ricochet*, one for each of the four seasons of the quartered circle, and there are four *patterns of reversal* one for each of the four thresholds that separate them. The patterns of ricochet relate to the experiences myths are made of. I call this pattern a ricochet because when the trauma derails development at *Ground Zero*, the brain ricochets consciousness off at right angles into the opposite, complementary quadrant of the life experiences represented by the Healing Circle, carrying our narrative with it. This movement is instantaneous, a quantum leap.

Patterns of ricochet arise out of *blindness to possibilities*. When our brains remove us instantly from perceived danger, we are prevented from learning the possibilities inherent in the missed experiences. Patterns of reversal arise out of *resistance to possibilities*. Patterns of reversal happen when we need to hold fast to our current core mythology rather than answer the call to cross a threshold into a new growth. Patterns of reversal occur because we are missing one or more of the essential skills needed to make the threshold crossing into the Doorway quadrant in the quadrant un-lived half-life. The treatment is to identify the missing skill(s) and develop it so that we can cross the threshold. Our personal mythologies are robust defenses of our integrity and identity. Readiness is developed by the accruing of specific skills necessary to a substantive change in

the personal mythology and thus our selfness. Our mythologies insure that we return to the scene of the trauma until we learn the missing skill(s). What ever the particular reasons for resistance, patterns of reversal occur because we are missing one or more of the essential skills required for the task. Since we will not move forwards and cannot move backwards, we slide along the horizontal or vertical axis that we cannot cross, ending up on the reverse (complementary) side of the life experiences represented by the Healing Circle. Because we are purposefully refusing to be where we are supposed to be, our act hunger to be there anyway causes us to “act out” behaviors that are metaphors of that reversed position.

As we cycle through the eight gates, I attribute names and sexes to the examples. The profiles are intentionally vague, more caricatures than character studies. The skills required to cross seasonal thresholds identified below are not all-inclusive. It is important to remember that explicate diagnoses are extrapolations of data that only imperfectly apply to real live implicate humans. The personal mythology is unique and the actual profile of a person is as unrepeatable as her genome. And finally, we all share some of all categories. Our personal mythologies determine which of the gates are easy and which are difficult.

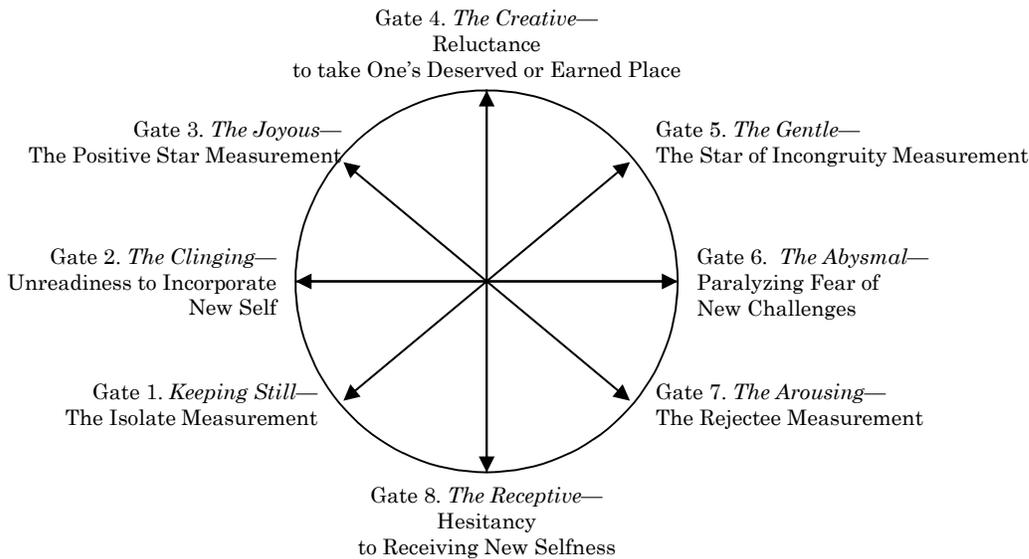


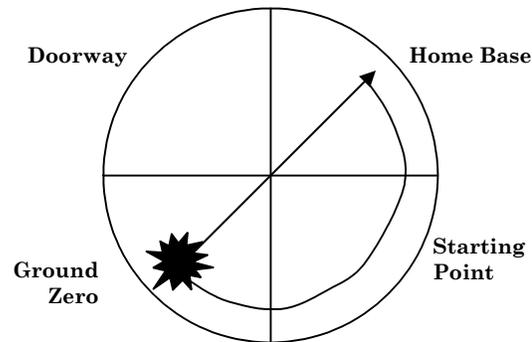
Chart 104. The Eight Stations of Development

*Gate 1: Keeping Still—the Isolate Measurement*

**Aspects of the Mythologies of Meaninglessness**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Season</b>   | Mid-Winter, February (Candlemas, St. Brigid’s Day, Ground Hog Day)   |
| <b>Cultural Archetypes</b>                              | Alfred E Neumann, the Fool, Sisyphus (the steadfast masochist)   |
| <b>Chief Task</b>                                       | Primarily through <b>left brain</b> dominance, we create models of reality that incorporate our new experiences and meaning making   |
| <b>Method</b>   | Keeping still, resting, gestating, regenerating—so that new structures of information and function can be formed through thinking and narrative elaboration  |
| <b>Healthy Process</b>                                  | Acceptance of one’s true experience and self   |
| <b>Healthy Myth</b>                                     | “I know and understand myself and the world of people and things around me”  |
| <b>Relationship Health</b>                              | Independent and accepting observer of self and others  |
| <b>Higher Social Goal</b>                               | Interpret and define the universe  |
| <b>Developmental Derailment</b>                         | A Newborn’s (birth to two months) environment is filled with chaos or is absent of meaningful structures to internalize. A Child is exposed to chaos, abuse, and disorder extreme enough to compromise meaningfulness of experience and trust in others. An Adult is subject to life threatening trauma (PTSD)   |
| <b>Resulting Ricochet</b>                               | Pain drives the subject to the complementary Summer Quadrant where others are manipulated and controlled to create an illusion of safety   |
| <b>Chaos Half-Life</b>                                  | In the personal mythology of mindlessness, emergent or remembered chaos (meaning destroying experiences like incest, abuse, deaths, severe illness, natural catastrophe, etc.) drives one’s dynamic self to compensate by engaging in interpersonal interactions that manipulate and control a situation and create a sense of safety. Once safe, the dynamic self can engage in highly challenging activities that affirm safety and control until circumstances change and the old unresolved and unincorporated trauma is triggered again and the half-life cycle begins again. |
| <b>Unhealthy Myth</b>                                   | “I don’t know nothin”  |
| <b>Compensated Social Goal</b>                          | Finding, promoting, becoming a charismatic guru to bring order to chaos  |
| <b>Personal Process</b>                                 | Schizoid, sociopathic, exploitive  |
| <b>Dominant Overt Emotion</b>                           | Dissociated, numb, or emotional flooding, panic  |
| <b>Unexpressed Emotion</b>                              | Rage   |
| <b>Behavioral Strength</b>                              | Reciprocal interaction with others to bring order to real or imagined chaos  |
| <b>Blocked Behavior</b>                                 | Learning, creating a data base, creating a holistic model of the world   |
| <b>Relationships in Groups</b>                          | Charismatically influencing, sometimes joining, quick to leave   |
| <b>Sociometric Position</b>                             | Star of positive/negative incongruity  |
| <b>Expressed Theme</b>                                  | “I don’t know (the troubles I’ve seen)”  |
| <b>Unexpressed Theme</b>                                | “I don’t want to know”   |
| <b>Core Defense</b>                                     | Denial   |
| <b>Adult Attachment Pattern</b>                         | Dissociated and/or disorganized  |
| <b>Therapeutic Task</b>                                 | Develop awareness, accounting for things, and incorporation of lost feeling  |
| <b>Prescription</b>                                     | Breathing, containing, challenging, protecting, and reframing  |
| <b>Most Successful Initial Therapeutic Intervention</b> | Challenging and the Leadership Style of Director   |
| <b>Intervention for Catharsis</b>                       | Structuring and the Leadership Style of Meaning Attributor   |

Profile of the Isolate Measurement Trauma: The Myths of  
 Meaninglessness  
**Alfred E. Neumann:** “*What? Me Worry? (I don’t know nothin’)*”



105. Isolate Measurement Ricochet

Alfred E. Newman (of *Mad Magazine* fame) is developmentally derailed in the WINTER QUADRANT. Derailments include the initial post-birth Modeling of Reality which can be seriously disrupted if it is filled with chaos (like extreme birth trauma) or absent of meaningful structures to internalize (like mother missing for some reason, incubated for survival, serious birth defects requiring surgery or invasive treatment). More often the trauma is caused by childhood abuse (sexual, physical, emotional, spiritual), the death of a primary caregiver, alcoholic parent(s), loud (not necessarily violent) fighting between parent figures, other chaotic environmental stress, frequent moves, or parents whose attachment is disorganized and dissociated. The most vulnerable ages are 0 to 2 months and 3½ to 5 years. The Recycling ages are 13 to 16, 25 to 28, 37 to 40, 49 to 52, 61 to 64, 73 to 76, and 85 to 88. These are also ages of greater vulnerability to chaotic retraumatizations. Recycling can be prompted by experiences that are self similar to the unresolved childhood derailment, life threatening experiences (and their anniversaries), and any experience of profound loss of meaning. When an extremely chaotic event occurs after early childhood, the chaos mythology may be superimposed over an earlier core myth.

Alfred is defeated by making meaning of his troubles (WINTER QUADRANT) and dysfunctional around getting rest, recovery, recuperation and nurturing. His ricochet shoots him right past the SPRING QUADRANT. He is suspicious of nurturing and will find ways to reject it (at best, it makes him feel vulner-

able). His wants are a mystery to him. On the other hand, he perceives the absence of things he wants (which are often potentially destructive) as not nurturing him. This puts those who care about him in a double bind and can drive his friends, lovers, and therapists crazy. Sexually, Alfred can be an athletic though joyless lover. Love shatters on his frozen dependency needs. The SPRING QUADRANT is Alfred's Doorway, so he won't be able to be very good at receiving support or showing gratitude.

Instead he will generate chaos in his life through drugs (both legal and illegal), impulsive decisions, inability to follow through on important tasks, risky high intensity challenges, and other consequences of dissociation and disorganization. The price of not knowing what you don't want to know is high. The SUMMER QUADRANT, which focuses on interpersonal relations, is Alfred's complementary, Home Base, position. Therefore, most activities are focused in socially hyperactive ways. He may split off, getting ungrounded or "airy fairy" or even sociopathic. He can be inconsistent. He can also be great in an emergency. When it makes him feel safe, Alfred can be quite good with people. If he is really threatened, he exploits others so that he can feel safer and in control. Alfred's wants are determined by staying safe. He will do anything to be safe when he is stressed, and he is capable of anything regardless of who is hurt or helped.

The Starting Point for Alfred is a good, do-able challenge, the essence of the FALL QUADRANT. He is used to this kind of behavior, and bears up well under the stress of doing something he knows he can do. He likes to have work that is well planned out and absolutely clear and, preferably, risky and intense. He can be a real workhorse and because he has no internal governor to stop, he can work himself to exhaustion. He loses track of what is enough. Extreme trauma disconnects Alfred from thinking, blocking full conscious awareness. Alfred is very good, however, with procedures and he will pick them up quickly with little training. He thinks best with his body. He can be a great imposter (fake it till you make it!). Though he often is anxious or scared, he will become calm and collected in emergencies. He probably does not know it, but he loves to bring order out of chaos and may seek chaos to defeat it. In this regard, Alfred can be extremely spontaneous and creative. Artistic creation is both healing and meaningful. He may earn a living as an actor, artist, or performer.

His work in therapy is very slow as he has great difficulty incorporating new learning due to dissociation or emotional

flooding. Alfred lives through his body. When he is safe he connects best with his own body and what meaning he creates he sorts much through his senses. He may even be a great athlete. Paradoxically, he could put on weight to feel more grounded and visible or to become unattractive and invisible to be safe. When he is stressed and dissociated he can be clumsy and awkward, even accident prone. Big dramas scare him and may retraumatize him. Containment is a key to helping him incorporate unprocessed trauma. Engage him with a significant challenge, but follow with highly containing structures, often small and focused. To express rage at his abusive mother, Alfred might optimize his expression by literally blowing her away (Alfred blows and the auxiliary accommodates by rolling away like a tumbleweed). It is best to do small pieces even though he will say he hasn't done anything useful. It's better to be patient and at a distance (playback, talking, sculpts, containing double, homework, hypnosis, pretend exercises) and very straight.

He can be a paradox and he responds to paradox. Alfred may accept nurturing as a challenge, for example. While he can be remarkably gentle, he is afraid of his underlying rage. He will want to call it anger and he will avoid expressing it for fear of where it will take him. He is a victim rather than an expresser of emotions. He will get into Victimhood before accepting that what happened to him was totally devoid of purpose or meaning. Lacking faith in himself or others, he is poorly connected and inconstant in most of his relationships. He may, however, project his unclaimed self worth on to some other who is either very powerful (a commanding officer) or very powerless (his little daughter) and become devoted and extremely loyal to them. Or he may choose addiction instead, as he feels less likely to be hurt, and it temporarily fills up the emptiness left by the lack of a meaningful and coherent autobiographical narrative.

Avoid questions as they confuse or frighten Alfred. He can go into a panic (whether it is visible or not) and simply stop thinking. Communications work best when they challenge Alfred to do or know something. Getting Alfred into his head and asking him to think is risky. He will frequently claim to not know things ("I don't know" is his trademark) and because of his half-life, this may actually be true. Trauma is unresolved because Alfred's emotions exceed his capacities for making meaning. This hinders his incorporation of these experiences into explicit narrative memory or the personal mythology. Help him know what he knows slowly because increases in meaning making capacity often result in increases in emotional flooding.

On the other hand, Alfred has an overdeveloped intuition and often is quite psychic

Even though he is disorganized in his connection to things and people, his energy is tightly contained, and he may be somewhat masochistic (more so, if overweight). He desperately controls his terror and rage (often his voice will be constrained, choked off). He'll have a hard time crying, and when he does, it can be alligator tears. He has no self soothing at all. He'll endure a lot, and build some superiority on how much he can take. Because his self esteem is so unstable, a good way to push him beyond his masochistic endurance is to turn the work over to him at his moment of greatest resistance. If his passivity gets you working harder than he does, you could soon become the sadist to his masochist!

In groups, Alfred can ask for time easily, but often will not know what for. If facilitated, he can muddle forever if contained; if uncontained, he can flood into meaningless yet intense chaos. Around real anger and loud noises, he may split off psychically or threaten to leave physically. This is the quadrant of posttraumatic stress, where the trauma is severe enough to engender dissociation and/or psychically leaving an environment so unsafe that return to the self is inhibited. The essence of this work is what the shaman calls *soul retrieval*. Thus Alfred may have split off a part or parts of himself at an early age, and these will have to be retrieved. Often there is a myth of a dark place of pain that I call the "Cave of the Innocents." Here the terrified innocent child is hiding in darkness, listening to the cries of distress of other little parts hiding there too. Keep the working space well grounded and pay attention to others present because a tremendous amount of energy is generated in this work. Others with abusive histories, remembered or not, can be sparked off, and will need to be brought back to ordinary consciousness too.

Often, the therapist and others present will feel like they are working harder than Alfred. The instability of his self worth and his difficulty incorporating his work means he may have to do it many times over. Also his self talk is extremely self punishing and his belief in some kind of fatal flaw (a much safer construction of reality than its meaninglessness) generates an atmosphere of hopelessness. Beware of group members picking up Alfred's unclaimed rage and flinging it back on him. The therapist, however, must be prepared to accept this rage—the

expression of which (even if whispered) is a tremendous accomplishment for Alfred.

Alfred's therapeutic process begins with challenges to bring order out of the chaos of his life. This involves exploring (because he does not know) unresolved, discredited, and dissociated parts of self that have fled the pain of early and extreme (for him) trauma. Once clearly identified, we can help Alfred incorporate these narrative elements so that he can learn, love and be loved, and appreciate his true worth. We must help him to purify himself of toxic rage and negative expectation so that he can stop feeling soiled, ruined, compromised, or unforgivable. This process is usually expressed as rage leading to sobs of relief as he receives comfort and holding from others he conditionally trusts. As Alfred becomes more whole, he will struggle with the abandonment that is part of the un-lived half-life. It is very difficult to keep new experiences positive as we really cannot protect and shield an adult from the harsh realities of life as effectively as we can shield an infant or child. Luckily, as an adult, Alfred can progressively collaborate in his protection and shielding as he heals. In time, he can learn true intimacy with peers. He can be interdependent, open, honest, and self disclosing without a guarantee of the outcome. He may find the resources to take the hand of his own traumatized child-self who created so much chaos himself in his efforts to survive. In time, Alfred can establish comfort with differentiation within the circle of intimacy. He can learn to do things for others as well as himself and to do things worth doing.

There are three keys to working with chaotic clients like Alfred. The first is to make clear challenges from a position of confident meaning making to face the reality of their traumatization. The second is to transform their experience of more making for less to less making for more. And the third is to anticipate that just as Alfred gets close to true soul retrieval he will want to separate and do it on his own. Remember protection and containment: Keep his feet to the fire and be certain he has asbestos soles on his shoes.

*Gate 2: The Clinging—Unreadiness to Incorporate New Self*

**Aspects of the Incorporation Threshold Passage**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Season</b>                                 | Vernal Equinox: Beginning of Spring  |
| <b>Cultural Archetypes</b>                    | Odysseus, Persephone, Gilgamesh  |
| <b>Chief Task</b>                             | Incorporation of new models of reality   |
| <b>Method</b>                                 | Engage in rite of incorporation with a community   |
| <b>Healthy Process</b>                        | Catharsis of abreaction and mindful feeling through of old wounds so that the new structures may take a firm hold on a fresh and purified foundation   |
| <b>Healthy Myth</b>                           | “I accept all of me and life and I and life are loveable”  |
| <b>Relationship Health</b>                    | Freedom from guilt and shame   |
| <b>Higher Social Goal</b>                     | Trust in one’s self and in one’s community   |
| <b>Developmental Derailment</b>               | Resistance to rite of incorporation due to insufficient skills or reluctance to move on to the Spring Quadrant   |
| <b>Resulting Reversal</b>                     | Resistance drives the subject to complementary Fall Quadrant to take on a new challenges   |
| <b>Reversal Half-Life</b>                     | Whether we feel unhonorable, unaccomplished, or ungenerous, some of us cannot or will not be embosomed. Instead, we will slide out of the Winter Quadrant over into the Fall Quadrant and take on another challenge. We may discover a new dire emergency. We may leave an intended loved one and start a new relationship with someone else. We are not good enough yet, we are not ready, or we see no meaningful reason to belong. In therapy, we will invalidate work just completed by bringing up another “and furthermore.” In general, we are driven to <i>try harder</i> instead of return home. Eventually, the new challenges are accomplished, we experience another transformation of self and we are feeling lost. We are back at the threshold of love and acceptance again for another chance. |
| <b>Unhealthy Myth Compensated Social Goal</b> | “I’m fucked, you’re fucked, the whole damn world is fucked”  |
| <b>Threshold Skill Set</b>                    | Because the world, somebody else, or we ourselves are not ready to hold and protect the new reality, we get back to work   |

We must be “embodied” so that there is some place to put the parts incorporated.

We must know what we are feeling and express these feelings. Emotions are the main elements that unite right- and left-brain functioning, that cement meaning to experiences, and that convey experiences to memory.

We need to have an inner life (hopes, dreams, desires, etc.) and a friendship with our unconscious.

We need to be able to imagine ourselves.

We must be able to evaluate the reality of the stimuli from within and without.

We need a functional “observing” ego.

We need a functional relationship with ourselves (i.e., good enough parent to a younger part of self).

We need skill at self-talk.

We need a capacity to visualize new possibilities of feeling, wanting, doing, and thinking.

Profile of an Unreadiness to Incorporate New Self  
**Odysseus, Persephone, Gilgamesh:**  
*"I'm not sure just where I belong"*

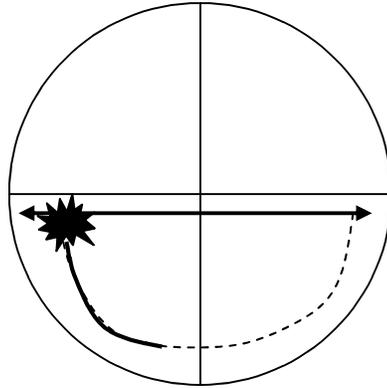


Chart 106. The Unready Reversal

When we have made meaning of a new sense of self, we return to our lives and the bosom of our communities where we accept praise for our accomplishments and feel proud that our community will benefit also. Most chaos quadrant people cross the threshold into their un-lived half-lives when they have accumulated the requisite skills and community support. One of the biggest causes of chaos quadrant mythologies is having both parents chaos mythologies. Their children often develop the same chaos mythologies. In practical terms, they cannot tell a coherent story about themselves. If there is no other trauma, this is a soft chaos mythology. Sometimes just learning how to construct a narrative is enough to move on. However, their “community” remains in chaos. Why move on? Besides, without the dark side of abuse creating pain, the intuitiveness, effectiveness under stress, positive sexuality, fluid adaptability, and ability to sidestep disaster are useful and desirable skills in themselves. Like Odysseus, we might ask why risk losing skills by and becoming dependent on others? At the other extreme are those so severely abused that to survive they had to collude at some level with their abusers. We may choose to remain, like Persephone, in Hell. Or like Gilgamesh, we may have learned to hate the part of ourselves that did not try hard enough or took some pleasure or power or imagined secondary gain from the chaos. Gilgamesh gave up the elixir of eternal youth for himself and his kingdom because he felt survivor guilt over the death of his companion Enkidu. Accepting this hateful part feels impossibly risky and forgiving it unimaginable.

Gate 3: *The Joyous—the Positive Star Measurement***Aspects of the Mythology of Lovelessness**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Season</b>   | Mid-Spring, May (Mayday, Cinco de Mayo, Mother's Day)   |
| <b>Cultural Archetypes</b>                              | Little Orphan Annie, Batman, Wendy (of Neverland)   |
| <b>Chief Task</b>                                       | Primarily through <b>limbic system (mid-brain)</b> dominance, we surrender trustingly to belong to a protective holding environment that soothes, nourishes, and cares for us   |
| <b>Method</b>   | Questing for love and connection, developing trust in dependence on others, and learning emotional expressiveness, strong self soothing, and a sense of personal worth and lovability   |
| <b>Healthy Process</b>                                  | The quest for love  |
| <b>Healthy Myth</b>                                     | "I am worthwhile and loveable"  |
| <b>Healthy Relationship</b>                             | Dependent consumer of attention, support, validation, and protection, and active need meeter  |
| <b>Higher Social Goal</b>                               | Acceptance of life, self, and others <i>as is</i> ; loving tolerance of all   |
| <b>Developmental Derailment</b>                         | Primary care giver and infant fail to bond during symbiosis (two to six months) usually through separation, abandonment and/or neglect, including mis- and non- attunement between primary caregiver and infant during symbiosis; then on-going   |
| <b>Resulting Ricochet</b>                               | Being loved activates abandonment pain that drives the subject to the complementary Fall quadrant where busyness replaces closeness and indispensability replaces being loved   |
| <b>Abandonment Half-Life</b>                            | The personal mythology of lovelessness makes vulnerability and neediness a threat. This drives one's dynamic self to compensate perceived neediness with compulsive self reliance and competence. Once reassured, the dynamic self can think everything out and create a model that explains everything but feelings (or as Oscar Wilde put it—the price of everything but the value of nothing). When vulnerability resurfaces—like when doing something new or feeling close to someone—the half-life cycle begins again. |
| <b>Unhealthy Myth</b>                                   | "I am worthless (my own mother didn't want me) and therefore unlovable and undeserving of anything"   |
| <b>Compensated Social Goal</b>                          | Becoming unquestionably indispensable by doing everything oneself   |
| <b>Personal Process</b>                                 | Controlling   |
| <b>Dominant Overt Emotion</b>                           | Anger   |
| <b>Unexpressed Emotion</b>                              | Fear, abandonment depression, despair   |
| <b>Behavioral Strength</b>                              | Working toward a goal   |
| <b>Blocked Behavior</b>                                 | Accepting love and care   |
| <b>Relationships in Groups</b>                          | Competitive, dominant, not belonging  |
| <b>Sociometric Position</b>                             | Rejectee (rejecting and rejected)   |
| <b>Expressed Theme</b>                                  | "I have to do it myself"  |
| <b>Unexpressed Theme</b>                                | "I'm overwhelmed"   |
| <b>Core Defense</b>                                     | Paranoia  |
| <b>Adult Attachment Pattern</b>                         | Compulsive Self Reliance (and sometimes dismissive avoidance of emotional process)  |
| <b>Therapeutic Task</b>                                 | Develop Basic Trust   |
| <b>Prescription</b>                                     | Calm and Stroke   |
| <b>Most Successful Initial Therapeutic Intervention</b> | Structuring and the Leadership Style of Meaning Attributer  |
| <b>Intervention for Catharsis</b>                       | Nurturing and the Leadership Style of Caring Leader   |

Profile of the Positive Star Measurement Trauma:  
 The Myths of Lovelessness  
 Little Orphan Annie: *“Leapin’ Lizards (I gotta do everything myself)”*

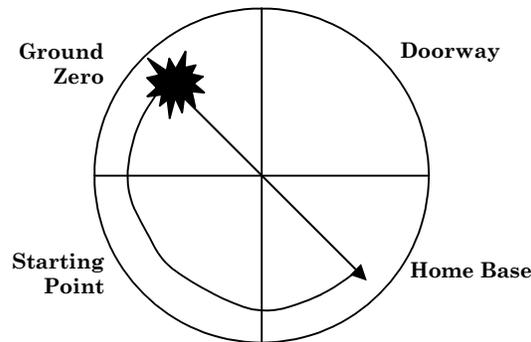


Chart 107. Positive Star Measurement Ricochet

Little Orphan Annie is developmentally derailed in the SPRING QUADRANT, her Ground Zero. She and her primary caregiver(s) failed to bond during the symbiosis stage (second to sixth months) of development, where the primary caregiver(s) and infant are like two beings in one envelope. Her Protective Holding Environment was unstable due to caregiver separation, abandonment, and/or neglect, or mis- or mal-attunement between her primary caregiver(s) and herself. Derailments can include a separation from the caregiver for any reason for three days or more between two to six months of age; being a child of the wrong gender; being a replacement for a dead or missing other; having a disturbed (borderline, narcissistic, psychotic, severely depressed, chronically ill) caregiver; sometimes just being the first born child to anxious parents or having parents who themselves were abandoned; or anything else that might perturb the parental/infant bond. If the infant is born with an extremely demanding combination of needs (low stimulus threshold, irregular sleep patterns, and negative mood) or birth conditions (drug addiction or HIV), the caregivers could be perfect and the bond might still fail.

True abandonment occurs only during the symbiosis stage of development from roughly two months to roughly six months of age. Recycling can occur during ages 5 to 7 years, 16 to 19, 28 to 31, 40 to 43, 52 to 55, 64 to 67, 76 to 79. Recycling can be prompted by starting something new, like first schooling, first loves (Annie will tend to tolerate sex in order to get nurturing

she can handle), a first home, first childbirth, or the first stages of creativity (she has extreme difficulty in starting things on her own as she fears they will be rejected just as she was). Endings, like the death of a parent (or loss of a parent through divorce), leaving home, or leaving a relationship can also spark abandonment recycling. All of us experience abandonment during our lives, but because we have created our personal mythologies from earlier traumas, in practice we interpret these abandonment experiences to fit our preexisting narratives.

Because she survived by denying her needing anybody, Orphan Annie struggles with belonging (SPRING QUADRANT). Because she never got to experience herself in a meaningful relationship with a significant other (SUMMER QUADRANT), she has great difficulty knowing what she wants (yet she believes she wants a Daddy Warbucks to take care of her perfectly). Because her doing has chiefly been a defense against despair and depression rather than developing a competent, individuated sense of self (FALL QUADRANT), she doesn't know who she really is. She is a lone wolfette. Ordinarily Little Orphan Annie (or Arnie) seems devoid of real emotions (symbolized in her comics by her pupilless eyes). Like Batman, another abandonee, her expression is often masked.

Annie struggles for control over her dependency and nurturance. Needs and vulnerability will prompt a quantum leap to her Home Base, the FALL QUADRANT, where Annie will deny that she has any needs at all—and this will feel true to her. Annie will flee dependency, believing that she can (must) take care of herself. She actually feels safer and more secure all alone, so loneliness is accepted as a cost of safety.

Yet, because she projects those needs on others, she can be very efficient at nurturing others. She has great difficulty claiming time for herself as other people's needs are more important than her own. Actually, her own needs, when they cannot be denied, are disgusting and further proof of her worthlessness. Thus she avoids attachments and is compulsively self-reliant. When she is stressed by being lonely or unappreciated or threatened by an emotional connection, she'll get busy. Under extreme stress (feeling hurt by someone she has been doing for, for example), she can be as mean as a wolverine. She can escalate into anger, violence, or incapacitation. Because she denies needs, Annie is very poor at self-soothing. She can have full-blown panic attacks: once defenses crack she is overwhelmed.

Her communication is often inadequate. She has little selfness or self esteem and avoids her emotional processes and needs. Therefore, when she tells a story, she cannot determine what is important and over-details to the point of boredom—even she will sometimes abruptly stop, explaining that she has been rambling and taking too much time. Without selfness or feeling, she has no sense of narrative. Others will sometimes see her as arrogant, snobbish, or unreachable. Although she may love them, none of her partners are good enough. However, she is extremely loyal, which may be a substitute for real attachment. When her loyalty is rebuffed or abused, she may then abandon others, doing to them what was done to her. She resists real closeness to others because closeness risks feelings and neediness.

The Starting Point for Annie is a good rational explanation of a structure to perform. Annie loves to learn new things, especially theories and methodologies of how things and people work. Begin in the Head, then move to the Heart and hold her there as long as possible, and then let her use her body to decompress. She is very sensate and can ground herself by being and doing in her body. In the beginning, feelings block her thinking clearly. Engage her mind and she will figure things out. She likes things to be very clear as she is frightened by too much ambivalence or ambiguity. Explain, do not interpret, as Annie will resist interpretations of her behavior or motives. She will try to redefine anything said to her so that it fits her rigidly held view of the world. It is best not to try to reason her out of this. She will learn from experience and does know how to construct world views.

In the beginning of therapy (and when she is deeply vulnerable), Annie is pre-transferential. She will not project mommy or daddy on to you; you will become Mommy or Daddy to her. When Annie gets to the core of her work, her feelings of abandonment, she will not want to stay there very long. Opening up to the emotional aspects of abandonment is usually very overwhelming. Annie is very touch sensitive, so the therapist must behave carefully in offering touch. Touch is very powerful and scary for her. There is usually no mistake when touching is unwanted, because Annie will stiffen or even shake off the contact. Usually, the less touch the better.

Yet an enveloping embrace at the right moment may provide a tremendously healing experience. The danger is that because Annie is working through abandonment by the nurturing

parent, receiving nurturing may blunt her feelings or she may be seduced into a parental/infant bonding replication with the therapist. This, in my opinion, complicates the therapy and may lead to new issues of betrayal by the therapist if Annie's awakened baby-hungers are not met. Individual therapy is best at this time, even though in a group the transference can be defused and group members' touch is effective and less transference challenging.

During the time that Annie is working through her abandonment, she may have to struggle with feelings of despair and abandonment depression and the belief that she is utterly worthless (not even her own mother wanted her). She may be suicidal. Little ones are born with the affective intensities of adults without any of the experiences of a self to step down those intensities to specific feelings. One of the functions of parents is to be an affective "transformer" for the little child. If the child is abandoned, she has no transformer to step down the intense affect she experiences. Her developing selfhood is terrified with the fear of being annihilated by the affective storms.

So she shuts down her feelings, bypasses the season of her development through contact with others (in SUMMER QUADRANT), and becomes a little adult. By definition, Annie had no transitional objects besides herself. This may be a time to introduce her to the need for one. She may let an animal (like the big dog in her comic strip) into the core of her life. When she begins loving herself, she may have dreams of giving birth to an animal or being a baby animal. This is a good sign for pet therapy.

In the later stages of therapy, but not before Annie has come to understand her abandonment mythologies and how to reclaim herself effectively, group can be essential. Because Annie leads with her body and may have split off parts, psychodrama can be especially effective for her. Only group therapy can help her experience true intimacy. Traumas are healed by re-experiencing them under controlled conditions. Individual therapy creates the adequate protective holding environment to re-experience bonding and attachment, but it cannot as easily handle the transition to individuation. Group therapy provides many numerous transitional objects, diffusion of transference through "humanization" of those objects into real people, and multiple experiences of balancing Annie's needs with those of others and the group, all under controlled conditions. The indi-

vidual therapist is the re-experienced bond-parent; group therapy is the re-experienced bond-family.

Annie has survived by becoming precociously embodied. Group therapy provides a controlled setting where she can embody (incorporate feeling and thoughts) new experiences, like being held and nurtured or expressing her true feelings about anything. Actually using her body bypasses the overly developed rationalization and compartmentalization of her belief systems. Sometimes just setting up a simple scene psychodramatically, like having people important to her show up for her college graduation that she declined to attend, can be profoundly revelatory. Her body may generate new feeling in responses to the actual experiencing that can override or at least compete with what she created in her thoughts about how it would have been.

Annie will hold her energy in her torso under stress, and she'll get pasty faced even though she talks or yells angrily. Physical movement can help that energy flow and discharge. When her anger is a cover for fear, it will feel manipulative. Often fearing some consequence, like her leaving, the therapist or group members will feel pulled to do something or to kick her. Avoid getting mad back—no matter how provocative—as this supports her paranoia.

Because Annie's affect is often precognitive, visceral, and unmediated by thought or reflection on felt experiences, she may have split off parts. This is how she can be so mean at times and yet be completely unaware of cutting someone to the quick. It is the therapist's task to provide a holding environment for the affect and help Annie to make meaning through her experiences. After a catharsis, Annie may be very open to experiences of surplus reality involving interaction with others (SUMMER QUADRANT). Play and fun are sometimes especially valuable—and very new too!

The therapeutic process with Annie begins when she knows that you have engaged and joined her belief system. Then she can entertain the possibility of not having to depend on herself totally because someone takes her seriously in spite of the fact that she is probably worthless (she thinks). She can begin to feel about not being wanted. Slowly the therapist builds up her ego strength and self esteem from the "inside." We "hold" Annie during moments of despair and worthlessness, then repair her self esteem by mirroring her old beliefs while incrementally inserting new beliefs (like people need each other) and affirming her achievements. She'll need to do this over and over. If feeling

become strong, she'll escalate anger over fear, becoming mean and critical.

We lead her to wholeness by offering increasingly real feedback about her caregiver(s) inadequacies and failure to help her achieve healthy attachment. We start over and over again comparing new knowledge with her old beliefs, helping her develop a new belief system and a new mythology.

Over time we help her experience true intimacy by treating her as an equal (not a peer), encouraging her expression of emotions (bodily feelings processed by conscious experience), especially her anger (not her pretend anger to cover her fear and vulnerability) at her caregiver(s) limitations as well as our own. We help her know that she is important and also what is important in her life. We help her to know what she wants based on her awareness of her needs. She may become interested in why she was born and what her life's purpose may be. We help her sort her wants, purposes and actions as well as encourage her unique self.

Especially important is teaching her to hold on to her self even when others support her—or not. We can love the workaholic in her and free her from constant doing. If she can do this, she can dare to replace competence with closeness and indispensability with intimacy. Most difficult, Annie must learn to accept and love her abandoned little one who probably hurt a lot of people over the years, possibly including her own birth children.

The key to working with Annie's (or Arnie's) abandonment is attunement first—nurturing last! Her feelings of despair (abandonment depression) which are often expressed as meanness can be met by helping her to know what she is doing and to express her full range of emotions in a safe holding environment. Her feelings of emptiness can then be met with nurturance.

This is a tall order. It takes, usually, a long time. Because we often do what was done to us, Annie and Arnie will sometimes abandon us (and themselves) and leave. They tend to merge with someone they get close to and then begin to feel lost or engulfed by the other. Thus they leave to find themselves. Men and women with abandonment mythologies often work through several therapists as they reclaim themselves.

*Gate 4: The Creative—Reluctance to Take One’s Deserved or Earned Place*

**Aspects of the Continuity Threshold Passage**

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Season</b>                   | Summer Solstice: Beginning of Summer  |
| <b>Cultural Archetypes</b>      | Esther Summerson ( <i>Bleak House</i> ), Homer Wells ( <i>Cider House Rules</i> )   |
| <b>Chief Task</b>               | Balancing of self and society—feeling entitled to your well earned and/or deserved praise and validation and pleased by the community sanction  |
| <b>Method</b>                   | Engage in a rite of continuity with your community (and cultural conserve)  |
| <b>Healthy Process</b>          | Catharsis of conation (wanting, yearning, desiring) and inspired and inspiring sense of new, larger possibilities   |
| <b>Healthy Myth</b>             | “Life is messy but complex. I love it and myself! I trust what I need and want”   |
| <b>Relationship Health</b>      | Needs of self and community are balanced; interdependency   |
| <b>Higher Social Goal</b>       | Focused acquisition of information perceived as necessary   |
| <b>Developmental Derailment</b> | Resistance to the rite of continuity due to insufficient skills or reluctance to move on  |
| <b>Resulting Reversal</b>       | Resistance drives the subject to the complementary Winter quadrant to retreat to the hermitage, ivory tower, sainthood, or detached intellectual pursuit  |
| <b>Reversal Half-Life</b>       | Sometimes the idea of investiture in a higher state, called apotheosis, is terrifying. Instead we slide down the vertical axis of the healing circle from the Spring Quadrant to return to the Winter Quadrant where we devote ourselves to the pursuit of knowledge more important than ourselves or anyone else. Of course, in time we exhaust the unknown elements of this new learning, incorporating all, and begin relating again, perhaps with new students or followers, yet feeling unaccountably confused. Soon the continuity threshold comes round again. |
| <b>Unhealthy Myth</b>           | Life is nasty, brutish, and short (and fundamentally unfair)  |
| <b>Compensated Social Goal</b>  | The unbridled pursuit of the Holy Grail of Something that might restore the prince or princess to the throne and thus fertility and joy to the wasteland  |
| <b>Threshold Skill Set</b>      | We need the capacity to feel pleasure and to embrace joy—even though fleeting.  |

We must know how to self sooth when we are frightened and traumatized. This involves not only good self talk but also acts of personal comforting (a warm bath, an hour of meditation, petting the cat, etc.).

We need a capacity to feel a part of things, to have some sense of belonging, and a willingness to embrace a new status in our community of relationships.

We need to be and feel deserving. Some aspects of deserving we are born to, some things we have to earn. Sometimes just desserts are thrust upon us.

We need to feel worthwhile, no matter how many mistakes, malicious actions, or foolish stupidities we have already committed. A person who feels worthwhile is seldom anxious. Absence of anxiety clears the way for feeling alive and being spontaneous. For the truly alive and spontaneous human being the past is no predictor of the future.

We must learn to recognize what is enough and create a robust optimism.

We must have a sense of healthy entitlement to take possession of what’s rightfully ours by achievement or birth.

We need a capacity to remain “conscious” and “present” in the public setting—we can “come out” as our true self.

Profile of Reluctance to Invest in One's Deserved or Earned New  
Place in the Community:  
Esther Summerson and Homer Wells: *"I'm not the important one"*

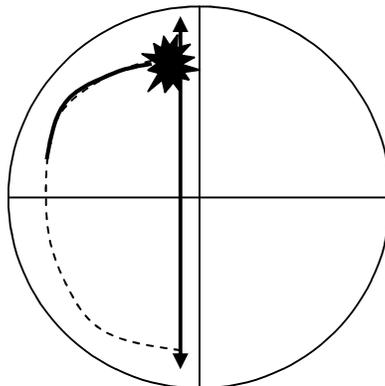


Chart 108. The Reluctant Reversal

Some people resist continuity and investiture. Again, it will be the people at the extremes of the mythos of lovelessness who are reluctant. Very soft abandonment, like having a loving Mother become very ill during the symbiosis stage of development but who returns to health and loving in a month or so, or very hard abandonment, like being left in an orphanage and rejected for adoption, are examples. Esther Summerson is the heroine of Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* represents the first. She simply cannot see herself as important enough to be made a fuss over. What she is doing is far more important than who she is. She is an angel of a girl who is so unassuming as to be—in-sufferable or irresistible, but never both, like most of us. Homer Wells of Irving's *The Cider House Rules* represents the second. The idea of being uplifted to a higher station earned or not is unacceptable. For some, apotheosis is a terrifying thing. Leaping (quantumly) down the axis from the SUMMER QUADRANT into the WINTER QUADRANT, we will retreat and become hermits, scholars, monks, or saints (like Esther and Homer). At worst, we will condemn those who try to include us as unworthy to praise us. At best, we will consider ourselves unnoteworthy. We may refuse to accept acceptance. We help reluctant royalty best by helping them to know their true worth. At the core of their refusal to claim their earned status and join their communities is some failure to accept themselves as loveable in spite of their imperfections. Best is to help them accept themselves unconditionally because of their imperfections. Our imperfections assure our dynamic, vital, and deeply human self emergence.

*Gate 5: The Gentle—the Star of Incongruity Measurement***Aspects of the Mythologies of Joylessness**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Season</b>   | Mid-Summer, August (the Dog Days, the Sun Dance, the harvest)  |
| <b>Cultural Archetypes</b>                              | Jeremy Hillary Boob, III, the Trickster (Raven, Coyote), the Betrayer  |
| <b>Chief Task</b>                                       | Primarily through <b>right brain</b> dominance, we participate reciprocally in meaningful connection with others in spite of inevitable conflict of wants and we learn to negotiate good boundaries between ourselves and these others   |
| <b>Method</b>   | Intruding intuitively into the personal space of the other (and vice versa) with ones needs, wants, feelings, and perceptions while holding the value of self and other as equitable   |
| <b>Healthy Process</b>                                  | The search for identity  |
| <b>Healthy Myth</b>                                     | “I want things because I matter”   |
| <b>Relationship Health</b>                              | Authentic interrelatedness; interdependence and reciprocity  |
| <b>Higher Social Goal</b>                               | Joyful awe of the beauty and wonders of existence  |
| <b>Developmental Derailment</b>                         | Betrayal and broken promises (either explicit or implicit) from six months to two years old. Baby is neglected or objectified during the practicing subphase of separation/individuation. Later, tricks and betrayal, and parent focused childrearing  |
| <b>Resulting Ricochet</b>                               | Pain of betrayal drives the subject to the complementary Winter Quadrant where intellectualizing dulls the anger and grief caused by the betrayal by trusted others while over-certain judgment and blaming of others creates an illusion of unassailable righteousness and relief from uncertainty and ambivalence towards those betrayers  |
| <b>Betrayal Half-Life</b>                               | The personal mythology of Joylessness makes the inevitable miscommunications between (among) connected others a threat. They drive one’s dynamic self to compensate perceived betrayal with intellectual probing for an answer for everything that is right and perfect. When this is secured the dynamic self can feel valuable and assume good nurturance and reasonable rewards. Being successful, they are then engaged by others and the threat of perceived betrayal rises again. The cycle repeats. |
| <b>Unhealthy Myth</b>                                   | “I am the bad one (so it’s got to be your fault or mine)”  |
| <b>Compensated Social Goal</b>                          | Know or make up the right answers to all issues; designate blame   |
| <b>Personal Process</b>                                 | Aloof, distant, disconnected from emotion  |
| <b>Dominant Overt Emotion</b>                           | Anger (usually repressed and acted out through hypercriticism or withdrawal) and depression  |
| <b>Unexpressed Emotion</b>                              | Grief  |
| <b>Behavioral Strength</b>                              | Learning, creating a data base   |
| <b>Blocked Behavior</b>                                 | Reciprocal interaction with others   |
| <b>Relationships in Groups</b>                          | Self focused   |
| <b>Sociometric Position</b>                             | Isolate  |
| <b>Expressed Theme</b>                                  | “I can take anything apart and understand it”  |
| <b>Unexpressed Theme</b>                                | “I don’t matter”   |
| <b>Core Defense</b>                                     | Idealization   |
| <b>Adult Attachment Pattern</b>                         | Angry withdrawal and ambivalent  |
| <b>Therapeutic Task</b>                                 | Establish contact, emotional engagement  |
| <b>Prescription</b>                                     | Passion (and breathing)  |
| <b>Most Successful Initial Therapeutic Intervention</b> | Nurturing and the Leadership Style of the Caring Leader  |
| <b>Intervention for Catharsis</b>                       | Intruding and the Leadership Style of Emotional Stimulator   |

Profile of the Star of Incongruity Measurement Trauma:  
The Myths of Joylessness  
Jeremy Hillary Boob: *“I don’t matter unless I do something wonderful”*

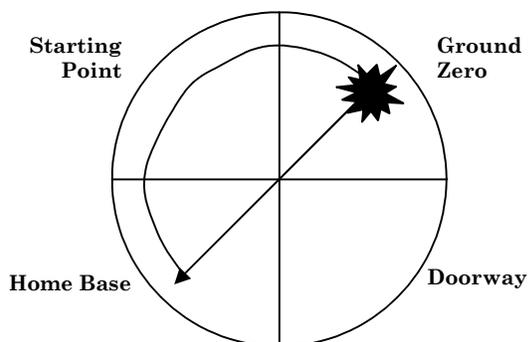


Chart 109. Star of Incongruity Measurement Ricochet

Jeremy Hillary Boob, III, PhD (of *Yellow Submarine*) is developmentally derailed in SUMMER QUADRANT. His Derailments include a narcissistic nurturing parent, being raised by “the book” (rather than loving responses to the child’s needs), and/or parents who are more interested in what they want for the child or themselves than in what the child wants. The birth of a sibling before the age of two can destroy the experience of normal narcissism every little prince or princess deserves, as even mildly neglectful or unavailable parents generating faulty mirroring/idealization/twinning experiences can erode vulnerable self esteem. Finally, when the meaningfully relating others break promises and agreements or inflict other forms of betrayal (like playing tricks and teasing) the child can conclude that contact with others is dangerous. The window of myth effecting trauma occurs between six months and two years of age. This is a period of development when parental fatigue and the child’s rapid growth (Jeremy’s brain reaches a peak in size and cells at two) present many opportunities for conflict. Recycling ages are 7 to 10, 19 to 22, 31 to 34, 43 to 46, 55 to 58, 67 to 70, and 79 to 82. Recycling is prompted by conflicting wants with significant others (where Jeremy must be right, the other, wrong, in order for him to be OK with having his own mind and wants), broken promises, unfairness, and injustice. Sometimes even slight changes in the way things have been done can trigger a recycling. Most commonly, Jeremy adaptively commits himself to more than he can possibly do, and when he cannot pin the blame for nonperformance on the other, Jeremy will become deflated and depressed.

The star of incongruity is very limited in realistic and self-accepting examination and assessment of his skills and vulnerabilities; he tends to inflate or deflate them, depending on the circumstances (WINTER QUADRANT, his Home Base). Jeremy's energy is bipolar. Alternating between high and low, he can be extraordinarily charming, even charismatic, but a perceived criticism from somebody who matters or from himself can send him plummeting to the dumps. He will pick himself up soon, however, by getting creating a theory about what happened, or a work of art. His defense of denial can be so unassailable that he displays inspiring naive optimism.

He knows what he wants, but because he worries so much about pleasing his significant others, he seldom gets it as and/or when he wants it (SUMMER QUADRANT, his Ground Zero). He struggles with meeting the challenges that life offers (FALL QUADRANT, his Doorway to wholeness). Instead he picks (or creates) the challenges he is confident that he can meet and that will please his significant others. He is too concerned about doing what he thinks is desirable and right. A sack of ideas, he enthusiastically commits to anyone interested, only to leave them holding the bag later.

In relationships, Jeremy is likely to be both overtly over-adaptive to the nuances of what others he depends on expect and covertly self and other) despising. Subsequent resentments generate angry withdrawal. Yet Jeremy simply does not recognize his isolation; his is a defense against the pain of broken intimacy. Jeremy stays busy creating new theories, writing books, painting pictures, and in other ways pleasing the world he has to distance himself from. He will often bring his current book to a party—and find a corner and read it.

Under stress, Jeremy's complementary Quadrant is the WINTER QUADRANT. Here he determines the blame for his discomfort. Overtly, he will find that you—not he—is at fault; covertly, he believes deeply that he is the “bad one.” Here, in his Home Base, he is “intellectualizingly” perfect. Being right covers it all on the short run. On the long run, solitary righteousness is seldom enough. No achievement, and often there are many, really makes up for his core “badness.” His achievements are never enough to fill him with self-esteem. He can be charming. Other archetypes are Don Quixote, Hamlet, and Scheherazade. In darker, deeper modes, any Trickster (Coyote, Hare, Raven) or Betrayer (Judas, Iago, Othello's mal-advisor) is a part of this story of the uncertainty of ordinary relationships and reality.

The Starting Point for the No Where Man is nurturance. He nurtures others unintentionally and loves to be nurtured himself. He will even feel grateful for nurturance, providing it is perfect. But when he is feeling safe, he will revel in any positive attention. He'll feel safest when he has just done something wonderful (for which he may ask for feedback–reassurance). Sometimes he acts entitled to adoration, but usually he is so out of touch with his own needs that he passes off praise unless it really touches the mark and mirrors something very important to him. Then he will be very embarrassed. Usually just a steady communication that he is liked, valued, and respected is enough for Jeremy to feel secure. Jeremy likes lots of little affirmations of his existence, lots of low intensity positive strokes; but do not expect reciprocation as Jeremy does not get it. In general, Jeremy does not have a broad range of emotional sensitivity. He lives largely in his head.

Jeremy needs to feel trust in you. This is not all that easy to do. You can be nurturing and supportive through empathic understanding. Affirm acceptance, self care, self soothing, self referencing, self awareness, and selfness as opposed to self centeredness. Help Jeremy build tolerance for uncertainty and complex thinking as opposed to black and white constructs. Patience and love for all these judgments may open the way to love for the judged. Express confidence in his choices when they are uninfluenced by others (including you). With his vulnerability to betrayal, Jeremy does not like to be played with. He'll feel laughed at. So be straight and generally avoid therapeutic manipulations. He can be quite cooperative in joint efforts and does not expect anyone to “do it” for him. If you slack off, he will continue working on, doubling his efforts. Later he will feel betrayed by you because you have just replicated his trauma. Broken agreements wound him profoundly. He will believe that you have “done it” to him. It is impossible to be perfect enough to never betray Jeremy, and helping him to deal and live with the inevitable betrayals that come with life is the essence of his work.

He will tend to be generally out of touch with his emotions—feeling and not knowing why or knowing why but not feeling! Jeremy will act scared when he is not and pretend not to be scared when he is scared by being aloof, seductive, or blaming. He will have a lot of anxiety about having, doing, and/or being enough, and he'll want to talk things to death. His anxiety increases around issues of closeness. Intimacy frightens him. He is confused about human relationships at a deep level and he

can lose his bearings easily. He is always waiting for the trap to be sprung or to be found out. He hides his anxiety well, however. Sex can be intellectually stimulating but more of an opportunity for acceptable nurturance, not intimacy. In general, sexuality and passion of all kinds is a great mystery to him.

When he feels trust he must learn to express his genuine anger at his first betrayers (rather than any- and everybody else) and his grief for the losses in his life. When he gets angry, it will be a slow burn. Jeremy holds grudges but when it reaches a boil, look out. He will not be passive aggressive then: he will either get mad or go. He can be quite articulate and globally condemning in expressing his anger, but it is simple narcissistic rage at being exposed for the “bad one” that he believes himself to be. It is a blustery show to cover up his deflation. At the core he feels hopeless and believes that he does not matter. He struggles to accept that he can not always get what he wants; to do so would confirm his badness, since if you are good you get what you want. Going—that is leaving (the job, relationship, or group)—has a purpose for Jeremy: to avoid being left as this leaves him purposeless.

Working with Jeremy can be difficult. In the beginning he will stay in his head and intellectualize. He feels “right” safer with black and white thinking. He may have an answer or rational explanation for everything. He expects himself to heal in one take. Continuing on the slow path of due diligence to wholeness can be an insult: backsliding must be the fault of the therapy or the therapist. Any intervention that takes him out of his head is resisted due to the perceived loss of control. Jeremy has very low frustration tolerance for disagreement, mistakes, and obstructions. He is a stickler for rules and procedures at the expense of common sense or other people. He can expend great energy in assigning blame and sometimes in giving out punishments. Jeremy needs to judge lest he be judged. On the positive side, when he is not too frightened, Jeremy will admit being wrong (which he suspected all along). Because this is the essence of his trauma, it is not counterproductive to prove him wrong. When Jeremy feels betrayed, being right about it is more important than the relationship with you. Holding on to the betrayal is holding on to themselves.

In his joylessness, Jeremy will objectify you and everything else, including himself. It is imperative to establish and maintain contact with Jeremy. If he feels misunderstood (i.e., betrayed), he is unlikely to tell you until very late in the healing

process. His attachment pattern is angry withdrawal. When you sense that Jeremy is “gone,” your best therapeutic intervention is to restore contact. The sooner you can get him into experiential work the better. It is important to be expressive yourself. Be as real as you can be. This joylessness is a relationship failure where the Jeremy learned that he did not matter. However, relating in a way that teaches him that he matters more than you is no favor. So you have to be intimate and equal in this regard. Express your thoughts and feelings (therapeutically, of course). Intrude yourself into the relationship. Ask questions. Be creative and playful (not giddy). Engage in personal confronting where appropriate. Above all be authentic and genuine so that Jeremy may see how to do it. Jeremy’s unresolved dependency issues from childhood prevent him from being authentic; the risk of being wrong is too great. By being real, you can short circuit that process. Be the change Jeremy wants to see in himself.

In group, Jeremy needs two skills before he can succeed: quick recovery from perceived hurts and the capacity to laugh at himself. Jeremy will have difficulty asking for and using time in group. He usually will not ask for time when he needs it, and can waste the time when he gets it critiquing the distribution of work time in the group instead of working. When pushed, he can betray the group, a particular individual, or the leader. He will be critical of the therapist, the group, others, and himself. If he gets hooked by someone (often a chaotic Alfred or another Jeremiah like himself), he can persist in an endless verbal conflict over whose version of reality is right. Help him get out of his head. Action works with Jeremy by connecting his affect to the here and now experience. On the other hand, when he is not working or acting out, Jeremy can be a very good process observer. He is used to watching, analyzing, tracking, and remembering. He will remember who said what, who gets the most time, and the group rules and rule breakers. He will not hesitate to point out instances of unfairness or unresponsiveness to others and himself.

The therapeutic process begins with Jeremy when he can stay present as the therapist intrudes into his angry withdrawal. The most powerful intervention with Jeremy is carefully calibrated teasing. A gentle joking and prodding at the right moment can help betrayal clients from continuing to take themselves and their errors or successes too seriously. It is the most dangerous intervention as well. Jeremy hates being laughed at and will feel betrayed. Remember that the objective is to get him to laugh at himself. Given trust, this is easier than you would

imagine. Because he is so good at intellectualizing, Jeremy can easily see the absurdity of his beliefs. He enjoys intellectual humor, and is wounded by emotional, hostile, or ridiculing humor. There is a very fine edge of tension that pitches the intellectual edifice of the betrayal mythology off center, opening the way for joy.

Vulnerability will increase as Jeremy becomes more healthy and spontaneous. This vulnerability surfaces profoundly in Jeremy's choice making. The threat of parental displeasure discouraged Jeremy from making choices based on his own wants and desires. He also was delayed in working through the ambivalence inherent in any (and every) choice. Without his radar for pleasing his significant others, he will often be lost about what to choose. He will lack guides to his perfectionism and the "right" choices. Break the hold of perfectionism. Applaud mistakes as opportunities for liberation and learning

Jeremy's chief task is to break off and separate from the authority and authorizing figures that are perceived as molding and holding his identity for their own purposes. The primary working through for Jeremy is grief and loss. He will show many different feelings along the way, but will need to come back to the sense of the loss of his childhood, parental love, and his experience of joy. As with any grief work, anger will lead the way to Jeremy's leaving the parental enmeshments that denied the value of his dreams and desires. Genuine anger over the violations of his personal boundaries is not only constructive but also essential to Jeremy's individuation. At his best, Jeremy will identify the boundary violation(s), express territorial anger to the violator, and state the conditions for repair. Anger ceases when the boundary is repaired and is followed by tears and sorrow over losses.

Jeremy will need to face the challenges of being ordinary, successful, loving and loved, and taking time for himself. Help him recognize and develop new competencies. In time Jeremy will have to face his righteous, judgmental, and "bad" inner child with love and patience. This is where all that nurturing offered to Jeremy in the beginning—and throughout the therapy—even when he was being a jerk—pays off. Freed from his dependency on approval and being right, he must acknowledge that he did unto others what was done unto him. He found his anger at his parent(s), now he must release his judgments and anger at himself. Only then come conscious self care, self soothing, self referencing, self awareness, and selfness.

*Gate 6: The Abysmal—Paralyzing Fear of New Challenges*

**Aspects of the Separation Threshold Passage**

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Season</b>                   | Autumnal Equinox: Beginning of Fall  |
| <b>Cultural Archetypes</b>      | The Grasshopper (who fiddles all summer), George Bailey ( <i>It's a Wonderful Life</i> )   |
| <b>Chief Task</b>               | Separating ourselves from those people or things that have a hold of some sort over us and prevent us from our personal empowerment  |
| <b>Method</b>                   | Engage in a rite of separation from these interpersonal and cultural entanglements with a community of support to do so  |
| <b>Healthy Process</b>          | Catharsis of construction and determination to disciplined (i.e., a disciple of oneself) seeking of the skills and resources needed to become ourselves  |
| <b>Healthy Myth</b>             | "My existence has a purpose that I can discover and manifest"  |
| <b>Relationship Health</b>      | Capacity to endure extreme relational discomfort (sometimes physical) until one is clear about one's boundaries; realization that such discomfort is a part of life  |
| <b>Higher Social Goal</b>       | Doing exhaustively everything possible to clear the way of all perceived obstacles for everyone  |
| <b>Developmental Derailment</b> | Resistance to the rite of separation due to insufficient skills or reluctance to move on   |
| <b>Resulting Reversal</b>       | Resistance drives the subject to the complementary Spring Quadrant to engage in some new things or to rescue others  |
| <b>Reversal Half-Life</b>       | Sometimes others seem to need us more than we need our dreams, or we lose confidence in our own capacity to be on our own and nobody else really wants us to go. So we slide from the Summer Quadrant over to the Spring Quadrant and make do with a new beginning (project, baby, promotion, etc.) or somebody else's desperation to give us a reason to live. Eventually the new project succeeds, the other's needs are fulfilled, and we begin feeling stuck, unfulfilled, deadened, and even suicidal. The separation threshold has come again. |
| <b>Unhealthy Myth</b>           | "Nothing I do makes any difference"  |
| <b>Compensated Social Goal</b>  | Loyalty to our sources (parents, nations, religions, etc.) makes us stay and help them first.  |
| <b>Threshold Skill Set</b>      | We need enough self and self esteem to tolerate our ambivalence.   |

We need to recognize the "calls to adventure" (the many portents, signs, synchronicities, dreams, dis-eases, boredom, accidents) that come.

We must be able to envision an alternative to the current conditions.

We must know what we want and protect it from turning into a "have-to." We must define and hold to our intention.

We must be able to talk to others, taking them into our confidence.

We must discern the difference between blaming and genuine anger at being betrayed in some way, and come to see our wounds as the source of new strength and possibilities.

We need to accept the flawed humanity of your betrayers and ourselves.

We must manage our anxiety at separation with self-care rather than blame or righteousness.

We must grieve our losses and face our own participation in the stuckness. Incomplete grief results in incomplete separation.

Profile of a Paralyzing Fear of New Challenges  
 The Grasshopper, George Bailey: *“Play or work—I’m too busy to go”*

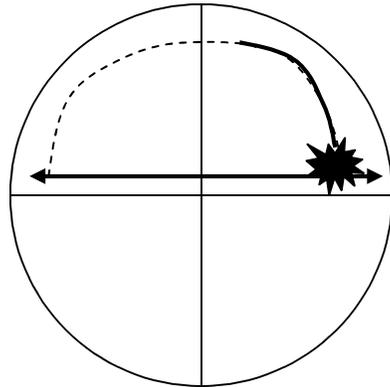


Chart 110. The Paralyzed Reversal

Some people resist individuation and separation. We slide to the left over to the SPRING QUADRANT and get involved in New Beginnings. The “George” referred to is the hero of the movie *It’s a Wonderful Life*. His dream is to travel the world, but every time he is ready to go, a new “crisis” arises and he decides to stay a little longer. His loyalty to his family and his town causes him to delay going away over and over until he wants to kill himself, even though he has everything to live for. He wishes that he had never been born. An Angel shows him what would have happened in his world without him.

Most of us do not receive angelic intervention when we want to kill our selves. Suicide is an issue, in this pattern. The initiation to a new life is a death of the old, and when we refuse this process, the need for the old to die surfaces in suicidal ideation. Whether we want suicide or not, what we usually end up doing is acting out new beginnings: we have a new baby of some kind. So we buy a new house to fix up, take on some new responsibility, or actually get pregnant. Or we may become a baby ourselves by getting sick, getting jailed, or blaming others for our distress. We must help the grasshoppers be clear about their losses. Often there is some resentment (internalized aggression) that needs to be identified and redirected towards the proper target. Finally, clear, thorough preparation for the new life to be explored can help. Sometimes, remembering that fledgling eagles often need to be pushed from the nest in order to learn to fly, we push them over the threshold.

*Gate 7: The Arousing—the Rejectee Measurement*

**Aspects of the Mythologies of Powerlessness**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Season</b>   | Mid-Fall, November (Halloween, All-Saint's-Day)   |
| <b>Cultural Archetypes</b>                              | Snow White, Peter Pan (of Neverland), Robin (Batman's buddy), Sleeping Beauty, Dagwood Bumstead   |
| <b>Chief Task</b>                                       | Primarily through <b>brain stem</b> dominance, we challenge ourselves to bodily step forward into an unknown (but prepared for) future  |
| <b>Method</b>   | Developing stage appropriate skills and competencies through self-discipline and courageous screening of help and knowledge   |
| <b>Healthy Process</b>                                  | Redemption (from a perceived fall from grace) and enacted hope for a better life  |
| <b>Healthy Myth</b>                                     | "I can handle things"   |
| <b>Relationship Health</b>                              | Finding empowerment through extremes of rebellion and compliance (co- and counter-dependence)   |
| <b>Higher Social Goal</b>                               | Fairly enforce a legitimate moral order   |
| <b>Developmental Derailment</b>                         | Toddler is over or under supported during the rapprochement subphase of separation and individuation. Later, shaming, humiliation, and other attempts to dis-esteem and disempower any learner of new competencies  |
| <b>Resulting Ricochet</b>                               | Pain of humiliation and shaming drive the subject to the complementary Spring Quadrant where he or she either takes care of others (whether they need it or not) or acts helpless enough to get taken care of him or herself  |
| <b>Betrayal Half-Life</b>                               | The personal mythology of powerlessness makes the need to make self defining decisions or take consequential action a threat. This drives ones dynamic self to compensate through co-dependent behaviors like taking care of others rather than oneself or being helpless enough to get taken care of (and thus relieved of the possibility of messing up). Once the crisis is over, the dynamic self can engage intimately with others, identify wants, and move towards meeting them. Sooner or later the need to make decisions or act decisively comes up and the flight to compulsive careseeking or caregiving repeats. |
| <b>Unhealthy Myth</b>                                   | "I am basically useless and inept (and you have it all)"  |
| <b>Compensated Social Goal</b>                          | Giving up one's self to the way things are  |
| <b>Personal Process</b>                                 | Symbiotic   |
| <b>Dominant Overt Emotion</b>                           | Fear  |
| <b>Unexpressed Emotion</b>                              | Anger   |
| <b>Behavioral Strength</b>                              | Accepting love and care; caring for others  |
| <b>Blocked Behavior</b>                                 | Working towards an important personal goal  |
| <b>Relationships in Groups</b>                          | Belonging to others, self sacrifice, or selfishness   |
| <b>Sociometric Position</b>                             | Positive Star   |
| <b>Expressed Theme</b>                                  | "We can do anything together"   |
| <b>Unexpressed Theme</b>                                | "I can't handle it"   |
| <b>Core Defense</b>                                     | Splitting   |
| <b>Adult Attachment Pattern</b>                         | Compulsive caregiving or careseeking  |
| <b>Therapeutic Task</b>                                 | Action with a 50/50 contract  |
| <b>Prescription</b>                                     | Pattern disruption  |
| <b>Most Successful Initial Therapeutic Intervention</b> | Intruding and the Leadership Style of Emotional Stimulator  |
| <b>Intervention for Catharsis</b>                       | Challenging and the Leadership Style of Director  |

Profile of the Rejectee Measurement Trauma: The Myths of  
Powerlessness  
Snow White: *“I can’t do it by myself (help me and I’ll take care of you)”*

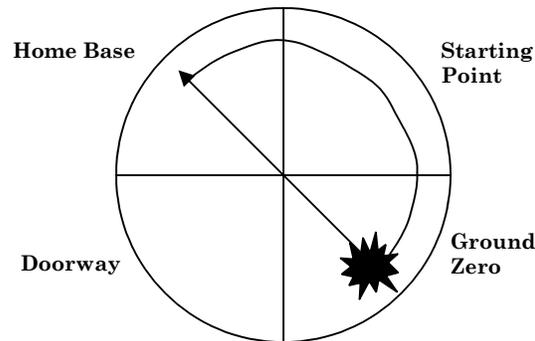


Chart 111. Rejectee Measurement Ricochet

Snow White is developmentally derailed in the FALL QUADRANT. In general, she is under- or oversupported during the rapprochement subphase of her separation and individuation from two to three and a half years old. This is a time of rapid learning of social, physical, emotional and intellectual skills. Most importantly, this is the time to learn that one is competent and empowered.

Her derailments include being shamed or humiliated, traumatic power struggles around toilet training and bedtimes, and a competitive parent who wants to be “the fairest of them all” or the most powerful. As Snow White gets older, struggles may emerge around sexuality and sexual identity, implied incest (if she is actually incested, she’s more likely to develop myths of mindlessness), oedipal problems, issues about growing up (masturbation, menstruation, needs for independence), cutting herself and failures due to inappropriate expectations.

The Recycling ages are 10 to 13, 22 to 25, 34 to 37, 46 to 49, 58 to 61, and 70 to 73. Recycling will be triggered by any perceived attempt to dis-esteem or dis-empower her on the one hand and by the need to make a self defining choice or to take a consequential action on the other.

Snow is dysfunctional around choices for new structures for being and becoming. She (or he) is the eternal child—the classic puella (or puer). She cannot grow up as she never was allowed to and thus never learned how. For Snow White (and her soul sister Sleeping Beauty), the threat to her life drove her parents to over protect her.

For many other disempowered folks the opposite is true—they are intensely criticized and humiliated for the slightest “mistake” or “imperfection” (FALL QUADRANT, her Ground Zero). Humiliation drives her into hiding in the SPRING QUADRANT, her home base. Here she becomes baby-like in hopelessness, helplessness, and emotional hysteria and gets taken care of. Or she becomes parent-like, and compulsively cares for others whether they need it or not. In quantumly leaping to the SPRING QUADRANT for relief from perceived mistreatment or the threatening need to become an independent person, Snow bypasses the Winter Quadrant where she could qualitatively change by creating new structures of meaning and reality.

Snow knows what she wants and frequently gets it. But she will often feel like she has to manipulate and maneuver to get it, and when she does not, she can express blustery anger to cover up deep fears of failure, inadequacy, and humiliation. She also puts a low ceiling on her wants—things of consequence can lead to change. She has trouble knowing who she is or where she is going. Her identity is fragmented and she needs others to sustain her sense of herself. Under stress, she follows others, taking care of them, getting them to take care of her, and/or initiating nothing of consequence.

Snow is often a performer. She can do well things that are not very important to herself or her audience (like singing other people’s music), but she’ll flub up when the stakes are high (like playing her own compositions). She can handle Community Theater, but her life fragments in Hollywood. She could be a politician. These are all ways to borrow power.

In relationships she can stay attached if her partner likes to be taken care of or is a “prince” of a care giver. She can feel intimate by fighting (if her partner can meet her), but the intimacy will not last long as the pain of growing is greater than the pain of staying the eternal child. She can be a delightful and at-tuned talker.

She can be the social glue in a group; she can also be shallow and flirtatious. Verbal communication is her path to feeling close, but she is limited by her fears of spontaneity and adult sexuality. Disempowered clients can have sexual identity issues causing extreme masculinity or femininity, cross dressing, asexuality, bisexuality, or transexuality. Other familiar archetypes are Robin (à la a Batman), Sleeping Beauty, Dagwood Bumstead, and Peter Pan.

The starting Point for the eternal child is play, especially verbal. Snow responds to playful intrusion in relationship with her. She will be disrupted but intrigued (think of the mysterious apple). Eye contact is useful to engage her, and eye behavior in general needs to be paid attention to (i.e., if she looks down, ask her what just happened). If she is in a cooperative mood she is easy and fun to be with, but when she gets into a power struggle with you the work begins.

One of her favorite power struggles is asking for guidance and help. Beware! If she needs it, she is likely to find it wrong and your fault. Offer her doable and optional challenges. Snow is very like a teenager, and she will respond (with complaints) to loving, accepting, and non-demanding hassling regarding her behavior. It is useful to therapize from the trickster position. After all, her rejecting and rejected powerlessness is in fact quite powerful—she herself is a real Brer' Rabbit in this respect.

Snow will perceive requests for her to be independent as humiliating. Nurturing her usually leads to trouble, yet she will flee from challenges into helplessness or helpfulness, depending on the circumstances. She will frequently become involved in symbiotic relationships with a caretaker/caretakee; she will sometimes be the figure behind the figurehead.

Snow will struggle with authority figures as she gets healthier, and this will conflict with a powerful drive to please them (a kind of “topping from below”). The essence of her wound is the experience of being defeated by the person in power. The essence of her healing is to claim her power and to choose a course of action, and then, of course, to act. She is not afraid of choices or action, by the way: these are triggers to her terror of humiliation. Therapists must allow Snow to “win,” but not easily. Look for signs of resignation (the little death). It is best to encourage little steps, maintaining warm contact throughout. Any time the therapist does something for Snow that she can do for herself is an opportunity for healing lost.

Without a sense of her own inner wisdom, she is vulnerable to fads (from religious cults to therapy techniques), about which she will tend to be rigid and ritualistic, like the three year old insisting on every word of the story. With poor access to her thinking function, she does not have a well developed observing ego. Thus her self-reflection is seriously impaired and the therapist must do a fair amount to mirroring. She is often clueless.

Snow will often be scared and not know why. Because her personal process is a mystery to her, she often cannot solve her problems on her own. However, if you can make it play, she will generate every option available but be unable to choose one. Snow is a poor evaluator of herself and her needs: they (her self and her needs) are either good enough or inadequate depending on the response of her audience (her children, partner, colleagues, parents, etc). And will she feel inadequate. It is the big stopper. She will typically underfunction and feel unsure at critical moments (excepting caregiving or careseeking). She may try to feel better by being oppositional or helpless, hopeless, and/or hysterical.

Energetically, Snow is bright eyed and bushy tailed; the former is literal, the latter metaphorical. She will have access to her feelings but needs encouragement to stay with her experience of them on her own. She will have a tendency to freeze up. The experiencing of emotions allows for thought and feeling to be united, leading to formation of explicit memory and her narrative autobiography and to changes in her personal mythology.

Snow fears such change and therefore has real difficulty learning from experience. Her unconscious resistance to learning things that may engender growth causes her short term memory to disappear. The lotus blossoms of important life lessons induce sleeping though class or compel her to fall asleep at cathartic moments. She will keep doing what does not work, only harder (like taking care of seven dwarves instead of herself). Because of her disconnection from thinking and self structuring, she may actually need information. Bibliotherapy, cinematherapy, and technical discussions about work done are part of the healing. Her own best source of information will probably be her dreams, as her unconscious has a better idea of what's going on than she does.

Snow has a good sense of self, but low self esteem and an unclear identity, particularly around sexual matters. Transference abounds with Snow, as well as sexual issues. Because Snow fears adult functioning, adult sexuality is frightening too. At worst, she may feel compelled to offer sex as a form of caregiving or feel compelled to endure sex as a helpless victim. At best, she will pursue sex to get nurturing or to have fun. Real and intimate sexuality requires differentiation and empowerment. Snow is the type of client that is easy to "fall in love with." But terminating therapy to have a relationship together just replays

Snow's usual escape route and does her no good but harm. Snow White is awakened with a kiss only in fairy tales. These cautions apply to males who have this pattern too. Whether you are working with a Snow White or a Peter Pan, the energy of their transference and the urgency of their desire to reclaim their power will have a powerful inductive effect on your relationship.

In groups, Snow is a boon to others and a source of cohesion. Every group should have one or two. She can weave webs of interdependence with others, although at first she falls short of true reciprocity. She maintains a kind of balance sheet instead. She will have no trouble asking for and using time, but she will have to be limited in her caretaking and supported when she is the focus. Being singled out is very threatening.

She will be very well liked, but group members will soon confront her helplessness, empty attention getting emotional expression (hysteria), and manipulations when she does not get what she wants. It is better for the therapist to confront group members about their taking her caregiving for granted than to confront Snow. She will be helped more by their declining her services than by her adapting to appease the therapist.

Snow is vulnerable when others disconnect from her, get mad at her, or do their own things without her. If pushed too far, she will try to disempower others by being vengeful, passive aggressive, and/or humiliating. The group process is a powerful tool for creating a healing experience for Snow and everyone else at these times so let them happen. Because of the transference diffusing capacity of a group, one or two of her will flourish. Everything is easier. One disempowered group member thrilled everyone, declaring: "I march up to the edge of real change—then I step back. Something happens. I get sick. I hurt my hand. I have to move away. And I don't do it." And then she did it!

The therapy process with Snow White begins when she realizes that her powerlessness has no power over you. You will not take care of her or allow her to take care of you. Your relationship instead is about connection and mentoring. In the beginning, you play, hassle and joke about her self limitations and grandiose caregiving at the expense of her self. You confront the empty charm and absence of genuine disclosure. Then you repeatedly help her face her fear of rejection, punishment, and humiliation (and death) when she claims her powers of choice and change. You help her see her skills and knowledge, and encourage her to face the unknown without guarantees that they

will work. In time, you help her identify new powers, knowledge, and behaviors for a new way of living.

These in hand, she can experience a new beginning. She will identify her true needs, dependencies, and feelings so that she can develop self care and self soothing. You may help her to distinguish among self care, other care, and rescuing (doing for others what they can and need to do for them selves or so that she can feel better). At this time in the process, she can encounter her inner child and lovingly reconnect and accept her. She can commit to being a supporting and empowering inner parent. Finally, you can help her to learn true intimacy and reciprocity. She can practice intimacy skills, interdependency, appropriate openness, honesty, and self-disclosure. She can learn the art of negotiating wants with significant others. When the time inevitably comes for yet another round of stepping into the unknown, Snow will know that she is powerful and whole.

There are three keys to working with disempowered clients. First, know that even the most factual and emotionally flat confrontations will trigger them, whether they show you or not. Reasoning with them will not work, but simple reasons do encourage.

Second, they are really undone by isolation—being truly alone. Rejecting and being rejected are painful ways to structure and consume time. Being alone, on the other hand, is terrifying. These clients did not learn how to act independently and autonomously because attempts to do so resulted in annihilating humiliation. Isolation is the key to their doorway quadrant. Identifying it and addressing it in a timely and potent way can help them choose to open the door to the unlived quadrant of their life cycle.

Third, when they come asking for continuity work (rituals that affirm and balance their powers with their community of others), they are telling you that they are ready to cross the transformation threshold. It is the dream of wholeness—often foretold in an actual dream—that they are seeking. Challenge them to claim their faith in themselves and step over the threshold into the unknown but dreamed of empowerment and completion. Ultimately, Snow needs to trust her own power to be in her own construct of meaning and reality.

*Gate 8: The Receptive—Hesitancy to Receiving New Selfness*

**Aspects of the Transformation Threshold Passage**

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Season</b>                   | Winter Solstice: Beginning of Winter   |
| <b>Cultural Archetypes</b>      | Oskar Matzerath ( <i>The Tin Drum</i> ), Jesus Christ  |
| <b>Chief Task</b>               | Taking the transformative step away from everything that we have believed and done into the unknown future that we know we must face   |
| <b>Method</b>                   | Engage in a rite of transformation   |
| <b>Healthy Process</b>          | Catharsis of Cognition, the “aha” feeling of the emergent knowing of existential truth, beauty, and interrelatedness   |
| <b>Healthy Myth</b>             | “Life is bigger than I am and still I have a meaningful place in it”   |
| <b>Relationship Health</b>      | Insight creates gnosis of the “inscape” of things; the nature of all Nature  |
| <b>Higher Social Goal</b>       | Identifying of and with a Higher Power   |
| <b>Developmental Derailment</b> | Resistance to the rite of transformation due to insufficient skills or reluctance to move on   |
| <b>Resulting Reversal</b>       | Resistance drives the subject to complementary Summer Quadrant to be grandly embosomed and intruded upon (like a Palm Sunday) or passionately intrude upon others, impersonally (like Oskar breaking windows with his screams)   |
| <b>Reversal Half-Life</b>       | Taking that blind faith leap into our unknown future is hard, even when we have prepared diligently for it. We can temporarily escape our destinies by thrusting ourselves up to the Summer Quadrant instead of stepping across the threshold from Fall to Winter (after all, who would want to do that!). Once in Summer we can systematically immerse ourselves in the storm and stress of interpersonal relationship. Yet in time, we are back at the Eighth Gate, the Receptive. Ultimately, as the saying goes, “resistance is futile.” |
| <b>Unhealthy Myth</b>           | “I too little to do it myself”   |
| <b>Compensated Social Goal</b>  | Becoming a selfless ideologue full of passionate intensity   |
| <b>Threshold Skill Set</b>      | We must respond spontaneously and creatively to ever increasing challenges even though there are no guarantees that the outcomes will be positive or even productive (and most will not be).   |

We must persist, holding on to our intentionality and power in the face of all resistance, and, paradoxically, accept help while resisting take over.

We must continue towards the threshold of transformation in spite of our many doubts.

We must be able to tolerate the feeling of breaking apart. The longer we can prolong the increasing fragmentation, the more profound the transformation.

Somebody may make a “blood” sacrifice. Transformation involves surrender of the body, the one thing that we can truly call our own, to make new meanings.

We must have a sense of a “spiritual” power greater than ourselves and accept and act upon “divine” interventions (luck, chance, synchronicity, miracles) when they come.

We need enough faith and mastery in ourselves to tolerate feeling utterly alone.

To accept transformation, you must accept the extraordinary circumstances that drive you to the point of no return, the edge of the plank, the lip of the cliff, the mouth of the abyss: The leap of faith into the unknown.

Profile of a Hesitancy to Receiving New Selfness  
 Oskar Matzerath, Jesus Christ: *"I Can't Do It!"*

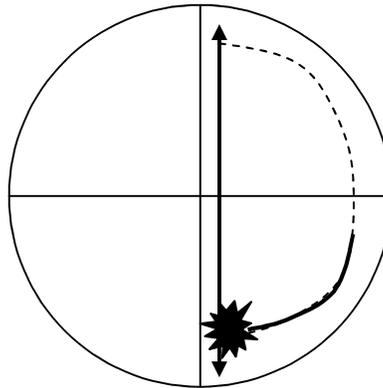


Chart 112. The Hesitant Reversal

Some people get cold feet just before the ordeal, and do not want to go on. We all must go through the process of developing competencies to the point that we discover the limitations of them and must redefine who we are. At this threshold, some of us cannot bear to step off the cliff into the unknown transformations of self. We are not ready. Like Jesus, we beg Mother or Dad to lift off the cross of our destiny. Unlike Jesus, we do not go on. Instead we beam up to the SUMMER QUADRANT and, for example, get a Mommy or Daddy by marrying one. If relief does not come from that quarter, we may go on. The gravity of this passage makes iteration here difficult.

However, if we do not move on, we sometimes cast our fates to the winds by living empty lives of passionate intensity. We act out by joining a cult, experiencing a religious or political conversion, becoming a therapy junkie (we may even begin study to become a therapist), or playing hard games of *Stupid* or *Do Me Something*. Like Oscar in *The Tin Drum*, we tend to be driven to please others, to perform. Yet no matter how engaging we become, we cannot escape feeling trapped, often in a golden cage.

Rites of transformation are difficult and terrifying at best. The Oscars of the world, like Jesus, must walk to Mount Golgotha on their own volition. Our best assistance is to compassionately show them that the things they hold on to have become empty and useless. We can help them connect to their spirituality or a higher power to fuel their faith in the unknown final outcome of their crossing. No one is ever ready for the transformation; the transformation makes them ready.

## Chapter 9

# Rituals: The Enactment of Myth

Long before a single family therapist strode the Earth, rituals served as systemic interventions in all the world's cultures, symbolic occasions that drew people together, announced new life stages, and helped families face difficult challenges. What is surprising is not that therapists are now paying attention to the role rituals play in the lives of families, but that we have ignored them for so long.

—Richard Simon, editor, *The Family Therapy Networker*

### Thresholds of Change

As the new sciences are articulating, change in the human system is essentially the same as change in any other dynamical, complex system. The healing circle assists in mapping out the cycles of our personal mythologies by including the complementary quadrants and the areas of our half-lives of which we are unconscious. In this chapter I want to identify how it also identifies the thresholds at which rituals can help us change our personal mythologies. For humans, as with any living organism, action precedes philosophy. No matter the mounds of self-help books read nor the months of musings on one's personal mythology, it cannot be changed without movement of energy and muscle. Movement of either alone prepares one for change, but the coordinated movement of mind, spirit, and muscle is what changes our inner reality. This coordinated movement is ritual, the enactment of myth.

In this chapter, I will first define the two classes of ritual, one stabilizing and the other transforming, and then I will explain their relationship to personal mythology. I will introduce the four parts to the structure of ritual, the four kinds of transforming rituals, and the corresponding four kinds of catharsis. I will also describe how to determine what class and kind of ritual might be called for in the process of healing and how to go about constructing it. Finally, I will comment on how the new sciences offer explanations of en-

ergy and human consciousness that point to how transforming rituals work to produce changes.

Here is an example of the use of ritual to transform. I was attending a workshop on psychodrama and gestalt led by Doctor Leon J. Fine, who was eventually to become my Mentor and primary trainer. Friday afternoon and evening had passed unremarkably, and we were half way through Saturday morning when Doctor Fine asked who wanted to work. After a long wait, I volunteered, though I had no idea what to work on. I proposed to do a gestalt “empty chair” piece talking to my sore knee, which chronically hobbled me. This chronic disability was a stabilizing ritual, resulting in anxiety (when was it going to cripple me next) and depression (here it goes again) but also curbing my immature impulsivity. Doctor Fine offered me something different: “When you said ‘sore knee’ it reminded me of Wounded Knee. Would you like to do a drama as an Indian?” I agreed with alacrity. This is the story of *Sore Knee the Sioux*, through which I created a role to replace *little boy, lost*:

I was thirteen years old and going out with other young braves on my first raid. After racing about the stage on our horses, we were ambushed by our intended victims, the Potowatomes. In the fracas, my horse reared and fell, breaking my knee. My friends and I fought for our lives and succeeded in driving the enemy away. Upon reaching our village, I was deeply ashamed and depressed. I was a failure and a cripple. I would never be a warrior. The village gathered and my friends acted out what happened. The shaman, played at my request by Doctor Fine, determined (while I was playing him in role reversal) that I had fought bravely and counted coup four times even though seriously injured. The shaman honored me and took me on as an apprentice. He directed me to select a totem and I chose Raven.

To perceive the fundamental complementarity of reality, human consciousness must learn to have a dual focus, one eye on the explicate order and the other eye on the implicate order, which is the source. We need structured, ordered and predictable procedures and unpredictable, creative opportunities. The neurological hodge podge of the human brain and nervous system left in the wake of evolution has components built in to handle this multi-focus on multi-dimensions. We need both myth and ritual.

The simplest definition of ritual: A ritual is a standardized system of both stereotyped (closed) and spontaneous (open) behaviors and communications that manipulate human emotions toward a preset or predictable end result (Campbell, 1968). The more spontaneity, the more transforming; the more stereotyped, the more stabilizing. Janine Roberts in *Rituals in Families and Family Therapy* (Imber-Black et al, 1988) offers a more complex working definition of ritual:

Rituals are coevolved symbolic acts that include not only the ceremonial aspects of the actual presentation of the ritual, but the process of preparing for it as well. It may or may not include words, but does have both open and closed parts which are “held” together by a guiding metaphor. Repetition can be a part of rituals through either the content, the form, or the occasion. There should be enough space in therapeutic rituals for the incorporation of multiple meanings by various . . . members . . . as well as a variety of levels of participation.

As discussed earlier, ritual is the measuring device that creates explicate realities out of the chaos of possibilities available. Like the Healing Circle itself, a ritual is a therapeutic device that simultaneously takes our measure and creates the conditions for change. When trauma is understood as an identity measurement of the personal mythology, rituals can construct controlled traumas that transform the old order into the new. Traumatized human beings create some kind of story to explain the meaning of that experience. This story neutralizes stresses and becomes part of the personal mythology. If the story making is blocked for some reason, like the change in political awareness leading to the rejection of returning Viet Nam veterans, the person will experience post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The cure is facilitated by a ritual (usually in a group or community) in which the feelings and stresses of the original experiences are brought back into the here and now. Through this ritualized re-experiencing, the sufferer can start over from a position of greater strength (i.e., the observer of one’s self suffering) and create a more useful story to explain the pain.

Rituals and myths are like Mutt and Jeff, Laurel and Hardy, peanut butter and jelly—heart and soul. They go together. A myth without a ritual is just a story. A ritual with-

out a myth is just an agitation, a non-goaldirected activity. Rituals and myths go together four by four, riding in their places in the quartered circle eight phase space. The four unique rituals that help us cross the thresholds from season to season quarter the four seasons of living. Rituals are techniques for effecting the momentum and direction of the personal mythology. The importance of ritual cannot be overstated. The myth is the content, the ritual the container. It is the combination of the two that creates the power of transformation. They are the technology of transformation. Transformations take place in the transition zones on the border between order and chaos. In the healing circle, the transition zones are the crossed axes separating the seasonal quadrants of life's experiences.

Rituals erupt spontaneously from earliest childhood. For example, our preferred sleeping position seems to be related to the birthing process. And parents have perhaps embarrassing stories to tell of their children's unselfconscious disciplining of their Teddies and other enactments of elements of the family myths. Throughout our lives we engage in rituals to stabilize our lives (with ceremonies and habits) or to change ourselves (in creative moments). We do this on our own if we do not have help.

Thus there are two classes of ritual: Habits, which stabilize, and rites, which transform. A habit is a ritual that has become de-energized and functions as a homeostatic reinforcer of the personal mythology. Originally, it sparked the celebrant's movement to the complexity space; in time, repetition serves to bring the celebrant to a new stable periodicity. We maintain our myths through the many habits of feeling, wanting, doing, and thinking that constitute the mundane validation of our past choices. Chopping wood and retrieving one's soul are both rituals, the one, typically, a stabilizing habit, the other an act of creation changing a personal myth. We change our myths during the generative moments when our spontaneity rescues us from the crisis of an apparent *cul de sac*. Creativity rises like a phoenix from the ashes of our burnt out choices.

A habit is a standardized system of stereotypical feeling, wanting, doing and thinking that affirms and validates the mythic status quo. Habits are mundane reactions or routinized rituals chosen from the past to calm energy and regulate behavior. They are solutions to earlier problems.

For example: Your partner, wanting you to do his or her will, expresses dissatisfaction with you. You are hurt and silently turn away from the confrontation towards the refrigerator for food. You eat and you are calmed and now you are too numb to fight. Your esteem is shot, but you are safe. Borrowing from chaos theory, I call this habituated behavior a limit cycle attractor, where the energy is being used to stabilize and maintain and new energy sources are denied.

Other rituals are numinous with meaning, and aspects of the outcomes are unpredictable. These are the rituals that change and can heal. Numinosity takes many forms. In the medical realm, awe may be inspired by the high technology magic treatments of the current great medical fears—cancer, heart disease, AIDS, strokes. Of course, the physician's role as the arbiter of special skills and knowledge, especially in these high anxiety areas, contributes to the effects. As health concerns move to things like giving birth, broken bones, allergies, and so on, we are less concerned with high tech magic and more critical of the doctor's bedside manners. The criteria that inspire belief in the rituals change with the risks.

Rites are a standardized system of both fewer stereotyped and more spontaneous behaviors and communications that predictably change the momentum and direction of a personal myth. When I use the term *ritual* this is what I will mean unless I indicate otherwise. Rituals are generative moments in the here and now when spontaneity creates a new choice by amplifying and focusing energy and behavior. Our spark of divinity has participated in creation.

For example: In a psychodrama, your partner expresses dissatisfaction with you for not doing his or her will. You stay and resist. This stimulates a recollection of an Earlier Scene in which a parent thrust upon you the truth of your dependence, vulnerability, and comparative inadequacy. You resist the parent, stand up for yourself, grieve your losses, and reclaim your autonomy and self-esteem. You close your drama by encountering your partner. You feel full and alive. Again, borrowing from chaos theory, I call this a point repeller, where energy is amplified by opening the system and focused upon creating something new.

It is no coincidence that rituals are often ecstatic experiences and that the structure of rituals parallels that of sexual experience. Ultimately, I believe that the basic imprint of

all rituals is human sexuality. The neurological structures for both ritual and sexuality reside in the brain stem (the R-Complex or Reptilian Brain), the oldest part of the human brain. Relationships and sexuality remain one of our most preoccupying involvements. There are few experiences of greater power generally available to everyone. Sexuality has long been debased by the polarized dualisms of Western culture which put mind over matter, our “godlike” reason over our “animal-like” physicality. But reason alone cannot bring about the deep healing that ritual facilitates. The sexual act contains a template for the stages of all intentional change. Sexuality consists of:

1. Desire to join with the other.
2. Intercourse, consisting of (a) the vascular tension and stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system, (b) a climax (crisis, catharsis) where a crossover occurs to (c) the stimulation of the parasympathetic nervous system and muscular relaxation.
3. Pregnancy: The generation of new possibilities of being.
4. The birth of a new being

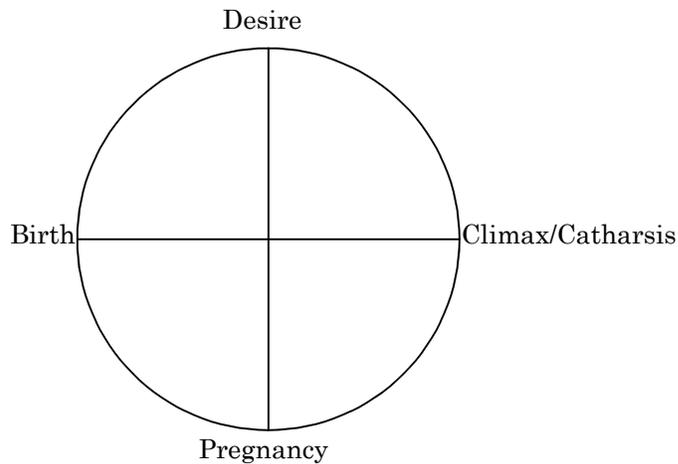


Chart 113. The Sexual Template

During any ritual the celebrant (the person on whom the ritual focuses) and the participants, each to their own degree of involvement or desire for change, will experience a build up of tension to a catharsis. Then they will experience relief, release, and relaxation during which new possibilities

of existence can be integrated. Finally they will return to everyday life and birth the new possibilities into the group, family, and/or community to which they belong. This procreative process extends further. Just as human beings need two, a male and a female, to unite and produce new offspring, so do we need two, a self and an other, to produce change, something new. The best that can happen in isolation is maintenance. As the complexity sciences confirm, the true creativity in the universe is in its interconnectivity and interrelatedness.

In human affairs, interrelatedness is perceived within groups and measured through sociometric methods. Moreno, who invented the field of sociometry, remarks:

It seems to us a valuable working hypothesis to assume that *back of all social and psychological interactions between individuals there must once have been and still are two or more reciprocating physiological organs which interact with each other*. The principle of bisexuality is only a small part of a wider principle: bisociality. Attractions, repulsions, and indifferences which we find, therefore, oscillating from one individual to the other, however varying the underlying factors, as fear, anger, sympathy or complex collective representations, it may be assumed, have a socio-physiological anchorage. [Italics his]

— *Who Shall Survive?* (1978)

The meaning of sexuality is extended here. It is a phenomenal method of exchanging genetic material and thus increasing the possibility of evolutionary changes for optimal development. The exchange assures changes. Just so interpersonal exchanges. The human capacity for connection with others and for mystical identification with other things assures socio-psychological fertility. Paradoxically, this interconnectedness and social interaction finally leads us to ourselves. Optimally, we develop an internal relationship between our own femininity and masculinity that is as generative as the biological one, usually producing wisdom. We also create a self/other relationship within ourselves by being able to see ourselves as objects of study. As we shall see in the following pages, the key to growth, healing, and transcendence eventually rests upon this self reference.

## The Structure of Ritual

There have been many excellent books written about ritual and its origins (Abel, 1963; Beck and Metrick, 1990; Cornford, 1961; Eliade, 1958; Fergusson, 1949; Gaster, 1961; Kerr, 1967; Mahdi et al, 1988; Ragland, 1949; Somé, 1993; Turner, 1974, 1979; Van der Hart, 1983; Westin, 1957), but Arnold van Gennep in *Rites of Passage* (1960) set the standard for understanding the structure of ritual. A ritual, according to van Gennep, consisted of three parts: a separation or withdrawal from everyday life, an ordeal or margin, and a return or aggregation. For the Healing Circle, I have added a fourth step. The four steps to a ritual are (1) A **separation**, (2) An **ordeal**, (3) A **return**, and (4) An **investiture** of “gifts” in the community and a call to the adventure of living a new role (and unknowingly beginning a new adventure of change).

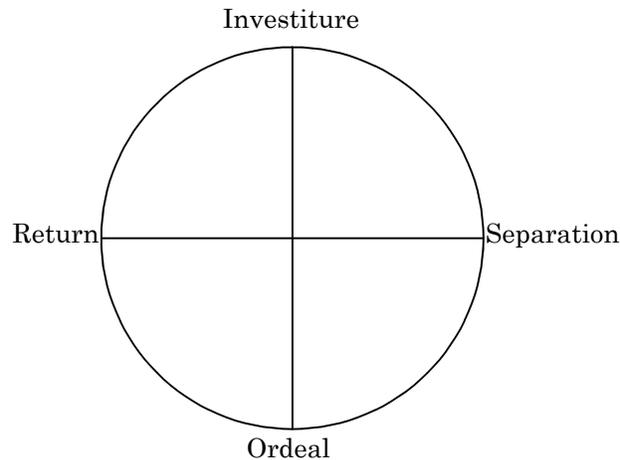


Chart 114. The Structure of Ritual

### *The Separation*

Ritual occurs in a place apart from ordinary time and space. The psychodrama stage facilitates a departure into such a place. Rites begin officially when the participant has left ordinary reality (by ceasing conversation to light a pipe, leaving a work day to go to the therapist’s or doctor’s office, or initiating a distance seeking fight from an intimate) to engage in specialized behaviors. This threshold crossing gener-

ates an altered state of consciousness and the experience of non-ordinary reality, facilitating an entry into the phase space of complex dynamical systems and strange attractors. Our capacity for separations or departures from every day ordinary reality into non-ordinary reality is part of the very texture of our lives. Life is full of everyday altered states:

|   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Driving a car                           | Reading a book                     |
| Over stimulation                        | Under stimulation                  |
| Close physical contact                  | Potency                            |
| Pain                                    | Shock and extreme emotional stress |
| Impossible tasks that must be done      | Having a fantasy                   |
| Discounting self independence           | Crossed transactions               |
| Logical thinking                        | Confusion                          |
| Losing oneself in a fascinating project | Raking the lawn                    |

Embedded within a myth, a story that gives meaning to the experience, and a ritual, a prescribed symbolic act that must be performed in a certain way and in a certain order, these alterations of consciousness can induce transformation of the self. Rituals manipulate our facility for altering consciousness. Focused by the ritual, these altered states activate key stimuli (props, auxiliaries, dramatic conflict, other personal symbols) which in turn activate innate releasing mechanisms (self-holding, acceptance, or objectivity) that connect the excitation of the nervous system to the core self. For example, as Sore Knee the Sioux, I was able to experience the ways I was disabling myself that were far more significant than physically limping. The rite of transformation we created dispelled my shame, depression, and most importantly, fear of accomplishment in my own unique ways.

### *The Ordeal*

The ordeal refers to the element changed. Change may or may not be stressful or painful but it's always an ordeal. At the least, the ordeal consists of the resistance we put up before the change and the inevitable accompanying grief associated with any loss. The change may come in the way we feel, want, act, or think. Earlier, I introduced the cycle of sexuality. The ordeal is the process of rising tension and in-

tensity leading to a climax or catharsis followed by relief, release, and relaxation. Preceding the catharsis, the celebrant of the rite has less and less of an idea where he or she is going, yet, as in sexual intercourse, must abandon the self to the emerging process. Like the fool of the tarot deck, each celebrant steps off the cliff into the unknown, dogged by the unconscious and smiling hopefully. The ordeal consists of four parts, which can be plexed on the Healing Circle:

1. A desire to be changed.
2. A period of preparation directed by helpers and during which normal boundaries among roles, social strata, sexual identification, goals, and life and death are confused or suspended and an altered state of consciousness surrendered to due to extreme stress on the system.
3. A threshold crossing to the sacred ground.
4. An active and mindful participation in the resulting experience.

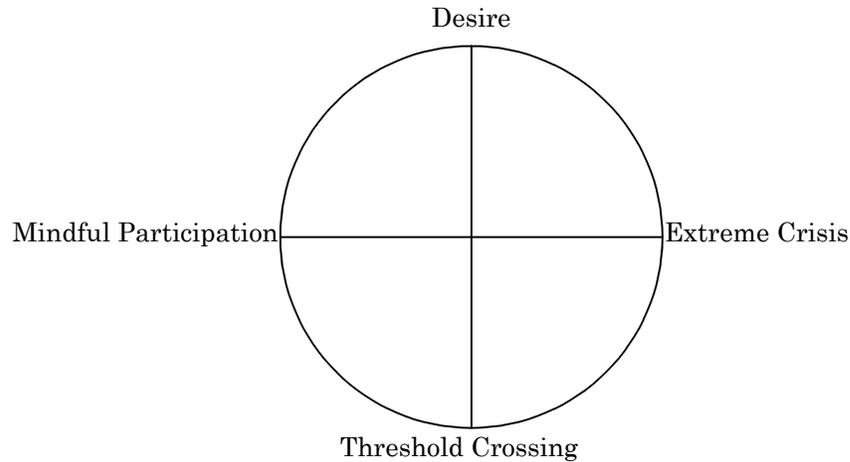


Chart 115. Elements of the Ordeal

### *The Return*

After the ordeal, the celebrant of a ritual must return to ordinary reality. This return journey may be slow or rapid, but it has its challenges too. The celebrant must incorporate the learnings of his or her ordeal and also purify him or herself of the grit and grunge of the passage. In a therapy set-

ting, the client dries his tears, calms his emotions, and strives to understand the insights of a session. Often the client experiences moderate disorientation or depression for one to three days. Perhaps the therapist will assign some homework to bring back these gifts to the client's family or community.

### *The Investiture*

The purpose of ritual is to assure both continuity and change in the culture and in its individual members. Rituals change people individually and as members of groups. Eventually, the celebrant must not only bring his or her gifts to the community, but the community must also validate, affirm, and sanction the accomplishments. Rituals bind individuals in a group culture or community. They connect the self to the community emotionally, through love and/or duty, spiritually, through transcendence of personal boundaries, physically, through the shared ordeal, and intellectually, through the story or myth. Rituals provide:

1. *Communitas*: A focus for community bonding.
2. Process: Processes for change.
3. Markers: The shaping of memories to stabilize and commemorate changes.
4. Structures: Structures for feeling, wanting, doing, and thinking.

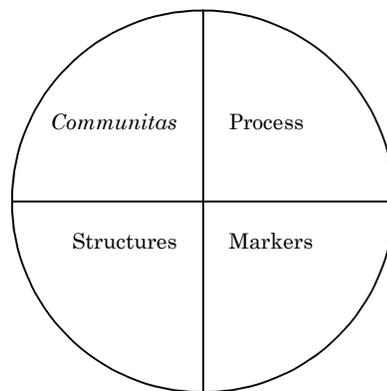


Chart 116. What Rituals Provide

To summarize, every ritual contains these four parts, the separation, ordeal, return, and investiture. There are unique rites for each of the four threshold crossings that these four parts represent. Some rituals can be relatively dead and stereotyped; others can be highly charged with spontaneity. Some rituals support the current half-life periodicity; others push us into the complexity space.

The things that are necessary to enliven a ritual are readily available for use. The human being and brain are biologically suited for ritual to begin with. Then we need a story to hold everything together meaningfully. It also helps to have a cognitive model about what is happening, but research has shown that it is not essential (Emerson, 1972; Goodman, 1986). Like magnificent poetry, at some point in the most numinous rituals there is a required “willing suspension of disbelief.” The ordeal, after all, takes us to the unknown. The greater the unknown, the greater need for spontaneity. This is the reason that a trained and sanctioned guide is necessary for these processes. The guide usually does not know any more about the content of the changes than anyone else, but he or she knows the processes of change and can provide the adjustments that can take the ritual community through the rapids of transformation.

Finally, the successful ritual requires symbols, objects to incarnate feelings, wants, actions, and ideas. These symbolic objects are the explicate key stimuli pointing to the implicate realities from which they have unfolded. They must have meaning for the celebrant and the participants, both. To the degree that they do, the participants can invest energy and action into the ritual while the celebrant can invest him or her self. Action, music, rhythm, repetition, and all forms of expression intensify rituals. The appropriate and adequate manipulation of these elements can infuse a rite with transformative power.

Any visit to any therapist or healer is a ritual (Van der Hart, 1983). Whether we go to the family doctor, a counselor, an astrologer, or a best friend, once we have set out away from the every day process of mundane living with the intent to deal with ourselves objectively we have embarked on a healing ritual. When we encounter the doctor, the counselor, the astrologer, the best friend, we may or may not be transformed. But the chances of something unusual happening increase when we intend to become self referential. At that

moment we enter into a relationship with the implicate order of the universe. We also enter a transition zone, the nonlinear complexity space, where everything that happens becomes opened to observation. In the therapeutic relationship, this is reflected by the therapist's interest and examination of everything from coming early or late to sessions to asking or not asking for the Kleenex.

The transition zone is bracketed by the decisions to enter self reference and to leave it. It is marked by many creative and surprising occurrences. Job changes, divorces, dreams, pregnancies, fortuitous accidents and other synchronicities can and do occur. When we become self referential we tap into the implicate order of existence and become part of a nonlinear equation for change. We move our selves and our group systems to the complexity space. The trick in on-going therapy, which is only one example of self referencing, is to teach the client to remain in the transition zone between sessions.

I define therapy as a leaving of the mundane world (*separation*) and a coming to a special place (for example, the therapist's office), sorting out what is causing discomfort or dis-ease (myth identification), isolating something to be worked through (*ordeal* or *catharsis*) in a prescribed way (ritual enactment), and then reintegrating (*return*) with the help of a trained therapist. The final step is the client's responsibility: investing the new aspects of self into the community returned to (*investiture*). The working through process involves identifying the impasse, the point of frozen stillness between the old and the new, and crossing the threshold. This may take a long time, several years, even, to accomplish. It takes a much shorter time to diagnose where the freeze point is.

### **Kinds of Ritual**

When rituals are designed to change personal mythology, they are therapeutic. Therapeutic rituals are steeped in quantum uncertainty. In the first place, the presenting issue may be originating from the **Home Base**, the complementary defense against the pain of the original trauma, or they may be emerging from the **Ground Zero**, the quadrant of the

wounding. In the second place, the celebrant, called the protagonist in psychodrama, has ambivalence about giving up known personal myth affirming habits for the unknown that is accessed when issues are taken back to the birth of the pain. In the third place, the underlying core personal mythology is more or less unconscious, so that all participants, the facilitator, and the celebrant must remain open to unfolding elements of the underlying story. In the fourth place, as the process enters into the implicate reality through altering states of consciousness, the emergent self organization is indeterminate. Certainty about which of the four therapeutic rituals is occurring is certain only after the fact. Nevertheless, knowing the four thresholds and the rituals that amplify and mobilize the energy to cross them is essential to healing. These are the four kinds of rituals:

1. Rites of Separation: The purpose of rituals of separation is the initiation of the individual into a new state of being. They define or redefine identity. They frequently have to deal with loss and death of the old to make way for the new. They involve the training of attention and concentration (altering consciousness), the *in*-formation of the will, and the development of intentionality. They usually deal with “parents,” especially “mother” (the better the “mother” relationship, the easier the separation). Often there is a journey, and the protagonist leaves “home,” frequently with a companion. They are frequently necessary for changing personal myths of betrayal and joylessness. They are associated with the element of Fire.
2. Rites of Transformation: The purpose of rituals of transformation is the healing of the individual of some condition that prevents attainment of the desired state or definition. Transformation is self realization through self transcendence (Wilber, 1995). This usually requires some form of ordeal. These rituals generate deeply internal changes, changes in consciousness and mindfulness. After surrendering to his or her deepest darkness “underground,” the celebrant achieves gnosis, knowledge of mysteries (the recognition of spiritual truths that rise up from the depths of his or her inner resources). Relationships focus on self and a higher power. Sometimes the protagonist has disciples. In short, these rites involve the cultivation of wisdom. They are frequently necessary for changing personal myths of humiliating powerlessness. They are associated with the element of Earth.
3. Rites of Incorporation: The purpose of rituals of incorporation is to establish new membership in a community. They usually require some form of incorporation of new or lost elements of self and cleansing or purification for the indi-

vidual to be made new for the new position in the community. They often deal with rebirth. They involve methods of emotional clearing and the construction of new or alternative structures for meaning. They are frequently necessary for changing personal myths of chaos and meaninglessness, bringing a new order, sometimes forgiveness, amends, or justice, and wholeness, and the mystery of life. They are associated with the element of Water.

4. Rites of Continuity: The purpose of rituals of continuity is to assure the continuance of the community. Frequently ceremonial, sometimes celebrations, often uplifting, they require the investiture of the self in the goals of the community; they demand that one claim his or her highest earned place in the system, striking a delicate balance between self and society. Because they involve the best we can achieve, our apotheosis, these rituals extend and affirm a rigorous system of ethics within the relevant culture. They are frequently necessary for changing personal myths of lovelessness through abandonment, neglect, and parentification of a child, and the breaking and making of attachments. They are associated with the element of Air.



Chart 117. Four Kinds of Ritual

Thus there are four kinds of therapeutic rituals, one kind for each of the four transition zones. If a child has been traumatized in the first Quadrant, Spring, he or she may, for example, develop an insecure attachment pattern of compulsive self-sufficiency. As he or she matures, the person will have extreme difficulty in crossing the threshold between the Spring and Summer Quadrants, thus becoming ineffectual in developing interdependency or intimacy with others. A rite of investiture, validating loveability and worth, may propel such a celebrant into the relatively unknown experiences of meaningful connection to others. Similarly, the young boy betrayed by his father's criticism, could develop a determined perfectionism driven by intense self-criticism and judgement of others. A rite of separation may help him cross the threshold from the Summer Quadrant into the Fall, where he can acquire a sense of genuine competence and healthy competition based on mastery of skills. Perhaps a young girl, denied access to empowerment because of her gender, may develop habits of helplessness or caretaking to assure her social safety. A rite of transformation may help her cross the threshold from the Fall Quadrant into the Winter, where she can experience the truth of her essential equality and make sense of her place in the world. Or finally, the child of alcoholic parents, lost in a chaotic and enmeshed family system, may develop an addiction to risk taking to bring order to chaos. A rite of incorporation may move him or her from the Winter Quadrant to the Spring, where he or she can receive safe and predictable care from self and others. As you can extrapolate from these examples, each of the ritual threshold crossings generates a different kind of change or catharsis:

1. Catharsis of Conation: The experience of awe and the expansion of spiritual values. *Apotheosis*, the enhancement of the individual towards his or her inner divinity. Incorporation by the community. Produced through rites of continuity.
2. Catharsis of Construction: Engaging and learning new behaviors and competencies. *Initiation*, Father (the activity principle) Atonement, the embracing of adequacy (as opposed to superiority or inferiority). Produced through rites of separation.
3. Catharsis of Cognition: The "aha" experience of enlightenment. *Gnosis*; inner knowing, the Sacred Union of complementaries. Produced through rites of transformation.

4. Catharsis of Abreaction: The experience of emotional regression in service of the ego. Incorporation by the celebrant of changes acquired through rites of transformation. *Purification*, Mother Atonement, Escape, Elixir Theft, the gifts of the Mother (receptivity principle) delivered to the community. Produced through rites of incorporation.

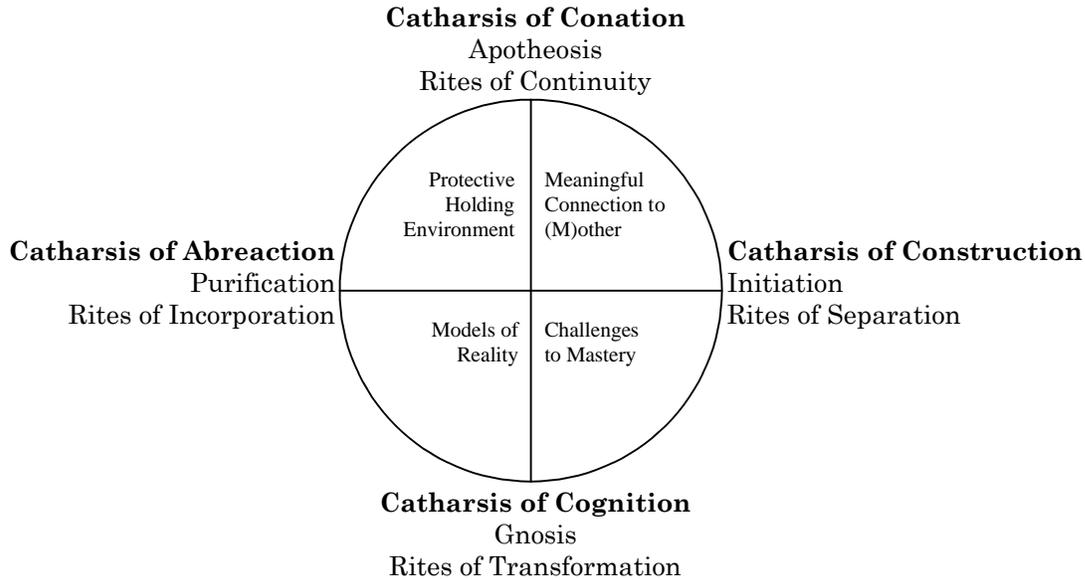


Chart 118. The Four Catharses

There are many ways to develop a sense of the ambience of the four kinds of rituals. A very accessible and valuable way is to look at movies (Vogler, 1998). Many movies depict one or another of these rituals for change. Movies are one of the cultural rituals to help twentieth century folks make their passages. The four kinds of ritual, the movies that depict each, and the elements usually observed in each kind are listed below.

1. Movies that model rites of separation:

|                            |                                  |                         |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Boyz in the Hood</i>    | <i>The Little Princess</i>       | <i>Star Wars</i>        |
| <i>The Client</i>          | <i>Little Voice</i>              | <i>The Stone Boy</i>    |
| <i>The Cure</i>            | <i>National Velvet</i>           | <i>Testament</i>        |
| <i>E.T.</i>                | <i>Nun's Story</i>               | <i>Turtle Diary</i>     |
| <i>Fly Away Home</i>       | <i>Road to Perdition</i>         | <i>Unforgiven</i>       |
| <i>Glengarry Glen Ross</i> | <i>Rosewood</i>                  | <i>Walkabout</i>        |
| <i>Into the West</i>       | <i>Running on Empty</i>          | <i>The War</i>          |
| <i>Juno</i>                | <i>The Secret Garden</i>         | <i>Wit</i>              |
| <i>King of the Hill</i>    | <i>The Secret of Roan Innish</i> | <i>Zelli and Me</i>     |
| <i>L.I.E.</i>              | <i>Stand by Me</i>               | <i>Zorba, the Greek</i> |

Elements of Rites of Separation:

- ❖ Initiation to a new state of being
- ❖ New Identity
- ❖ Death of the old, birth of the new
- ❖ Intentionality (concentration, attention, will)
- ❖ Relations with “parents,” especially “mother” (the better the “mother” relationship, the easier the separation)
- ❖ Betrayal, joylessness
- ❖ Leaving versus being left (both are present), often a journey
- ❖ Stripping of clothes, status, belongings, gender; cutting of skin, hair; scarification; permanent physical changes
- ❖ Relations with peers; often a “companion”
- ❖ Images: of fire, sexuality, intense light, anger, violence, sunrises and sunsets, “dragons,” seasons from summer to fall

2. Movies that model rites of transformation:

|                                 |                                 |                              |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Apocalypse Now</i>           | <i>Fearless</i>                 | <i>Platoon</i>               |
| <i>A Beautiful Mind</i>         | <i>Good Will Hunting</i>        | <i>Priest</i>                |
| <i>Blade Runner</i>             | <i>Grand Torino</i>             | <i>Quiz Show</i>             |
| <i>Bonnie and Clyde</i>         | <i>The Insider</i>              | <i>Rebel without a Cause</i> |
| <i>Braveheart</i>               | <i>Into the Void</i>            | <i>Schindler's List</i>      |
| <i>Breaking the Waves</i>       | <i>Interview with a Vampire</i> | <i>Silkwood</i>              |
| <i>Cool Hand Luke</i>           | <i>Jerry Maguire</i>            | <i>Shawshank Redemption</i>  |
| <i>Dances with Wolves</i>       | <i>Jacob's Ladder</i>           | <i>The Station Agent</i>     |
| <i>Dancer in the Dark</i>       | <i>Lawrence of Arabia</i>       | <i>Thelma and Louise</i>     |
| <i>Dead Man Walking</i>         | <i>Life as a House</i>          | <i>The Time Machine</i>      |
| <i>Dracula (either version)</i> | <i>Mission</i>                  | <i>The Truman Show</i>       |
| <i>Dune</i>                     | <i>Murder in the First</i>      | <i>The Wizard of Oz</i>      |
| <i>The Empire Strikes Back</i>  | <i>On the Waterfront</i>        | <i>Zardoz</i>                |

Elements of rites of transformation:

- ❖ A healing of some condition that prevents desired change (hero has a sense of breaking apart; goals and outcomes are unknown)
- ❖ Self regulation through self transcendence
- ❖ An ordeal (sense experience leads to insight)
- ❖ Disempowerment and humiliation, abuse of power

- ❖ Relations with self and higher power, others are incidental
- ❖ Changes are internal, mindful (gnosis, spiritual knowing)
- ❖ Wisdom (union of the dualities of life)
- ❖ Empowerment through surrender of control (a quantum leap into unknown)
- ❖ Disciples, followers who carry on
- ❖ Images: of cruciform, earth, night, darkness, birth (tunnels, water, blood, feces), turbulence, rain, thunderstorms, seasons from fall to winter

### 3. Movies that model Rites of Incorporation:

|                           |  |                              |
|---------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| <i>The Abyss</i>          | <i>Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Md</i> | <i>Nell</i>                  |
| <i>Accidental Tourist</i> | <i>Hillary and Jackie</i>                  | <i>Ordinary People</i>       |
| <i>Aliens (II)</i>        | <i>The Hours</i>                           | <i>Ponette</i>               |
| <i>American Heart</i>     | <i>How to Make an American Quilt</i>       | <i>Return of the Jedi</i>    |
| <i>Babbette's Feast</i>   | <i>Living Out Loud</i>                     | <i>Somewhere in Time</i>     |
| <i>Big</i>                | <i>Lone Star</i>                           | <i>Star Man</i>              |
| <i>Close Encounters</i>   | <i>Lovely and Amazing</i>                  | <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> |
| <i>Dumbo</i>              | <i>The Miracle Worker</i>                  | <i>2001</i>                  |

### Elements of Rites of Incorporation:

- ❖ Order out of chaos and trauma
- ❖ Establish membership in community, community creating
- ❖ Taking in new or lost elements of self
- ❖ Cleansing and purification
- ❖ Emotional clearing
- ❖ Forgiveness, amends, justice
- ❖ Rebirth and renewal
- ❖ Construction of new or alternative structures for meaning
- ❖ Wholeness and the mystery of life
- ❖ Images: of cleansing (therefore dirt and feces), animals, standing water, moonlight, flight from harm, helpers, twins, the double (döppelganger), seasons from winter to spring

## 5. Movies that model Rites of Continuity:

|                                |                                 |                            |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Artificial Intelligence</i> | <i>Dave</i>                     | <i>Little Orphan Annie</i> |
| <i>August Rush</i>             | <i>Field of Dreams</i>          | <i>The Lion King</i>       |
| <i>Bat Man</i>                 | <i>Ground Hog Day</i>           | <i>Once Were Warriors</i>  |
| <i>Blue Sky</i>                | <i>Harry and the Hendersons</i> | <i>Pieces of April</i>     |
| <i>Cat Ballou</i>              | <i>Hurricane</i>                | <i>Places in the Heart</i> |
| <i>Chariots of Fire</i>        | <i>Iceman</i>                   | <i>Resurrection</i>        |
| <i>Contact</i>                 | <i>It's a Wonderful Life</i>    | <i>Secrets and Lie</i>     |

## Elements of Rites of Continuity:

- ❖ Uplift and uplifting
- ❖ Continuance of community
- ❖ Ceremonial, celebratory, and sometimes circus-like
- ❖ Investiture of self in community goals
- ❖ Balancing between self and society
- ❖ Taking an earned higher place in community
- ❖ Defines ethical behavior
- ❖ Often contexted by abandonment and/or loss
- ❖ The breaking and making of attachments
- ❖ Images: of air, bright light, God, music, visions, high/low, flying, "family," the "star," seasons from spring to summer

Because this is a nonlinear model of change, based on uncertainty yet trusting emergent self organization, it is easier to participate in than to facilitate. Being a healer is hard. The use of various quartered circles, particularly Mosher's Mandalas, can be helpful guides towards plotting out a personal myth and determining the ritual to effect change. The best plan is to stay with the process and follow what emerges. Like a child's development that is supported adequately, a person's individual healing process will lead to the next stage. Working in action can always be redone. It sets a seasonal stage and allows for trial and error. People's personal mythologies tend to unfold and open organically to a nourishing and accepting enlightenment.

## The Healer and the Healing Circle

Determining what ritual intervention is called for and applying it is healing. It is a complex task requiring many years of training, supervision, and experience. It also requires an intuitive grasp of the gestalt of the client's life around the presenting issue and/or his or her life generally. Sometimes they will be different. The healer must know the following kinds of information:

- Where are the clients now in the cycle of their presenting issues? Where they are in their life cycles?
- Are they stuck in a half-life periodicity or swirling in chaotic overload?
- What do they want (spoken and unspoken)?
- How do they stabilize themselves when under stress (i.e., get drunk or helpless, talk to a friend, work, isolate, problem solve, etc.)?
- Who or what are the antagonists?
- What do they want to change: Is it feelings, wantings, doings, or thinkings?
- What is working well for them?
- What is missing?
- What do they discount about themselves?
- What symbols are relevant to them? Is there an organizing metaphor?
- What is the myth, the basic plotline of their story?
- What stabilizing ritual will support the change?

These questions help locate the client's issues on the Healing Circle. One way or another, the client's place of first trauma in the personal mythology, called **Ground Zero**, needs to be identified. It will be the hardest place for the client to be in the healing process, and it is the place where crucial work will be done that changes the personal myth to something hopefully more useful and joyous.

Often the ground zero becomes clear in the first meeting between the healer or therapist and the client. In fact, subsequent sessions can cloud the issues, so “listen” carefully to all sources of information from the client. How they are dressed, in what colors, how they talk to and address the therapist, how they talk about themselves, their sentence structure, tone of voice, imagery, and so on are all possible self similar elements of the fractal of the self. It is equally valuable to listen within oneself: How am I feeling, what do I want to do for, with, to this person, why, what pictures am I seeing inside, am I aware of any energy fields, and so forth are very important in the first minutes.

A wise teacher once told me that clients offer the healer clues, consciously but mostly unconsciously, to their remembered and mostly unremembered secrets in the first few moments of the first meeting. I believe that the first fifteen minutes are perhaps the most important quarter hour of the whole healing process.

It is during these initial conditions that the destiny of the dynamic, complex system of the healing or therapy relationship itself is set. There is a high level of energy and possibility in these early moments. The usual questions and interview mask the underlying deterministic chaos. It is the wise student of human nature who pays attention to all the signs and clues to the unfolding of the ritual of healing. It is important to remember that after the first sessions, the clues the client drops are often expressions of the most familiar and safe behavior, what I call the **Home Base**.

Determining the right rite at any given time is more than determining the celebrant’s core mythology. He or she may be working through an issue not directly related to by the core myth. An important way to determine what ritual is called for is to listen to the client’s language. If you know the Healing Circle, you can learn to use the client’s first words as clues to the ritual required. Embedded in our manner of speaking are clues to the immediate issues at hand. In psychodrama, I pay special attention to how the client first states what he or she wants to work on:

| Ritual             | OPENING REQUEST FOR HELP   | CLUES   |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Rite of Separation | <p>I don't know who I am.</p> <p>I want to work, but I don't really know what to work on.</p> <p>I'm stuck. I don't know what I want. Sometimes I think I know, then I'm not sure any more.</p> <p>To tell you the truth, I really believe that I can do it myself. I mean, history has proven itself over and over. You count on somebody and you get disappointed. So why bother. Right? I just don't want to feel empty any more.</p> | <p>Lack of self identity</p> <p>Lack of self identity</p> <p>Inability to determine wants</p> <p>Expectation of betrayal</p> <p>Intellectualization</p> |

| (Ritual)               | (Opening request for help)   | (Clues)   |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Rite of Transformation | <p>I have to go home. It's my father's retirement party. But I don't want to go. I hate feeling like a kid when I go home.</p> <p>My partner doesn't appreciate me. No matter what I do, it's never good enough.</p> <p>When I was studying for the bar exam, the night before the test, my dad, a judge, came in and told me I didn't have a chance, but he'd love me anyway. I finished second in the state.</p> <p>I was about ready to be promoted. Then one of the secretaries accused me of sexual harassment. It's a lie, but I'm probably going to be fired.</p> | <p>Feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness</p> <p>Inadequacy and powerlessness again</p> <p>Direct experience of humiliating disempowerment</p> <p>Unconsciously screws up</p> |

| (Ritual)              | (Opening request for help)   | (Clues)   |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Rite of Incorporation | <p>I freeze up under stress and nobody and nothing seems to help me when I'm paralyzed like that.</p> <p>Even though I'm good with people, I don't like them. I don't belong anywhere. I don't know why I feel this way.</p> <p>I keep hurting myself. It's like I don't know who I am unless I'm in pain.</p> <p>My partner and I have never been so close. But the other night we were cuddling, getting ready to make love. She started stroking my neck and I went ballistic. I had a complete panic attack. I have no idea why.</p> | <p>Stopped thinking</p> <p>Non attachment and not belonging and no empathy</p> <p>Not knowing and masochism: pain "makes" reality</p> <p>Possible flashback to chaotic trauma</p> |

| (Ritual)           | (Opening request for help)  | (Clues)   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Rite of Continuity | <p>I have three or four things to work on. I don't know which one to chose.</p> <p>I hate my inner child. I have to get control of it.</p> <p>I don't know what to do. We may have to break apart. My boyfriend asked me to marry him. But he's poor and lazy. He's a really sweet guy, but he'll never go anywhere.</p> <p>My stomach hurts all the time. I don't have an ulcer or anything like that—I had a check up. I want to do something about this. I hate how it makes me feel weak.</p> | <p>Emphasis on doing and busy being</p> <p>Rejection of vulnerability</p> <p>Resistance to attachment</p> <p>Out of touch with body and feelings.</p> <p>Rejection of vulnerability</p> |
| <b>Ritual</b>      | <b>OPENING REQUEST FOR HELP</b>   | <b>CLUES</b>  |

Chart 119. Asking for Rituals

Perhaps most basic to the creation of a ritual is having a sense of where the story is going. The personal mythology is larger than the core myths. It includes all the conscious and unconscious interacting and sometimes contradictory feelings, desires, actions, and beliefs we have about the world. Personal myths not only determine the meaning we attach to our experiences but also they direct the actions we take to create the conditions for many of those experiences to take place. Knowing the therapy process, the psychodrama process, and the basic plot elements leading to each of the four kinds of ritual is essential.

| <b>Therapy Process</b>  | Dis-ease                               | Sorting  | Dissociation (Trance)                          | Integration                                    |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Ritual Process Required to Assist</b>                              | <i>Call to Adventure</i> (Investiture) | Separation<br>Withdrawal from Ordinary Reality | Margin: Ordeal In Nonordinary Reality (Trance) | Return (Aggregation) to Ordinary Reality       |
|   | <b>Initial Condition</b>               | <b>Starting Element</b>                        | <b>Cathartic Element</b>                       | <b>Closing Element</b>                         |
| Catharsis of Construction (Toward New Behavior)<br><b>Separation</b>  | <b>Paralyzed Stuck</b>                 | Separation from limiting conditions            | Trial by Ordeal                                | Return To new sense of identity                |
| Catharsis of Cognition (Toward New Thinking)<br><b>Transformation</b> | <b>Fragmentation Breaking Apart</b>    | Intense Physical Discomfort                    | Insight  | Discernment and Gnosis                         |
| Catharsis of Abreaction (Toward New Feeling)<br><b>Incorporation</b>  | <b>Impulsive Lost</b>                  | Innocence and Experience                       | Purification from Guilt and Shame              | Expiation and Incorporation of Self Acceptance |
| Catharsis of Conation (Toward New Spirituality)<br><b>Continuity</b>  | <b>Reactive Confused</b>               | Contact  | Balancing Self and Society                     | Wisdom and Acknowledgement                     |
| <b>Psychodrama Process</b>  | Selection of Protagonist               | Warm-up  | Catharsis                                      | Sharing  |

Chart 120. Ritual Plot Elements

The chart on the previous page outlines the basic plots of the four kinds of ritual in relationship to the therapy and psychodrama processes. In reading the chart, start with the *call to adventure*, the initial condition. Directors follow their protagonists. Sometimes protagonists need a ritual experience that is not representative of their core myth but rather what is happening in the flow of their lives in the moment. Thus if someone complains of feeling lost, you can hypothesize that he or she needs a ritual of purification, a rite of incorporation. Or if someone is in the throes of intense shame and guilt, he or she may be in the middle of the rite of incorporation, and the healer can facilitate movement towards self acceptance. The purpose of the chart is to help focus on the ritual needed in the moment.

Every culture has unique rituals. Any group will have its culture. Each of the therapeutic modalities has its own particular rituals. Empty Chair, Therapeutic Neutrality, Working Through, Auxiliary Ego, Operant Conditioning, Accountability Work, there are 10,000 names. Here is a sampling of rituals for each of the four directions of growth:

Chart 121. Sample Rituals

| SEPARATION  | TRANSFORMATION                                       | INCORPORATION   | CONTINUITY   |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1. Stripping of clothes, status, belongings, gender | 1. Giving birth                                      | 1. Rites of reversal (April fools, Boy Bishop, role reversal) | 1. Receiving awards, crowns, medals, graduation              |
| 2. Scapegoating                                     | 2. Puberty rites                                     | 2. Purification rituals (baptism, sweat lodge)                | 2. Gifts exchanged   |
| 3. Funeral rites, burning objects                   | 3. Getting dirty                                     | 3. Bathing, changing clothes, new uniform                     | 3. Family dinner, formal dinner, potlucks and potlatches     |
| 4. Seclusion  | 4. Sacred sex  | 4. Soul retrieval   | 4. Production of art   |
| 5. Ventilation of repressed feelings                | 5. Fasting/Abstinence                                | 5. Spring cleaning  | 5. Passionate dedication                                     |
| 6. Saying goodbye, grief work                       | 6. Mutilation/Pain                                   | 6. Forgiving  | 6. Defining relationships (platonic love, marriage, top dog) |
| 7. Empty chair                                      | 7. Challenges to God or the Higher Power             | 7. One-way gift   | 7. Dialogues with God or the Higher Power                    |
| 8. Sexual license                                   | 8. Death (of ego-psyche and re-birth of self-psyche) | 8. Penance  | 8. Security and protection                                   |
| 9. Symptom prescription (paradox)                   | 9. Dreams and trances                                | 9. Intensification rituals                                    | 9. Concealing conflicts (diplomacy)                          |
| 10. Psychodramatic catharsis of construction        | 10. Psychodramatic catharsis of cognition            | 10. Psychodramatic catharsis of Abreaction                    | 10. Psychodramatic catharsis of conation                     |

The actual content of the ritual elements must come forth from the unfolding personal myth. Some cultural symbols are helpful. Often the elements are helpful—earth, air, fire, and water. The personalized symbols that emerge from the process need to be concretized. The most personal symbols are often the most powerful. Also there are a number of features that are essential to the ritual process and these must be present to some degree in every ritual. They relate to the structure of the ritual and are as follows:

1. There must be a trained and sanctioned leader.
2. There must be a period of preparation, both conscious and purposeful activities and unconscious processes.
3. There is prescribed language and action, certain things that must be done to set things right.
4. There must be emotionally “charged” periods of unstructured spontaneity, moments for self organized emergence.
5. The participants must enter into an altered state of consciousness.
6. There is a sense of inevitability, where causality appears deterministic (but not determined) and where the myth prescribes the action.
7. Time and space are transcended and telescoped into the present moment and place (the *here and now*). The strange attractor of the problem system is concretized.
8. There must be meaningful (to the participants) props, objects of symbolic significance.
9. Ordinary reality is devalued in favor of narrative truth.
10. The personal myth interprets the facts.

In psychotherapy, many studies have shown that the particular orientation of the therapist is relatively unimportant (except to the therapist). The therapeutic orientation simply defines the particular therapeutic rituals that the therapist knows best. Whatever approach the healer takes regarding the unfolding of a personal myth and the enactment of an appropriate ritual, these four attitudes are necessary:

1. Acceptance: There needs to be a holding environment for the productions and expressions of the protagonist/teller. Any sense of rejection will blight the unfolding personal myths.

2. **Resonance:** There is a need to apply various techniques to help the protagonist/teller and other participants achieve resonance with each other and the unfolding. Participants need to become entrained with one another, making them parts of a single “group” system. This can be achieved through techniques like the warm-up, doubling, role playing, role reversals, scene setting, soliloquies, mirroring, asides, sharing, and so on.
3. **Dissonance:** There need to be challenges to the protagonist/teller and the participants, sources of stress to excite the self, demand commitment to the process, and push the energy up into the complexity space. Examples are things like concretizing stress, spontaneity tests, or enactment of painful memories.
4. **Mini-Max:** One of the most general definitions of a problem is that one has too much of something not wanted or too little of something wanted. So energies can be modified by turning the volume down on the *too muches* and up on the *too littles*. Sometimes, to effect change one has to create a “problem” by increasing something to the too much level or reducing something to the too little level. This is a tweaking of the system into the complexity space.

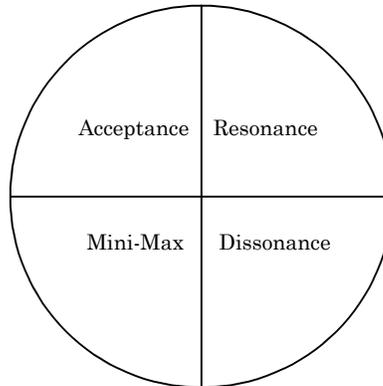


Chart 122. Four Basic Therapeutic Attitudes

### How Rituals Work

One late afternoon as I was kayaking off the west coast of Vancouver Island, I experienced one of those exquisite epiphanies of life that blossom unexpectedly. Rounding an isthmus, I disturbed thousands of terns on the beach. In an instant, the birds flew up, circled around the bay, and landed again on the beach. Inches separated their pumping

wings as they flitted in a slow moving cloud pattern. Not one bird bumped the other. I was awed by this organization of bodies in movement. How did they do that without smashing into one another?

How does a pine nut become a mountain pine? What happens to the words we speak? Do they continue to exist somewhere? What happens to ideas? Why do great advances seem to sprout up simultaneously all over? How does a group become a mob? Or a village? What is it that directs the growth and transformation of nuts and people and everything in between? How are these processes related to telepathy, past lives, myth, ritual, and the collective unconscious?

The manner of the unfolding of the implicate order into the explicate is not clearly understood. From the quantum point of view, the act of observation, generally carried out through measurement of some aspect of quantumstuff converts fundamental reality into the explicate phenomena of classical physics. Quantum physicist John Von Neumann, determined to discover the point of transition, concluded that consciousness caused the shift (Herbert, 1993). That consciousness creates reality is pretty heady stuff. This reality does not match my everyday experience of existence no matter how hard I wish. Yet change happens during a successful ritual, and consciousness has something to do with it.

### *Morphic Fields and Morphic Resonance*

Rupert Sheldrake (1981, 1989) postulates that memory is inherent in nature. Natural systems inherit a collective memory from all previous beings of their kind, however far away they were and however long ago they existed. These morphic fields arise and evolve in time and space, and they are influenced by what has actually happened in the world. The morphogenetic field is a special kind of strange attractor. It takes tremendous energy to create a new morphogenetic field, but once the field is created repetition leads to habitual enactment in time and space.

All humans draw upon a collective memory, to which all in turn contribute. When we learn something new, as more people learn to do it, it becomes progressively easier to learn. This aspect was proven accidentally when a researcher who was working on inherited memory learned that a colony

of rats in another lab and a different experiment was learning simultaneously the same things he was teaching his rats (Sheldrake, 1989). Memory is not in the body or the brain; memory is in the morphic field. To remember something, we must tune into the field and establish morphic resonance. When we do something new, we send that to the field too, and the field may be affected, depending on the strength of the resonance. These quartered circle eight phase spaces that I have been presenting can be understood as morphic fields also.

I believe that Rupert Sheldrake's theory of formative causation through morphic fields is a possible bridge between the infinite possibilities in the implicate reality, which is eternal (that is, out of space-time) and the explicate order which is of space-time (Bohm and Sheldrake, 1982; Brown and Novick, 1983). Morphic fields, like other energy fields in nature such as the gravitational or electromagnetic fields, are structures in space-time. Yet, according to Sheldrake, they are also eternal. The functioning of morphic fields presupposes the non-locality of the implicate order. It is a morphic field that allows the fleeing flock of terns to maneuver without collision.

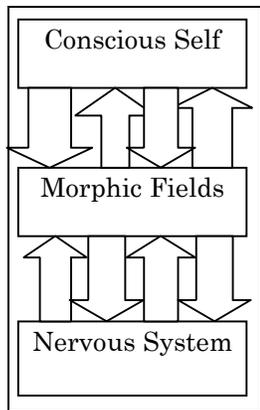
The theory also bridges complex dynamical systems. The morphic field is an energy fractal that guides the formation of things in the material world. Like any fractal, the morphic field is a record of the experience of that particular structure. It is an attractor that provides stability in nature. In more human terms, the morphic field is a habit of nature (Sheldrake, 1989).

I think of morphic fields as the archetype of rituals. These fields can change, but they require enough external changes in their environments that their normal habits of formation are prevented from being carried out. New morphic fields are not from the future, but rather from the unrealized possibilities that exist simultaneously and continuously. There really is no such thing as the future, according to Sheldrake. The idea of an ideal future of perfection that is pulling the present into it is the philosophical time bomb that has led to the destruction of the environment and other "triumphs" over nature (Brown and Novick 1983). According to Sheldrake (*The Presence of the Past: Morphic Resonance and the Habits of Nature*, 1989), Morphic fields:

1. Are self-organizing wholes.
2. Have both a spatial and a temporal aspect, and organize spatio-temporal patterns of vibratory or rhythmic activity.
3. Attract the systems under their influence towards characteristic forms and patterns of activity, whose coming-into-being they organize and whose integrity they maintain. The ends or goals towards which morphic fields attract the systems under their influence are called attractors.
4. Interrelate and co-ordinate the morphic units or holons that lie within them, which in turn are wholes organized by morphic fields. Morphic fields contain other morphic fields within them in a nested hierarchy or holarchy.
5. Are structures of probability, and their organizing activity is probabilistic.
6. They contain a built in memory given by self-resonance with a morphic unit's own past and by morphic resonance with all previous similar systems. This memory is cumulative. The more often particular patterns of activity are repeated, the more habitual they become.

Before going further, however, some terms defined by Sheldrake (in italics), to which I have added a few relevant comments, may be helpful:

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b><i>Form</i></b>         | <i>The shape, configuration, or structure of something as distinguished from its material.</i>  |
| <b><i>Field</i></b>        | <i>A region of physical influence. Fields interrelate and interconnect matter and energy within their realm of influence. Fields are not a form of matter; rather, matter is energy bound within fields. There are gravitational, electro-magnetic, quantum matter and morphic fields, for example. A myth is an example of a morphic field.</i>  |
| <b><i>Morphic Unit</i></b> | <i>A unit of form or organization, such as an atom, molecule, crystal, cell, plant, animal, pattern of instinctual behavior, social group, element of culture, ecosystem, planet, planetary system, or galaxy. Morphic units are nested in hierarchies of units within units: a crystal, for example, contains molecules, which contain atoms, which contain electrons and nuclei, which contain nuclear particles.</i> |



**Formative Causation**

*The hypothesis that organisms or morphic units at all levels of complexity are organized by morphic fields which are themselves influenced and stabilized by morphic resonance from all previous similar morphic units.*

**Chreode**

*A canalized pathway of change within a morphic field. A ritual is a chreode within the morphic field of a myth.*

**Holon**

*A whole that can also be part of a larger whole. Holons are organized in multi-levelled nested hierarchies or holarchies. A morphic unit.*

**Morphic Field**

*A field within and around a morphic unit which organizes its characteristic structure and pattern of activity. Morphic fields underlie the forms and behavior of holons or morphic units at all levels of complexity. The term includes morphogenetic, behavioral, social, cultural, and mental fields. Morphic fields are shaped and stabilized by morphic resonance with and from previous similar morphic units, which were under the influence of fields of the same kind. They consequently contain a kind of cumulative memory and tend to become increasingly habitual. At the same time, morphic fields are not immutable laws but rather they change through an evolutionary process.*

**Morphic Resonance**

*The influence of previous structures of activity on subsequent similar structures of activity organized by morphic fields. Through morphic resonance, formative causal influences pass through or across both space and time, and these influences are assumed not to fall off with distance in space or time, but they come only from the past. The greater the degree of similarity, the greater the influence of morphic resonance. In general, morphic units closely resemble themselves in the past and are subject to self-resonance from their own past states. An individual human being is composed of literally billions of interpenetrating fields all directed in an ascending interlocking order up to (and probably beyond) the general field that I call a personal mythology.*

Here is Sheldrake's illustration of the two-way interactive relationship of the conscious self, morphic fields (which consist of the conscious and unconscious *mind*), and the nervous system.

Myth is the morphic field and the stabilizing element. Ritual is the chreode, the path or way, and is the shaping element. Experiences and pre-existing morphic fields are the

raw materials of an individual's life. The myths are like a blueprint, while the rituals are like the tools. Taken together, these can be coordinated to shape any personality, much like different blueprints can turn the same building supplies into an apartment, a bungalow, an office building, a houseboat, or an outhouse.

The chreode is a canalized pathway to change in the field. The purpose of the standardized elements of a ritual is to establish the morphic resonance. The open elements of the ritual introduce the new developments into the morphic field. First one must "pace" the system; then one can "lead."

The more intensity that is generated through the ritual, the more effect the ritual is likely to have on the morphic field. Also, the more holons (morphic units) of the self system that can be brought into resonance, the more effective the ritual. The self system consists of physical, spiritual, mental, mythological, and behavioral fields. The catharsis of the ritual represents the shift point where the morphic field is changed. These changes need to be enacted repeatedly in order for them to become fully incorporated into the field. Because the strength of the resonance has an impact on the strength of effect in the field, therapeutic techniques that operate holistically and/or intensely would be likely to have a powerful effect on the field. This would account for why psychodrama, as a method that works with mental, behavioral, and emotional fields simultaneously is such a powerful model.

If we take the speculative leap of quantum physics away from the cause and effect laws of classical physics, the concepts of morphic fields and resonance to them have far reaching implications, in the fields of healing and psychology no less than in psychodrama. Projection becomes a pushing out of a morphic field into the sociometric network. Projective identification occurs when someone in the network resonates with the projected field. Then both parties begin to replicate the earlier events that shaped the projected field.

Dissociative Identity Disorder is another example. A lack of order, the prevalence of random chaos, and physical, psychical, and emotional stress generate it. A morphic field for the whole self fails to develop, resulting in random acquisition of disconnected morphic units that are pulled in from the larger cultural field that holds the memories of all the whole self fields that ever were.

Many of the more profound experiences of psychodrama and ritual, difficult to define, are illuminated by the concept of morphic fields. Tele, for example, may be another name for morphic resonance, in this case, resonance with another person's morphic field. Tele is the impulse or current of feeling that flows between person and person, from person to object and from person to symbol (Starr, 1977). Transference (and countertransference) is unconscious self-resonance, as the person vibrates to his or her projected mythos. Effective doubling would involve consciously intending resonance with the protagonist's morphic field by adopting identical body positioning, vocal intonation, and other bonding techniques. Group cohesion occurs when the group activities have generated a group morphic field. Each group will have a separate field, and each addition or departure from the group will require the creation of a new morphic field, although some of the old history will be a part of the new field. A warm-up is a technical process for creating resonance with and within a targeted morphic field.

Specific techniques, particularly role reversal, auxiliary ego, and mirroring, involve different ways of deliberately tuning in to the protagonist's (the client who is working at the moment) morphic field. Any psychodramatist you talk to will be able to tell of amazing things that people have said in role reversal or as doubles or auxiliaries for a protagonist that proved to be paranormally accurate. On the other hand, Moreno's canon of creativity and spontaneity (discussed in the next chapter) may further illuminate the morphic resonance theory, which actually says more about the "habits of nature" than morphogenesis.

### *The Brain*

We cannot leave the subject of ritual without speaking of the human nervous system, particularly the human brain:

The fractal geometry of the brain allows the three-pound ball of cells in our skulls to pack an enormous, variable surface area into a small space. As a separate structure, each brain cell is free to render a unique response to stimuli, yet through the cell's branches it is compelled to participate in a network that unites it through feedback with the entire brain. In the

spaces between cells, other fractal networks deliver oxygen, nourishment, and hormones necessary to keep neurons firing. In all, the fractal geometry of the brain gives it a flexibility and complexity no microchip technology has begun to approach.

—John Briggs, *Fractals: The Patterns of Chaos* (1992)

The hodge podge structure of the brain can be looked at from a quartered circle point of view as well. From this point of view, one can see how effectively the system is organized for the function of ritual. An effective psychodrama will activate all four parts of the brain systems. Actually, it activates the whole mind/body system.

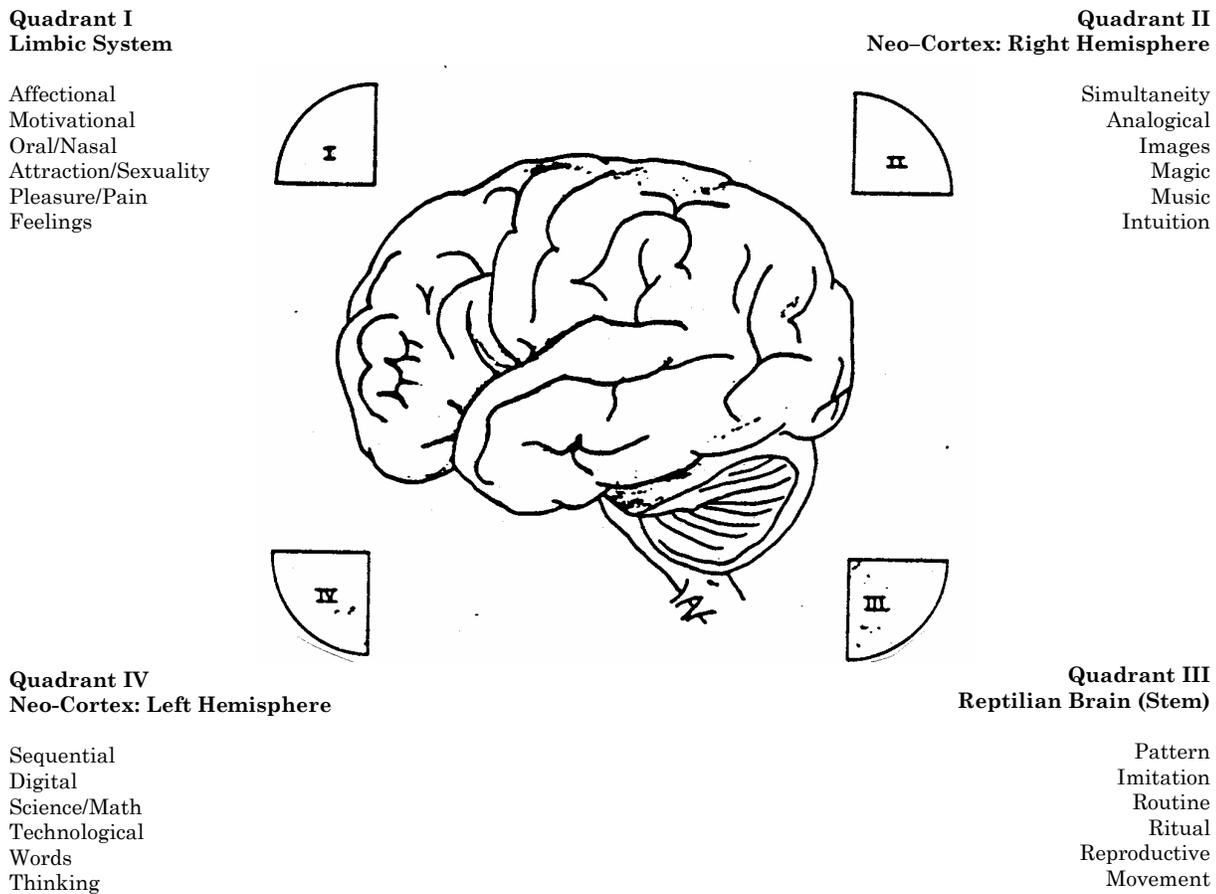


Chart 123. The Human Brain

Every ritual has aspects of both change and stability. However, some rituals focus on change. These rituals *confront* and *disrupt* patterned behavior that no longer works, *transforming* and *sanctifying* human endeavor by awakening our self organizing processes of creativity. Other rituals focus

primarily on stability. These rituals *affirm* and *extend* growth, *establish* pattern formation, and *institutionalize* it. The difference of focus is determined by *intention*. The intention of rituals of change is to heal. The intention of rituals of stability is, of course, to stabilize. A true healing ritual effects a change in a person's (or culture's) core mythology. A true stabilizing ritual confirms a personal (or cultural) myth.

Our personal myths are maintained by ceremonies and habits (rituals from yesterday's growth) and they are changed during rituals when we have warmed-up to a special state of consciousness called spontaneity. Whether we are confronted with something very new or with something very familiar, we must warm up to it in order to generate spontaneity. The warm-up is a form of trance induction, a doorway into the timeless (or more like time-liberated) moment, the here and now, which includes all time, all roles, all possibilities, the universe. If all of time were represented by an "intelligible sphere," the present would be a single spot on the outer (explicate) surface of that globe, looking out. The moment, what Moreno called the *status nascendi* (the state of birthing), is the same spot of that sphere, but on the inner (implicate) surface, looking towards the center. From such a spot one can see every other point on the inner surface and contemplate the divine.

The moment is the link to spontaneity, which generates creativity and the emergence of something new. In a community, group cohesion, increased through sharing of personal myths, the selection of representatives to carry the focus of the group, and the enactment of their stories as rituals for stability or changes are methodologies of the warm-up. And an adequate warm-up generates spontaneity, and spontaneity generates creativity, and creativity drives the evolution of the soul.

## Chapter 10

# Psychodrama

### PSYCHOTHERAPY AS SPONTANEOUS RITUAL

#### **In the Beginning**

To people raised on a diet of television and Hollywood dramas, psychodrama is a powerful introduction to the real healing we are capable of creating spontaneously together. To this day, I remember my own introduction with amazement. It changed my life. It was January 1975. I had just begun co-leading a therapy group with a psychologist with whom I had collaborated in writing an article (Mosher and Thomson, 1975). It was my first experience as a group therapist. After the second group, I shared my frustration with a friend. I could easily figure out what was going on for the client, I told him, but I had no idea what to “do” about it. Advice giving was disempowering and mere talking was—well, frustrating. My friend suggested a psychodrama training workshop the following weekend.

The details of this workshop have faded, yet the overall experience remains. I was not a protagonist, the person whose story was being enacted, but I was chosen frequently for auxiliary roles, characters in those stories. More powerful was my experience as a participating audience member. I wept for the first time in twenty years. On the spot, I dedicated myself to the method that could help me express my feelings. It was at this workshop that I met my Trainer and Mentor, Leon J. Fine.

Many people, even those who have never considered therapy or personal growth, know about some psychodrama techniques. Growing like wild flowers out of the grounding concepts of spontaneity and creativity, psychodrama techniques have spread into many nooks and crannies in the fields of education, training, theater, sociology, religion, and science, not to exclude psychotherapy. Some examples: Role training, flight simulation, and boot camp; impromptu theater, theater games, role playing games, and *Candid Camera* (a televised spontaneity test); ego states (Berne attended Moreno’s sessions in New York), empty chair work in the here

and now (so did Perls), and aggression management (so did George Bach); music, dance, and movement therapy; family sculpts, family therapy, group therapy, and some methods of scientific experiments with human subjects—the list could go on. Because they describe and implement an early complexity model, the theory and methods of psychodrama and sociometry are very user friendly.

Psychodramatists work in action. Action is the royal road to the psyche, not words. When people talk their stories, they string together their commutable experiences like a strand of pearls—each one mostly like the others but a little different. Nothing new is experienced (unless this is a story told for the first time). Every true second living through of an experience is the relief and release from the first according to Moreno. When we enact our stories the way is opened for the unknown and the unexpected. Role reversal, a strategy in which the protagonist of a drama reverses roles with an antagonist, enacts the principle of complementarity, for example, and this plunges the protagonist and the auxiliary into a truly transpersonal experience. Like many aspects of psychodrama, it is a vehicle for expanding identities within the Self through connection with the implicate reality.

This chapter is not about psychodrama as a form of therapy. The reader is referred to Adam and Allee Blattner's *Foundations of Psychodrama* (1988) or Karp, Holmes, and Tauvon's *Handbook of Psychodrama* (1998) for a good introduction to psychodrama. Rather, this chapter places the theory of psychodrama and its techniques within the structures of the Healing Circle as well as the larger context of the new sciences. I will define psychodrama, how it changes people, the roles of the psychodrama leader, and the warm-up to creative change. Then I will survey some strategies and techniques. In the following chapter, I will describe Shamanic Psychodrama.

A psychodrama is an enactment of all or part of a personal myth. It emerges spontaneously from the realities within the heart and mind of the protagonist, into the world of the group or community participating. What is implicate becomes explicate. The protagonist can unfold his or her past, present, or future personal myths, psychodramatically. Someone else might prepare for a job interview or a feared visit home. Another might explore the feelings the group harbors about an issue or him or herself.

To give you an idea of the flexibility and power of the method, I would like to share the first psychodrama in which I was a protagonist. This psychodrama occurred in a peer group formed by participants from that first psychodrama training workshop I attended. The director was a student of the method like myself.

The issue I presented was the deadness in my relationship with my wife. Within minutes I was setting the scene of our bedroom. When I got to the dresser, I described a giant (two by four foot) birthday card from her depicting Tigger, the well-known friend of Winnie the Pooh. The card was upside down.

My director directed me to reverse roles with the cartoon tiger. Thus began a struggle with my unexpressed anger at my wife, an anger contaminated by equally unexpressed rage at my stepmother and my mother (for dying when I was seven). An indication of the size of this issue was reflected in the auxiliary that I picked to play the tiger. He was six foot four and two hundred and fifty pounds to my skinny six feet.

The struggle to find expression continued for nearly an hour. Like Jacob wrestling his angel, I knew I could be wiped out at will by the intensity of my feelings. After sixty minutes of being squashed by Tigger, my director suggested that since I had successfully negotiated survival within this structure I might leave it be. A life of real feelings would require many changes. Perhaps we should stop. I flipped Tigger off me instantaneously. He literally flew across the room into a pile of pillows (thankfully). As I stood over him my rage was spent—and Tigger was gone, replaced by an astonished auxiliary, and I was no longer paralyzed by my own aggression.

I had persisted until I had finally wrestled my destiny out of that concretization of my anger and rage. Given my betrayal mythology, I knew that without adequate and appropriate expression of my feelings, the spontaneity necessary for being a psychodramatist would never be mine.

Directed professionally, psychodrama assists the protagonist in spontaneously concretizing, or making explicate, the implicate contents of his or her psyche. Role reversals assure that the unfolding story flows from the protagonist's process, conscious and unconscious. As it turned out, it was I (not my wife) who placed the birthday card upside down on the dresser, an unconscious expression of my own feelings for my Tiggerly inner tiger. My freedom to express my anger in particular and my assertiveness in general were restored by

handling my issue like a story, a personal myth, in which all the parts were role–played by auxiliaries.

Psychodrama, as a social/psychological theory, recognizes that people function optimally among other people. Psychodramatists believe that we are therapeutic agents for each other and that most change takes place within the various groups that we belong to from birth on to our deaths, if we are lucky. Groups can wound us and heal us, but in isolation we never do more than maintain, at best. Psychodrama as a group technique heals groups by increasing group cohesion at the same time as it differentiates individual members, by assuring that each has a voice. As a process it operates within and generates more effective community bonds. The leader(s) and the group, jointly, create a nurturing group setting, where support, exploration, expression, and behavior change are normal.

When group trust is sufficient, members emerge to become protagonists who present memories, metaphors, emotions, and confusions which the leader(s), together with the group, help concretize in dramatic action, during which the possibilities for changes in perspectives, expression, behaviors, and choices multiply. In the process, members develop a sense of their common humanity as well as the incredible variety in the human condition. Personal power comes from experiencing non–coerced and non–habitual choices from among alternatives. As our parents and culture socialize us, we lose our spontaneity, the power to create behaviors in the face of new experiences. When we have access to our spontaneity, we always have alternatives. Psychodrama empowers people.

J. L. Moreno, the founder of this method, called psychodrama “Kindergarten for Adults.” Its primary purpose is to re–awaken our spontaneity, the life force that empowers us to live our lives from the inside while encountering fully the world and the people in it. Moreno believed that our capacity for creativity, which he defined as adequate and appropriate novelty, was our way of expressing the divine creativity within. It is this fundamental spirituality in action that links psychodrama to shamanism.

## Definition of Psychodrama

Moreno assigned April 1, April Fool's Day, as the birthday of psychodrama. April first was the feast of fools, the feast of the Boy Bishop, in the middle ages. On this feast day, the adults would reverse roles with the children, and the children would run the villages while the adults engaged in adult child's play, with "permission" to engage in forbidden activities (frequently sexual). It's great to make a new spring start with some role relief.

Moreno was a Viennese contemporary of Freud and Jung. He is the father of group psychotherapy, sociometry, and the "action/expressive" theories and techniques he called psychodrama. He also introduced the theater of spontaneity, which has evolved into improvisational theater, theater sports, and playback theater. Moreno immigrated to the United States in 1925 because he believed that America was a place where his ideas and methods would flourish. He preferred being a "midwife to an incoherent, confused, democratic way of life, than a commissar of a highly organized world" (*Who Shall Survive?* 1978). He was a man who could recognize the complexity space.

Peter Kellerman (1987) offers the following excellent definition of psychodrama:

Psychodrama is a method of psychotherapy in which clients are encouraged to continue and complete their actions through dramatization, role playing, and dramatic self presentation. Both verbal and nonverbal communications are utilized. A number of scenes are enacted, depicting, for example, memories of specific happenings in the past, unfinished situations, inner dramas, fantasies, dreams, preparations for future risk-taking situations, or simply unrehearsed expressions of mental states in the here and now. These scenes approximate real-life situations or are externalizations of mental processes from within. If required, other parts may be taken by group members or by inanimate objects. Many techniques are employed, such as role reversal, doubling, mirroring, concretizing, maximizing, and soliloquy. Usually, the phases of warm-up, action, working-through, closure, and sharing can be identified.

The psychodrama method can be used in variable styles and applications, as follows:

- Setting—individual, group, family, or milieu
- Focus—person, group, or theme centered

- ❑ Location—in situ, stage, school, hospital, clinic
- ❑ Adherence—Morenean, Freudian, Adlerian, Rogerian, etc.
- ❑ Underlying theory—psychodramatic, psychoanalytic, behavioral, existential, humanistic, etc.
- ❑ Therapeutic goal—symptom reduction, crisis intervention, conflict resolution, personality change
- ❑ Therapist's intervention—directive, supportive, confrontive, reconstructive, expressive, interpretive
- ❑ Therapeutic factors emphasized—emotional release, cognitive insight, interpersonal feedback, behavioral learning
- ❑ Time and frequency of sessions—periodic, continual, single session, marathon, time-limited
- ❑ Population treated—age, sex, status, diagnosis

### **Change in Psychodrama**

In this book, I have placed the Healing Circle within the constructs of the implicate and explicate orders of reality. Moreno's theory of healing is also a model that sits dynamically between these two complementary extremes: the Scylla of the implicate order and the Charybdis of the explicate order. The implicate order, you will remember, is the order of chaos, the chaos of all possibilities from which all things might become. It is the ultimate archetype of freedom, within which even alternate universes are possible. Out of this whirlpool emerges the explicate order of things that have become, including humankind. We use our senses to define the explicate order and the scientific method to observe, analyze, and codify it. The explicate order is the archetype of structure. We need theories that incorporate both the whirlpool and the rock.

Many systems, chemical, biological, mechanical, and social, have foundered on the hard rocks of too rigid a structure. Species, governments, myths, and psyches have shattered on structures that have sacrificed creative choices for stability. The implicate and explicate orders are a fundamental complementarity. As the new sciences show us, they are complementary aspects of reality, and they are incomplete without each other. There is no implicate order without the explicate—no chaos without order. There is no freedom with-

out structure: And a structure without freedom of choice is dead.

Consciousness complicates human affairs. However, we define it, consciousness is ultimately the awareness of the implicate order through the explicate reality as expressed in language, gesture, image, and symbol. As I discussed earlier, the birth of personal consciousness occurs when the infant “hatches” itself from the implicate reality of the parental/infant symbiosis and is aware that there are two, not one. This awareness is the birth of duality. The duality is the whole. As we have seen from the non-locality principle in quantum physics, things once connected remain so even in apparent separation. Humankind needs the wholeness of perceptions that incorporate both ends of the polarity of the implicate and explicate orders of reality.

To live such a life, our personal mythologies, the conservator of the meaning of our experiences, must be functioning, interrelating, and meeting the needs of the situation. Whether we simply do not know what to do, are doing the same thing over and over and getting nowhere, or are getting no joy or aliveness from our ongoing choices, we sometimes feel choiceless. This discomfort invites us to take a look at ourselves, and in so doing, we enter into self referentiality and nonlinear equations for change. We leave the familiar conserve of our personal, family, and cultural myths, and enter into the chaos of unpredictable outcomes.

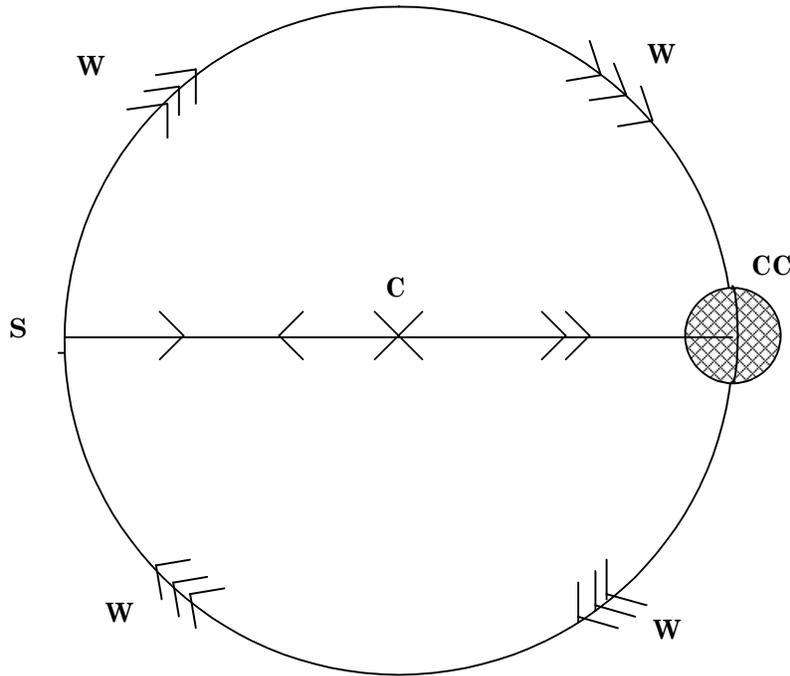
This is the source of creativity. We navigate our process through life by alternately choosing stability then change then stability again. Sometimes we choose to validate and implement choices already made (by ourselves or somebody else). This assures stability. Other times, we spontaneously choose options that are new for us, assuring change. Growth occurs, paradoxically, when we run out of options. Dis-ease calls us to adventure into the chaos of the unknown possibilities of the implicate order. We do not really tap into the richness of our spontaneity, which is the infinite pool of primordial possibilities, until we have exhausted all the existing choices present in the cultural conserve. “Pinholed” enough, our energy switches from “particulate” to “wave form” as we warm up to the creative act. We literally promote our own evolution.

*The Canon of Creativity*

This is the process J. L. Moreno called the Canon of Creativity, and it is central to the theory and practice of psychodrama, sociometry, and group process. It presents a healthy model of human relations and human history. Moreno intuited the existence of complex dynamic systems that self organize new order in identifying the dynamic spontaneity between what he called the cultural conserve (order) and creativity (chaos) of the Godhead. The dynamic and heated interaction of the cultural conserve with our spontaneity, the core of the divine within us, results in the creative co-evolution of the universe. This is the essence of the Canon of Creativity.

Moreno contributed many ideas to the world of healing and psychology. None are more revolutionary than the Canon of Creativity. Freud portrayed a mechanical pressure cooker model of the superego repressing energies from the cauldron of the id while the ego wrestled with sexual and other drives. Moreno presented a model that was emergent, renewing, and inherently interactional. Moreno saw the creative process as circular (which is what you get from the dynamic oscillation between powerful bipolar forces). A person encounters an already existing product from what he called the *cultural conserve*. The **cultural conserve** is the collection of all existing creations: *Every idea, fact, design, structure, myth, ritual, work of art, and all the creations of humankind*. Moreover, our experiences, both remembered and forgotten, our roles, both active and inactive, and our personal myths, both conscious and unconscious, that make meaning of our lives—all this and more constitute our personal conserve. For one reason or another, someone begins to imagine changing the conserve. Following these imaginings into action enables spontaneity to come into being, generating energy to sustain the creative process. In *Who Shall Survive?* (1978), Moreno presented the “Field of Rotating Operations between Spontaneity–Creativity and the Cultural Conserve”:

Chart 124. The Canon of Creativity  
Spontaneity—Creativity—Conserve



Field of Rotating Operations between Spontaneity—Creativity—Conserve (S—C—CC)

S=Spontaneity; C=Creativity; CC=Cultural (or any) Conserve (for instance, a biological conserve, i.e., an animal organism, or a cultural conserve, i.e., a book, a motion picture, or a robot, i.e., a calculating machine); W=Warming up. The “operational” expression of spontaneity.

The Circle represents the field of operations between S, C, and CC.

- Operation I: Spontaneity arouses Creativity.  $S \Rightarrow C$ .
- Operation II: Creativity is receptive to Spontaneity.  $S \Leftarrow C$ .
- Operation III: From their interaction Cultural Conserves result.  $S \Leftrightarrow C \Rightarrow CC$ .
- Operation IV: Conserves would accumulate indefinitely and remain in “cold storage.” They need to be reborn; the catalyzer Spontaneity revitalizes them.  $CC \rightsquigarrow S \rightsquigarrow CC$ .

Spontaneity does not operate in a vacuum; it moves either towards Creativity or towards Conserves.

*The Spontaneity Factor*

I suffered from an **idee fixe**, from what might be called then an affectation, but of which might be said today, as the harvest is coming in, that was “by the grace of God.” The **idee fixe** became my constant source of productivity; it proclaimed that there is a *sort of primordial nature which is immortal and returns afresh in every generation, a first universe which contains all beings and in which all events are sacred.* [Italics mine]

—*Who Shall Survive?* (1978)

Born in an earlier era, Moreno believed that he would have been a religious leader. He believed that our choices made in the moment that are novel, adequate, and appropriate—what he called our creativity—are the manifestation of the divine in humankind. The Moment is the focus of healing—neither the past nor the future. This Moment, which collapses linear time into the here and now, establishes what quantum physics calls non-locality, the doorway to the synchronicity of the implicate reality. The Moment is the strange attractor for change. In the Moment our aliveness or spontaneity can lead us to act out of our full **creativity**, that is, with *novelty, adequacy, appropriateness, and connection*. Through warming up to our own spontaneity we have access to this Moment of creativity. Every technique of psychodrama (and sociometry) serves in some way or another to warm-up the participants, including the director of the work, to the co-creativity of the Moment. The warm-up provides more or less structured experiences with unstructured opportunities for spontaneity—actions, words, feelings, or yearnings that are completely unplanned and unscripted.

Warm-up techniques are ritual techniques. The warm-up drives the self to the creative Moment. Moreno describes the experience of entering the Moment as a *clicking*, and it is unmistakable when it happens. There is an alteration of consciousness, a heightening of awareness, a lowering of self-consciousness, and progression into the unknown. Afterwards, as when we wake from a dream, we often have great difficulty remembering immediately what we did or said. The Moment is the doorway to **spontaneity**, which, according to Moreno, is *an unconservable energy present in the creative process that also provokes the creative process. True spontaneous behavior is adequate, appropriate, and novel (a previously unencountered yoking of stimulus and response)*, like remaining supportively silent when someone struggling at a cathartic choice point is pleading with you for advice.

There are four ways that spontaneity can falter. Moreno labeled three of them. The Healing Circle shows their relationship to each other and generates a fourth, “fragmented spontaneity,” for wholeness. They describe what can happen to creativity when the appropriate ritual does not assist it toward its fullest “true” expression. Without training in attention and concentration that rites of separation provide, a protagonist’s spontaneity becomes paralyzed; he or she is stuck. Without the wisdom generated by rites of trans-

formation, a protagonist's spontaneity fragments; he or she is breaking apart. Without the methods of emotional clearing that rites of incorporation facilitate, a protagonist's spontaneity becomes impulsive; he or she becomes lost in the emotional turbulence. Finally, without the rigorous system of situational ethics developed by rites of continuity, a protagonist's spontaneity becomes reactive, and choices are abdicated; he or she becomes confused. The striving for wholeness that spontaneity fuels is blocked and its expression is incomplete. They are arrayed around the quartered circle:

1. Frozen Spontaneity: No immediacy. No response to a situation. Anxiety is so profound that it causes complete immobilization of the actor. (Paralysis)
2. Fragmented spontaneity: Responses sputter; lacking direction, they go nowhere. They start and stop. They are incomplete. (Breaking Apart)
3. Pathological Spontaneity: A novel response to a situation that lacks adequacy or appropriateness. Like running a red light or punching the traffic cop who stops you. (Impulsivity)
4. Stereotyped Spontaneity: A response that is adequate and/or appropriate, but which lacks novelty. Like politely applauding a boring speaker or bureaucratically doing things by the letter as they have always been done even when doing so is destructive. (Reactivity)

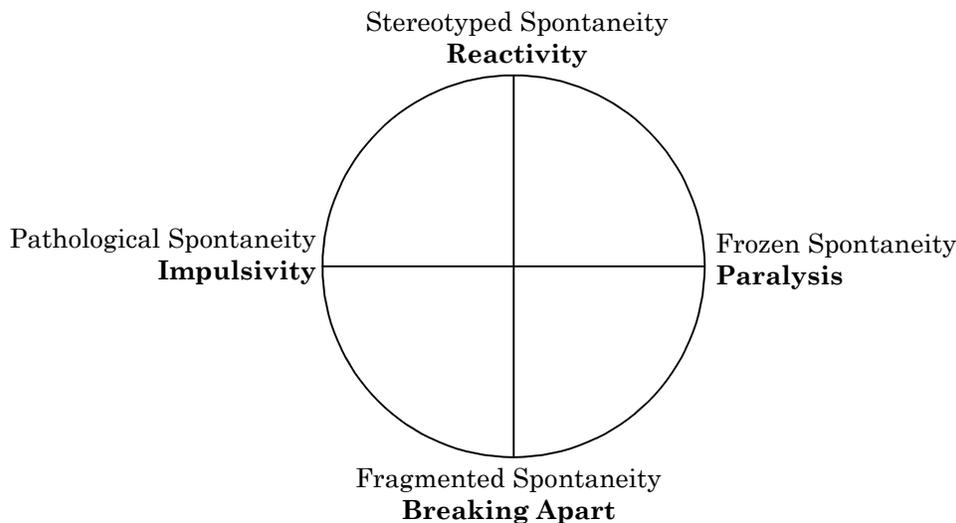


Chart 125. Four Types of Failed Spontaneity

Moreno himself developed a dramatic therapy for each of these deficits. In *The Theatre of Spontaneity* (1973), Moreno introduced four kinds of new theater, which can be drawn and quartered around the circle by anchoring them to the four kinds of ritual, as their purposes are similar:

1. **Immediate Theater:** The theater of what is happening in the here and now. It leads to spontaneity and creativity. Like rituals of separation, it trains attention to what is important and concentrates on the outcome.
2. **Theater of the Creator:** Like the life of Jesus, this is the theater of life itself, of self-actualization to the fullest on the world's stage. The protagonist is God's double and divine. Like rituals of transformation, it fosters the cultivation of wisdom, the union of opposites.
3. **Therapeutic Theater:** This takes place in the home where the players live. Spectators are the community. Conflicts are played out a second time, giving perspective, distance, and humor; in short, liberation from the first time. Like rituals of incorporation, it fosters the clearing of emotions, which clears affects acquired from initial conditions.
4. **Theater of Axiodrama:** The audience takes the main role and challenges the cultural conserve. Like rituals of continuity, it rigorously encodes new systems of ethics. We play the Godhead.

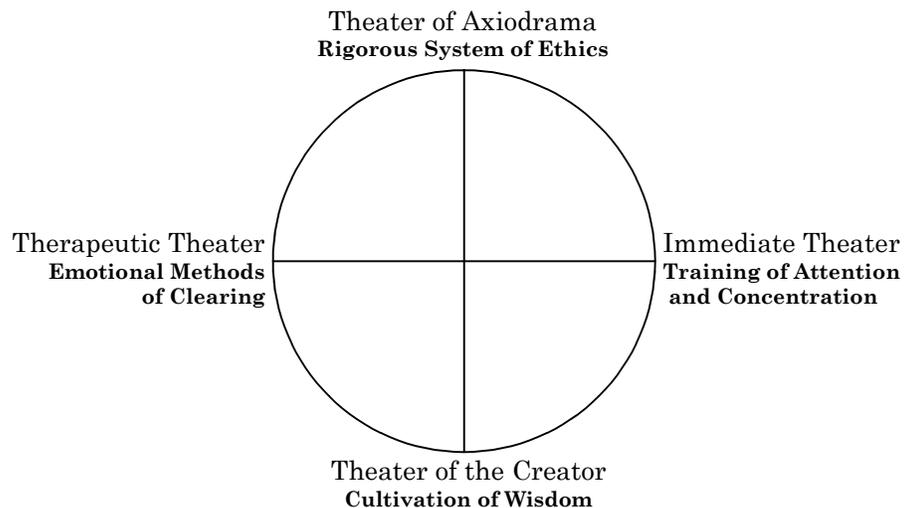


Chart 126. The Four Forms of Theater

Moreno's ideas about theater are significant here. He believed that he was proposing a true revolution in drama. In

the past, dramas were focussed on Aristotelian catharsis, the “purgation of emotions” of the audience (Abel, 1963; Cornford, 1961; and Fergusson, 1949), and the scripts were written and the same performance repeated over and over. In the new theater of psychodrama, the catharsis shifts to the protagonist. It is the hero or heroine who is purged first in the spontaneous enactment of an unscripted and unreplicable re-living of his or her story. He or she is liberated from the first experience while the audience is changed through a participating involvement in the drama—by role-playing, by identifying with common human experiences, by sharing as a group, and by co-creating the drama. Moreno’s psychodrama is an experiment in controlled chaos (Remer, 1996, 1997).

### *Psychodrama as Ritual*

I would like to propose a definition of psychodrama as a ritual process.

- ❑ Psychodrama is a spontaneously and communally co-created artistic and ritual drama process through which a complex segment of an individual’s or group’s personal or cultural mythology is made explicit.
- ❑ This is accomplished through an enactment of an unscripted dramatization that is unified, complex, and intense.
- ❑ This dramatization is facilitated and directed by an experientially trained designated director acting as a healer or shaman.
- ❑ The director first helps the protagonist and/or group experiencing the need to bring forth new order from personal chaos (called *act-hunger*) to withdraw from the mundane commonality of everyday existence and consciousness and to achieve an altered state.
- ❑ Then the director prepares and generates tension (anxiety management) for a threshold crossing that transforms the protagonist’s and/or group’s, feelings, wants, behaviors, or beliefs through tension releasing action.
- ❑ The action is brought to the complexity space at the edge between order and chaos so that self organization can occur during the catharses.
- ❑ This drama is participated in by the audience, role players, protagonist(s), and director(s) for the common good.
- ❑ The usual results are a shared identification with the protagonist, a sacred sense of *communitas* (a transcendent

communal bonding), and the emergence of a new cultural or personal order. This new order will eventually become a part of the individual or cultural conserve. It may even become a new personal myth.

Psychodrama is a method for creating community and individual rituals that enact spontaneously the communal and personal myths of the members. In the previous chapter, the following elements were described as necessary to make a ritual and to make it numinous. These same elements are common to psychodrama:

| Elements of a Ritual   | Requirements for Numinosity   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Trained and sanctioned leader</li> <li>❑ Period of preparation (warm-up)</li> <li>❑ Prescribed language and action</li> <li>❑ Emotionally “charged” periods of unstructured spontaneity</li> <li>❑ Altered consciousness</li> <li>❑ Sense of inevitability (Myth prescribes the action)</li> <li>❑ Time and space are telescoped into the here and now</li> <li>❑ Props</li> <li>❑ Ordinary reality is devalued</li> <li>❑ Myth interprets the facts</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ A guide</li> <li>❑ Work—effort</li> <li>❑ The human brain</li> <li>❑ Excitation of the Self—investment of the Self</li> <li>❑ Altered consciousness</li> <li>❑ Cognitive model (i.e., awareness of personal myth)</li> <li>❑ A sense of the <i>eternal moment</i> (“the still point the turning wheel”)</li> <li>❑ Objects (sacred)</li> <li>❑ The unknown</li> <li>❑ A story</li> </ul> |

Any visit to another for the purpose of change, including getting new information, is potentially a ritual. This includes traditional medical doctors, astrologers, tarot readers, teachers, as well as therapists. At the very least, these visits involve a separation from everyday reality, an “ordeal,” the return, and a community investiture of new learning—or a call to further adventure. Moreover, the psychodramatic process is ritualistic by design. The following chart of the psychodrama process demonstrates this:

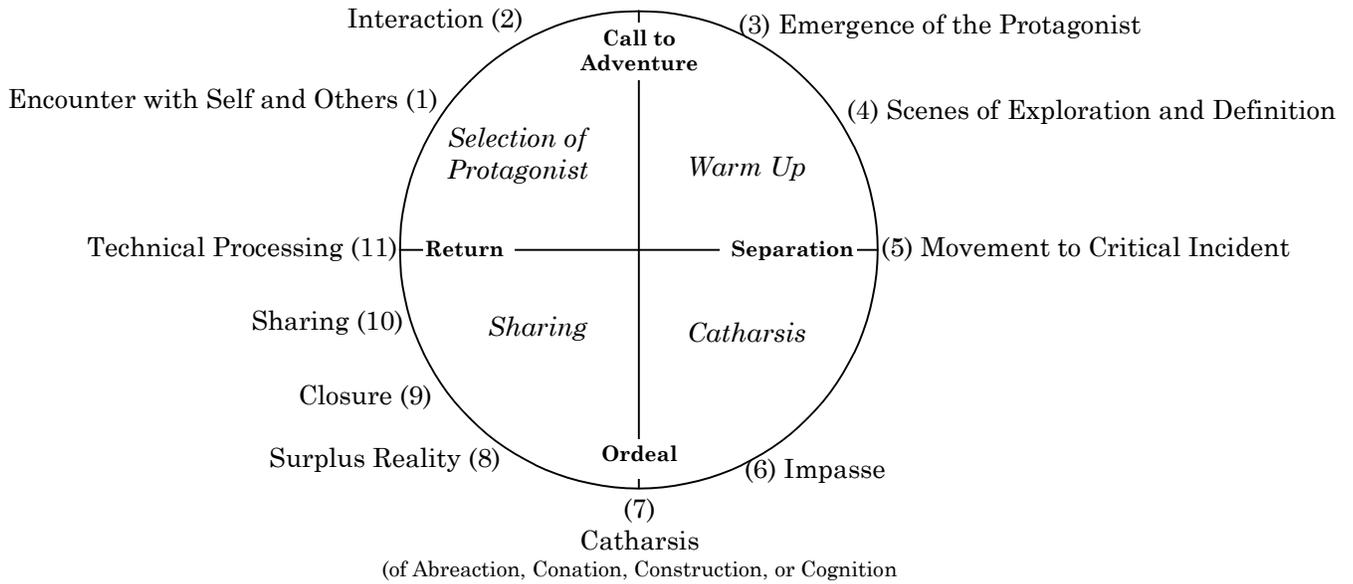


Chart 127. The Psychodrama Process

The following chart shows another way of looking at this by depicting the relationships among the psychodrama, ritual, and therapy processes:

Chart 128. Ritual, Therapy and Psychodrama Table

| <b>Psychodrama Process</b>  | Selection of Protagonist              | Warm-up   | Catharsis                                       | Sharing  |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Ritual Process</b>   | Investiture:<br>The Call to Adventure | Separation:<br>Withdrawal from Ordinary Reality | Margin: Ordeal in Non Ordinary Reality (Trance) | Aggregation:<br>Return to Ordinary Reality     |
| <b>Separation</b><br>Catharsis of Construction (Toward New Behavior)  | Stuck<br>Paralyzed                    | Separation from limiting conditions             | Trial by Ordeal                                 | Return to a new sense of identity              |
| <b>Transformation</b><br>Catharsis of Cognition (Toward New Thinking) | Fragmentation<br>Breaking Apart       | Intense Physical Discomfort                     | Insight   | Discernment and Gnosis                         |
| <b>Incorporation</b><br>Catharsis of Abreaction (Toward New Feeling)  | Impulsive<br>Lost                     | Innocence And Experience                        | Purification from Guilt and Shame               | Expiation and Incorporation of Self Acceptance |
| <b>Continuity</b><br>Catharsis of Conation (Toward New Spirituality)  | Reactive<br>Confused                  | Contact   | Balancing Self and Society                      | Wisdom and Acknowledgement                     |
| <b>Therapy Process</b>  | Dis-ease                              | Sorting   | Dissociation (Trance)                           | Integration                                    |

### **Leadership: Differential Directing**

The psychodrama process can be amazingly powerful and impeccably precise. The Healing Circle helps to focus and utilize this precision. Because the leadership position is held through spontaneity, each leader must find his or her own unique expression of the method, at the same time developing an expanded role repertoire. This relationship to the role of leader or director is quintessentially shamanic. As the protagonist moves through the psychodrama, different leadership roles and functions are reciprocally demanded, depending on the “season” of the drama. The protagonist’s core mythology and the “seasonal” content of his or her issue and lifestage affect the “season” of the drama.

There are appropriate seasonal “Parental” responses which facilitate healing. These seasons of “parenting” are coincidentally the seasons for therapeutic interventions. In other words, where the needed style of intervention was inadequate on the part of the parents (for whatever reason), the therapist, using the same response style, can later correct this, potentially altering the template. Seasonal responses are as follows (Jernberg, 1979):

- ❑ Quadrant I, Spring: **Nurturing**—“The Parent” rocks, nurses, holds, nuzzles, comforts, feeds, cuddles, envelops, caresses, lies next to, and hugs baby. An unconditional loving and touching care that simulates a womb outside of Mother’s body. Maintains protective holding environment. Facilitates the development of *feelings*, beginning with *trust*. Appropriate for times of helplessness, extreme need, profound confusion, and new beginnings.
- ❑ Quadrant II, Summer: **Intruding**—“The Parent” tickles, bounces, swings, surprises, giggles, hops at and pounces playfully, makes eye contact with. An energetic drawing into the world through eye contact and age appropriate play. Maintains contact. Facilitates the development of dealing successfully with *wanting* and developing *intuition*. Appropriate for clarification of boundaries, wants, spirituality, and reduction of paralyzing anxiety.
- ❑ Quadrant III, Fall: **Challenging**—“The Parent” teases, dares, encourages, varies, chases, and sets forth age appropriate and achievable developmental tasks. Leads the child to a sense of mastery. Facilitates confidence in *doing* and the experience of *sensation*. Appropriate for directing “child” beyond perceived limits into available areas of new knowing.

- Quadrant IV, Winter: **Structuring**—“The Parent” limits, defines, forbids, outlines, reassures, speaks firmly, labels, names, clarifies, confines, holds, and restrains. Teaches differences and their names. Creates models of reality. Facilitates the development of *thinking*. Appropriate in times of meaninglessness and chaos as a container of generative energy.

An effective leader would be one who could “seasonally” adjust his or her role and therapeutic interventions to match the evolving cycle of the protagonist or group. This provides a kind of counter-spontaneity to heat the protagonist to full resonance with the personal mythology needing to be altered. An analysis of leadership roles and interventions (Yalom, 1973) can be displayed around the circle:

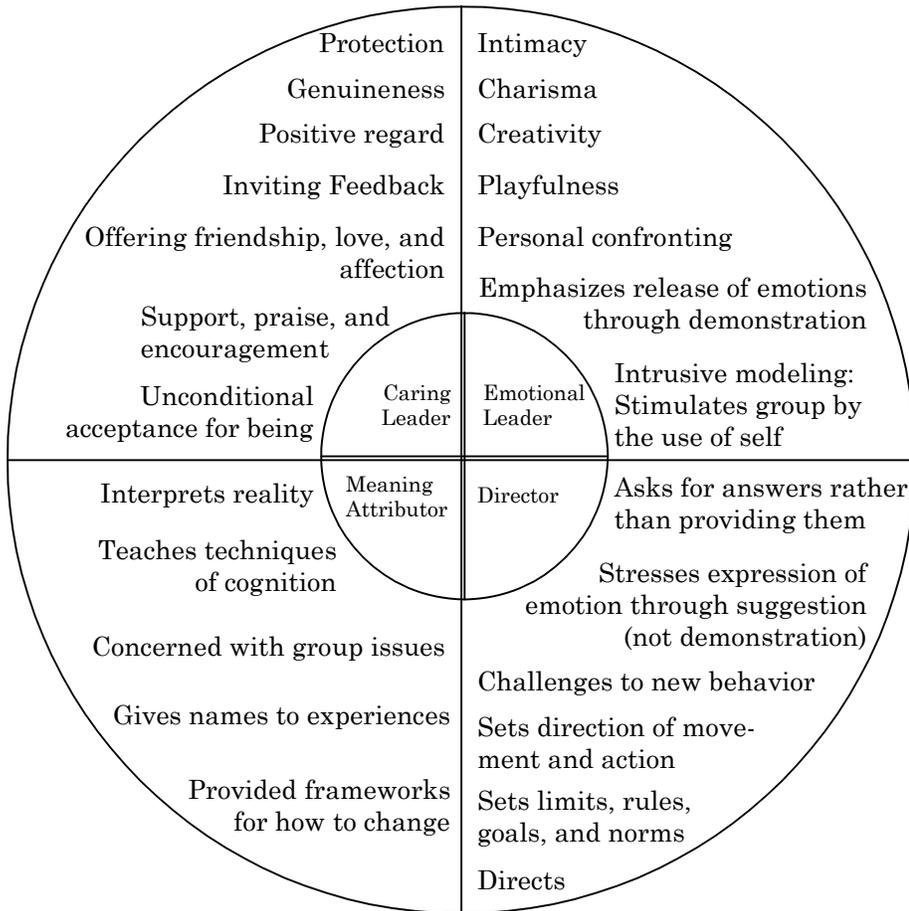
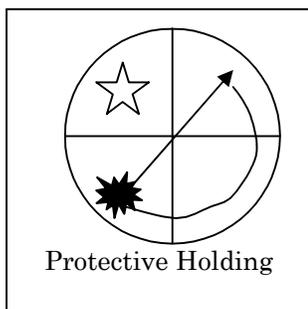
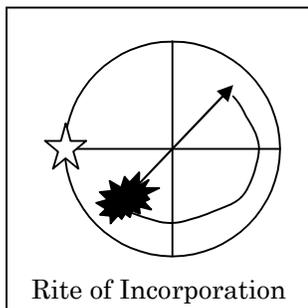
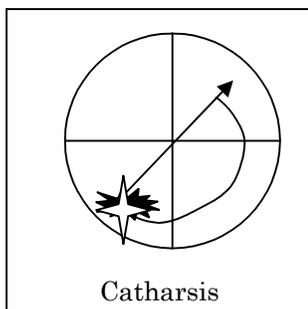
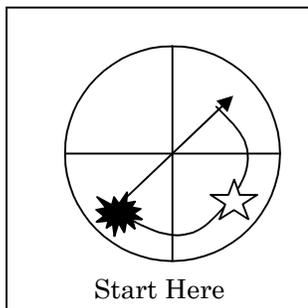
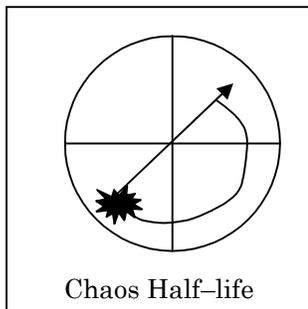


Chart 129. Leadership Styles and Functions



In the delineation of differential leadership styles, the Healing Circle is especially powerful. For example, a protagonist presents an issue involving the childhood experience of chaotic traumatization (i.e., alcoholic parents, sexual and/or physical abuse, violent death, destructive acts of nature, kidnapping, rape, etc.). From the Healing Circle, the director hypothesizes that the issue has generated a chaos/disorder, Quadrant IV, half-life.

Many therapists would begin in a Caring Leader role, emphasizing softness and safety. Yet the most powerful reciprocal role is counter-intuitive. It is the Director role, where the therapist challenges, questions, and generally controls the unfolding process. From the nurturing quadrant (Caring Leader), the therapist is unattuned to the protagonist. The protagonist may even experience the therapist as not strong enough to be of real help with the issue. Or worse, may mistrust the therapist. The Caring Leader perhaps says: "Don't be afraid; I'm here to help you." Whatever the protagonist's response, he or she is and will continue to be afraid and the comment is useless at best. At worst it can engender contempt for the therapist or increased fear in the protagonist or both. A comment from the Director might be: "This will be intense. Are you ready to do what you can today?" The protagonist says "yes," "maybe," or "no." The drama continues or not.

Typically, severe traumas cause flight to Quadrant II and dissociation. The victim then goes on living as best he or she can. Life itself often becomes a challenge. In this half-life, Quadrant III is the strongest. When the therapist meets the protagonist here, he or she joins him or her in strengths. The protagonist feels supported and perceives the therapist as possessing power. Techniques like the containing double (Hudgins and Drucker, 1998) can be very useful in helping the protagonist contain the inner chaos and remain open to the challenge to heal.

Trauma work, because of the dissociation, usually leads to a rite of incorporation; in mythic terms this is a soul retrieval. The protagonist descends into "hell" (the underworld), finds the part that split off, and retrieves it. Thus in staging this story in action, the trauma is recreated, usually with an auxiliary as the protagonist/victim. At the point of traumatization, the therapist must inquire where the protagonist has gone and go there (psychodramatically).

In the course of this part of the work, the therapist moves along with the protagonist from Quadrant III into Quadrant IV, the Quadrant of Trauma. The therapist then takes on the Meaning Attributer functions and interprets events, names behaviors, and provides explanatory frameworks for how to heal. Alternatively, some of these functions can come from the containing double, who is also attuned to the protagonist's "seasons."

In a drama, for example, a protagonist is grieving the betrayal by her father who left the protagonist with an abusive mother. The protagonist was asked to set up the scene she needed to begin with. She created a scene where her father tries to protect her, but her mother escalates horrifically. Finally, Daddy brutally assaults the Momma. The meaning attributing therapist asks: "Your mother provokes your father until he loses it, doesn't she?" The protagonist, frozen in terror, looks at the therapist and says, "Yes!" Then she proceeds to remember dozens of similar scenes like this one. The memories pour out until the protagonist is empty. Father's abandoning turns out to be secondary to a deeper, more frightening, and forgotten process.

Later in the drama, before claiming her dissociated little girl, the protagonist is asked to show the group a time when she felt like her father felt when he left the family. She creates a contemporary scene where her rebellious teenaged daughter is provoking the protagonist. The protagonist, a confirmed pacifist, who has never touched or even talked aggressively to her daughter, cries: "I feel like beating her up!" The meaning attributing therapist (coming from Quadrant IV) could respond: "Now you know how your father felt." After deep catharsis, the protagonist is able to retrieve her dissociated child part, confident in the knowledge that she can care for her very differently than before. She tells her little self that she had not trusted herself before now. The adult protagonist tenderly and lovingly cares for the little child auxiliary. Reversing roles with her little self, the protagonist crosses the threshold to the spring quadrant to be held and nourished in a protective holding environment she created herself. Depending on the ego strength of the protagonist, the retrieval scene may be redone, the protagonist reversing roles with the little one and entering the retrieval scene.

The therapist now shifts to the Caring Leader style and directs the group to care for the protagonist; the Caring

Leader also cares for the group, facilitating members outpouring of nurturance and care for the protagonist or themselves. Some members may have had similar traumatic experiences and an opportunity for healing has opened up for them as well. The group, by way of identification with the protagonist, has walked the path from the third through the fourth to the first quadrants of the circle with the protagonist, learning the same lessons of meaningfulness, hope, and support. These structures for healing are more or less incorporated by each group member, the degree of incorporation depending upon the particular member's life experiences of traumatization and current state of healing there from.

The same process can intensify each type of ritual to a healing level by the astute attunement of the therapist. Of course, being able to identify the underlying personal mythology of the particular story as well as the core personal myth of the protagonist is essential. By identifying Ground Zero, the quadrant of distress about the issue at hand, the therapist/healer can safely hypothesize the type of unfolding ritual. With this information, the therapist/healer can calibrate his or her leadership style and function appropriately, adequately, and creatively.

The therapist/healer begins by choosing the leadership style matching the protagonist's Starting Point quadrant. An abandonment issue, leading to a rite of continuity, will be best matched by (1) the Meaning Attributer at the beginning, then (2) the Caring Leader during the re-enactment of the abandonment, and ending with (3) the Emotional Stimulator functions. Betrayal (Quadrant I, II, III) and disempowerment (Quadrants II, III, IV) issues can be mapped similarly. The calibration of the leadership style to the protagonist's personal mythology attunes the director's connection or tele to the protagonist. This attunement drives the psychodramatic process through an increasing warm up to the catharsis of the protagonist's story. The protagonist learns how to be spontaneous, and the spontaneity generates creative resolutions to problems and concerns.

Human consciousness is seldom linear. The issue the protagonist is working on in the moment (being fired from a job), where he or she is in the life cycle (receiving the person of the year award), and the core mythology (father insisting that he or she was stupid) may not correlate. The therapist/healer must be very attuned to the protagonist's seasons

of progress. In the example illustrating differential directing, the protagonist began her process wanting to work on her father's betrayal of her. This turned out to be her Home Base defense against the traumatic stress from the violence of both parents. Among other things, this prevented her from acknowledging her own human capacity for violence (in spite of her pacifism). Her denial in turn prevented her from feeling safe about incorporating her victimage and thus caring for her little inner victim. After this psychodrama, which significantly changed her reality, she was able to fully integrate the chaos of her childhood and make a cautious peace with both parents.

## Some Psychodramatic Strategies and Techniques

### *The "Five" Elements of Psychodrama*

There are thought to be five significant elements to psychodrama. Modified from Adam and Allee Blatner (1988), they are listed below:

**The Stage:** The action space. At Beacon, Moreno had a three level stage, the third level being the place of action, the first and second levels, the places of increasing warm-up to the action. Usually, the stage is wherever the action is happening. It represents the subjective life space of the protagonist, without the physical, sociological, temporal, or psychological limitations of life itself. The stage area can represent any type of environment: hallucination, fantasy, reality; the present, the past, the future, inside, outside. In mythic terms, the stage is the sacred center, the axis mundi.

**The Audience:** The group of individuals observing the psychodrama. This is never a passive audience. It is the source of the protagonist (or protagonists) who represents the issues of the group. It is a sounding board. It is a co-producer of the action. Even those members who are not playing auxiliaries are participating actively through identification, tele, empathy and/or understanding. Through these forms of participation, the group members activate their own issues, become bonded with one another through the protagonist, feel their common humanity, and/or develop further understanding of their own personal myths. In mythic terms, the audience is the community essential to the growth and transcendence of the protagonist. In sociodrama, the actors play social roles and so the community is the protagonist.

**The Protagonist:** The main role player of the psychodrama who is being him or herself and manifesting his or her own

reality on the stage. This is a learned role, requiring a willingness to surrender into the psychodramatic process, to express maximum spontaneity available in the moment (i.e., verbally and actively expressing what is emergent in the moment without censorship), to take direction, and to remain mindful throughout the process. In mythic terms, the protagonist is the hero whose journey to the center of self will renew the community.

**The Director:** A trained and sanctioned leader who facilitates the co-creation of a spontaneous enactment of the protagonist's reality in the moment. Through use of feelings, intuitions, psychodrama skills, and knowledge of life, the director improvises the direction of the drama and concretizes the covert meaning behind the overt action. The director must handle the warm-up, the enactment, and the sharing of the psychodrama, as well as the sociometry of the group, by using various psychodramatic, sociometric, and group therapeutic techniques. He or she will keep the action vital and flowing by instructing auxiliaries in the moment by word or deed, suggesting role reversals, handling resistance, offering interpretations, setting and maintaining the integrity of the stage, facilitating group cohesion, supporting, and guiding the protagonist and the group to the conclusion of the drama. In mythic terms, the director is the ritualist or shaman.

**The Auxiliaries:** The auxiliary egos, the double(s), the supporting players who play either absent members of the protagonist's social network, aspects of the protagonist's inner reality, or supporting members of the community in the psychodrama. These roles may be human, animal, spiritual, or psychological aspects of the protagonist's reality. A catharsis of a sexual trauma drama once occurred from and through the role of the all knowing, all seeing spirit of the room where the abuse took place. In mythic terms, these roles are necessary for the cathartic healing of the protagonist and community through the enactment of the personal myth.

To this list of five, I have to add two more features, both of which make psychodrama transpersonal and self referential.

**Role Reversal:** First, I believe that true psychodrama begins with role reversal, one of Moreno's most unique contributions. Once an enactment is set up, the process does not become self referential until the first role reversal is called.

This is an example of applied complementarity. All the roles of a psychodrama are complementary to the protagonist's role. As in a dream, the psychodrama concretizing the protagonist's internal process really portrays parts of the protagonist's inner object world. In role reversal, the protagonist meets these parts of him or her self.

The process of role reversing is one that becomes more and more differentiated as the drama unfolds. In the beginning of a drama, there often seems to be little difference between the protagonist and the auxiliary, as defined by the protagonist. With the help of the director, the internal object being played by the auxiliary becomes more and more specified and externalized. The protagonist eventually becomes very clear about who is who, the me and the not me.

The exploration of complementary roles through role reversals shifts the definitions of those roles. Elements of the roles are picked up or let go of until a new sense of self is clarified. As what is more fully implicate in the mind becomes explicate in the drama, more and more leverage for change develops. And all the while, the protagonist remains, through role reversing, close and intimate to inner and outer objects. Paradoxically, while clarifying the differences, the protagonist can feel the complementary unity.

Moreno describes the nature of role reversal best in his first book, *An Invitation to an Encounter* (1973). The organizing metaphor of this book was the Meeting, specifically of the Author and the Reader. For Moreno, the co-creative intimacy of author and reader symbolized the ultimate meeting between self and other, where we are co-protagonist/ auxiliaries in the unfolding drama of life.

A meeting of two: eye to eye, face to face,  
 And when you are near I will tear your eyes out  
 And place them in place of mine,  
 And you will tear my eyes out  
 And will place them instead of yours,  
 Then I will look at you with your eyes  
 And you will look at me with mine.

**The Double:** The other feature of psychodrama which is both transpersonal and self referential is the double. The double is one of the most valuable and most difficult positions, techniques, and theories of psychodrama. In essence, it is an application of inspired empathy in action. I know of no better instrument for training people to achieve deep empathy.

The double becomes an extension of the protagonist as well as the director. The double expresses the complementarity of the moment, speaking the unspoken or unspeakable that is encrypted in the words, actions, or expressions of the protagonist. The protagonist's selfness is stretched. At the same time, the director can effect the process by coaching the double to express implied complementaries that the double may miss.

In doubling, an auxiliary, either a trained co-therapist or a group member, joins the protagonist. The double's essential

job is to function as a support in presenting the protagonist's position or feelings. The double's first task is to establish an empathic bond with the protagonist.

In general, a double stands to the side of and at a slight angle to the protagonist so that he or she can replicate the non-verbal communications and present a kind of "united front." By synchronizing his or her movements and other non-verbal behaviors, the double "co-acts" with the protagonist

In psychodrama, it is presumed that the body has memories and that body posture has an effect on the experience of the person positioned (a feature shared with shamanism). Thus co-moving is critical to developing the intense level of empathy that good doubling aspires to. When well attuned, a double can often achieve full synchronicity with the protagonist

The double is a subjective position. The double uses his or her inner experience of being with and acting with the protagonist as a basis for a "first approximation" of empathy. The doubling is enhanced when the double immerses him or herself in the immediate experience—the process, the body posture and its effects, the tone of voice, etc. For this reason the director should try to see that the double gets the same experience as the protagonist. Thus if the protagonist is being hugged, the double should be hugged too.

The double can serve many functions—supportive other, extender, amplifier, ally, listener, understander, witness, challenger, container, speaker of the unspeakable, sayer of the unsaid, believer of the unbelievable, and expresser of the resistance.

This last is especially valuable, because when the double takes the side of the resistance, particularly when the protagonist is ambivalent about something, it leaves the progressive side to the protagonist. There are numerous specialty doubles as well which are described in the literature.

Being an effective double is an essential directorial skill. Often, the absence of adequate auxiliaries means that the director has to do "spot" doubling. A technique for spot doubling, providing you are an accomplished doubler is to visualize yourself in the doubling position with the protagonist, then enter your visualization consciously, then double from where ever you are (across the room, over the phone, in an opposite chair). The skill is transferable to the individual therapy session as well and enhances acute deep empathy.

### *The Warm-Up*

The warm-up is critical. It is a structuring of experience that meets the participants where they are and progressively propels them along the highway of spontaneity to the Moment of creativity. It moves from the simple to the com-

plex, from less intensity to more, from less risk to more, from more structure to less, from objective to subjective, from individual to group. Warm-ups reduce anxiety, the spontaneity killer, and bring participants to a coherent state of excitation. An effective warm-up is essential to any action, and a broken warm-up can be as painful as a broken heart.

Psychodramatists believe that a warm-up precedes every action we take. When we get up in the morning, for example, we each have a particular ritual that we perform that prepares us for the day we choose to live. When that warm-up is interrupted—like getting up on the “wrong side of the bed,” being awakened by a phone call, running out of hot water or toothpaste—our day may be off a bit or a lot. In our creative process, which is complementary to the ritualized morning wake up behaviors, the progressive warm-up drives spontaneity to the act of creation.

The warm-up is a progressive and ordered series of linked preliminary actions, thoughts, objects, feelings and/or desires. They may only appear to be linked in hindsight, but the links are lines of tele. Tele, which I will discuss more in a later chapter, is “a feeling into the nature” (Moreno, 1951) of an action, thought, object (including a person), emotion, and/or desire that recognizes each thing for what it is. Moreno defined tele in many ways as he struggled to explain his sense of the underlying self organizing principles of complex systems that complexity science and quantum physics explore. A chart may be helpful here:

Chart 130. The Warming up Table

|                           | <b>Conserve</b><br>(Robotic) | <b>Spontaneity</b><br>(warm-up)   | <b>Creativity</b><br>(Divine)                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Process</b>            | Isolation<br>(affectless)    | Contact<br>(connected)            | Cohesion<br>(affective)                              |
| <b>Operant Conditions</b> | Double Bind<br>(rage)        | Goal Directed<br>(intentionality) | Double Bond<br>(connectivity/<br>sexuality/intimacy) |
| <b>Seasonal Functions</b> |                              |                                   |  |
| I. Nurturance             | Boredom                      | Novelty                           | Love   |
| II. Intrusion             | Anxiety                      | Immediacy                         | Excitement/Joy                                       |
| III. Challenge            | Depression                   | Adequacy                          | Sadness  |
| IV. Structure             | Terror                       | Parameters                        | Anger  |
| <b>Ultimate Goal</b>      | To Stabilize<br>(Destroy)    | To Create<br>(Connect)            | To Co-Create<br>(Self-Emerge)                        |

A warm-up can manipulate the deterministic chaos of a complex dynamic system, increasing or decreasing it as necessary for self organization to occur. With an adequate and appropriate warm-up, we can enter into the implicate reality and participate in creation.

Everything that happens before the catharsis is a function of the warm-up. It is the director's management of the warm-up that manages the anxiety of the participants. Moreno in *Who Shall Survive?* (1978) considered anxiety as a function of spontaneity:

Spontaneity is, as defined, the adequate response to a present situation. If the response to the present situation is adequate—"fullness" of spontaneity—*anxiety diminishes and disappears. With decrease of spontaneity anxiety increases. With entire loss of spontaneity anxiety reaches its maximum, the point of panic. . . Anxiety sets in because there is spontaneity missing, not because "there is anxiety," and spontaneity dwindles because anxiety rises. [Italics his]*

Spontaneity is resonance to the vibration of the morphic fields of the interrelated conserves and, in the moment of the creative cathartic choice, an entrainment with the energy web of the implicate order. Moreno called this interconnectedness *tele*. A morphic field is a fractal, a record of the interaction between chaos and order in the transition zones between them. It is in these zones that the birth of the new takes place. Moreno's intuitions about the nature of spontaneity, creativity, and the cultural conserve sound very like fractal descriptions:

In the spontaneous-creative enactment emotions, thoughts, processes, sentences, pauses, gestures, movements, etc., seem first to break formlessly and in anarchistic fashion into an ordered environment and settled consciousness . . . The disorder is only outer appearance; inwardly there is a consistent driving force, a plastic ability, the urge to assume a definite form; the stratagem of the creative principle which allies itself with the cunning of reason in order to realize an imperative intention. The poet hides no complexes but germs of form, and his goal is an act of birth. Therefore, he is not merely following a pattern: he can alter the world creatively.

—*Psychodrama, Volume I* (1973)

We can train ourselves to increase our resonance to tele through spontaneity training (which is not an oxymo-

ron). Every psychodrama is training in spontaneity. We do *learn* how to become protagonists in psychodrama and heroes of our own mythology.

In a psychodrama, the setting of the scene and early enactments of an event or issue serve to establish a resonance with the conserves involved in the desired change. As the protagonist warms up, the energy of the moment of difficulty is replicated. This is the catharsis—the creative moment of rechoosing and redeciding. This creative act can generate new energy patterns, resulting in permanent change. Warming up to a point of impasse and crossing the threshold to the other side is never easy. But we develop both confidence in ourselves and also faith in the abundance of possibilities we discover in the implicate order once we have broken through the rocks of the explicate order. Evolution is carried forward by the changes in the morphic fields made by chreodes (see Chapter 9).

Human beings are not the only change agents on the evolutionary journey; but we are among the few who can do it on purpose. We don't even have to be conscious about doing it. The observation that impacts on the observed, the car problem that disappears at the mechanic's garage, and the illness that dissipates between calling and seeing the doctor, are examples of spontaneity linking the implicate with the explicate orders.

We establish the “habits of nature” we practice through the personal myths that we construct to explain the experiences we have had. We change those habits, the limits we have shelled around an inner core of implicate possibilities, by intentionally designing and implementing rituals, chreodes that thrust through the rigidity of the morphic field to the implicate source, like the sacred sword in the stone.

### *Technical Support*

There are more strategies and techniques (Moreno, Z.T., 1959) than I want to describe here. I will discuss a fourplex that sorts those most relative to the Healing Circle.

1. **Scenesetting:** Setting the scene is a method for establishing a holding environment for the protagonist, the group, and the personal myth being enacted. It sets the absolute acceptance of the protagonist's world, and can be as detailed as necessary to accomplish that.

2. **Proximity Factoring:** The goal is to help the protagonist find the distance from the material where he or she experiences the greatest spontaneity. An enactment of a rape where the victim plays himself may be so overwhelming that he cannot be spontaneous at all, while a playback enactment with the protagonist as teller may facilitate a working through. Most techniques are intended to establish resonance with the morphic fields up to causal energy body. Attunement of distance with intensity is essential.
3. **Intensification Techniques:** When the protagonist and the working through are flat or if the protagonist has imploded into the impasse, the director may chose to intensify the moment to facilitate the catharsis.
4. **Surplus Reality:** After the catharsis, the director may decide that future pacing the work would be useful for the protagonist and/or the group. Here enactments are created where the protagonist can use the new feeling, wanting, doing, or thinking energies learned in the drama.

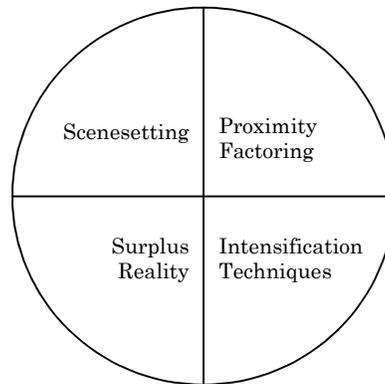


Chart 131. Strategies and Techniques

I will break out these four quadrants to more detail:

*Quadrant I—Scenesetting:* Scenesetting is one of the most important techniques for establishing the psychodrama. It can be very detailed, on the one hand, or very symbolic and sparse, on the other. Or anywhere in between. Setting the scene establishes the coordinates of the action in the here and now, creating the phase space for the catharsis, the fractal of healing. Scenesetting involves the following elements:

- **Complex Equivalency:** The building of visual (colors, sizes, shapes, geography, beauty), auditory (sounds, words, ideas, slogans, choruses), and kinesthetic and olfactory (feelings, sensations, textures, smells) anchors

spatially arranged and pantomimed (through enactments—touching, feeling, smelling) into the set on the psychodrama stage. Objects may be used.

- ❑ **Physicality:** The integrity of the set must be maintained—actors cannot be allowed to walk through tables or walls.
- ❑ **Role Reversal:** The Director can have the protagonist role reverse with objects, people, and other beings in the set to further explore the charge these objects carry.
- ❑ **Meaning Attribution:** The Director may need to paraphrase, repeat, reference, and reframe verbally as the set is being established to help the protagonist and the group warm-up to the vibratory implicate order it represents.
- ❑ **Distraction:** The Director may use puns, wit, anecdotes, and other distracters to cool the warm-up until the scene is completely set.
- ❑ **Trial and Error:** Interacting with the protagonist by questioning, directing, commanding, pleading, offering, following, encouraging, requesting, enjoining, and so forth, the Director learns through trial and error how to best resonate with this protagonist in this drama.
- ❑ **The Cat-bird Seat:** For a very confused, frightened, borderline, or fragmented protagonist, a special place of observation, where he or she is calm and most in touch with his or her inner knowing, can be built into the scene and used periodically throughout the drama as necessary.
- ❑ **Aesthetics:** The Director must pay attention to the orientation of the scene so that it impacts optimally on the audience as well. Some liberties may need to be taken to accomplish this. Verisimilitude is not usually the object in scene setting.

*Quadrant II—Proximity Factoring:* Proximity factoring is the key to developing the protagonist's, group's, and leader's spontaneity. Spontaneity requires adequacy, appropriateness, and connectedness as well as novelty. In operational terms, working at a distance is the way to find the line between too much or too little, which is problematic. The objective, however, is not simply to keep at a distance—but to find the community's harmonic resonance to the issue at hand. There is an optimal relationship among the protagonist, the issue, the director(s), and the group.

When the protagonist is on the growing edge—neither too much nor too little intensity—the presence of spontaneity in the protagonist, the group, and the Director is unmistakable. Spontaneity is demonstrated by high muscle tonus,

sparkling eyes, extraordinarily creative role playing, an ongoing flow of action, emotion, and verbalizations, and, finally, choice making. It is, above all, a sensation of energetic resonance, which must be experienced rather than described.

Using the example described in the section on differential directing above, if a rape victim plunged into an enactment of his traumatization ahead of his own energetic warm-up to the event, it could be a kind of therapeutic rape added to the original trauma.

On the other hand, the protagonist may be ready but the group may not be, spreading trauma throughout the community. The group needs to be in resonance with the protagonist. The protagonist may be eager to proceed and fully energized, but if the group is not in harmony with the protagonist, there is no community, and therefore no healing ritual. The community investment extends the therapy making it more intense, sacred even, by its energized involvement.

The Director, too, needs to be on board. By calibrating the intensity through explorations of the distance to/from the work, the Director establishes a working relationship with the protagonist and the group and develops a working sense of what the community can handle at any given level of warm-up. Thus, through these explorations, the Director facilitates the warm-up and the emerging spontaneity of the community.

The various therapeutic interventions therapists and healers learn, some of which are listed on the next chart, are the materials for discovering the optimal distance to contact the growing edge. Brave and/or trusting protagonists will leap in where angels fear to tread, so the Director must use the process to find the optimal distance to and from the core of the work.

Chart 132. Interventions for Working at a Distance

| Call to Adventure<br>Continuity<br><i>Air</i>  | Separation<br>Initiation<br><i>Fire</i>  | Ordeal<br>Transformation<br><i>Earth</i>   | Return<br>Incorporation<br><i>Water</i>   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <b>Unbalancing the energy between the polarities to move towards self consciousness. Any extreme increases intensity; balance is calming. Therapist can play the continuum of the polarities to find optimal energy.</b> | <b>Challenging the protagonist in order to overload the self system. Therapist can choose to defuse energy at any time, or crank it up. Listed in order of increasing intensity.</b> | <b>The taking, playing, and creating of roles, adding to the role repertoire of the self so that there are more options. All roles are coordinates of self awareness. Listed in order of increasing intensity.</b> | <b>Establishing new transmuting internalizations, new inner structures, to reorganize the self system and increase negative entropy. Listed in order of increasing intensity.</b> |
| Near/Far   | Wit  | Audience of tapes, films, recordings   | Talking About   |
| Here/There   | Puns   | Audience in the here and now   | Describing, naming experiences  |
| Below/Above  | Story Telling, anecdotes, allegory   | Playback theater   | Role training   |
| Seen/Unseen  | Paradox  | 1. Auxiliary ego uninvolved observer   | Future projection   |
| Small/Large  | Symptom prescription   | 2. involved naïve newcomer   | Surplus reality   |
| Now/Then   | Symptom displacement   | 3. involved objective  | Behind the back   |
| Hot/Cold   | Illusion of alternatives   | 4. observer, i.e., mirror  | Watching enactments   |
| Hard/Soft  | Reframing  | 5. involved supporter  | Concretizing metaphors  |
| Tight/Loose  | Suggestopoedy (Loganov, 1980)  | 6. involved non supporter  | Gestalt work  |
| Explicate/Implicate  | Pre-empting  | Playback teller  | Enacting (with auxiliaries)   |
| Confusion/Relief   | Injunctions (commands)   | Auxiliary Ego II:<br>1. Personal antagonist  |   |
| Giver/Receiver   |  | 2. Cultural/mythic antagonist  |   |
| Ant/Grasshopper  |  | 3. Part of Self  |   |
| Attracted/Repulsed   |  | 4. Double  |   |
| Manic/Depressive   |  | Protagonist  |   |

*Quadrant III—Intensification Techniques:* Intensification Techniques are ways of heightening feelings, contact, awareness, and insight. Evidence suggests that in order to cross thresholds into altered states of knowing, barriers need to be passed, usually through stimulation (not too much, not too little). This is not about feelings only. Some people escape from feelings—others escape into them. Intensity is not just feelings. Here are some ways of increasing intensity:

- ❑ **Action:** Work in action involves more of the self (self involvement increases intensity).
- ❑ **Concretizing:** Pay attention to the organizing metaphor that is always present somewhere in the work at hand and find a way to express it in action in the moment.
- ❑ **Goals:** Not all work done needs to have a goal. It helps to identify one, even if it is just to explore an issue.
- ❑ **Here and Now:** Increase the immediacy by bringing events, people, objects into the present moment.
- ❑ **Keeping Feet to the Fire:** When the protagonist is in the midst of his or her ordeal, guide him or her through it with respect, not relief. In general, keep things going, and refrain from things that diminish the intensity (like reversing the protagonist out of strongly experienced roles or sticking Kleenex into the energy).
- ❑ **The Mini-Max:** The watch phrase for any complex dynamical system is neither too little nor too much. This rule of thumb allows the Director to attune to the vitality, spontaneity, and self emergence of the ongoing process. Tweaking the system may involve making something small very large, or vice versa. Because the process itself is an emergent fractal, nothing of substance changes but the energy.
- ❑ **Other Arts:** Spontaneous dance, music, painting, or sculpting can increase intensity.
- ❑ **Simplification:** Clear out the distractions and get to the bottom of things! Clear the stage of unused objects and auxiliaries and push for the bottom line.
- ❑ **Specific Antagonist:** If a protagonist is pissed off at his bad luck, he may need to take on God. The more specific the antagonist the better, usually.
- ❑ **Stress and Pain:** The Director should take care that the community is protected from harm. But a degree of pain

and stress is necessary for growth. Who ever heard of a painless birthing. This is not about suffering, it's about "blood sacrifice." (The reader is reminded of the Upanishads, Buddha, Christ, the Sun Dance, medicine, allopathic and homeopathic, and psychotherapy, to name a few examples of the positive use of pain and stress.)

- ❑ **Structures of Accommodation:** Al Pessó (1969; 1972), a dancer turned therapist/teacher, created a process called accommodation. These are structures for working through involving a presenting feeling, behavior pattern, and a healing interaction:

Chart 133. Accommodation Structures

| FEELING | BEHAVIOR     | INTERACTION                     |
|---------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Anxiety | Agitation    | Calming Nurturance              |
| Fear    | Flight       | Refuge with Protector           |
| Anger   | Fight        | Enemy Destroyed                 |
| Grief   | Letting Go   | Empathic Guidance               |
| Despair | Surrender    | Trusting Acceptance             |
| Love    | Reaching Out | Loving Reciprocation            |
| Joy     | Opening      | Oneness with Cosmos             |
| Rage    | Immobility   | Release within Caring Restraint |

*Quadrant IV—Surplus reality:* When Moreno was developing group psychotherapy and psychodrama, it was so different from the dominant analytic model that every technique seemed a surplus of reality. A role reversal, for example, or even role playing an auxiliary ego in someone's work were beyond the boundaries of the "real" world of analysis. Moreno spoke of these (and other) techniques as surplus reality. According to Moreno (1966):

There are certain invisible dimensions in the reality of living, not fully experienced or expressed. . . . and for those who failed to experience them, life is incomplete . . . that is why we have to use surplus operations and surplus instruments to bring them out in our therapeutic settings.

To me, surplus reality is a way of pacing into the future changes created during the therapy. By addressing the deeper meaning of the Healing Circle, its seasons and its thresholds of change, the Director can identify those things that are missing in the personal mythology of the protagonist or the group members. Surplus reality is the vehicle for pro-

viding these missing elements in therapeutic settings. Thus special props, future sculpts (strange attractors of the future!), ideal, and wished for experiences are created. Often, the protagonist or group is in no shape to engage in surplus reality scenes after a catharsis, but this really is not a factor because of state dependent learning. The learning state for the particular change is a unique one. With an adequate warm-up, any re-addressing of the work will plug the community back into the proper state of mind.

One of the ways I often end workshops is by doing what I call *racehorse*. These completion dramas are a kind of surplus reality. In this process, group members have five to ten minutes to create “whatever they want,” with more involvement from me (or any Director). This usually turns out to be that aspect of reality that is missing from their stories of living.

My involvement consists of using the protagonist’s trust in him or her self, the group, and in me to apply the Healing Circle model to intensify the enactment. I am free to attribute meaning and add symbolism, color, texture, sound, movement, and group participation to fill out their Healing Circles. Because anything is possible in psychodramatic enactments, racehorse dramas can be of a fantastical nature. A protagonist changing a spider phobia might enact an encounter with the spider people to test her new skills. Or one might decide to meet with one’s ancestors to get a go ahead for a change in the family legacy. Going in the other direction is possible too: One can meet with one’s children’s children to discuss the outcomes of choices made. Being too young to attend her beloved grandmother’s funeral, one member visited the graveside and anointed her Grandmother’s hands and feet before saying goodbye. Dramas like these are less possible without the containment of the Healing Circle to embrace them.

Perhaps my favorite experience of surplus reality is one that happened to me. I had just completed a very difficult and self revealing psychodrama. Leon Fine directed it. It was just after the sharing and Leon looked very intently at me and asked if there was something that I needed. My voice shaking, I told him that I was feeling tremendously vulnerable, and could he please tell me something that he liked about me. There was a long silence as he continued to look at me intently. Then his eyes twinkled and he said: “Sure. But

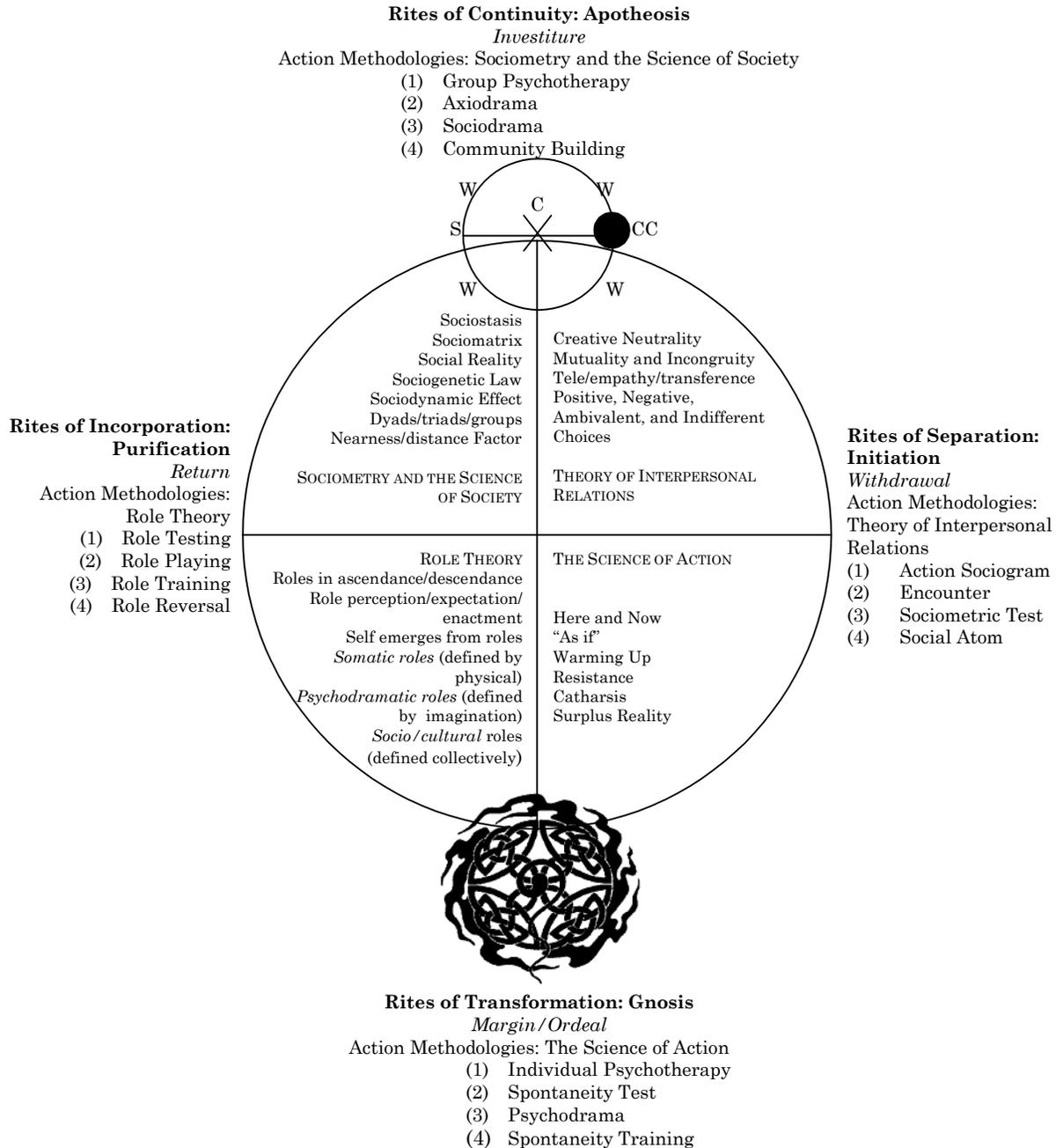
only if you say something that you like about yourself first.” Momentarily, I felt tricked and betrayed (my core mythology), but the laughter in his eyes was with me not against me. So I did say several things I liked about myself. With each one I felt stronger and more ready to meet all the challenges of becoming a psychodramatist. To this day I remember what I said about myself. Leon’s words have faded into appreciation and love. Dr. Fine had just presented me with a mini rite of separation. Rather than foster a dependence on him for self soothing in distress, he invited me to meet the challenge myself. It was a turning point in my growth, my development as a healer, and my relationship with him—all for the better.

### **Psychodrama and the Healing Circle**

Before moving on to the next chapter on shamanic psychodrama, offer a graphic review of the elements of psychodrama from the Healing Circle point of view.



Chart 134. The Canon of Creativity and the Healing Circle



**CC=Cultural Conserve.** The collection of all existing creations (every idea, fact, form, design, structure, one's life experiences, elements of one's personal mythology, all supporting rituals, works of art, and all things created). Within the context of psychology and personal growth, those life experiences of sufficient intensity to become a part of one's personal mythology (conscious and unconscious) are the attractors within the dynamic chaos of probabilities that bring forth a new order of creation.

**C=Creativity.**

**W=Warm Up.** The "operational expression" of spontaneity, characterized by connectedness, immediacy, structure, novelty, adequacy, appropriateness, goal directedness, energetics, agency, and action.

**S=Spontaneity.** An unconservable energy present in the here and now of the creative process which provokes creativity. Spontaneous responses are novel, adequate, and appropriate. Spontaneity is the concentration of probabilities within a **complex dynamic system** which is a collection of parts that interact with each other and change each other over time, with small early changes creating large later changes in the system and which is characterized by emergent self organization of new order.



## Chapter 11

# Shamanic Psychodrama

### **Non-Newtonian States of Mind**

If we think beyond the polarized dualisms of mind and body, God and man, or cause and effect modeled by Newtonian physics, the development of the self must be followed into states of consciousness beyond familiar versions of explicate reality. A different idea of consciousness requires that we suspend our Newtonian system of belief and the expectation of empirical evidence. Classical Newtonian/Cartesian sciences notice these states of consciousness too but tend to label them unhealthy and outside the optimal norm of highest functioning as their systems define it. We cannot see the implicate while we are in explicate reality, nor apply its rules to verify the existence of the implicate. If we are to account for the whole of experience, we must seek new definitions and new proofs from other sources.

This frontier of an expanded consciousness is well known in philosophy and religion as well as quantum physics and the new sciences. Shamanic states of consciousness are different from other states of consciousness. Roger Walsh (1990) reviewed the research of altered states of consciousness within several religious disciplines, comparing them to acute schizophrenia (see the chart on the next page).

The quartered circle template is an explicate representation of the implicate reality of the Healing Circle. Through its modeling of complementarity and the thresholds of our lived and un-lived half lives, it provides a discipline for crossing from mundane explicate reality into the charged possibilities of the “sacred” implicate reality. I use the term “sacred” to reflect the experience of numinosity and mystery that attaches to the rituals at the thresholds of the Healing Circle’s transitional phases that are entered through states of altered consciousness. Moreover, I believe that the spark of the divine in human nature is struck on the flintstone of our psyches and it illuminates, however briefly, the implicate order of the universe which is the Great Mysterious.

| <b>Dimension</b>   | <b>Shamanism</b>  | <b>Buddhist<br/>(Vipassana)<br/>Insight<br/>Meditation</b>   | <b>Patanjali's<br/>Yoga</b>  | <b>Acute<br/>Schizophrenia</b>   |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Ability to enter and leave altered states at will</b> | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  | Dramatic reduction of control  |
| <b>Ability to control the content of the experience</b>  | Partial   | Partial  | Extreme control in some <i>samadhis</i>  | None   |
| <b>Awareness of the environment</b>                      | Decreased   | Increased  | Greatly reduced sensory and body awareness   | Decreased and distorted  |
| <b>Ability to communicate</b>                            | Sometimes   | Usually  | None   | Decreased and distorted  |
| <b>Concentration</b>                                     | Increased and fluid   | Increased and fluid  | Greatly increased and fixed  | Greatly reduced  |
| <b>Mental Energy/Arousal</b>                             | Increased   | Usually decreased  | Greatly decreased  | Increased<br>Agitation may be extreme  |
| <b>Calm</b>  | Decreased   | Usually increased  | Greatly increased  | Decreased  |
| <b>Affect</b>  | Positive or negative  | Positive or negative (positive increases with practice)  | Highly positive ineffable bliss  | Usually very negative<br>Often distorted or inappropriate                        |
| <b>Identity or Self Sense</b>                            | Separate self sense, may be nonphysical "soul"  | Self sense is deconstructed into a changing flux: "No Self"  | Unchanging transcendent self or <i>purusha</i>   | Disintegrated, loss of ego boundaries; inability to distinguish self from others |
| <b>Out-of-Body Experience</b>                            | Yes, controlled ecstasy ("ecstasis")  | No   | No, loss of body awareness ("enstasis")  | Rarely and uncontrolled  |
| <b>Content of Experience</b>                             | Organized, coherent imagery determined by the shamanic cosmology and purpose of the journey | Deconstruction of complex experiences into their constituent stimuli. Stimuli are further deconstructed into a continuous flux | Single object ( <i>samadhi</i> with support) or pure consciousness ( <i>samadhi</i> without support) | Often disorganized and fragmented  |

Chart 135. Comparison of Shamanic Journey State with Other Trance States

The purpose of the last chapter was to show the ways that psychodrama is a ritual technique and to look at the psychodramatic method through the quadrants of the Healing Circle in various ways. The new sciences help to explain how the use of ritual can change personal mythology through the movement from chaos or order, to complexity. Psychodrama is a practice for the model of change the Healing Circle represents, as well as the nonlinear processes of human development and other complex dynamic systems. Like many other forms of therapy that can be guided by the Healing

Circle template, used on this model the practice of psychodrama has profound parallels with Shamanism. Not surprisingly, some version of the Healing Circle exists in cultures where Shamanism has existed or continues to exist as a central spiritual and healing modality.

Western practitioners are learning from indigenous medicine people and the Foundation for Shamanic Studies how they can facilitate healing. The Foundation is returning shamanism to some indigenous peoples who have lost it. It has only been very recently that some researchers have presented altered states of consciousness, especially shamanism, in a positive light.

Shamanism, the oldest extant religious and healing practice of humankind, has been around for at least 20,000 years and perhaps, in protohuman form, as long as 150,000 years. One of the key beliefs is that everything is related (the fundamental unity of basic matter in the implicate reality) and that this relatedness influences the world of matter (synchronicity, nonlocal effects). Another is that the universe is (collectively and individually) alive, as complex dynamic self organizing systems. Each thing possesses its portion of spirit (energy or “consciousness”). By altering states of consciousness through rituals, the shaman enters into this spirit world by way of an imaginal journey to lower, middle, and upper worlds, the symbolic geography of which is also consistent across cultures and time. The shaman returns from this journey with information of benefit to his or her community or patient. Shamanism has a belief system (myths), a supporting symbology, organized practices (rituals), and training requirements for the profession that are consistent across cultures and time.

Carl Jung (1969b) argued that the “fall” of humankind was in fact the separation of consciousness from the more generally undivided unconsciousness of the primitive psyche. When we learn shamanism today we are literally reversing the journey that the primitive shaman undertook: He or she divided the undivided unconsciousness and became an empirical observer of the unconscious psyche. When a modern shaman journeys, he or she reconnects with the generally inaccessible unconscious psyche, the collective unconscious, while remaining connected to consciousness. Thus the symbolic geography is the same.

A shaman sees all illness as a disturbance of the spirit. I argue that illness is a disturbance of the personal mythology. Personal mythology is a spiritual matter. The guiding stories we live by give our lives meaning. They define our roles, our possibilities, and our limitations. Because personal myth is largely unconscious, we all suffer from a loss of spiritual power. From a shamanic point of view, it is precisely the loss of power that allows for the intrusion of “spirits” that cause illness. I believe that the deterministic chaos of the personal mythology defines the illnesses and deaths we suffer. For example, while more research is needed, contemporary studies of the mind/body connection and its relation to sickness suggest a relation of biotypes to certain illnesses, like cancer, arthritis, asthma, migraines, ulcers and the like (Arehart–Treichel, 1980; Dahlke and Dethlefsen, 1990).

For twentieth century humans, the old cultural myths, including Christianity, have dissipated in force and power and our personal myths are our religion. And most personal myths are out of conscious awareness, operating like Terminate and Stay Ready (TSR) programs in a computer. Like the computer version, humankind’s TSR’s, our personal myths, pop up at critical moments, usually involving life decisions or disturbances, do their work, and terminate, staying ready until needed again. For example, we are influenced by early and unconscious elements to pick another partner who will abandon us. Or we get fired from another job because one more boss does not understand us. We play out whatever the role demands our mythic script requires. By bringing personal myths into consciousness, we return to power. *Power is the capacity to live intentionally.*

If many therapy techniques in general, and psychodrama in particular, are unconsciously shamanic, what would happen if we made them conscious and used them intentionally? In this chapter, the psychodramatist is shown as a kind of twentieth century shaman, helping people change by uncovering their personal mythology, introducing change through action (quantum energy mobilization through ritual), journeying, and helping them to the transpersonal experience of their interconnectedness to all creation.

### **Altered States of Consciousness**

While it expresses a worldview, shamanism is not a doctrine. It is a grassroots practice which recognizes and de-

velops innate human capacities for consciousness, or in the terms of quantum theory, our existence in an explicate and implicate holomovement. In *The Adventure of Self Discovery* (1988) and other works, Stanislav Grof takes the horizons of developmental psychology further when he argues for a new cartography of the human psyche that includes structures for experiencing both the explicate and the implicate orders of reality. In effect he is proposing a form of consciousness familiar to cultures in which Shamanism is a central practice in various forms. He refers to the explicate as consensus reality, accessible to the *hylotropic* mode of consciousness. Consensus reality is the collective of personal myths created by individuals out of the fabric of their biographical and cultural experiences. All “memories” are distorted, deleted, discounted and/or amended to fit the main themes of the myths lived, however. Other experiences are “forgotten,” but remain available in the unconscious as a resource for later use.

Thus in consensus reality, we experience only a limited and specific segment of the phenomenal world from one moment to another, but given our explanatory systems based in Newtonian physics, we experience this segment as what is real. The nature and scope of this experiential fragment is perceived by four processes:

- ❑ Our bodies and the spatial and temporal coordinates in the consensus everyday world
- ❑ The anatomical and physiological limitations of our bodies and sensory organs
- ❑ The physical characteristics of the environment
- ❑ The belief systems (personal and cultural myths) that identify our place in this world

Grof calls non-ordinary implicate reality the *holotropic* mode of consciousness. It is the experience of all the remaining aspects of existence beyond the veil of the matter oriented consensus reality. These include not only access to many other levels and domains of reality described by the great mystical traditions of the world, but also access to one’s biological, psychological, social, racial, and spiritual history and the past, present, and future of the entire phenomenological world.

In effect crossing into these modes of consciousness requires a deconstructing of the Newtonian empirical world we once constructed developmentally as we were brought into

the explicate reality of our particular cultures, with their versions of time, space, and the self. Grof's new cartography includes the traditional recollective-biographical level and two major transbiographical levels. The first is the perinatal domain, related to experiences prior to, during, and after birth, and after death experiences. The second is the transpersonal domain, related to experiences of self and other beyond the ego boundaries of the Newtonian physical world and the mind/body dualism of the Cartesian subject.

Although this claim that we have a consciousness beyond the limits of explicate reality may seem unscientific from the perspective of a dualistic Newtonian world view, considerable empirical evidence has been collected to document memories of birth and near death experiences. The parallels between levels of consciousness attained through spiritual discipline or altered states and the stages of the birth experience are striking. Grof, among other researchers, believes that our development into expanded consciousness may be through stages that recycle our birth experiences.

In independent research studies of children's and adults' memories of birth extremely accurate visual details have been recalled and verified by third parties. This suggests that whatever the limits of consciousness, they are not developed solely in the central nervous system, because at birth our vision is not developed enough to observe in this way. In fact, there is research to document a discarnate consciousness outside of the body that perceives with this visual accuracy even before the embryonic state. Moreover, this prenatal consciousness is mature, empathetic, insightful, and even clairvoyant. Some narratives relate that this observing consciousness must make a choice to enter the body within two days after birth (Wade, 1996).

Though research is still limited, the following stages of development in utero are hypothesized. Prenatal learning is possible in the first trimester. At the sixth to seventh month fetuses can have an emotional response to disruptions in the environment, particularly chemical changes effected by the mother's emotions and hormonal fluctuations. When hormonal changes register the mother's distress, her mnemonic ACTH (adrenocorticotrophic hormone, a critical substance in memory retention) floods the fetus, helping record the event. By the sixth or seventh month the fetus discriminates among different types of hormonal changes and responds with de-

pression and anxiety of a primitive kind. The repetition of such events constitutes a foundation of selfness, separate from the mother. This developmental history suggests that a self is already relatively intact at birth, and can therefore experience birth as life threatening (Wade, 1996). A discarnate self appears at other times in human lives, most notably during near death experiences (NDEs). Victims of trauma also report out of body consciousness. Moreover, I believe that the journey experience during shamanic trance is a function of the same discarnate self.

The underlying processes of these experiences of a discarnate self seem to require transformative threshold crossings from one form of life space to another. The movement of unfolding from or enfolding into the implicate order of reality may activate an experience of this disembodied consciousness. Our existence as a discarnate consciousness could explain the loosening of boundaries during regression whether achieved through ritual or trauma. Regression involves entry into the complex dynamic system of quantum consciousness that self organizes out of the personal mythology. Because everyone experiences them, the birth and death processes seem to be a doorways between the explicate incarnate to the implicate discarnate consciousness.

The birth experience recovered through various forms of therapy and spiritual practice seems to have four stages. Grof identifies them as follows:

1. BPM I: The Amniotic Universe—It is the original symbiotic unity of the fetus with the maternal organism. However, a variety of factors of physical, chemical, biological, and psychological nature can seriously interfere with this state. This is the archetype for *Paradise*.
2. BPM II: Cosmic Engulfment and No Exit—It is the onset of biological delivery. Fetal existence is first disturbed by alarming chemical signals and later by mechanical contractions of the uterus. These contractions, applying fifty to one hundred pounds per square inch of pressure, restrict the blood supply and thus the oxygen, nourishment, and warmth to the soon to be born infant. This is the archetype for *Paradise Lost*
3. BPM III: The Death/Rebirth Struggle—It is the second clinical stage of childbirth. The contractions continue, but the cervix is now dilated and allows gradual propulsion of the fetus through the birth canal. This involves an enormous struggle for survival, crushing mechanical pressures, and often a high degree of anoxia and suffoca-

tion. The child cooperates in his or her birth, struggling to be born. This is the archetype for the *Quest for Redemption*.

4. BPM IV: The Death/Rebirth Experience. It is the actual delivery of the child into a new form of existence, air breathing and increasingly independent one, accompanied by sudden release and relaxation. This is the archetype of *Paradise Regained*

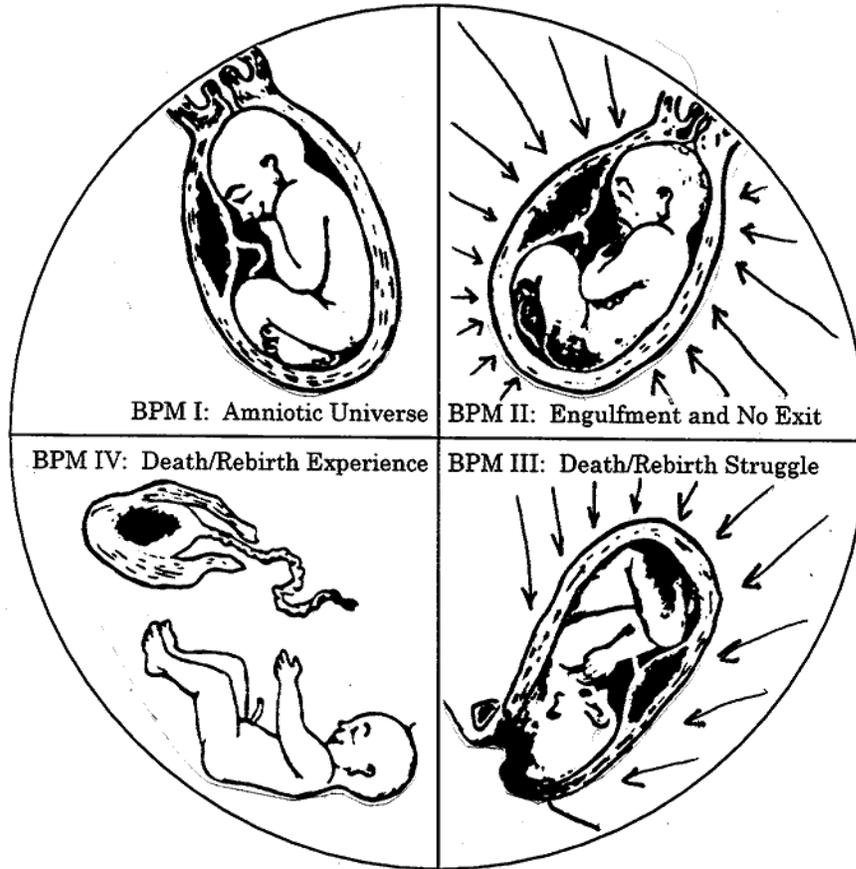


Chart 136. Basic Perinatal Matrices (Stages of Delivery)

Grof calls this sequence the Basic Perinatal Matrix (BPM). He believes that it is the link between the recollective–biographical level of consciousness and our capacity for discarnate transpersonal consciousness. When we arrive at the birth experience through regression into biographical material (framed by the personal mythology), we are at the threshold of transpersonal consciousness. However, we do not

merely walk through a doorway. The experiencing of the BPM encompasses profound physical sensation and personal and cultural archetypes and myths. The data below describe the matrix experiences in some detail.

The process of regressive therapy like the sequence of altered states undergone by subjects responding to small doses of LSD in Grof's study, has stages parallel to the BPM. Both processes give evidence that here is a sensory barrier to be passed through as we begin to go beyond consensus reality. Intense emotional, spiritual, physical, or cognitive distress is often experienced as pain, but it can also be experienced as a variety of unspecific sensory awarenesses, such as elementary visions of colors and geometrical patterns, hearing of ringing or buzzing sounds, tactile sensations in various parts of the body, tastes, or smells.

These experiences seem to represent a *first sensory barrier* that one has to pass through before the journey into one's psyche can begin. This journey crosses the threshold from ordinary explicate reality into the recollective-biographical domain, the path toward non-ordinary implicate reality and transpersonal experiences.

The *recollective-biographical* level, accessed through our capacity for regression, connects us to the individual unconscious. Psychotherapy in all its four hundred forms is the usual technique for entering this level. As one moves into deep experiential psychotherapy, biographical material is not only remembered or reconstructed but also fully relived. This level of consciousness involves emotions, and physical sensations, visual perceptions, and vivid data from all other senses. These experiences happen typically in complete age regression to the stage of development when the original events occurred.

Many psychotherapies stop here (if they get this far). The destination of regressive therapy is the birth experience, the Basic Perinatal Matrix. Grof (*Revision*, 1985) developed his ideas during government sponsored research of the effects on human consciousness of small doses of LSD. Holotropic therapy, by the way, does not involve any use of drugs. When people are experiencing the BPM level of consciousness they are undergoing a re-birthing experience. In the data matrix below are some of his findings.

Chart 137. Matrix of Basic Perinatal Data

| BPM I   | BPM II  | BPM III   | BPM IV  |
|---|---|---|---|
| PHENOMENOLOGY IN LSD SESSIONS   |   |   |   |
| <p><i>Undisturbed intrauterine life:</i> realistic recollections of “good womb” experiences; “oceanic” type of ecstasy, nature at its best (“Mother Nature”); experiences of cosmic unity; visions of Heaven and Paradise; <i>disturbed intrauterine life:</i> realistic recollections of the “bad womb” experiences (fetal crisis, diseases, and emotional upheavals of the mother, twin situation, attempted abortions), universal threat; paranoid ideation; unpleasant physical sensations (“hangover,” chills and fine spasms, unpleasant tastes, disgust, feelings of being poisoned); encounter with demonic entities and other metaphysical evil forces</p> | <p>Cosmic engulfment, immense physical and psychological suffering; unbearable and inescapable situation that will never end; various images of hell; feelings of entrapment and engulfment (no exit); agonizing guilt and inferiority feelings; apocalyptic view of the world (horrors of wars and concentration camps, terror of the Inquisition; dangerous epidemics; diseases; decrepitude and death, etc.); meaninglessness and absurdity of human existence; “cardboard world” or the atmosphere of artificiality and gadgets; ominous dark colors and unpleasant physical symptoms (feelings of oppression and compression, cardiac distress, hot flashes and chills, sweating, difficult breathing)</p> | <p>Intensification of suffering to cosmic dimensions; borderline between pain and pleasure; “volcanic” type of ecstasy; brilliant colors; explosions and fireworks; sadomasochistic orgies; murders and bloody sacrifice, active engagement in fierce battles; atmosphere of wild adventure and dangerous explorations; intense sexual orgiastic feelings and scenes of harems and carnivals; experiences of dying and being reborn; religions involving bloody sacrifice (Aztecs, Christ’s suffering and death on the cross, Dionysus, etc.); intense physical manifestations (pressures and pains, suffocation, muscular tension and discharge tremors and twitches, nausea and vomiting, hot flashes and chills, sweating, cardiac distress, problems of sphincter control, ringing in the ears)</p> | <p>Enormous decompression; expansion of space; “illuminative” type of ecstasy, visions of gigantic halls; radiant light and beautiful colors (heavenly blue, golden, rainbow, peacock feathers); feeling of rebirth and redemption; appreciation of simple way of life; sensory enhancement; brotherly feelings; humanitarian and charitable tendencies; occasionally manic activity and grandiose feelings, transition to elements of BPM I; pleasant feelings can be interrupted by <i>umbilical crisis</i>: sharp pain in the navel, loss of breath, fear of death and castration, shifts in the body, but no external pressures</p> |
| ASSOCIATED MEMORIES FROM POSTNATAL LIFE   |   |   |   |
| <p>Situations from later life in which important needs are satisfied, such as happy moments from infancy and childhood (good mothering, play with peers, harmonious periods in the family, etc.), fulfilling love, romances; trips or vacations in beautiful natural settings; exposure to artistic creations of high aesthetic value; swimming in the ocean and clear lakes, etc.</p>  | <p>Situations endangering survival and body integrity (war experiences, accidents, injuries, operations, painful diseases, near drowning, episodes of suffocation, imprisonment, brainwashing, and illegal interrogation, physical abuse, etc.); severe psychological traumatizations (emotional deprivation, rejection, threatening situations, oppressive family atmosphere, ridicule and humiliation, etc.)</p>  | <p>Struggles, fights, and adventurous activities (active attacks in battles and revolutions, experiences in military service, rough airplane flights, cruises on stormy ocean, hazardous car driving, boxing); highly sensual memories (carnivals, amusement parks and nightclubs, wild parties, sexual orgies, etc.); childhood observation of adult sexual activities; experiences of seduction and rape; in females, delivering of their own children</p>  | <p>Fortuitous escape from dangerous situations (end of war or revolution, survival of an accident or operation); overcoming of severe obstacles by active effort; episodes of strain and hard struggle resulting in a marked success; natural scenes (beginning of spring, end of an ocean storm, sunrise, etc.)</p>  |

| BPM I  | BPM II  | BPM III   | BPM IV   |
|--|---|---|--|
| CORRESPONDING ACTIVITIES IN FREUDIAN EROGENOUS ZONES   |   |   |  |
| Libidinal satisfaction in all erogenous zones; libidinal feelings during rocking and bathing; partial approximation to this condition after oral, anal, urethral, or genital satisfaction and after delivery of a child                                    | Oral frustration (thirst, hunger, painful stimuli); retention of feces and/or urine; sexual frustration; experiences of cold, pain and other unpleasant sensations  | Chewing and swallowing of food; oral aggression and destruction of object; process of defecation and urination; anal and urethral aggression; sexual orgasm; phallic aggression; delivering of a child, statoacoustic eroticism (jolting, gymnastics, fancy diving, parachuting)  | Satiation of thirst and hunger; pleasure of sucking; libidinal feelings after defecation, urination, sexual orgasm or delivery of a child  |
| RELATED PSYCHOPATHOLOGICAL SYNDROMES   |   |   |  |
| Schizophrenic psychoses (paranoid symptomatology, feelings of mystical union, encounter with metaphysical evil forces); hypochondriasis (based on strange and bizarre physical sensations); hysterical hallucinations and confusing daydreams with reality | Schizophrenic psychosis (elements of hellish tortures, experience of meaningless "cardboard world"); severe inhibited "endogenous" depressions; irrational inferiority and guilt feelings; hypochondriasis (based on painful physical sensations); alcoholism and drug addiction, psoriasis; peptic ulcer | Schizophrenic psychosis (somasochistic and scatological elements, automutilation, abnormal sexual behavior); agitated depression, sexual deviations (somasochism, male homosexuality, drinking of urine and eating of feces); obsessive/compulsive neurosis; psychogenic asthma, tics, and stammering; conversion and anxiety hysteria; frigidity and impotence; neurasthenia; traumatic neuroses; organ neuroses; migraine headache; enuresis and encopresis | Schizophrenic psychoses (death-rebirth experiences, messianic delusions, elements of destruction and recreation of the world, salvation and redemption, identification with Christ); manic symptomatology; female homosexuality; exhibitionism |

These experiences are profoundly illuminating. The process of exploration can end here. However, continued stress can lead to a *second sensory barrier*. This is the barrier to the transpersonal domain. At this barrier, elements of emotional and physical pain can reach extraordinary intensity. One can experience such things as suffocation, accelerated pulse rate and palpitations, nausea and vomiting, changes in color of the complexion, oscillation of body temperature, spontaneous occurrences of skin eruptions and bruises, or tremors, twitches, contortions, twisting movements and other striking motor manifestations. This is the sensory barrier to realms of the psyche beyond the explicate order and Newtonian physics. The following chart illustrates the richness of these experiences.

Chart 138. Transpersonal Experiences

| <b>I. Experiential Extension Within Consensus Reality and Space–Time</b>  | <b>II. Experiential Extension Beyond Consensus Reality and Space–Time</b>   | <b>III. Transpersonal Experiences of Psychoid Nature</b>  |
|---|---|---|
| <b>A. Transcendence of Spatial Boundaries</b>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Spiritistic and Mediumistic Experiences</li> <li>2. Energetic phenomena of the Subtle Body (auras, chakras, kundalini, meridians, nadis)</li> <li>3. Experience of Animal Spirits</li> <li>4. Encounters with Spirit Guides and Suprahuman Beings</li> <li>5. Visits to Other Universes and Meeting with their Inhabitants</li> <li>6. Experiences of Mythological and Fairy Tale Sequences</li> <li>7. Experiences of Specific Blissful and Wrathful Deities</li> <li>8. Experiences of Universal Archetypes</li> <li>9. Intuitive Understanding of Universal Symbols</li> <li>10. Creative Inspiration and Promethean Impulse</li> <li>11. Experience of the Demiurg and of Cosmic Creation</li> <li>12. Experience of Cosmic Consciousness</li> <li>13. The Supracosmic and Metacosmic void</li> </ol> | <b>A. Synchronistic links between consciousness and matter</b>  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Experience of Dual Unity (Fusion)</li> <li>2. Identification with Other Persons</li> <li>3. Group Identification and Group Consciousness</li> <li>4. Identification with Animals</li> <li>5. Identification with Plants and Botanical Processes</li> <li>6. Oneness with Life and All Creation</li> <li>7. Experience of Inanimate Matter and Inorganic Processes</li> <li>8. Planetary Consciousness</li> <li>9. Extraterrestrial Experiences</li> <li>10. Identification with the Entire Physical Universe</li> <li>11. Psychic Phenomena Involving Transcendence of Space (Out-of-Body Experiences, Journeying, Clairvoyance and Clairaudience, “Space–Travels,” and Telepathy)</li> </ol> |   | <b>B. Spontaneous Psychoid (Body/Mind Events)</b>   |
| <b>B. Transcendence of the Boundaries of Linear Time</b>  |   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supernormal Physical Feats</li> <li>2. Spiritistic Phenomena and Physical Mediumship</li> <li>3. Recurrent Spontaneous Psychokinesis (Poltergeists)</li> <li>4. Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs)</li> </ol> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Embryonal and Fetal Experiences</li> <li>2. Ancestral Experiences</li> <li>3. Racial and Collective Experiences</li> <li>4. Past Incarnation Experiences</li> <li>5. Phylogenetic Experiences</li> <li>6. Experiences of Planetary Evolution</li> <li>7. Cosmogenetic Experiences</li> <li>8. Psychic Phenomena Involving Transcendence of Time (Precognition, Clairvoyance and Clairaudience of Past Events, Psychometry, TimeTravels)</li> </ol>  |   | <b>C. Intentional Psychokinesis</b>   |
| <b>C. Physical Introversion and Narrowing of Consciousness (Organ, Tissue, and Cellular Consciousness)</b>  |   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ceremonial Magic</li> <li>2. Healing and Hexing</li> <li>3. Siddhis (Control of Autonomous Functions, Levitation, Bilocation, Telekinesis, Firewalking, etc.)</li> <li>4. Laboratory Psychokinesis</li> </ol> |

The ordinary, hylotropic, explicate reality maintains and sustains the self. The non–ordinary, holotropic, implicate reality heals and transforms it. The connecting links between all levels of consciousness appear to be the emotions and physical sensations involved. Transpersonal experiences extend perceptions beyond the boundaries of the Western twentieth century bounded, masterful self. Even empirical studies have documented that holotropic consciousness has the po-

tential to reach all aspects of existence, including the postnatal biography of the individual, events in the future beyond the lifetime of the individual, biological birth, embryonal and fetal development, and the moment of conception, as well as the ancestral, racial, karmic, and phylogenetic history.

The discounting of these non-ordinary realities by Newtonian science does not change how easily and often we move in and out of them. Boredom, joy, pattern disruption, intense stimulation, focused breathing, and more extreme methods like pain and shattering trauma are a few “natural” methods of passage. Humans can also enter these states through some forms of hypnosis, Grof’s holotropic therapy, psychodrama, some musical experiences, some spiritual practices, shamanism, and some hallucinogenic drugs.

It is not necessary to be trained in a religious discipline or under the influence of LSD to have access to these altered states of consciousness. They are accessed when they are because we have an innate capacity, in terms of the structure of the mind and the nature of the psyche, for such experiences of our own consciousness. Those who train in a religious discipline to develop these states of consciousness are not essentially different than the rest of us, whether they practice any of the traditions cited above or Christianity or shamanism.

Felicitas Goodman (1986, 1988), 1990; Gore, 1995) has demonstrated, for example, that eighty-five percent of her subjects volunteering from a university town population entered visionary journey experiences (1986). Many of her subjects experienced powerful physical and emotional components on these journeys. Listening to a rattle for fifteen minutes in a darkened room, while adopting a physical posture derived from cave paintings or other primitive art depicting shamans at work, produced these states of consciousness.

It seems that the rattle and the postures themselves enabled these shamanic non-initiates to pass physical barriers into altered states where their experience of their own consciousness and what they knew went beyond the explicate order or consensus reality. In fact, each posture produced a uniquely different experience. The fifteen percent who did not journey were men and women who were experienced meditators. Apparently, the practice of meditation inhibited the attainment of these shamanic states of consciousness.

| PURPOSE        | NAME                                      | DESCRIPTION   | USUAL EFFECTS  |
|----------------|---|---|--|
| Spirit Calling | <b>Singing Shaman</b>                     | Standing, feet straight forward, 6 inches apart, knees loose and relaxed, head slightly tilted backwards, hands, held loosely in fists, are joined above the heart, knuckle to knuckle. Tone an “ah” sound. | Stimulation of base of spine and energy movement from lower body out through top of the head. Energy may concentrate in umbilical area. Visual brightness. Sense of stillness. Visuals of flying. Spontaneous vocalizations.                                     |
| Journeying     | <b>South American Lower World Posture</b> | Lying on back on floor with left back of hand resting lightly (as if to shield the eyes from light) on middle of forehead. Right arm along side body in relaxed position.                                   | An accumulation of energy building to a need for emergence, passage through a wall or tunnel followed by visualizations of travel. Lower world is world of rock, plant, insect, and animal spirits.  |
|                | <b>Lascaux Cave Upper World Posture</b>   | Lying on board raised up to 37 degree angle, the right arm is relaxed, the elbow slightly bent, the thumb up. The left arm is held straight and rigid, the thumb pointing down.                             | Muscle spasms, contractions, rushing energy (in circular and spiral motion), concentration of energy in genital area, sense of emergence (of energy body to astral plane), passage through a wall, then journey imagery, frequent flyer, mountain tops, ecstasy. |
| Transformation | <b>Olmec Prince Posture</b>               | Sit cross-legged, support self with fists placed on floor, rather close together and bent at the wrist. Place tongue loosely between lips.  | Visualizations of becoming other beings, often animals.  |
| Healing        | <b>Bear Spirit</b>                        | Standing, feet straight forward, 6 inches apart, knees loose, head tilted back (more pronounced than the singing shaman posture), hands positioned in front of midriff in loose fists.                      | Energy in heart area and top of head, energy flow is from top down and produces ecstasy. Body perceptions change; striking perceptual changes. A sense of opening. Rich visualizations.  |

Chart 139. Shamanic Trance Body Postures

## The Way of the Shaman

I believe that shamanic experiences are grounded in four innate capacities of human consciousness:

1. Regression: The human capacity to regress to early states of experience, including primary process.
2. Dissociation: The innate capacity of human consciousness to dissociate and enter into *altered states*.
3. Resonation: The human capacity to resonate to the energy vibrations of the rattle, the drum, and the implicate order.
4. Simultaneity: The human capacity to inhabit both the explicate world of personal identity and the implicate world of interconnectedness, the personal and the transpersonal, simultaneously.

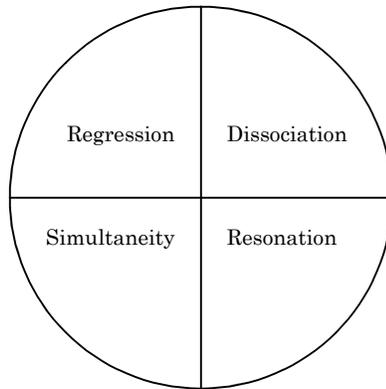


Chart 140. Basis of Shamanic Experiences

Shamanism has developed independently in non-contiguous cultures. What we call shamanism is basically a use of innate functions of human consciousness. Roger Walsh (1990) defines shamanism as . . .

. . . a family of traditions whose practitioners focus on voluntarily entering altered states of consciousness in which they experience themselves or their spirit(s) traveling to other realms at will, and interacting with other entities in order to serve their community.

Shamanism is primarily a set of practices that amplify the practitioner's resonance with the energy of the implicate order. Jeannette Gagan, a psychologist who practices sha-

manism in her work, believes that shamanism enriches psychotherapy “through the doorway of the mind that knows how to expand into spirit.” She continues:

Shamanism brings to the psychological domain a force that is both natural and spiritual—natural, because it is rooted in nature and in humankind’s earliest relationships with the elements, and spiritual, because it illuminates the client’s relationship with her soul. This approach does not transport a person to other realms for purposes of magical experience; rather, it facilitates a healing of the body and soul through the doorway of the mind that knows how to expand into spirit. The energy of shamanism rises from the folds of the earth (via the power animals and spirit helpers) and ignites with the energy showering down from above (via the spiritual teachers). The drumming, like the beat of the heart, announces the life of spirit and invites entry into a place where the sacred meets the profane, where shamanic strength knows human weakness and wisdom casts its light on shadow emotions.

—*Journeying: Where Shamanism and Psychology Meet*, 1998

Because the induction into altered states is so easy and experiences like isolation, hunger, fatigue, intimacy, stress, rhythmic sound or light are so common, I believe that most people have experienced shamanic phenomena at some time in their lives. For example, the transport that one experiences at a concert can be shamanic. Or runner’s high. Or a sense of unity with the woods. While there is a difference in people’s attitudes about such states as to whether they are produced by Beethoven or Bruce Springsteen, phenomenologically they are not very different. Stanislav Grof’s holotropic therapy (1988) accomplishes profound experiences simply by controlled breathing and intense music in a safe and supportive context.

The heavy emphasis on left brain processes, however, and the misunderstanding and cultural dismissal of right brain processes have taught people to suppress shamanic experiences. However, the shamanic experience is not merely a right brain process. The Newtonian science poses the left brain processes as the culmination of consciousness and discounts right brain processes like shamanism and other spiritual, intuitive, and artistic practices. But these “right brain” processes, like left brain processes, must take explicate form. They actually unite right and left hemispherical functioning. They use both hemispheres simultaneously.

Shamanic cultures tend to be egalitarian. Everyone has shamanic capabilities to one degree or another, regardless of sex, age, or status. The main requirement for shamanism is to have a calling. In response to the call, the potential shaman undergoes a shamanic crisis, whereby he or she is “dismembered” and “re-membered” in some way. In shamanic cultures, this often takes place on a spiritual journey where the shaman is flayed alive, flesh taken from bone, and then reconstituted by spiritual beings (as charted through the perinatal matrix described above).

In “non-shamanic” cultures like our own, men and women still get the call and undergo a spiritual death and rebirth. This may sound esoteric. Yet my informal surveys of therapists’ personal myths have shown that most of them have had such an experience in their personal mythologies. They did not have a tradition that would lead them to understand their experiences as shamanic, but they subsequently were recognized as unusually intuitive, helpful, and empathetic. Many therapists also have myths of helping their community (i.e., their families) and of being “therapeutic” in their youths. In his *Autobiography: Part I* (1989), Moreno himself reports what I would consider a shamanic crisis (especially considering his disturbed mental state afterwards). This event happened after his parents had decided to split up. I call it the encounter with Christ in Chemnitz:

As I paced the dark and empty streets, I tried to sort out my incoherent thoughts and feelings . . . I found myself in a little park standing in front of a statue of Jesus Christ illuminated by the moon’s faint light. It drew my gaze and I stood transfixed. In the intensity of this strange moment I tried with all my will to have that statue come alive, to speak to me. I wanted Jesus to move out of the stone and act out his life there in the park for the people of Chemnitz. Then it seemed to me that the statute was about to speak and I listened intently.

Standing there in front of the statue, I knew that I had to make a decision, one which would determine the future course of my life. I believe that all men have to make such a decision in their youth. This was the moment of my decision. The question was, how would I choose: was my identity the universe, or was it with the particular family or clan from which I had sprung? I decided for the universe . . .

My decision meant that all men and women were my brothers and sisters, that all mothers and fathers were my mothers and fathers, that all children, whoever their parents, were my children, and that all women were my wives, that all the

property of the world was my property, and, in reverse, that my property was the property of the world. . . Standing before the Christ in Chemnitz, I began to believe I was an extraordinary person, that I was here on the planet to fulfill an extraordinary mission . . .

From that time on there was a surplus of meaning in everything I did, and in everything which was done around me. There was an excess of feeling, of joy or depression, or love or of anger. It was the way lovers feel in their first excitement at finding one another. The sun, the stars, the sky, the trees seemed bigger. Colors seemed brighter. All events seemed more dynamic to me than they seemed to other people.

### *The Priest and the Shaman*

Shamans have a foot in both worlds, the implicate and the explicate. Their shamanic crisis, their training, and their innate skills help them to tune into the implicate, move back and forth between the worlds, hold both views in their consciousness at once, and change the incarnation of spirit in the explicate. The shamanic crisis is typically a death/rebirth experience in adolescence which effects the shaman-to-be's total consciousness and which he or she experiences alone. Perhaps the capacity to dissociate in distress, which fades for most people, resurges in the shamanic crisis. At any rate, the shamanic crisis is accompanied by a vision or some sense of mission, as if a covenant was drawn up between the shaman and the "spirits" of the energetic implicate order.

In an article on the creativity theory of personality that appeared in *Arts and Sciences* (1966), Moreno defined the poles of approaches to creativity in terms of the creator's focus of attention: (1) the devotee of the truly perfect and (2) the improvising creator:

1. The devotee of the truly perfect upholds the conserve as the ultimate value and is skeptical of spontaneity. He is the devotee of theory and the master of words. That is why he is compulsive, authoritarian, and critical of those who act. He loves to develop magnificent theoretical systems, physical, social and cultural projects. He sponsors theories of religion, altruism, of love, and preferably on the theoretical level. He shrinks from experimenting existentially with religious or theoretical creativity.
2. The improvising creator, in contrast, is devoted to experimentation in all forms—religious, therapeutic, scientific. He is the improviser in art, science and religion. Rather than writing books and formulating systems he loves to act and create.

The priest-like devotee is dedicated to the Word, while the improviser is like the shaman, focussed on experience. As I see it, neither extreme is exclusively desirable. The true healer stands astride the continuum, a foot planted firmly on either side, and, like the Navaho sand painters, strives for a perfect creation yet leaves a unique imperfection so the implicate divinities (who yearn to “act and create”) can enter the process and heal the sick. The devotee and improviser comprise yet another duality that points to two extreme ways of viewing reality. These views point to polar approaches to and cultural authorization for healing and psychotherapy.

Psychotherapy is a process for developing private rituals to systematically guide us in the discovery and modification of our personal mythology (Feinstein and Krippner, 1988). Therapists perform many of the functions that shamans or priests perform. The late Joseph Campbell traces two paths in his work: the **Path of Knowledge** and the **Path of Experience**. In *The Seeded Earth*, Campbell (1988) writes about the stable, agricultural mythologies of knowledge maintained and protected by an “ordained” Priesthood. In *The Way of Animal Powers* (1983), he writes about rituals of change assisted by Shaman Guides who have “been there” and experienced it. Every mythology must have its experiential rituals and every ritual its explanatory myth. But the Priests of the **Path of Knowledge** sometimes push the myth at the expense of rituals that may transform things, and the Shamans of the **Path of Experience** sometimes push rituals at the expense of the myths that may stabilize change.

The Priest (or sometimes a Priestess) is a socially initiated and ceremonially inducted member of a recognized cultural mythology, where he holds a certain rank and functions as the tenant of an office held by others before him. Priests’ power resides in the authority of the group. Robes, books, and other social symbols surround the priest. Priests are often solemn and superior. Priests sacrifice others for the common good. In shamanic cultures, both men and women who have gained power as a consequence of personal psychological crisis are respected and used. Overpowering mental crisis makes shamans. The Shaman’s power is charismatic; it rests in his or her ability to alter consciousness at will. The Shaman masters altered states of consciousness as the bird masters flight. Birds and animals are the symbols surrounding the Shaman. Shamans are often tricksters (the ar-

chetype of Agents of Chaos in mythology). Shamans sacrifice themselves for the common good. Here are some more distinctions between priests and shamans:

### **Priests**

- ❑ The Path of Knowledge
- ❑ Focus on the group
- ❑ Have mono-myths that all must believe
- ❑ Immortality is in the group
- ❑ Human sacrifices (sometimes willing)
- ❑ Priestly bureaucracies
- ❑ Focus on suffering (happily) now for a Paradise later
- ❑ Focus on tradition. Therefore, faith in the products, the contents of the culture, the myths, stability is supported by well boundaried ceremony and solemnity
- ❑ Mythic Identification: Spiritual maturity requires dissolution of the ego into the Divine
- ❑ Personal Path: Each individual strives to live within the fold of his or her traditional mythology as a protection against the dangers of an individual life
- ❑ Focus on the particle aspect of reality, the separateness of things and their measurable observable proof

### **Shamans**

- ❑ The Path of Experience
- ❑ Focus on the individual
- ❑ Have a multiplicity of myths
- ❑ Immortality is in the individual
- ❑ Fear of death
- ❑ Shamanistic individuality
- ❑ Focus on self salvation and achievement
- ❑ Focus on creativity. Therefore, faith in the process, the forms of the culture, change is driven by ritual techniques of ecstasy
- ❑ Mythic Inflation: Spiritual maturity requires differentiation and communication between the ego and the Divine
- ❑ Personal Path: Each individual is the center of his or her own mythology, of which his or her own character is the incarnate god or goddess, whom his or her empirically questing consciousness is to find
- ❑ Focus on the wave aspect of reality, the interconnection of things and the universe of possibilities, including alternative realities

As you can extrapolate from the above, the best therapists would be a combination of both priest and shaman. The worst errors in psychotherapy come when the focus gets too polarized. The Therapist–Priests promote lobotomies, over-medication, or the Snake Pit. The Therapist–Shamans promote Mainstreaming (the chronically mentally ill into the community, who then join the ranks of the homeless), Nude Encounters, and therapy cults. Of course, uniting both the Priest and Shaman aspects of our therapist functions simultaneously is even harder than trying to see both the “conversing faces” and the “chalice” at the same time. Yet the Healing Circle provides a cognitive structure and an application of procedures for doing just that.

Throughout this book, I have compared and contrasted the explicate and the implicate orders of the universe. As one might expect, there is an explicate approach to psychother-

apy by a priesthood of the allopathic medical model and an implicate approach by experientially trained shaman/therapists of a holopathic systemic model. I believe in a balanced approach. A true healer is both priestly and shamanic. Psychodrama is both priestly and shamanic, but its primary method of change and its primary authority are shamanic. Shamanic psychodrama is not about the implicate order as opposed to the explicate order. It is about both. It is about how the two correlate. More to the point, it is about the boundary between them, that edge of emergence of self organization that humans straddle through the function of their consciousness.

*Shamanic Practices*

There are skills unique to the practice of shamanism. Like any good healer, the shaman must demonstrate an acceptance of the dispirited person and his or her disturbing “spirits.” In the shamanic world, everything that exists is “good” in that it exists. The shaman not only guides the healing of the individual but that of the community as well. The shaman is the master ritualist who teaches the celebrants of the healing process the particular ritual procedures. The shaman is the mediator between the spirits and ordinary reality just as a modern therapist mediates between the psyche and the personal mythology.

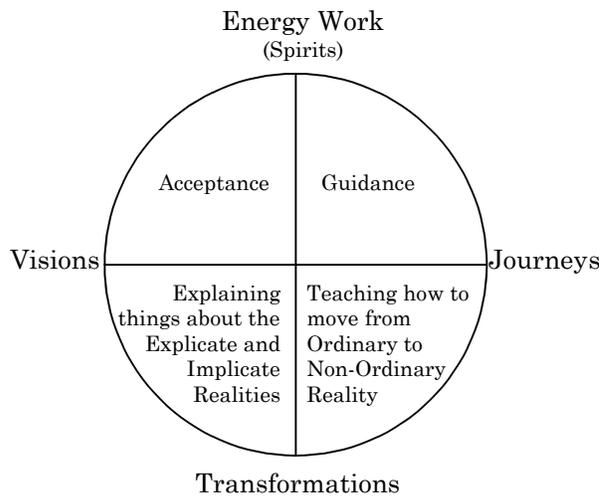


Chart 141. Shamanic Skills

The threshold skills of the shaman are more complicated and require more details:

***Energy Work (Spirits):*** Traditional shamans speak of spirit helpers, animal powers, ancestral guides, and spirit masters. Some people experience the organization of energy fields as these things. We bring to the process both the explicate contents of our consciousness and the embodied knowing of our cognitive unconscious mind. These are the tools with which we define the intangibilities of the implicate order. I believe that spirits are organizations of particular energy patterns in the energy web of the possibilities of the implicate universe. In truth, the relationship that one can develop with a spirit helper can be as important and intimate as any relationship. Working with energy has direct effects on the central nervous system. Heart beat, respiration, motility, and brainwaves are effected.

Some techniques of working with energy include accupressure, Raki, SHEN, bioenergetics, therapeutic touch, movement of energy with hands, feathers or other objects, intensification of affect, many familiar therapy techniques, breath work, body positioning and sculpting, use of rattles, drums, and other percussion, chanting, singing, manipulation of lighting, stress, and concretizations of all kinds (Bauer, 1991; Brennan, 1988, 1993; Collinge, 1998; Gach, 1990; Gerber, 1988; Krieger, 1979; Kunz, 1991; Miller and Harper, 1990; Morningstar, 1980; Myss, 1996, 1997; Pavek, 1988; Pierrakos, 1987; Schwarz, 1980; Wolf, 1986). Other, more subjective effects are noted (Achterberg, 1985; Harner, 1980; Jilek, 1982; Laird, 1984; Walsh, 1990; and Wolf, 1991) and listed below:

- ❑ Archaic thought processes, primary process, and heightened experience of ambivalence (the implicate:explicate view!).
- ❑ Disturbed time sense (sacred time, the eternal now).
- ❑ Reduced self consciousness and increased spontaneity in the here and now.
- ❑ Affective intensification.
- ❑ Physical sensations (pain, dizziness, weakness, numbness, blurred vision, muscular contractions or flexions, synesthesia, hypersensitivity).
- ❑ Visual imagery, organized hypnogogic hallucinations—a waking dream.
- ❑ Experience of revealed Truth, deep insight.
- ❑ Experience of awe beyond words.

- ❑ Feelings of renewed hope and rebirth.
- ❑ Sense of Oneness with Creation.

Theories of human energy have long held the insight of the vibrational aspects of life. Not until quantum physics has there been a scientific hypothesis to support the esoteric ones. A Grandfather of quantum physics, Albert Einstein developed the theorem  $E=mc^2$ , where  $E$  is energy,  $m$  is matter, and  $c$  is the speed of light, creating the foundations of quantum physics. Einstein's insight was that matter and energy are basically the same.

This equation was later modified by a proportionality (relativity) constant known as the Einstein–Lorentz Transformation. As a particle accelerates towards the speed of light, its kinetic energy increases towards infinity. Until recently, physicists have accepted the limitation that one cannot accelerate beyond the speed of light. Quantum physics has demonstrated the proof (Bell's theorem) of nonlocal (i.e., faster than light, unaffected by distance) effects. When speeds faster than light are hypothesized and plotted out, a positive–negative space/time model will emerge. Positive space/time is the realm of electromagnetic radiation (EM).

On the other side is negative space/time, which is distinguished by its primarily magnetic nature, and energy that is described as magnetoelectric radiation (ME). These energies are complementary to positive space/time energies. Thus the negative space/time energies tend towards negative entropy: That is, they bring order, organization, and coherence to a system, resulting in growth and development to greater levels of complexity and integration. These magnetic negatively entropic qualities are found in the energy fields of psychic healers (Gerber, 1988; Tiller, 1972, 1978).

Further studies in quantum physics have shown that at the level of sub–atomic particles, all matter is literally particularized energy fields (frozen light). Complex aggregates of matter, like molecules, are specialized energy fields. Therefore, just as light has particular frequencies, so does

$$E = \frac{mc^2}{\sqrt{1-v^2/c^2}}$$

AS  $v \rightarrow c$ , THEN  $E \rightarrow \infty$

E=ENERGY c=SPEED OF LIGHT  
m=MASS v=VELOCITY

Chart 142. Einstein—Lorentz Transformation

Chart 143. Relationship of Energy to Velocity

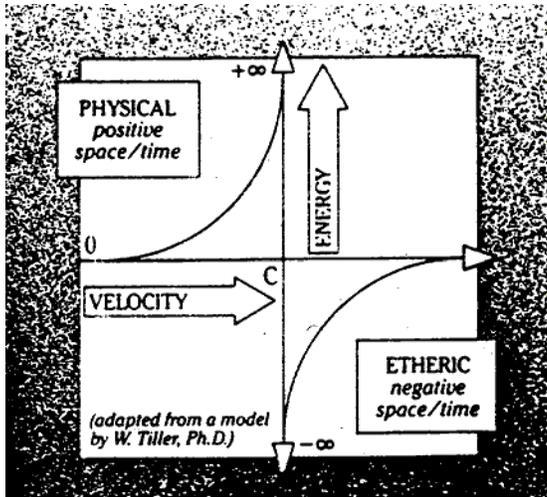
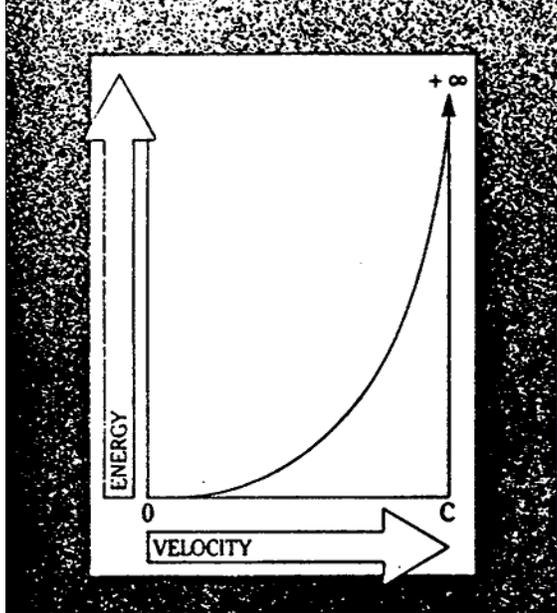


Chart 144. Positive—Negative Space/Time

matter. The lower the frequency, the denser the matter: the less dense, the more subtle the matter.

Starting in 1935, a Yale neuro-anatomist, Harold S. Burr, became interested in the electrical energy around living beings. His research showed that individual beings, including humans, possessed characteristic fields, like electric fingerprints, and that disruptions in the pattern of these fields foretold events that would show up later in the physical body. Of particular interest, is Burr's work with salamanders. He noticed that baby salamanders possessed an energy field roughly shaped like the adult animal. He localized an electrical field along an axis aligned with the brain and the spinal cord. This electrical axis originated in the unfertilized egg! The morphic field may begin to operate at the moment of an entity's existence. These research findings are a bridge between Sheldrake's work and the metaphysical energy bodies of the spiritual dimension of the healing circle model. These energy bodies are morphic fields. The origins of this material lie in ancient medical theories and practices of India and China, but I will refer mostly to the formulations of Richard Gerber (1988) and William Tiller (1972, 1978).

This forms the foundation for understanding how human beings can be considered dynamic energy systems. The molecular arrangement of the physical body can be considered a complex network of interwoven energy fields which constitutes a template for the arrangement of the cells and organs of the physical body. Consciousness itself is an energy process that participates directly in these energy fields. Richard Gerber (*Vibrational Medicine*, 1988) summarizes:

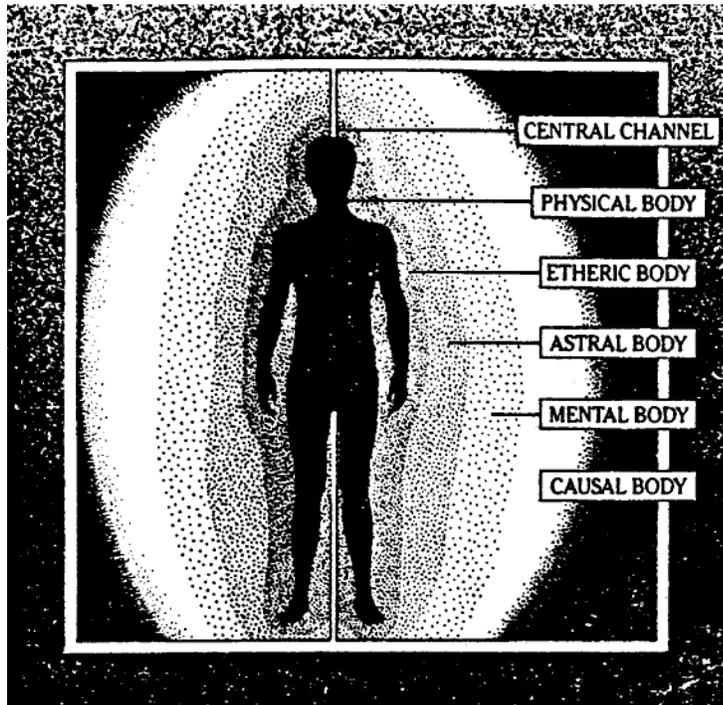
Vibrational medicine is a healing approach which is based on the Einsteinian concept of matter as energy, and of human beings as a series of complex energy fields in dynamic equilib-

rium. The physical matter is in equilibrium with . . . negative space/time, higher dimensional fields. These fields of *etheric*, *astral*, *mental*, *causal*, and even higher frequency matter operate to provide energetic information, structure, and higher knowledge to the incarnating personality from its spiritual source. The purpose of the entire structural arrangement is to provide a vehicle of expression for the soul to grow through experiences in the worlds of matter.

These models assume that the human being is more than mere flesh and blood. The human body would not last more than a few hours without the animating life-force of these subtle body frequencies that bring order, coherence, growth, and structure to “living” matter. A metaphor may help in understanding the concept of subtle matter: If the physical body is like ice, than the etheric body is like water, the astral body like clouds, the mental body like humidity, and the causal body like the formula for water, H<sub>2</sub>O.

The acupuncture meridians of Chinese medicine, the chakras and nadis of East Indian medicine, the etheric body, the astral body, the mental body, and the causal body are parts of a human multi-dimensional anatomy. Human beings possess interpenetrating, interactive, hierarchically arranged energy fields.

Chart 145. The Human Energy Fields



The physical body is the lowest frequency of matter, followed by the etheric, astral, mental, and causal bodies. Because energy moves from higher to lower, changes made on the causal body level effect the whole system, cascading down the energy system to the physical body. Changes made on the physical level alone may be undone if the causes still remain in the higher frequency bodies. As might be expected, these subtle energy bodies can be circled:

1. **Astral body:** The astral body is also called the emotional body. It is the seat of human emotions. It is also a protector of the emerging self in that it allows for dissociation which may be a primitive energy reflex that protects consciousness from trauma. Dissociation usually diminishes with age.
2. **Mental Body:** The system through which the self manifests and expresses the concrete intellect.
3. **Etheric Body:** A holographic energy template that guides the growth and development of the physical body as well as its dysfunction and demise.
4. **Causal Body:** The Higher Self. It is the organizer of abstract ideas, concepts, and mythic structures. It is the carrier of past lives and other holotropic phenomena. It deals with the essence of substance and the true causes behind appearances.

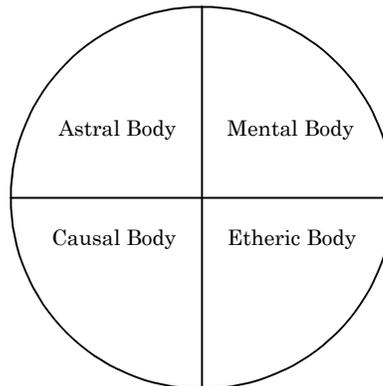


Chart 146. Four Subtle Energy Bodies

Human beings are able to resonate with the vibrations around them by directing their consciousness to do it. Energy flows where attention goes. Most people do this some, but usually we rely on ritual structures that organize these vibrations towards preset frequencies. Some people are born with incredible capacity to resonate, and they are recognized for their empathy, their understanding, their healing touch,

or their psychic abilities. Probably everyone can be taught to tune into the vibrational frequencies around them intentionally. How they experience this tuning is usually quite unique and individualized.

Ritual structures, like those used in shamanism and psychodrama, excite the human energy systems by starting at the bottom with the physical body, through enactment and repetition. Eventually they reach all the way to the top to the causal body, the repository of the morphic fields for the personal mythology and cultural mythos, through the unfolding of the story. A ritual generates a coherent negative space/time energy field that orders and organizes resonance among the energy fields of the individual and the group. While each of these fields vibrates at a different frequency, they come together into harmony, like the different instruments of an orchestra.

A tremendous amount of effort is needed to direct energy up the fields; thus, change does not come easy. Sensory barriers must be crossed. Some kind of stress must be experienced, as intensity seems to fuel the crossing of the thresholds from one energy field to the next. The catharsis in the ritual is the force that activates changes in the causal body energy system. This energy, now that the physical system has switched to the relaxed state of the parasympathetic nervous system travels from higher to lower frequencies, ratcheting down the energy bodies back to the physical body and transforming the whole person.

Chart 147. Higher Spiritual Energies (Morphic Fields)

|                 |               |   |         |                  |                |
|-----------------|---------------|---|---------|------------------|----------------|
|                 | Causal Body   |   |         | <b>Spiritual</b> | <b>Healing</b> |
|                 | ↑ ↓           |   |         |                  | Myth           |
|                 | Mental Body   | ↔ | ↔       | ↻                | Harmony        |
|                 | ↑ ↓           |   |         |                  |                |
|                 | Astral Body   |   | ↔       | ↔                | Resonance      |
|                 | ↑ ↓           |   |         |                  |                |
| <b>Magnetic</b> | Etheric Body  | ↔ | Nadis ↔ | ↻                | Altered States |
| <b>Healing:</b> | ↑ ↓           |   |         |                  |                |
| Touch and       | Acupuncture   |   |         |                  | Identification |
| other           | Meridians     |   |         |                  |                |
| Direct          | ↑ ↓           |   |         |                  | Empathy        |
| Energy          | Physical Body |   |         |                  | Ritual         |
| Manipulations   | (Dis-ease)    |   |         |                  | (Dis-sonance)  |

In *The Eagle's Quest* (1991), physicist and author, Fred Wolf reports on his search for the links between shamanism and quantum physics. He argues that shamans perceive the universe as made from vibrations. In quantum physics these vibrations are . . .

. . . contained in the “probability” waves of subatomic and atomic matter. These waves are called probability waves, *quantum waves*, or *quantum wave functions* because they have a vibrational pattern and they determine just how probable physical events are to take place. Wherever in space and whenever in time an event manifests are governed by the strengths or amplitude of these waves.

**Journeys:** I have learned that a client's shamanic journey in conjunction with psychotherapy can be especially powerful. In fact, true psychotherapy constitutes a dismembering of the self constructed by one's personal mythology and a remembering of one's “true” self, in the same way that the shamanic crisis spiritually reconstructs the journeying shaman. While the shamanic journey happens relatively quickly, the shamanic growth in ordinary reality takes as long as the therapeutic process. In essence, I believe that they are the same process.

Journeys are the special work of shamans and I refer the reader to Michael Harner's *The Way of the Shaman* (1980) and Jeanette Gagan's *Journeying: Where Shamanism and Psychology Meet* (1998) to learn about them. The shaman journeys to the *other reality*. Significantly, the geography of this other reality is remarkably consistent across cultures. It includes an upper world (a place of ancestors, spirit masters, and spiritual development), the middle world, (basically this one in a more implicate form, thus introducing many energetic possibilities), and the lower world (a place of mineral, plant animal, and spirit helpers, personal tests, and healing).

As I have already discussed, the process of psychodrama drives a session to the edge of chaos, and few people present will miss the change to the spontaneity state, the complex state out of which self organization emerges. I believe that all successful psychodramas are shamanic when the spontaneity state is achieved. Shamanic Psychodrama, which I practice, intentionally uses the tools of shamanism to arrive at the spontaneity state. Shamanic psychodrama

makes use of myths (the *products of living*) that we have created to give us the illusion of stability in an evolving universe and rituals (the *processes of change*) that we use in those moments when the chaos of possibilities inherent in the implicate order intrude into ordinary reality. The edge of emergence is the spontaneity state.

In Shamanic psychodrama, when protagonists enter the other reality, the shamanic director concretizes what they see. One protagonist, for example, had a vision of himself diving through the second story window of the room we were working in. He was clear that it was not suicide he was after and that he felt a compulsion to do it. Using auxiliaries, we created the window, laid out some pillows on the other side, and instructed the protagonist to dive through if he wished. I agreed to go with him through the passage. Head first, he dove through. On the other side, even though it was in the afternoon, he experienced complete darkness. Even with his eyes open, he could hardly see. However, he felt a need to keep his eyes closed and that was fine with me. We went on to implement what he found in the dark place. Eventually he found a terrified little boy who was himself just after he had been raped by an uncle. This was news to him, and it was a very powerful and painful moment.

After some work with the little one, he chose to bring this part of himself back to ordinary reality through the original window he had jumped from. Synchronicity struck: the auxiliary he chose to play this part of himself had discovered the day before the start of the workshop that he too had been sexually abused as a child. Medical records needed for some insurance showed that he had been treated for gonorrhea at the age of five. So we had two protagonists, neither of whom were operating from conscious memories.

This kind of drama is a shamanic soul retrieval concretized in action. Because I was entrained with the protagonist, I too was entranced and saw my parallel (similar form but different details from the protagonist's) vision. My presence was necessary, as I laid a bright red energy trail in the underworld labyrinth that I followed back to ordinary reality with the protagonists.

Journeying is not necessary in every drama, either for the protagonist or the director. However, when a protagonist goes on one (i.e., dissociates), the director who knows how to join on the journey is going to be able to use the opportunity

to do some de-fragmentation of the protagonist's selfness and lay the groundwork for revisions in the protagonist's personal mythology. Students are taught how to journey and return. Beginning students are given the following guidelines:

- ❑ Know your intention and, if possible, your destination.
- ❑ Know the most appropriate shamanic posture/destination
- ❑ Follow the "path"—don't blaze one.
- ❑ Pay attention to repetition (the third time is the charm, the fourth is certainty).
- ❑ Ask questions of things, rocks, trees, other beings telepathically or out loud if that does not work. Meaning is sometimes communicated by the events themselves, the symbolism of the moment that we must grasp intuitively.
- ❑ Discover your unique gifts and your nature in the other reality.
- ❑ You can never have too many helpers. There is no limit to them other than the boundaries of your need.
- ❑ Beware of insects and exposed teeth.
- ❑ Do not take anything without permission—and leave something in return when you do take something.
- ❑ Even though you may have to do battle, do not kill anything. Flee first. Flight often leads to creative surprises.
- ❑ Necessity is the Mother of Invention—Trust the Process.
- ❑ It is, after all, OK to experience anything while journeying (including "death" and "dismemberment.")

***Transformations:*** Transformations are what humans do. We are able to alter reality through deed, thought, feeling, and intention. The shaman just works more directly with the energy of the morphic fields in the implicate reality than a psychotherapist would. The shaman must be able to resonate with the energy of many beings, which is similar to doubling in psychodrama. From the shamanic perspective, role reversals are similar to shapeshifting. When we reverse roles with a part of ourselves that is like an animal power, the shamanic view considers that we are becoming the animal, much like a Catholic priest becomes Christ during the Mass. The technology of transformation is ritual practice, whether in shamanism or psychotherapy. Shamanism is a dramatic form, and thus psychodrama is especially related to shamanic healing. Intentionally shamanic psychodrama systematically uses the techniques of shamanism, from ecstatic postures through percussion induced trance states, as well as

the techniques of psychodrama and psychotherapy in general to facilitate transformations of individuals and groups.

**Visions:** Visions are also the purview of the shaman. It is a frequent outcome of the shamanic state of consciousness to experience visual imagery. The shaman must remember that the personal myths that he or she brings to the process effect what is seen, colors in the details so to speak, and that these details may differ from those of the person being worked with. Operationally, the point of view of the person working takes priority over the visions of the shaman. The experience of the shaman has supremacy. This guideline “is a specific application of a general law of processes according to which simpler processes precede and necessarily co-exist with complex ones, while the latter predominate in a more limited spatio-temporal field. ‘Priority of the simple; supremacy of the complex’” (Sabelli’s, 1984).

Sometimes one can experience another kind of vision, a vision that re-organizes one’s whole life. During my first journey to the upper world (in a training workshop with Michael Harner), I was shown the image—painted on a floor of a tower—of the quartered circle.

### **Shamanism and Psychology**

Not surprisingly, Jung embraced shamans from the beginning, and there are several books by Jungians articulating the relationship between analytical psychology and shamanism (Gagan, 1998; Sander and Wong, eds., 1997; Smith, 1997). Many non-indigenous shamans see the other reality as an imaginal encounter with the collective unconscious. Though no less spiritual, the journey is to the depths of the mind rather than some spirit place, and power animals, spirit helpers, and the like are fully imagined archetypes of the unconscious. The September/October, 1998, issue of *Family Therapy Networker* features shamanism in its special issue on postmodern healing.

Moreno himself was well aware of the connection between psychodrama and shamanism. According to Moreno, “the origins of my work go back to the primitive religions and my objectives were the setting up and promoting of a new social order” (*Who Shall Survive?* 1978). In a chapter on psychodrama in *The American Handbook of Psychiatry* edited by

Silvano Arieti (Moreno, 1959), he drew parallels between shamanic techniques of North American Indians and psychodrama sessions. Moreover, like shamanism, psychodrama and sociometry are community methods. “The process of healing—catharsis—does not take place in a physician’s secluded consultation room,” he wrote in a *Group Psychotherapy* article (Moreno, 1955), “it takes place in the group, in the midst of community.” It would not be going too far to say that the shaman was the first group therapist (Lewis, 1982; McNiff, 1979). Like shamanism, psychodrama utilizes enactment rituals, role taking, playing, and creating, multiple realities, light trance work, and other techniques of ecstatic expression leading to catharsis and *communitas*.

Anthropologists refer to shamanic practices as psychodramatic. Wolfgang Jilek in *Indian Healing* (1982) examines the group therapeutic and psychodramatic qualities of several rituals of the Salish Indians of the Northwest. Any psychodramatist reading a description of a shamanic ceremony will recognize many psychodramatic elements, like enactment, concretization, here and nowness, doubling (of the patient by the shaman), self presentation (of spirits), and role playing. A big difference between shamanic and psychodramatic healing, however, is the involvement of the patient in the latter as a protagonist who “acts out” rather than being acted upon.

Far from being a detriment, shamanism contributes to psychology. In the first place, its methods generally take us to primary process, what the cognitive scientists would call the “cognitive unconscious,” where we are not subjected to rational censorship and where we are connected to the other 95 per cent of what is going on within us. In the second place, the shamanic approach addresses the varieties of spiritual emergency that still occur despite our complex civilization. Psychotherapy alone may miss the mark in treating one of these crises. Christina and Stanislav Grof (*The Stormy Search for Self*, 1992) name ten spiritual emergencies:

- ❑ Episodes of unitive consciousness (peak experiences)
- ❑ The awakening of Kundalini
- ❑ Near death experiences
- ❑ Emergence of “past life memories”
- ❑ Psychological renewal through return to the center

- ❑ The Shamanic crisis
- ❑ Awakening of extrasensory perception (psychic opening)
- ❑ Communication with spirit guides and channeling
- ❑ Experiences of close encounters with UFOs
- ❑ Possession States

The three most common shamanic practices are soul retrieval, extraction, and conducting a dead person's soul to the lower world (the psychopomp). In psychological practice, the need for help in these areas continues. We spend great efforts helping clients find and incorporate lost aspects or parts of themselves. This process is often assisted by imaginal work and, in psychodrama, with actual retrieval of an auxiliary role playing the lost part. Extraction takes many forms, but most often it is the analyzing of parental introjects, whereby the client learns that the internal messages are not inherent parts of him or herself. Grief work is also a major part of psychotherapy. According to Alice Miller (1981), it may be the only work of certain narcissistically wounded clients.

### Shamanic Psychodrama Training

Everyone may educate and regulate his imagination so as to come thereby into contact with spirits, and be taught by them.

—Paracelsus (1493–1541)

Shamanic healing requires experiential training. As a very basic beginning, the trainee must:

- ❑ Have a *calling*.
- ❑ Undergo an *initiation* involving some form of spiritual Death and Rebirth, known as the shamanic crisis.
- ❑ Develop warm caring, authenticity, authority, and empathy.
- ❑ Learn the myths of the community (the shared beliefs, whether conscious or unconscious, in the healing myth are more important than the *facts*).
- ❑ Develop spiritual visioning through:

Something is wrong. People are gossiping and bickering. Accidents are increasing. Many are sick. Work production is down. Finally, the leader calls the group together and invites everyone to say what is going on. Eventually, one by one each person takes responsibility for some aspect of the collective difficulty. Communications are improved, boundaries of various kinds are clarified, and emotions are identified, targeted, and expressed through various structures and rituals. Afterwards everybody feels better; they celebrate somehow and return to their efforts renewed.

This could be a description of

- (a) A small corporate shareholders meeting.
- (b) An on-going therapy group session.
- (c) An Inuit purification ceremony.
- (d) All of the above.

1. Discipline and applied stress.
  2. Trance states.
  3. The practice of *visions* in dim light with peripheral vision and *soft eyes*.
  4. Well developed fantasy skills.
  5. Capacity to organize ambiguous stimuli into coherent images.
  6. Patience (vision will usually start with glimpses and gradually develop into *reality-like* images).
- ❑ Acquire “spirit helpers” who help in four ways:
    1. With journeys: The practice of journeying (entranced lucid dreams).
    2. By providing strengths and abilities.
    3. By teaching.
    4. By *possession* (a role reversal with Raven, Bear, Zolpar, etc.).
  - ❑ Master the arts of entering and leaving altered states of consciousness and of journeying.
  - ❑ Learn diagnostic and healing practices from eclectic sources, both traditional and non-traditional.

For a trainee experienced with psychodrama, things are not going to be that different—at first. After all, psychodrama *is* shamanic. Moreover, depending on the training, group, and personal agendas at any given training session, the work may not move into shamanism. As a program working to develop psychodramatists who can become nationally certified, we also placed importance on psychodrama fundamentals. Shamanism, to borrow from the Sabelli’s model (1989), has supremacy; training in psychodrama, sociometry, and group psychotherapy has priority. The answer, by the way, is *d*.

Within the first few hours of the first session of a shamanic psychodrama training workshop, the visitor notices the special attention that the leaders and regular students direct to protection, safety, nurturance, and inclusion. The visitor would soon become aware of a powerful sense of community and observe or be included in independent expressions of mutuality and support. Also clear would be expressions of trust in the process—self determination, self starting, active assistance, and responsiveness to sociometric cues by both trainers and students. Above all, the visitor would notice—and experience—a heightened intensity. Things are buzzing with aliveness. Operating from the shamanic belief that all things that exist are good and

acceptable, whether we agree with them or not, a complex dynamic system is generated within the container of the community.

As the workshop unfolds, another thing becomes apparent. These people have a coherent world view that inclusively places elements of psychodrama, sociometry, group psychotherapy, psychodynamics, object relations, community development, ecological consciousness, Old Celtic and Native American Spirituality, and personal and cultural mythology within a context called the Healing Circle. At the same time, the trainers welcome discussion, questions, challenges, and opposing points of view. Leadership is distributed among participants. Some members are actually eagerly awaiting a breakdown into training sub-groups lead by students, perhaps themselves.

As the workshop proceeds, astute observers notice that everyone works towards a union of the goals of community cohesion and self determination. There is unity and diversity. Frequent attention is directed to creatively finding ways to meet multiple agendas.

By now the visitor has probably become so immersed in the process that careful observation of goings on is by the board. One reason for this is that there are frequent inductions into altered states. Music, chanting, drums, and rattles are obvious. Sage or sweetgrass may be burned. Participants are actively encouraged to express their spontaneity and intuition. There is action, non-verbal expression, and energy work. The message is to know what you need, express what you want, and trust the process. You are expected to be intentional. All the while, you have to think and reason things out. The dual focus is trance inducing in itself.

In terms of the work done, the visitor notices a deliberate use of ritual, along with special attention to the developmental lines of the work—where does it seem to be going—rather than much concern about the content (where it has been). Enactments tend to concretize rather than set realistic scenes. There is a sociodramatic thrust too. No one is supported in seeing a protagonist's work as so alien that identification is impossible. Members are encouraged to identify with all possibilities and to express themselves. A deeply felt response (of any valence) to someone's work is welcomed when expressed—challenged when not.

Most unusual of all, there are multiple protagonists. In a process called a fluid session, after an initial protagonist begins to work, there may be three, four, or more enactments going on simultaneously. Group leaders oversee the process, helping and intervening where necessary. Student directors direct protagonists. Protagonists will work, then become directors themselves helping others. Throughout a session, there may be as many as a dozen catharses of as many protagonists. Yet in the end everything seems to be interconnected and to make sense.

How is this accomplished? In *the first place*, the emphases on intentionality and trust support both individuation and bonding. The union of the explicate and the implicate aspects of every experience is emphasized. Participants get a high level of support, encouragement, and group involvement. The attention to safety and protection allows people to surrender to the entrancing process of intentionally intersecting explicate and implicate realities.

*Secondly*, the community is built upon a shared use of the Healing Circle. This ancient shamanic approach operates from the frame of reference of the new sciences of chaos and complexity. The human psyche is a complex dynamic system. Its surface complexity arises out of deep simplicity, and self organization is emergent. Faith in the Healing Circle is not required (Emerson, 1972); the order is for free (Kauffman, 1993). However, a willing suspension of disbelief is frequently useful. More importantly, members are expected and encouraged to play with the model—to operate *as if* it were true. Without the shared frame of reference, things can get very disorienting.

*Thirdly*, all work has a dual focus: self and society. We are more interested in the social reality than the individual identity. We seriously question the supremacy of the twentieth century ideal self, tightly boundaried with hyper-competent independence (Cushman, 1990; 1995). We wonder whether the plight of modern civilization is in fact a result of such a view. Therefore, we work with the implicate interconnectedness of all things. Participants may engage in multiple roles within the same session: protagonist, auxiliary, double, facilitator, and audience. Some of the time some of these are engaged in simultaneously: an individual can be an auxiliary in someone else's drama and at the same time be a protago-

nist in her own, for example. The dramas can be entirely different yet intersect meaningfully.

*Communitas* shifts to individuation at the start of each following session, where individual sharing and technical processing of the previous session are worked through. Usually, the first protagonist tells the story of her work. Then the other protagonists share theirs. These stories are mapped around the Healing Circle. Often there is an action sharing where the group spontaneously plays out the apparent group myth expressed through the fluid session. This is complexity in action, as the resulting process is a strange attractor for the energy of the group before, during, and after the fluid session. A group member once remarked that fluid sessions reminded him of the movie *Wings of Desire*, where the protagonist angels hear all the stories of the earth at once, but can choose to single out one or another for a period.

*Fourthly*, students are taught to work with the energy. They are taught to focus their minds on the interface between the implicate and explicate realities. This is a trance state that heightens sensation, affect, intuition, and act hunger specifically and awareness generally. Students are taught to sense and see the energy, the web of interconnections co-existing and interpenetrating their sense and sight of explicate realities.

Students are encouraged to share what they experience and to compare notes. Because reality is seen as multifaceted, no perceptions are discounted. Instead, students are encouraged to test their intuitions, and they are taught safe and non-coercive ways to do this, like offering a playback of a vision they had of their protagonist's childhood. The true test is whether perceptions, insights, and resulting interventions work: Do they bring new order and clarity to the protagonist's system of personal myths?

The Healing Circle proposes the coexistence and interpenetration of the explicate reality our everyday senses define and the implicate reality we intuit. It proposes that these realities are in fact complementary and need each other for wholeness. Matter incarnates spirit. Entities concretize possibilities. It is an approach that includes both ends of the polarity and, of course, everything in between. No prescriptions for health that exclude things that exist are going to capture the essence of life.

By shamanism, I don't mean paganism or some "magical" hocus pocus (which both the alloplastic and the holoplastic models have their share of). True healing taps into the complexity state of deterministic chaos, and the culture figure of the trickster is the Agent of Chaos, bringing both the ridiculous and the sublime to human change processes. Shamanism means a return to some knowledge, techniques, and wisdom of antiquity. Modern man is not necessarily the highest accomplishment of humankind. It makes sense to look at the whole of human history and achievement from time to time. Moreno agreed:

For the true precedent [to psychodrama] we must look into civilizations of the prehistoric period. In primitive dramatic rites the aboriginal performer was not an actor, but a priest. He was like a psychiatrist engaged in saving the tribe, persuading the sun to shine or the rain to fall. In order to draw from the gods or from natural forces an appropriate response, methods of pretending, persuasion, and provocation akin to primitive psychodrama may have been widely used. Long before scientific medicine in our sense emerged, the purging of mental as well as physical ailments with a quasi-psychodramatic shock was practiced.

—*Psychodrama, Volume I* (1973)

I believe that we very much need a new vision of reality. The one we have allows for too much avoidable pain and stress. A vision of the world that considers all things connected and that can explain that connection to people in terms of a modern scientific mythology may be very useful. In the meantime, we do have the shamanic vision. In *Imagery in Healing: Shamanism and Modern Medicine* Jeanne Achterberg (1985) describes it:

The function of any society's health system is ultimately tied to the philosophical conviction that members hold regarding the purpose of life itself. For the shamanic cultures, that purpose is spiritual development. Health is being in harmony with the worldview. Health is an intuitive perception of the universe and all its inhabitants as being one fabric. Health is maintaining communion with the animals and plants and minerals and stars. It is knowing death and life and seeing no difference . . . health is not the absence of feeling; no more so it is the absence of pain. Health is seeking out all of the experiences of Creation and turning them over and over, feeling their texture and multiple meanings. Health is expanding beyond one's singular state of consciousness to experience the ripples and waves of the universe.

## Chapter 12

# Interpenetrating Mythologies

### **The Group as Patient**

Up until now, I have focussed on the individual and his or her personal mythology. Most of our education as therapists focuses on the individual. The group, without which real change is very limited, has remained in the background. It is now time to explore what happens to people when their personal mythologies interact.

Of course, when a group exists for a while, it also develops its own cultural mythology. Each group can be analyzed much as if it were an individual. Very small groups, the dyad or couple, for example, and very large groups, a whole nation, are very complex. The very small and the very large are more difficult to “diagnose” than middle sized groups. Couples are especially difficult because a true intimacy between two people requires two differentiated individuals with their full personal myths fully optimized. Truth frequently leads to complexity; intimacy, truth in relating, leads to great complexity.

Nations, at the other extreme, are so large and complex that there is room for all the individual stories to coexist within their cultural mythologies. America, for example, could be criticized as having a disempowerment cultural mythology. We foster an adolescent immaturity of economic impulsivity, instant narcissistic gratification, denial of death, and welfare for the poor and rich alike. Yet America holds immense diversity, individual self expression, and creativity. Messy democracy seems a natural space for complexity to operate optimally. The very small and the very large frequently enter the complexity space of emergent self organization. The middle usually needs to be pushed into complexity.

Middle sized groups—businesses, corporations, families, fraternal orders, and such—are often easier to “diagnose.” Microsoft Corporation, for example, seems to favor the abandonment story. The Corporation stands alone, staffed by workaholics, rejecting and being rejected by other software

companies. Middle sized groups have many ways to institutionalize or weed out misfitting members and their disturbing personal myths. Thus, linearizing the complexity somewhat, these middling groups create an opportunity for a profitable consulting industry to assist them in reclaiming their emergent creativity.

Murray Bowen, a giant in family therapy, wryly asserts that people pick partners who function at equal (but different) levels of dysfunction (Kerr and Bowen, 1988). I believe we form groups (collectives of two or more persons) with people we can hold our own with, whether or not we feel or are conscious of being peers. We determine “equality” by calibrating and interpenetrating our personal mythologies.

Given “equality,” the first phase of group building is typically exciting, flexible, exploratory, and, of course, deterministically chaotic (Briggs and Peat, 1999). For couples, this period can last up to three years or until the first offspring (or major problem) is born, which ever comes first (Fisher, 1992). Then, as Margaret Wheatly says, “Passion mutates into procedures” (1996). At a posthumously identifiable point, the group begins to petrify:

Eventually, competition, hierarchy, and power begin to dominate the group’s activity. Negative feedback loops controlling the way things are done become reinforced, and soon the [group’s] strange attractor is reduced to a limit cycle . . . Individual creativity is subordinated to the routines and routinized beliefs of the [group].

—John Briggs and F. David Peat, *Seven Life Lessons of Chaos*

At its best, a group is a crucible for self growth. Couples have intimacy; nations have wide ranging choices giving members more degrees of freedom and increased possibilities for a flow of positive feedback. Middle sized groups with determined purposes, like that of Microsoft, usually reduce choices and degrees of freedom and elevate the importance of the group over that of the individual. This destroys the complexity space. To keep groups complex and self organizing, there must be room for some chaos. In essence, this is achieved by supporting each member’s equal voicing of feelings, diversity, and divergent points of view.

My interest is not in group cultural myths but in the interaction of personal mythologies within groups of all sizes. What happens to people when their core myths interface? Whether individual, couple, or group, I am concerned about the interactions that support spontaneity, as this assures the creation of dynamic complexity.

### **Wedded Wheels: The Pairing of Personal Mythologies**

An excellent example of complementarity in relationship is O’Henry’s story, “The Gifts of the Magi.” A devoted couple, just getting by, prepares for Christmas. He has a treasured old pocket watch, a family heirloom. She has beautiful, long tresses, never cut. He sells his watch for money to buy a lovely comb for her. She cuts and sells her hair for money to buy a gold watch chain for him. They share a poignant Christmas together.

The popularity of this story is connected to the felt truth about coupling: We never get to just “wed” the qualities we want; we must give up something precious in order to claim them. We spend the first thirty to forty years of our lives living the half-life myths we crafted to assure survival and growth. What we give up is the secure half-life; what we claim is wholeness.

Individuals leave families to discover their personal myths. Then they enter relationships to change them. Intimate relationships have been called the crucible of the self. To the degree that personal myths are challenged and changed they are just that. Transformed towards greater wholeness, partners create families, groups, corporations, and nations, separately and together. The wholeness that individuals achieve in paired relationships contributes to the wholeness of all the other groups they co-create.

What happens when two people, each with a comprehensive and largely unconscious personal mythology to live by, meet to engage in a common purpose? How their personal myths operate in their choices of each other and with each other in day to day relating is a complex, relatively uncharted territory. I will offer a few maps to help in the exploration. Despite the section heading, coupling is not about

“marriage.” It is about the pairing for any purpose of any two equally functioning people, whether to play, work, or live together and/or get married. The partners can be friends, business associates, group therapy co-leaders, lovers, or couples (or all of these).

In general, I ascribe to the theory, supported by many writers and researchers (Bader and Pearson, 1988; Berne, 1972; Kerr and Bowen, 1988; Hendrix, 1988, 1992; Sabelli, 1989; Scarf, 1987; Snarch, 1991) that individuals seek out partners whose talents, skills, vulnerabilities, and deficits are complementary in some way. People seem to have an interpersonal radar that locks in on each other to find the perfect partner, given their ages and stages and the strength of their personal myth connectivity.

Over time, the very things we loved about our partner in the beginning, the things that attracted us, become the things we loathe in the challenging phases of relationship development. Marty loves Jerry’s solid calm and common sense; Jerry loves Marty’s joy of life and sense of humor. A few years into their relationship, Jerry thinks Marty is an undependable flake and Marty thinks Jerry has become boring and unimaginative.

I believe that the dynamics of pairing are well explained and assisted by the Healing Circle. The underlying personal mythologies provide the channels for connectivity if not bonding between people and also the paths toward each individual’s development of a mature self. In their daily interpenetration, the core personal myths each person has strengthen or weaken the influence of the evolutionary processes of relating listed below:

1. Myth Resonance: The underlying stories, themes, values, and roles are mostly compatible. A stabilizing force.
2. Role Reciprocity: Partners will interlock personal mythologies through role reciprocation. A stabilizing process.
3. Challenges of the Half-Life: Once interlocked, partners’ half-life patterns present unique challenges to growth. A changing process.
4. Sociogenesis: Evolving to optimal wholeness, partners develop levels of acceptance (self and other), ego free adaptability, intentionality, and courage that are highly generative for themselves, their families, their communities, and the whole of life. A changing process.

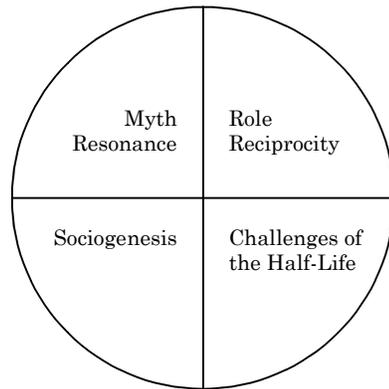


Chart 148. Processes of Relating

### *Myth Resonance*

In physics, “resonance happens when systems vibrate or swing in sympathy with each other so that the tiniest connection between them progressively magnifies their mutual interaction. Place an E tuning fork on a badly tuned violin and nothing will happen. But if the top string is in tune, it will resonate in sympathy with the fork” (Briggs and Peat, 1999). Myth resonance is the attunement of plot, character, and/or symbolism. The individual personal myths of two people in partnership must be in resonance for them to remain together. A man with a “struggle for success” myth will not join with one who has inherited wealth, unless that one has a “disinheritance” myth. The underlying stories, themes, roles, and values (both conscious and unconscious) must be compatible; discovering the underlying compatibility may be the help a struggling partnership seeks. Generally, healers do not see partners with failed resonance because these relationships do not endure long enough for connecting or bonding to occur.

### *Role Reciprocity*

The personal mythology contains the overt and covert identities of its creator. Partners will interlock mythologies through role reciprocation. In intimate love relationships,

these roles are often embodied constellations of positive and negative traits of each person's childhood caretakers, with the negative being the more influential (Hendrix, 1988). We are, after all, driven to seek environments similar to those that wounded us so that we may heal (Fromm and Smith, 1989). Intimate love relationships are the primary vehicle for doing this.

Other relationships may also involve seeking childhood caretaker roles, of course, but usually this happens more in unequal partnerships (teacher and student, boss and employee, therapist and client) rather than equal ones. Sometimes the reciprocating roles are obvious, like a very expressive person partnering with a calm, quiet one. Other times they are embedded in a culture, like a resident doctor marrying a nurse. Usually they are less immediately accessible, requiring some exploration of the partners' stories. Seldom are they difficult to discover. The healer must help the partners uncover the roles of their personal myths that have interlocked in complementary symbiosis; this is almost always followed by growth.

### *Challenges of the Half-Life*

Folk wisdom holds that two halves make a whole or that our partners are our better half. When considering half-lives, nothing could be further from the truth. Seldom do two half-lives make a whole. Wholeness begets wholeness. But half-life challenges are the invitations to both personal maturity and deep interpersonal intimacy. By facing these challenges we arrive at our wholeness. I suspect that this may be the way that human beings do it. We cannot arrive at wholeness alone.

Theoretically, both half-life patterns of ricochet and reversal can be involved. However, I have not yet encountered anyone whose primary core myth is a pattern of reversal. Therefore, I will not include them in this chapter. Because reversal is a place where people can get stuck for years, however, I do not ignore them in the therapy process.

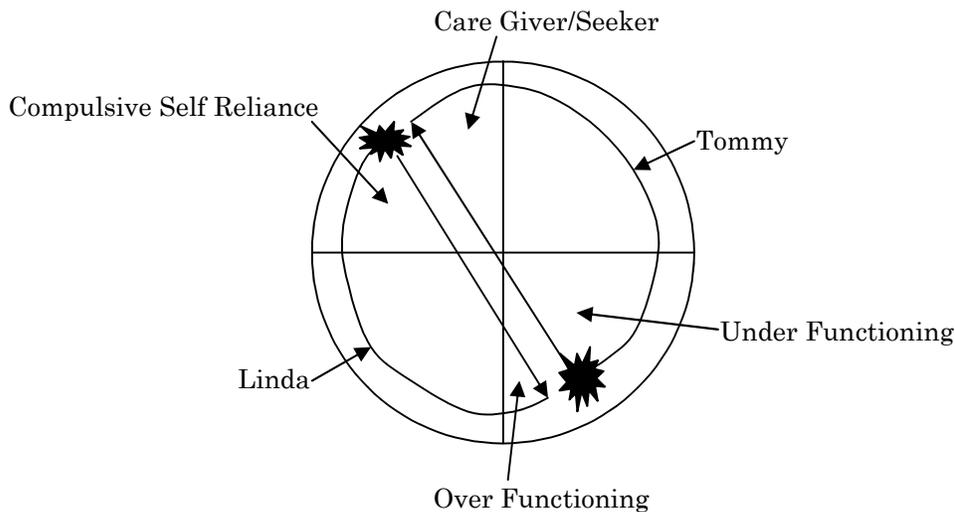
While there are only four patterns of half-life challenges, the unfolding stories are as many as there are people.

In working with pairs of personal mythologies, I first look for the ways that two person’s issues interlock, like a plug in a socket. Then I hypothesize about which core myth may underlie each person’s behavior regarding the presenting problem. When I have some clarity about the possibilities, I lay out the half–life templates for each person on a single quartered circle.

At this point, I am ready to begin testing my hypotheses with questions, spontaneity tests, role–plays, or meaning attributions. I often test the intimacy level of the pair by asking each to theorize about the other, based on their understanding of each others stories. Their willingness to do so and the quality of the information and insight determine how well they are going to be able to “self reference” their relationship.

The challenges of the half–life are where much of the work with partners takes place. There are four ways that these challenges interpenetrate the same circle. They can be **Complementary**, **Replicating**, **Crossed**, or **Mixed**. The following examples are intended to illustrate a way of thinking about relationships through the Healing Circle.

Chart 149. The **Complementary Pattern**



In the complementary pattern, one partner’s half–life fills half the circle; the other partner’s fills the other half. The half–lives mirror each other. In the example, Linda has

an abandonment half-life while Tommy has a disempowerment half-life.

Linda struggles with her partner who seems to keep abandoning her. As it turns out, Tommy is struggling with his disempowerment core myth and is finally beginning to claim personal power. This changes the underlying reciprocity of the role of cooperative helpee that he has been playing out in the relationship with Linda doing the over functioning helper. This deconstruction of role reciprocity is a typical issue in complementary patterns.

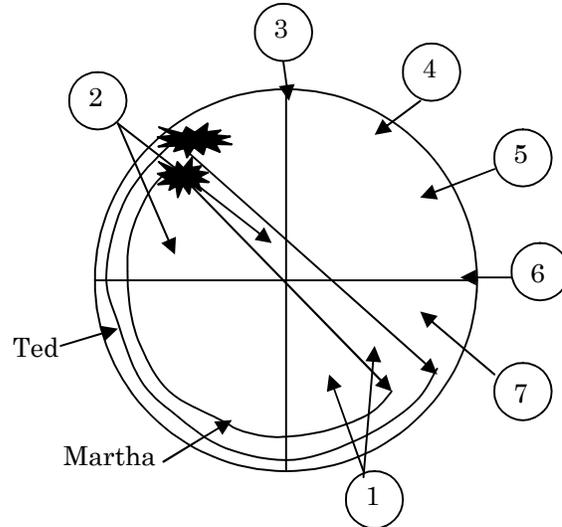
People who have abandonment myths frequently compensate by becoming over functioning, controlling doers, and they need cooperative folks who take direction with some degree of docility, if not gratitude. Of course, this is not truly satisfying to either party; for example, for the Abandonee, the cooperative one is never good enough, and for the Disempowered, the controlling one is too bossy and impossible to please. Linda's personal myth did not hold enough trust in others to seek out a permanent relationship with someone with nurturing qualities, like someone with a betrayal core myth. Nor did she have enough self to pick a partner with strong interdependence, like a person with a chaos core myth. Instead she chose a "Peter Pan" man whose competence and personal power had been seriously compromised.

Tommy was all too willing, at first, to be controlled and taken care of without having to ask for it or to be especially competent. For him, the early days of the relationship were heavenly. When he wanted an evening libation, for example, Linda knew his tastes and habits and his drink was in his hand as if by magic. Of course, she received no magic in return. And Tommy, unchallenged, began to feel more and more useless. Tommy began to resist Linda's control and to assert himself, albeit rebelliously and counter-dependently. This caused her to feel abandoned by him and brought out into the open her contempt for his incompetence. Linda began to complain about the lack of "magic" for her in the relationship—where were his thoughtfulness and attentions?

On the positive side, her competence and self sacrifice were great models for him as were his sociability and selfishness for her. Eventually, the pressure for wholeness and the inherent dissatisfactions of such half-lives on the home front brought them into the consultation room. He initiated the

therapy. So with their core myths in their hands, they began the change process.

Chart 150. The **Replicating Pattern**



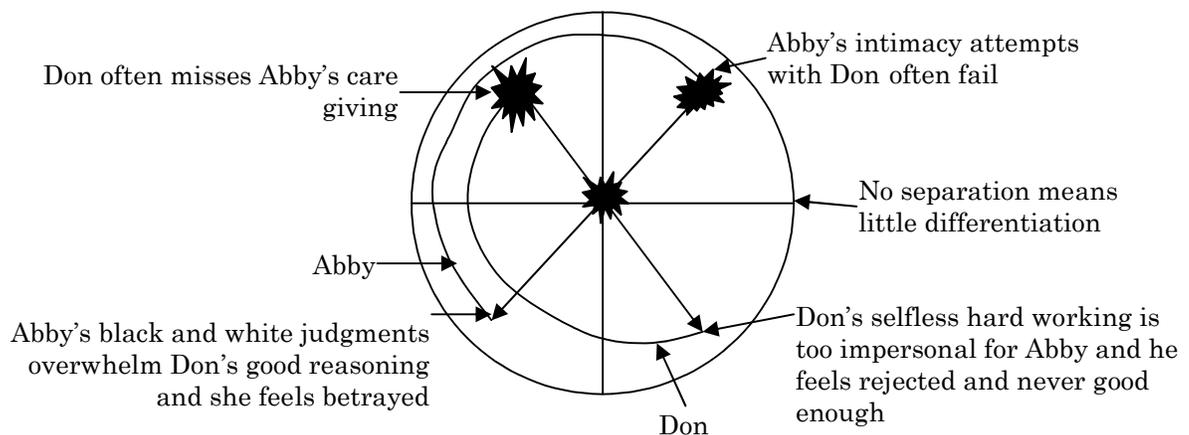
Partners' half-lives can replicate each other. In the example above, Ted and Martha both have core abandonment myths. When things are good, they are very good; when they are bad, they are twice as bad. Ted and Martha's life was perfect as long as their relationship resembled a business partnership rather than a marriage. Ted, a doctor, kept long office hours, extended hospital rounds, and a determined self-improvement program of reading and seminars. Martha, a psychologist, had an equally intense work regimen. While their intimacy was low frequency, they saw most things eye to eye. They were proud that their relationship did not need much tending. They made lots of money, spent little of it (having little free time), and their lovemaking was companionable if not frequent. A look at their replicated half-lives shows the strengths and weaknesses (by the numbers) of their relationship.

1. Their replicated half-lives allow them to share a dedication to and satisfaction with work, shared beliefs, and low personal and interpersonal maintenance.
2. Their nurturing of themselves and each other is only half-functional. They make great money, but cannot use any of it for recreation or relaxation.
3. They do not recognize accomplishments. They are locked in their professions doing more and better of the same activities. When Ted was offered a fantastic opportunity in another city, he was too busy to respond to it.

4. They are not called to adventures of new discovery.
5. They lack real intimacy skills. Their intimacy is untested because they seldom have conflicting wants and desires. They have very few wants and desires, and have no time to have dreams about other ways of living.
6. Neither Ted nor Martha is interested in change. They do not want to upset the comfort of their lives. They are both utterly focussed on their work.
7. They are only half challenged by life—only those things that their work presents them. Neither has ever engaged in an emotional fight. Neither knows the emotional or psychological depths of the other, much less themselves.

Then Martha gets pregnant. She and Ted contemplate abortion, but Martha's Roman Catholic upbringing stops her. For the first time as an adult, Ted is furious—and feeling guilty for feeling it. As the pregnancy advances, like an oncoming apocalypse, Martha begins to experience increasing and demanding needs, needs that Ted, when he can be made aware of them, cannot comprehend much less attend to. Martha begins to desire: she wants to lay off work; she wants the home office (Ted's space) converted to a baby room with all the trimmings; she wants Ted close by. They have their first full-blown fight when an emergency keeps Ted away from Martha's amniocentesis. But the real trouble begins after Ted's two seventy-hour work-weeks just after the birth of their baby daughter, Diana. As abandonees, they have no support group or family to help them. Martha's postpartum depression does little to blunt her participation in the "equal child-care war" she and Ted begin. Both feel that they are fighting for their survival. This is when they seek help.

Chart 151. The **Crossed Pattern**



Crossed patterns occur when half of one person's half-life overlaps with half of the other person's. In my experience, this is the most frequent pattern. People like the "his (her)," "mine," and "ours" combination. In the example on the previous page, Don's abandonment core myth overlaps with Abby's betrayal core myth.

Abby and Don are on their way to a couple's therapy session. Don is driving. Their usually pleasant togetherness spins out of control, erupting into chaos. It happens like this:

Both Don and Abby start to speak simultaneously. Don politely encourages Abby to go ahead. Abby does so. Upon finishing, Abby inquires about what Don was going to say. "Oh," he says, "I forgot." Abby teasingly says to Don: "Well, next time, don't defer to me and you won't lose what you were going to say." Within seconds they are both totally enraged. Don feels rejected and criticized. Abby feels misunderstood. Fifteen minutes of pitched fury shakily ends when Don tells Abby that he was feeling nervous about the therapy session and was therefore oversensitive.

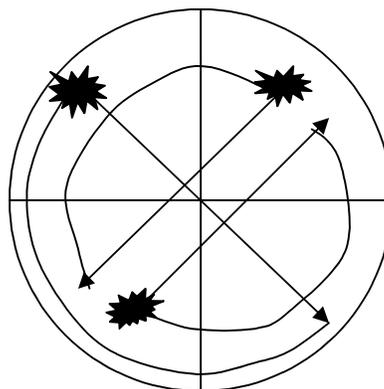
In the therapy session a little later, the fight resumes. Don is angry. Abby is crying but resentful. After several minutes of psychic slashing and burning between them, the therapist interrupts, asking Abby if she knows enough about Don's story to see why he would be willing to set himself aside and defer to her. After some shifting of gears, she remembers a part of Don's story that increases her tears. "Well, I don't see how it relates, but I'm remembering the night that Don's Dad left his family when he was five. He knocked on his Mother's bedroom door that night and asked if he could come into bed with her. She told him that he was the man of the house now and that men don't sleep with their mothers. Later he snuck back into his Mother's room and slept on the floor at the foot of her bed."

A light flicks on in her eyes: "Oh my God! He set aside his needs to defer to his Mother's." After some further discussion exploring Don's abandonment mythology that led to a half-life of self-deferment for the good of everybody else, the therapist interrupts again. "So Don. Do you know enough of Abby's story to see why she would be disturbed by your inability to remember what you were going to say?"

Having warmed to the task, Abby wants to share what she knows immediately, but the therapist urges her to give Don space to put things together. Soon Don theorizes that Abby's annoyance could be related to how her Mother would sometimes give Abby the silent treatment for three or four days if she didn't behave right. By now both Abby and Don are crying, and Abby adds more examples of her Mother's betrayals of her.

The session continues with the therapist pointing out the effects of their interlocking personal core myths. Don's myth of abandonment leads to his hard working self sacrificing; Abby's myth of betrayal leads to her righteous judgment of Don, even if tempered with teasing. Don's deferring to Abby is an unconscious home base behavior from the doing Quadrant III. Abby interprets Don's forgetting as an angry withdrawal from her because she should not have spoken first. This is an unconscious home base behavior from quadrant IV, blaming subsequent to perceived betrayal. In moments like these, neither Don nor Abby is authentic. Their half-lives prevent differentiation (a kind of rite of separation) in these moments, which push the core trauma into the crucible of the relationship. Resolution requires intimacy, like the sharing and acceptance of each other's vulnerabilities.

Chart 152. The **Mixed Pattern**



We all have lessons from each of the four quadrants of living. Sometimes, however, there is such consistency and interrelationship between multiple quadrants that it is as if

one or both partners have “lived” two half-lives. One had a wonderful early life, but lost a father to war. Mother remarried, and the step-father sexually abuses the preadolescent child. The other had abandoning parents and realized early that survival depended on self-sufficiency. Later, a hurricane strikes, wiping out the second one’s family and half the community. In my experience, the intrusion of chaos into an unfolding life is the most common feature of mixed challenges. Unless a trauma is especially strong, it usually gets “interpreted” into the existing core mythology rather than overlaying a whole new core myth pattern. The essence of severe psychological trauma is in the loss of faith in the order and meaningfulness of life (Van der Kolk, 1987). Belief in the old core myth is overlaid by a new core myth of disbelief and distrust in order and continuity. This is the case in the example on the previous page.

Jan and Candace are therapists in private practice. Jan began practicing three years ago and Candace one year ago. Jan has three times as many clients as Candace. Some months ago they began co-leading a group together. They met in psychodrama training, where Jan is one third into the process and Candace is preparing for final certification. Recently Candace has been feeling angry with Jan for not following protagonists and for pushing her own agendas on clients. She believes that Jan is not experienced enough as a psychodramatist. Jan feels resentful and rejected, but asserts that she must be doing something right since she has a full practice and seven of the ten group members are her clients anyway. They seek supervision. Their relationship is a mixed pattern:

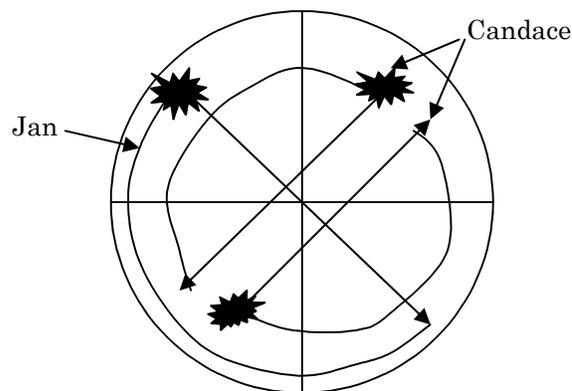


Chart 153. Co-therapists in Supervision

Both Jan and Candace have done years of therapy along with their education and training. Each brings rich and well-honed self awareness to the supervision process. Jan identifies herself as having a core abandonment myth. Candace sees herself as having an early core betrayal myth and a later core chaos myth. A trusted neighbor sexually abused her throughout her early adolescence.

Jan believes that she is driven into home base Quadrant III over functioning by the judgmental looks she sees on Candace's face. Candace admits that she is feeling judgmental a lot of the time, but especially during the incident that brought them into supervision. She knows that this is her betrayal home base Quadrant IV behavior. Jan confronts Candace about this: "You were judging me before I started over functioning; that's what got me started."

After some deeper exploration of the event, Candace becomes clear that just before Jan's overdoing she had had a "wild idea" about an intervention. This intervention was decidedly not following the client working at the time. Further self referencing leads Candace to understand that the "wild idea" was generated by her chaos myth driven behavior. She was being "sociopathically charismatic" in her fantasy intervention.

Her avoidance of being "sociopathically charismatic" (i.e., not following the protagonist) was to use her betrayal mythology to feel betrayed by Jan. This put her back in Quadrant IV in a more acceptable way with righteous indignation regarding Jan's behavior even though Jan had not done anything yet. Candace was also unconsciously escaping the ambivalence she felt about the intrusive "wild idea" that she both wanted and did not want to do. Jan, picking up on Candace's scowl, imagined that she was working too slowly or something and began to aggressively make something happen.

After further discussion both Jan and Candace agreed that the "wild idea" might have been a brilliant intervention. The supervision pointed out that home base behaviors are not all bad or deplorable. Home base behaviors obviously have some utility. And wild ideas generated by a defense against the threat of chaos—in this case the client was close to rage—can be observed and evaluated before implementing or discarding them.

From this session, Jan and Candace learned that core myths not only hinder they also help. They learned that the triggering of core myths is quite frequent and that we notice them primarily when things go wrong. They also saw that when two core myths in the same person occupy the same quadrant, that person can quantumly slide back and forth between them. In Candace’s case, the distress of the client’s potential rage caused her to defend against her chaotic feelings (Quadrant IV) by generating a “wild idea” to save herself. Her spontaneity sputtered when she wanted to implement her idea and she felt dissociated from the process. Distress from this pushed her into her betrayal myth in Quadrant II. She relieved this second distress by returning to Quadrant IV, where she judged Jan’s inadequacy. The chart below maps this process.

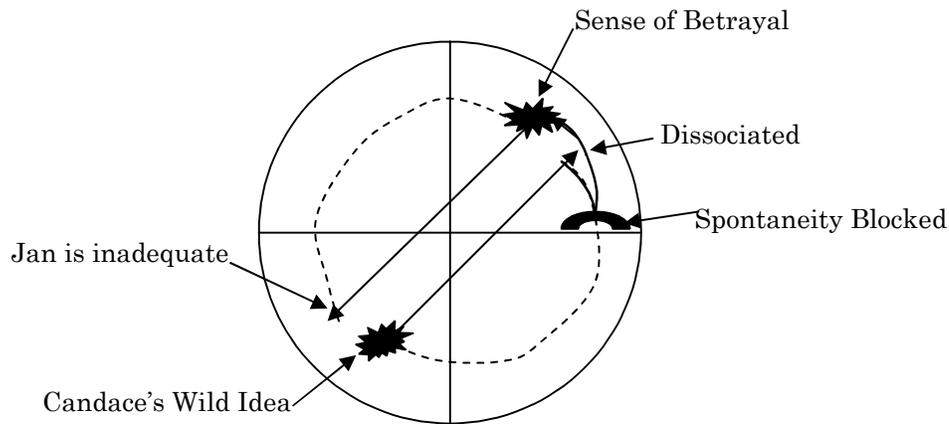


Chart 154. Candace’s Path

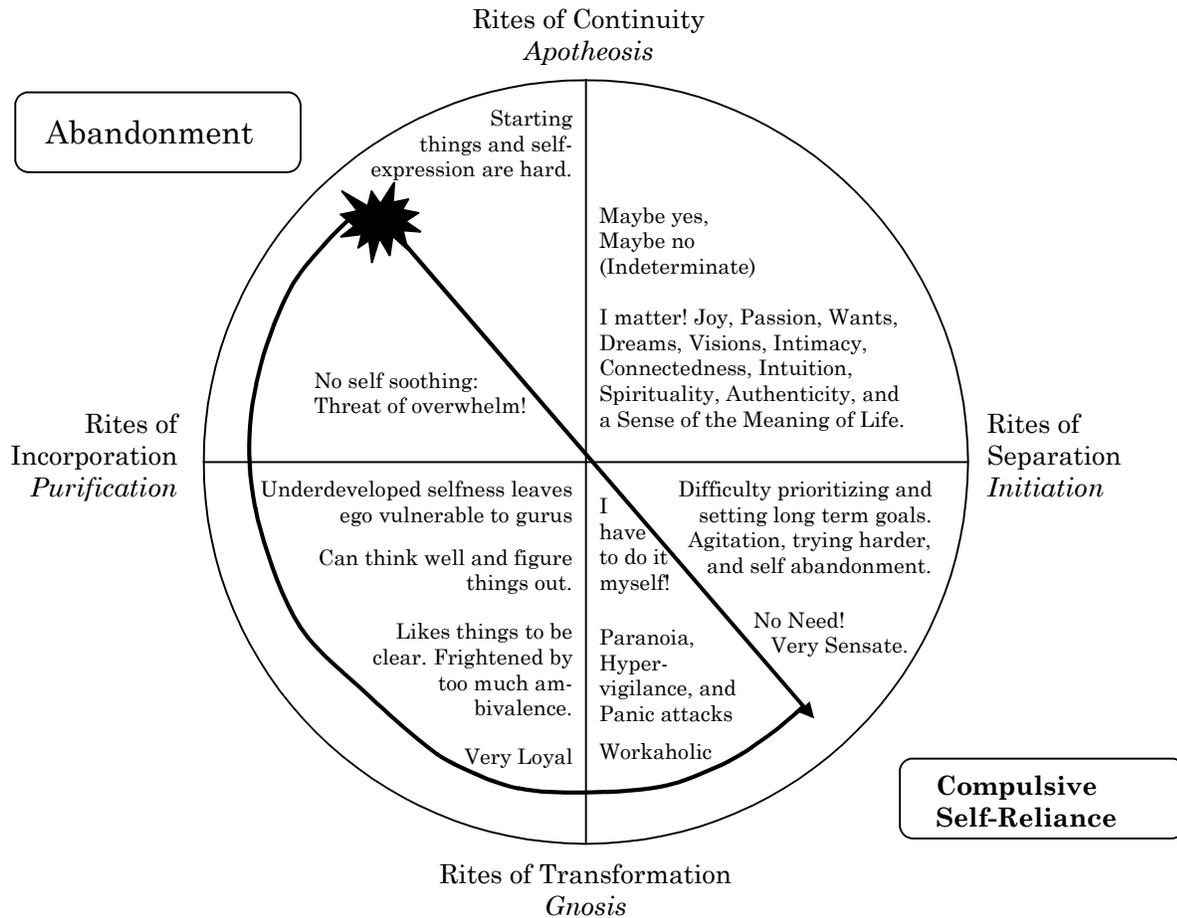
On the following pages, you will find four charts reiterating the half-lives that individuals wounded in the different quadrants bring to relationships. Imagine them paired on a single quartered circle and then notice what is reinforced, conflicted, and missing. After determining which half-live(s) are involved for each person, draw them both on a single quartered circle and begin testing the resulting hypotheses against the history and the personal experiences of the pair.

**Quadrant I: Spring**

Developmental Stage: Protective Holding Environment  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Action: Nurturing  
 Develops Feeling Function  
 Relationships: Dependent  
 Trauma: Abandonment and Neglect  
 Healthy Myth: I feel loveable.

**Quadrant II: Summer**

Developmental Stage: Meaningful Connection to Other  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Action: Intruding  
 Develops Wanting (Intuition) Function  
 Relationships: Interdependent  
 Trauma: Betrayal  
 Healthy Myth: I want things because I matter.



**Quadrant IV: Winter**

Developmental Stage: Modeling of Reality  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Function: Structuring  
 Develops Thinking Function  
 Relationships: Independent  
 Trauma: Chaos and Disorder (Extreme Abuse)  
 Healthy Myth: I know myself and understand things.

**Quadrant III: Fall**

Developmental Stage: Challenges to Mastery  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Action: Challenging  
 Develops Doing (Sensation) Function  
 Relationships: Counter- and Co-dependent  
 Trauma: Humiliating Disempowerment  
 Healthy Myth: I can handle things.

When working with partners, consider the whole quadrant within the half-life as a strength, the half quadrants as problematic under stress, and the whole quadrant outside the half-life as indeterminate (unpredictable). Distinguish between when one partner is stressed and when both are. Look for what is missing, including rituals.

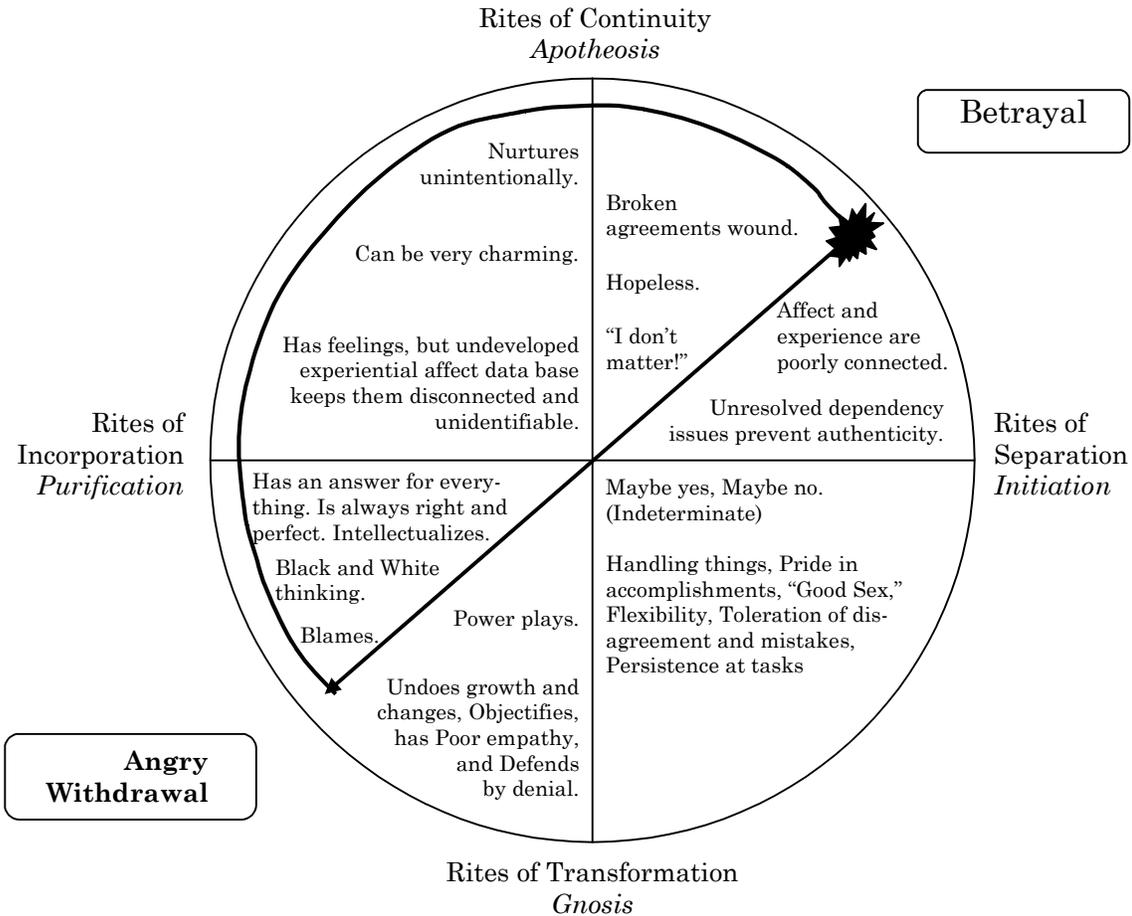
Chart 155. Abandonment Mythology (Lovelessness)

**Quadrant I: Spring**

Developmental Stage: Protective Holding Environment  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Action: Nurturing  
 Develops Feeling Function  
 Relationships: Dependent  
 Trauma: Abandonment and Neglect  
 Healthy Myth: I feel loveable.

**Quadrant II: Summer**

Developmental Stage: Meaningful Connection to Other  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Action: Intruding  
 Develops Wanting (Intuition) Function  
 Relationships: Interdependent  
 Trauma: Betrayal  
 Healthy Myth: I want things because I matter.



**Quadrant IV: Winter**

Developmental Stage: Modeling of Reality  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Function: Structuring  
 Develops Thinking Function  
 Relationships: Independent  
 Trauma: Chaos and Disorder (Extreme Abuse)  
 Healthy Myth: I know myself and understand things.

**Quadrant III: Fall**

Developmental Stage: Challenges to Mastery  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Action: Challenging  
 Develops Doing (Sensation) Function  
 Relationships: Counter- and Co-dependent  
 Trauma: Humiliating Disempowerment  
 Healthy Myth: I can handle things.

When working with partners, consider the whole quadrant within the half-life as a strength, the half quadrants as problematic under stress, and the whole quadrant outside the half-life as indeterminate (unpredictable). Distinguish between when one partner is stressed and when both are. Look for what is missing, including rituals.

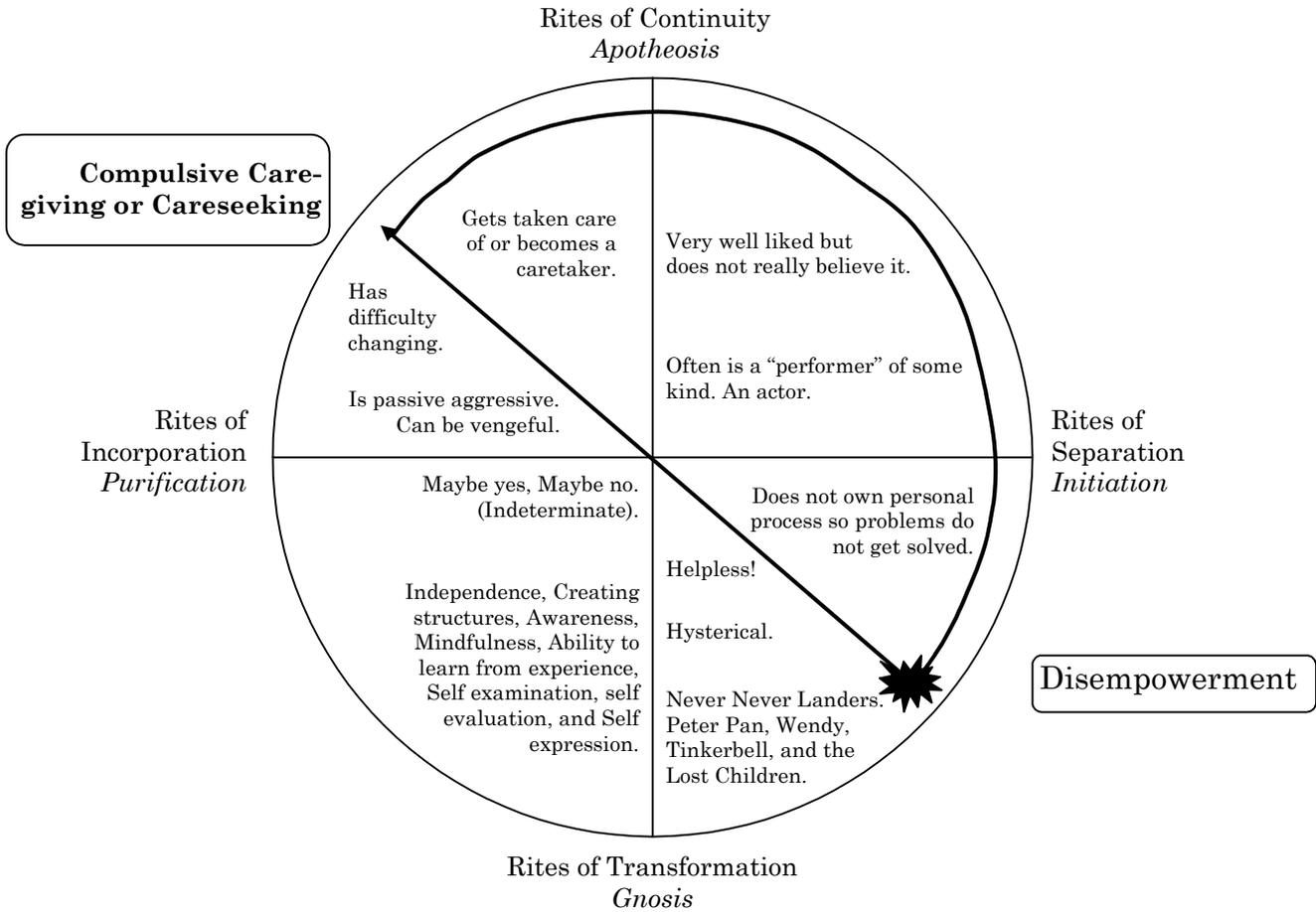
Chart 156. Betrayal Mythology (Joylessness)

**Quadrant I: Spring**

Developmental Stage: Protective Holding Environment  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Action: Nurturing  
 Develops Feeling Function  
 Relationships: Dependent  
 Trauma: Abandonment and Neglect  
 Healthy Myth: I feel loveable.

**Quadrant II: Summer**

Developmental Stage: Meaningful Connection to Other  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Action: Intruding  
 Develops Wanting (Intuition) Function  
 Relationships: Interdependent  
 Trauma: Betrayal  
 Healthy Myth: I want things because I matter.



**Quadrant IV: Winter**

Developmental Stage: Modeling of Reality  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Function: Structuring  
 Develops Thinking Function  
 Relationships: Independent  
 Trauma: Chaos and Disorder (Extreme Abuse)  
 Healthy Myth: I know myself and understand things.

**Quadrant III: Fall**

Developmental Stage: Challenges to Mastery  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Action: Challenging  
 Develops Doing (Sensation) Function  
 Relationships: Counter- and Co-dependent  
 Trauma: Humiliating Disempowerment  
 Healthy Myth: I can handle things.

When working with partners, consider the whole quadrant within the half-life as a strength, the half quadrants as problematic under stress, and the whole quadrant outside the half-life as indeterminate (unpredictable). Distinguish between when one partner is stressed and when both are. Look for what is missing, including rituals.

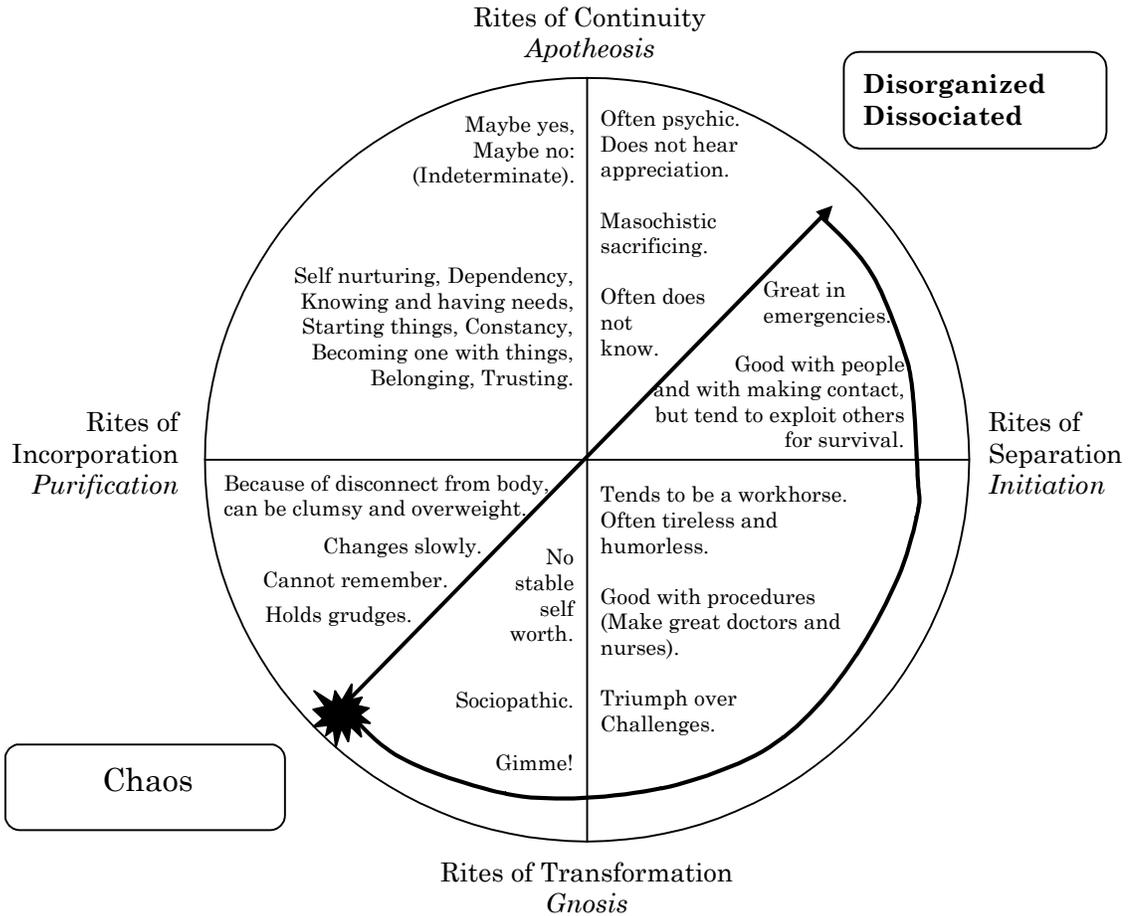
Chart 157. Disempowerment Mythology (Powerlessness)

**Quadrant I: Spring**

Developmental Stage: Protective Holding Environment  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Action: Nurturing  
 Develops Feeling Function  
 Relationships: Dependent  
 Trauma: Abandonment and Neglect  
 Healthy Myth: I feel loveable.

**Quadrant II: Summer**

Developmental Stage: Meaningful Connection to Other  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Action: Intruding  
 Develops Wanting (Intuition) Function  
 Relationships: Interdependent  
 Trauma: Betrayal  
 Healthy Myth: I want things because I matter.



**Quadrant IV: Winter**

Developmental Stage: Modeling of Reality  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Function: Structuring  
 Develops Thinking Function  
 Relationships: Independent  
 Trauma: Chaos and Disorder (Extreme Abuse)  
 Healthy Myth: I know myself and understand things.

**Quadrant III: Fall**

Developmental Stage: Challenges to Mastery  
 Parental (Therapeutic) Action: Challenging  
 Develops Doing (Sensation) Function  
 Relationships: Counter- and Co-dependent  
 Trauma: Humiliating Disempowerment  
 Healthy Myth: I can handle things.

When working with partners, consider the whole quadrant within the half-life as a strength, the half quadrants as problematic under stress, and the whole quadrant outside the half-life as indeterminate (unpredictable). Distinguish between when one partner is stressed and when both are. Look for what is missing, including rituals.

Chart 158. Chaos Mythology (Mindlessness)

### *Sociogenesis*

Sociogenesis is a concept developed by J. L. Moreno. When members of a partnership have achieved optimal self organization by learning how to richly interconnect their personal myths, they are truly liberated to co–create a new world together. Sociogenesis is self organization in the social sphere. Evidence suggests that evolution is an interlocking partnership of natural selection and self organization that leads not to perfection but to greater levels of self organization, order for free (Kauffman, 1993). Evolution is not just “chance caught on the wing” (Kauffman, 1993) nor is it survival of the fittest. Nor is human pair bonding. When pairs work to understand themselves and the meanings of their lives together, they participate not only in their own growth, but also in the evolution of social reality.

### **The Self Organization of Human Systems**

Human beings are born into and grow up, work, play, and change in groups. Where and how people fit together in their mutual and necessary groupings are the subjects of sociometric study. Sociometry is the measurement and treatment of groups. According to Moreno:

Sociometry is, first of all, a theory and then a method—a method of how to gather the really vital facts about the inter-individual relationships among people living in social groups and how to immediately remedy the frictions among their members with a minimum of effort.

—*Who Shall Survive?* (1978)

Moreno considered sociatry, the scientific application of sociometry, his greatest contribution. Just as psychiatry was the treatment of the individual, sociatry was the treatment of the group. The purpose of sociatry was the healing of all of mankind (Moreno, 1978). Moreno viewed his theory of spontaneity and its relationship to creativity within the cultural conserve as a spiritual vision. In his perspective, God needs humankind to fulfill His destiny. All God’s creations are auxiliary egos in His divine psychodrama about Love. Human creativity is our spark of divinity within us and demands a co–creative stance with the Godhead. Sociatry was a means to implement the creativity of mankind. Moreno be-

lieved that sociometric techniques were as revolutionary for today as Christianity was in its beginnings.

Moreno was ahead of his time. Moreno was an early complexity theorist in that he looked at the human propensity to form groups for sustenance, growth, and healing from a non-Newtonian perspective. Moreno and other sociometrists were consulted by governments to assist in things like refugee housing, education of children, management of prison populations, community planning, and the selection and training of military officers. His formulations intuitively recognized the nonlinearity of the social reality. Sociometric tests are true “quantum” measurements: They change the groups they measure.

Sociometry fell into disfavor after thirty years of success throughout the forties, fifties, and sixties (Blake and McCause, 1989). A retrogressive movement in the “soft” social sciences (including psychology and psychiatry) delayed the emerging paradigm shift to the quantum and the complex. The social sciences stretched themselves to fit into the classical physics mold, perhaps hoping to achieve legitimacy in the scientific community (Mendelson, 1989). The community healing interventionist stance of sociometry was purged from academic programs and therapists and consultants were trained to be neutral observers.

The new cognitive, complexity, and computer sciences are reactivating interest in sociometry and sociatry (Blake and McCause, 1989; Carlson–Sabelli et al, 1992; Hale, 1987a; Hart, 1987; Hoffman et al, 1992; Remer, 1996; Remer and Betts, 1998; Treadwell and Leach, 1987; Treadwell et al, 1998). As the knowledge of complex, dynamic systems emerging from the transition zones between chaos and order grows, sociometry, with its rich methodology for intervention in complex human groups, will get new attention.

Sociometry is a subtle resistance–avoiding tool for effective change. Techniques of sociometry and the sociometric approach are highly generative of new information regarding discernment of differentiation of choices among group members (Williams, 1994). These methods, especially when developed in action, “bring out the patterns that connect persons, objects, actions, perceptions, ideas, feelings, events, and beliefs” (Williams, 1994). The strange attractors of human choices can be mapped in the offices, workplaces, and homes of the groups assisted. These community “maps of meaning”

originate from and interpenetrate with the personal mythologies of the group members who created them. Measurements change the measured.

I will discuss sociometry as a theory, a practice, and tests and techniques that intentionally intervene in the spontaneous self organization of human groups. My concern is with the emergence of the social reality from the transition zones between the chaos of possibilities in the sociomatrix and the conserve of existing societies.

In *Sociometry, Experimental Method, and the Science of Society* (1951), Moreno describes three dimensions of society: **external society**, the **sociomatrix**, and the **social reality**. Dynamically, he viewed them in Hegelian terms: the external society, the thesis; the sociomatrix, the antithesis; and the social reality, the synthesis. Chaos and complexity theories improve upon this linear modeling. The external society is the order; the sociomatrix is the chaos; and the social reality is the complex, dynamic system emerging from the tension in the transition zones between them.

### *The External Society*

The external society consists of all the tangible and visible groupings of which society exists, whether they are large or small, legal or illegal, or formal or informal. Any external society of a group may be described by explicating the organizational charts, laws, rules, and norms used to guide that particular group in achieving its purpose. To the degree that the external society is out of sync with the sociomatrix (described below), there will be tension and conflict. Generally, the sociometrist attempts to narrow the discordance between the external society and the sociomatrix by bringing the external society into congruence with the underlying socioemotional structure of the sociomatrix (Mendelson, 1989).

### *The Sociomatrix*

The sociomatrix consists of all the possible invisible morphic fields and their constantly shifting interrelationships. The morphic fields are created by the relational choices made by group members expressing their telic valences (attraction, repulsion, ambivalence, or neutrality) towards each other. These fields are depicted in the deployment of group members in the action space of the office,

workplace, or home or in charts on paper. A sociometric test, like an action sociogram, momentarily stops the shifting of fields. Isolates, stars, pairs, triads, quads, polygons, chains, and other forms of relationship are concretized by creating a freeze frame of the sociomatrix at the moment of decision on a criterion. Each person seeks the personal optimal fitness within the group that his or her personal mythology currently permits.

The sociomatrix is constantly changing. It has four aspects that can be drawn and quartered on the circle:

1. The Sociometric Cycle: The holding environment of the Self in the social reality.
2. Tele: The process that attracts individuals to one another or that repels them. The flow of feeling between people. The force that links people to other people.
3. Operating Techniques and Principles: The processes by which the social reality emerges from the interplay between the external society and the sociomatrix. The processes that activate self organization in the social reality.
4. The Sociod: The evolving fractal of the total human community.

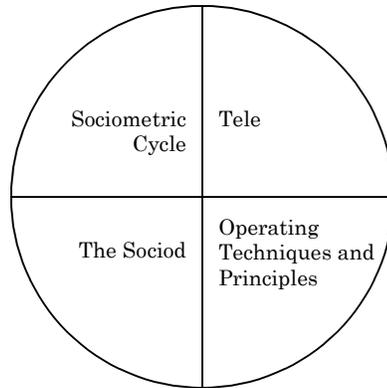


Chart 159. The Four Aspects of the Sociomatrix

### The Sociometric Cycle

I will examine these four aspects of the sociomatrix in more detail, beginning with the Sociometric Cycle. In an open, complex system, a person will cycle through the sociometric positions available. Each person must find a fit within the various social groups of which he or she is a member. At best, this is an intentional process that works out the optimal position from the personal internal and the social external dynamics of the situation. At worst, our social destiny

is thrust upon us. Usually, however, we are more influenced by the habits and expectations of our personal mythologies into a kind of social predestination.

We begin life, if we are reasonably lucky, as a **Positive Star** in our Mommy's or Daddy's arms. As we get older, and our wants conflict with our parents, we become **Stars of Positive–Negative Incongruity**. Eventually, we separate, becoming **Rejectees**, rejecting our parents and being rejected by them, hopefully temporarily. Finally, we move into the **Isolate** position to incubate our new changes and re-emerge to a new beginning and start all over. All other things being equal, the sociometric positions are a part of a natural cycle of emergence, expansion, retraction, and re-emergence. The healthy person (like a healthy group) is constantly changing and holds different positions in every group he or she might belong to.

However, the sociometric structure of a group, interconnected by telic attractions and repulsions, is constantly changing from criterion to criterion and task to task. There are laws (discussed below) regarding the formation of the sociomatrix that do not take into consideration the suffering of the individual, whether rejectee, isolate, overburdened star, or star of incongruity.

Moreno hypothesizes what he called one's sociometric destiny. Because of the reciprocal nature of the telic effects (discussed below), people would learn their place in the sociomatrix. Habit and familiarity within their personal mythologies could lead them to feel destined to produce the behaviors and roles that would keep them locked into a particular sociometric position. Or people could develop a belief that their most familiar sociometric position is the only one, or that the best one is to be the Positive Star. Thus Moreno invented role tests, role training, spontaneity tests, and psychodrama (for individual change) and sociodrama (for larger group changes) to help people overcome their sociometric destinies.

Starting with the Positive Star, it is generally no problem to convince people about the positive aspects of feeling chosen, of being popular. It may take a few well-designed action sociograms to highlight that one is chosen far in excess of his or her capacity to reciprocate and far in excess of his or her needs. It is nice to have a smorgasbord, but torture to have to eat the whole table of delectable dishes. A person not

pathologically attached to positive stardom will move eventually.

In the natural flow, that person might begin to say *no* (even though he or she continues to be chosen) and gradually become the Star of Incongruity. These *no*'s are a tremendous energy boost within a group, in part because the roles vacated by the positive star are available for others. The star of incongruity herself (or himself) is also a lightning rod of changing values and choices. It is a time of growth for the former positive star now the Star of Incongruity, and a great relief and release.

Assuming non-pathological movement, the incongruity star begins to generate reciprocal negative responses in other group members. The people who were choosing positively, even though refused, begin to reject the rejecter. This places the person in the place of initiation, the place where inter- and intrapersonal conserves are broken, making room for spontaneity and creativity. The position of the Rejectee is the doorway to our divinity.

Again, as the cycle continues, the Rejectee creates a new self-possibility through some significant step of personal growth. After this cathartic event, the person needs some time in recovery. In this place, the person is the Isolate. During this phase of isolation, the person has time to incubate the new developments, to incorporate them, and to grieve the losses of the old conserves. When this is done, he or she can re-emerge into the star position, choosing and, in time, being chosen.

A review of the chapter on development will show how this process replicates the passages in the development of a self. Of course, any glitches in these passages are maintained by our personal mythologies and re-enacted with each recycling. The developmental thrust and the passing of time carry us forward even though aspects of our development are frozen. Without unfreezing, these aspects block our spontaneity each time necessity or opportunity calls them out. If we were prevented from successful rejecting as teenagers, this will recycle over and over until we learn how.

For good health, we need to have comfortable access to all the sociometric positions. This was brought home to me personally with devastating power at a much needed sociometry workshop I had set up for members of the institute I

was a part of. It was a five-day workshop and on the third day we were all exhausted and could hardly imagine going on for another two days. There were a dozen of us plus the leader, who decided that it was a good time to lighten up. Thinking that nurturance was a good way to renew, she directed us to put our hands on the shoulder of the person we would most like to be nurtured by right then. Except for myself, everybody put their hands on me! I, who had spent years honing my charismatic stardom, was totally overwhelmed. I had nothing left to give—and there was nobody there for me. The consequences of this sociometric exercise changed the institute and me totally. It was the group catharsis of the workshop.

The day to day concerns of identity and sociometric position can be very pressing. Sometimes we know who we are and sometimes we do not. In fact, like most things, our identities seem to recycle. In that constant recycling, we fit into different positions in the different sociometric networks we belong to, at different times. We may be a Rejectee at home and a Positive Star at work, while with our best friend we are a Star of Incongruity—at the same time! According to Anne Hale (1987b), these positions cycle as follows:

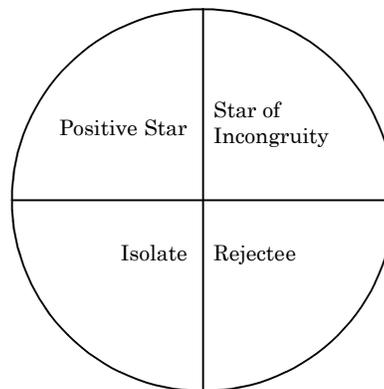


Chart 160. The Four Sociometric Positions

It is difficult for some to imagine that rejection might be a valuable thing or that isolation is a necessity. In our culture, we want to or think that we should be stars. When we are not (which is actually quite often), we feel out of place and unsure of our identity. The concept of the sociometric cycle is useful for finding the thread of selfness that brings more meaning, coherence, organization, and energy to our lives. The sociometric process allows us to thread the eye of the Self.

## Tele and Telic Effects

The experience of immediate attractions and/or repulsions towards others is common, if not universal. Moreno called the current of feeling that flowed between two (or more) people, *tele*. Tele is a phenomenon that bridges the implicate and the explicate orders of reality. Tele is a reciprocal (two-way) connection among the people in a relational system. Moreno saw tele as a projection of feelings across space.

In its implicate form, tele is a nonlocal (quantum) energetic link between all things. When synchronicity strikes, tele is the culprit. Tele is the energy of the implicate order. Feelings, like grief, excitement, anger, or fear are the energy of the explicate order, embodied as they are in the physical being of the person experiencing them. Tele is implicate energy. People experience feelings as “good” or “bad,” “positive” or “negative.” However, like absolute numbers in mathematics, tele, is neither positive or negative; it just is. According to Moreno:

1. *The fundamental principle underlying all forms of therapy is the [I/Thou (sic)] encounter and not the transference of psychoanalysis . . .*
2. *The scientific counterpart of encounter is tele. It is the cement that holds individuals and groups together. Group cohesiveness, reciprocity of relationships, communication, and shared experiences are functions of tele.*
3. *Tele is the constant frame of reference for “all” forms and methods of psychotherapy, including not only professional methods of psychotherapy like psychoanalysis, psychodrama, or group psychotherapy, but also non-professional methods like faith healing, or methods which have apparently no relation to psychotherapy, like Chinese thought reform. [Italics Moreno’s]*

—*Psychodrama, Volume II* (1975)

The valences of tele can be placed in the circle:

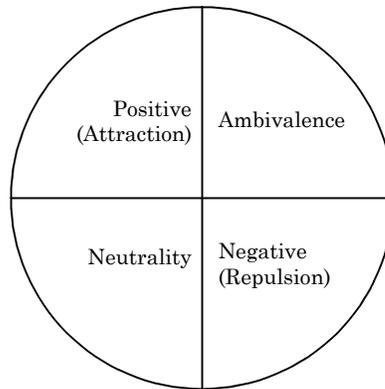


Chart 161. Telic Valences

Tele is also of the explicate order. Tele is interpersonal sensitivity to some real process in one person's life to a corresponding sensitivity in another person's life. There are numerous degrees of tele from none (neutrality) to intense and positive, negative, and ambivalent (both) valences. Tele may be potential and unactivated until two people are brought into proximity or until a particular sensitivity is activated by one or the other or by someone with whom they are both linked in the sociometric network. Tele is the linking medium of a sociometric network.

Personal mythologies hold unconscious criteria for attractiveness, proximity, self similarity, and social sensitivity. The morphogenetic fields of our personal mythologies interpenetrate and generate very quick responses of attraction, repulsion, ambivalence, or neutrality on multiple criteria.

According to Alton Barbour, tele is the result of dynamical (i.e., chaotic) and transactional processes by which we form impressions and reduce ambiguity. From the explicate order, "the tele effect is based on a sensitivity to interpersonal perceptual cues, is integrated into a total impression, and is compared with cultural and personal standards for acceptability. This whole tele-effect process is swift and largely unconscious" (Barbour, 1994).

But measuring tele is not easy. Its existence can be demonstrated when the perceptions that one person has about another match the perceptions that the observed person has about him or her self, and vice versa. It can also be demonstrated by comparing the structures of randomly associated groups and any other group of real people in real time.

To get at the bonds of attraction, repulsion, neutrality, and ambivalence that connect real people together in real groups, forming complex systems of interpenetrating structures and cohesiveness, you have to activate them and observe how they behave.

Tele operates through feeling, wanting, doing, and thinking in the here and now activated by proximity in space and time. Transference, an explicate phenomenon, is telic energy locked in time, provoking operations by cues that are non-present, spatially distant, and from the past. Transference, the projection of past feelings about people or objects in the present, is the link between implicate tele and explicate feelings.

Transference is a product of our personal mythologies, the constructs of meaning we create to explain our experiences. Tele changes our personal myths. Transference is the starter that, if explored and clarified, allows us to activate implicate tele where we were shut down to it before. Tele is also complementary to chance. I think that tele is essential to self organization and the generation of fractal dimensions of deterministic chaos. It is tele which skews group structures away from random connections and towards self organization.

There are various phases of tele:

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Mutual tele         | Equally reciprocated choices quantitatively and qualitatively                |
| Incongruous tele    | Unequal choices quantitatively or qualitatively                              |
| Transference        | Pathological tele  |
| Object transference | Attraction/repulsion to a projection upon an object or process (addiction)   |
| Chance              | No tele operating  |
| Role/Object Tele    | Attraction/repulsion to a role or an object that is experienced as rewarding |
| Infra-tele          | Unreciprocated choices   |
| Empathy             | One way tele   |

The phases of tele can be eightplexed:

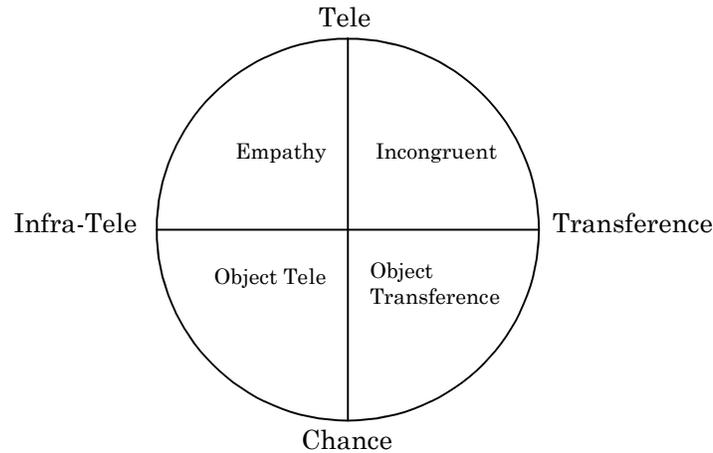


Chart 162. The Phases of Tele

### Operating Techniques and Principles

In general, the sociomatrix is subject to the operating techniques of sociometry and the principles of chaos and complexity theories. Thus the sociomatrix shows scaling with self similarity at various scales of magnification, moment to moment unpredictability, interconnectedness, general dependability, and high sensitivity to initial conditions.

Sociometry is a living method. People live by their personal mythologies. They “respond to meaning or information, that is their interpretations of behavior rather than the behavior itself” (Williams, 1994). When the members of a system are exposed to the strange attractors of their choices, new information enters the system. This increases the deterministic chaos of the system and pushes it from a linear limit cycle of the external society to the self organizing complexity of the social reality.

In my work with groups (a pair, family, team, corporation, or any collective of two or more people), I regularly teach sociometry, overtly, by explanation of the emerging group process, by designed interventions to effect the group process, and by spontaneous action explorations. I covertly teach it by attending to the sociometry of the group from moment to moment and criterion to criterion and by using the resulting information in every transaction in the group.

I point out, use, and quiz a group about nonverbal sociometrics. Who is sitting next to whom (or not)? What is the energy (telic) level of individual group members, of the whole group? How do you read the energy? (By attending to noise, alertness, facial coloration, body posture, movement, placement, etc.) Where are the hot spots in any given group configuration? What self statements may be inferred from the color of clothing, style of dress, and so on. These cues are important; they are always present and informing our intuition.

I frequently use action sociograms. An action sociogram invites group members to make a choice about group members, like who benefits most from a particular behavior, like blemish or criticism, and then to concretize that choice in an action, like placing a hand on the shoulder of the person chosen. The resulting array of group members in the group space depicts the sociogram of the group on that criterion. A sociogram is the distribution of telic valences of attraction and repulsion activated by the choices about the criteria; it is a freeze frame of a moment of the group's life. The stars, isolates, dyads, triads, chains and so on emerge in the moment. We can hypothesize about the meaning of these configurations and devise new choices to test our hypotheses.

Or perhaps we might do action sociograms in the form of group fantasies, either group focused or individually focused. We might spontaneously enact a metaphor put forth by a group member: "This group (family, team, company) is like a bunch of wild animals today." Then we work with what comes up, either sociodramatically (the beasts of prey, the prey, the others) or psychodramatically (the response of an individual role-playing a rabbit to an attack by another person role-playing an eagle).

Sociometric choice is introduced wherever possible: in picking partners to love, work mates for team formation, or neighbors to share living space. When issues surface, they are processed in the moment. Sociometry uncovers the ongoing social network of energetic, telic connections in a group. This interlocking web of relationships is what the group leader works with, after all. Of course, knowledge of the group's structure and one's place in it changes the group structure and one's place in it. And every choice is a potential bifurcation depending on the "reality" of the criterion. Thus the cohesion of a group is built.

Less frequently, I will do formal sociometric tests, usually in a research mode, giving a test before and after a piece of work or session. Usually this provides rich evidence of the fluidity of the group structure, changes in cohesion (mutual pairs, triads, quads, etc.), and changes in energy levels. I also work frequently with the social atom of a group member. A social atom is a fractal record of the minimum number of relationships a person needs to survive.

Where necessary I will do sociodramas. Sometimes these will be informal ones emerging out of the group process. Some members are crying for action, for example; others insist on caution. Rather than a democratic or authoritarian decision, I might set up a sociodrama of the roles around the question: the Actors, the Wait-and-Sees, the Go-alongs, the Don't Cares, the Resisters. Subsequent role-reversals inject information into the individuals and group, producing more complexity and, thus, more self organization.

Even in a deeply personal psychodrama a sociodramatic element can be introduced. A protagonist confronts an abusive parent, and the whole group is impacted. I can bring the protagonist out (and sometimes the auxiliary) and then invite group members who need to confront an abusive power (or members who would like to experience or who need to take the role of the confronted abuser) to step into the drama to express themselves.

Moreno proposed in *Who Shall Survive?* (1978) two sociometric laws that are especially relevant to this discourse. They are the Law of Sociodynamic Effect and the Law of Sociogenesis. The Law of Sociodynamic Effect holds that more choices go to fewer members (stars) all out of proportion to their needs and their ability to use them. A larger number remain unchosen or neglected (isolates). As choices are increased (by increasing the size of the group and/or the diversity of roles available, for example), the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. In short, choices do not randomly distribute. The systems' complexity is limited.

In extensive research (*Who Shall Survive?* 1978), Moreno and his research team discovered that isolates appeared at a frequency 250% greater than they would if only chance were operating while stars emerged at a 39% greater than chance frequency. Mutual choices (two people choosing each other) appeared at a 213% clip. More complex structures such as triads, squares, and other closed patterns generally

did not appear in chance. Chance groups were only possible on paper. Once people were in proximity to one another, tele would begin to operate. Anne Hale summarizes pointedly:

Access to roles, including access to role-taking, role-playing and role-creating so important to the emergence of the self, is denied by the sociometric selection process and by external reality. The result to the chosen few is rigidity, controlling behavior, overwork and depersonalization. The result to the underchosen is isolation, apathy, competition, and reduced activity.

—*Conducting Clinical Sociometric Explorations* (1985)

The Law of Sociogenesis holds that each generation and each person inherits a propensity to certain natural groupings, rituals, customs, and myths. The structures of order that emerge when any people come together for any length of time are like dreams, inherent in the minds of the people. The self organization of human society from simpler to more complex structures is based on the increase of criteria (choices) in the system and the telic (energetic) forces (attraction, repulsion, ambivalence, and neutrality). We have inherited our groupability. Sociogenesis is the origin of the morphic field of groups.

Because sociogenesis constitutes a complex, dynamic system, we can use the self similarity rule to look at child development, where group complexity and cohesiveness increase with age, autonomy, social skills, and awareness of cultural choices (criteria) to see how humans have evolved. Thus groups of children under six or seven years of age are poorly organized and lack cohesion. The groupings tend to be sequential dyads (“You’re not my best friend anymore. Bobby is”). Triads are tumultuous. And the children depend on parents or parent substitutes for order.

At about nine years old, children discover social gender, and a whole new world of criteria emerges. At ten, they discover things like race, ethnicity, social status, and disability. Cleavages in groups of children also appear. As they get older, the social reality of the children becomes more complex and dynamic. In other words, before age six or seven, human groups are linear; afterwards they become fractals. We can assume that early human behavior was more linear and that evolution produced human complexity.

### The Sociod: The Fractal of Community

The sociomatrix is alive and constantly changing. Yet there is an underlying interlocking webworks of morphic fields that together constitute what Moreno called the Sociod. The Sociod is the psychological totality of humanity. Moreno believed that social atoms, the smallest number of people a person needed to survive, were composed of telic structures. These “social atoms were parts of still larger networks that were parts of communities that were in turn parts of society itself” (Barbour, 1994).

The psychological totality of humanity is a dendritic fractal structure like the human brain or the circulatory system. It consists of linked psychological geographies of communities. When psychological geographies of communities and physical geographies of communities are different, people risk warfare, like the Serbs and the Croatians.

The psychological geography of a community consists of linked psychological networks. These in turn consist of linked social atoms, which are the smallest unit of social structure in a community. However, this is not the end of it. Each of us through our telic choices (of attraction, repulsion, ambivalence, or neutrality) is linked to the whole of humanity. And each person has a whole internal object world and a set of personal myths embedding a world of partial selves, an internal Sociod mirroring the external.

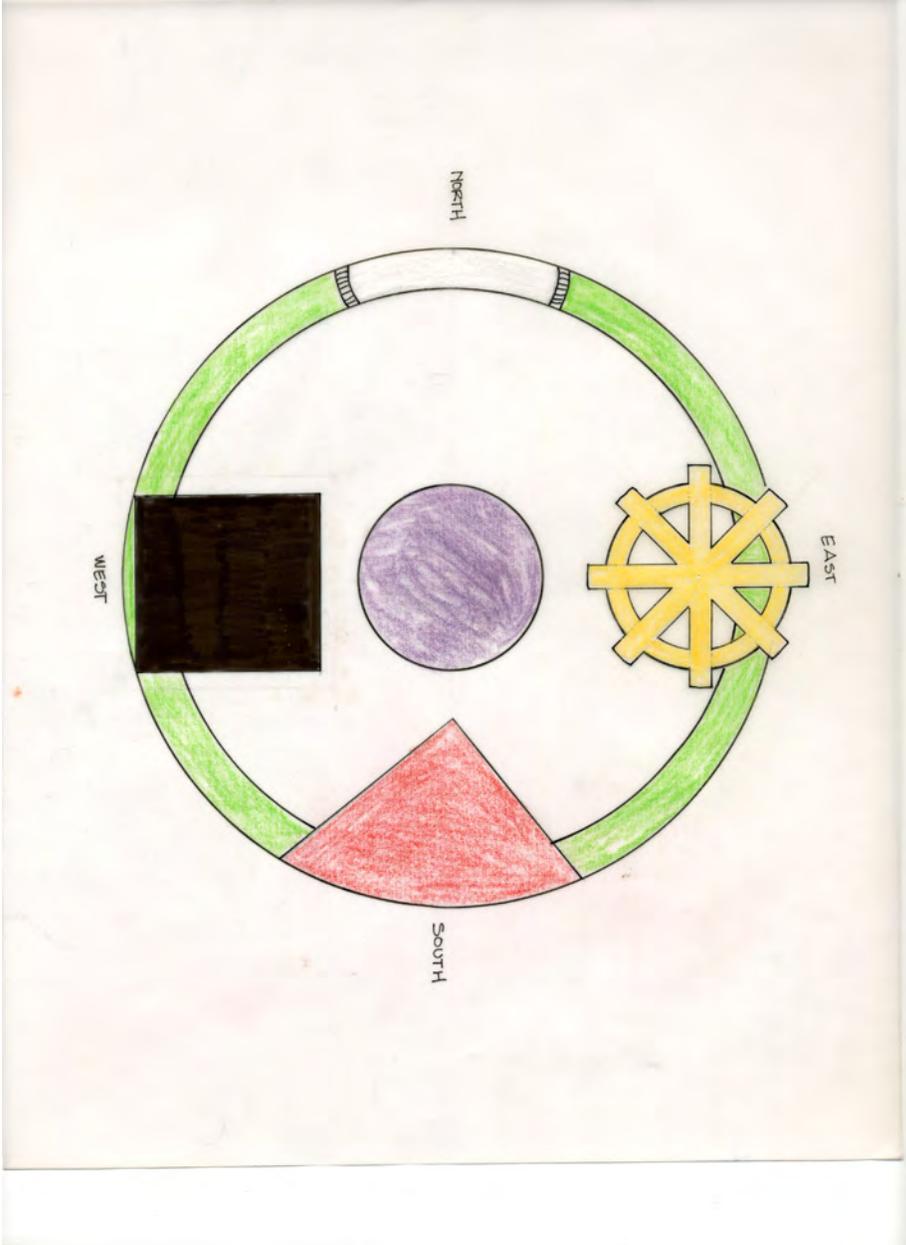
### *The Social Reality*

Out of the tension in the transition zones between the external (explicate) order of society and the underlying (implicate) chaos of the sociomatrix emerges the complex, dynamic system of social reality, the here and now actuality where we spend our lives. When the contrast between the external society and the sociomatrix is great, intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, and international conflict and violence erupt. As the changes in the Soviet Union in the late nineteen eighties and early nineties vividly demonstrate, the social reality can change virtually overnight.

I believe that knowing and using sociometric theory and techniques makes it possible to heal the social reality.

Effective group leaders of any therapeutic, religious, or political persuasion understand and use sociometric principles intuitively. Ineffective leaders encounter them, like dragons at the treasure trove, since sociodynamic effects are occurring spontaneously whether we are aware of them or not.

Whether it is focused on an individual, a group, a nation, or the world, all healing takes place within and draws its energy from the social reality. The social reality is what we live in, for better or worse. The linear sciences and the resulting political structures that logically follow from them have created a world that is far more painful and limiting than it needs to be. For all of our efficiencies of living, modern man works harder and for longer hours than our forefathers did. Early hunter-gatherer societies required its families to work about three hours a day to sustain themselves. Modern Western societies require husbands and wives to work sixty or seventy hours a week each. Even children sometimes have to add their labor to make the family sustainable. This does not leave much time for self referencing, not to mention relaxation, play, and social gathering. We live among strangers and pay a huge price for it. With the tools of the new sciences, tools like sociometry, perhaps we can more consistently and deliberately transform our external societies to release the immense creativity we are capable of. The resulting social reality could perhaps become more holistic, more attuned to the interconnectedness of all things.



Floor Design from Shamanic Vision that led to the Healing Circle

# CYCLES OF HEALING:

Creating Our Paths to Wholeness

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Echo

Nothing is lost, sweet self,  
Nothing is ever lost.  
The unspoken word  
Is not exhausted but can be heard.  
Music that stains  
The silence remains  
O echo is everywhere, the unbeckable bird!

—Lawrence Durrell



Note: Items identified in bold face are of special interest in relationship to this theory. Readers wanting to learn more may want to start with them.

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# Appendices



# Rites of Continuity Checklist

| Themes:  | Comments/Notes | Yes |
|--|----------------|-----|
| The breaking and making of attachments   |                |     |
| Often contexted by abandonment and/or loss of primary caregiver (Mother)                           |                |     |
| Redefining of ethical/purposeful behavior (what is “right” and “wrong”)                            |                |     |
| Often a very “spiritual” quality (i.e., the purpose of life, destiny, the existence of God)        |                |     |
| Taking an earned new (higher) place in a community   |                |     |
| Balancing between self and society (sometimes between inner and outer self or part to whole, etc.) |                |     |
| Investiture (coronation) of self (King or Queen) in community goals (Kingdom)                      |                |     |
| The continuance of the community in a new form   |                |     |
| Ceremonial, celebratory, and sometimes circus-like   |                |     |
| Uplift of the protagonist and uplifting and joyful for the viewer                                  |                |     |
| Images:  |                |     |
| From spring to summer  |                |     |
| Air, bright light, music   |                |     |
| Visions  |                |     |
| Flying   |                |     |
| “Family” stories—from troubled to wholeness  |                |     |
| High/low; up/down; light/dark  |                |     |
| Divine or superhuman intervention with an “impossible” task  |                |     |
| The choosing and chosen “Star”   |                |     |
|  |                |     |
|  |                |     |
|  |                |     |
|  |                |     |

**Title of Movie:**



## Varieties of Continuity (Attachment)

### (Moving from Confusion to Community)

1. Affirmation: Like a foundling “prince” or “princess,” you overcome rejection and servitude to eventually be recognized and crowned King or Queen. (*King Arthur, The Lion King, Little Princess, Cinderella*)
2. Validation: You are so certain of your unique qualities that you persist successfully in proving them in the face of nearly universal rejection. (*Babe, Hurricane Carter*)
3. Quest: You persist in a seemingly impossible task even though abandoned by everyone. (*The Magnificent Seven*; David, the boy mecha in *Artificial Intelligence*; Roy Neary, of *Close Encounters*; Ellie Arroway, of *Contact*)
4. Restoration: After losing your parents or family, you try more or less successfully to restore them in some way. (*Batman, Little Orphan Annie*)

### Requirements to “Continue”

1. You need a capacity to remain “conscious” and “present” in the public setting—you can “come out” as your true self.
2. You must know how to self sooth when you are frightened and traumatized. This involves not only good self talk but also acts of personal comforting (a warm bath, an hour of meditation, petting the cat, etc.).
3. You need the capacity to feel pleasure and to embrace joy—even though fleeting.
4. You need to be and feel deserving. Some aspects of deserving you are born to, some things you have to earn. For a few, just desserts are thrust upon them.
5. You need to feel worthwhile, no matter how many mistakes, malicious actions, or foolish stupidities you have already committed. A person who feels worthwhile is seldom anxious. Absence of anxiety clears the way for feeling alive and being spontaneous. For the truly alive and spontaneous human being the past is no predictor of the future.
6. The main tasks of rites of continuity are to learn to recognize what is enough and to create a robust optimism.
7. You need a capacity to feel a part of things, to have some sense of belonging.
8. You need a willingness to embrace a new status in your community of relationships.
9. And you must have a sense of healthy entitlement to take possession of what’s rightfully yours by achievement or birth.



# Rites of Separation Checklist

| Themes:   | Comments/Notes | Yes |
|---|----------------|-----|
| Initiation into a new state of being                                      |                |     |
| Emergence of a new identity   |                |     |
| Death of the old, birth of the new<br>(someone may be sacrificed!)        |                |     |
| Intentionality (concentration, attention, will)                           |                |     |
| Relations with “parents” and other controlling systems                    |                |     |
| The better the “mother” relationship, the easier the separation           |                |     |
| Relations with peers are important; the protagonist often has a companion |                |     |
| Betrayals, intentional and unintentional, abound                          |                |     |
| While both are present, leaving is more important than being left         |                |     |
| Prevalent mood is often joyless   |                |     |
| Images:   |                |     |
| From summer to Fall   |                |     |
| The journey   |                |     |
| Cutting of skin or hair   |                |     |
| Permanent physical changes (scarification, tattooing)                     |                |     |
| Stripping of clothes, status, belongings, gender                          |                |     |
| Sexual tension, images of sexuality                                       |                |     |
| Anger, violence, wounding, death  |                |     |
| Fire, intense light, sunrises and sunsets                                 |                |     |
| Ritualized structures   |                |     |
| Here may be Dragons   |                |     |

**Title of Movie:**



## Varieties of Separation (Differentiation) (Moving from Paralysis to Action)

1. Unimagined Alternatives: You are stuck in an unsupportable and meaningless situation with no alternatives. Yet driven by external events, you forge a new alternative out of nothing. (*Nun's Story, Rosewood, Unforgiven*)
2. The Tender Trap: Things are so good that you do not want to rock the boat or change even when necessary. You are prompted from within to break free of your complacency. (*Turtle Diary*)
3. Coming of Age: You must escape the net of enmeshment that binds you, resolving your ambivalence between being dependent or autonomous. This usually means familial bonds. (*The Cure, Little Voice, National Velvet, Road to Perdition*)
4. Too Scared to Cry: You are caught in an intolerable situation where any wrong move could (and sometimes does) end in death. Strong external forces push precipitous action. (*Glengarry Glen Ross, Wit*)

### Requirements to Separate

1. You must be able to talk to someone else, taking him or her into your confidence.
2. You must have enough self and self esteem to hold you through your ambivalence (to see the glass as both half empty and half full).
3. You must be aware of the "calls to adventure" (portents, signs, synchronicities, dreams, diseases, boredom, accidents) that come. If you are not uncomfortable, you will not seek change.
4. You need to be able to envision an alternative to the current conditions (the clearer the better; after the fact will do in a pinch).
5. You must know what you want and protect it from turning into a "have-to." You must define and hold to your intention.
6. You must discern the difference between blaming (which keeps you a victim) and genuine anger at being betrayed in some way (which liberates you).
7. You must see your wounds as the source of new strength and possibilities.
8. You must account for and accept the flawed humanity of your betrayer and yourself. To see your self or your betrayer as evil is to stay stuck.
9. You must tolerate ambivalence (duality) and manage your anxiety at separation with self-care rather than blame or righteousness.
10. You must feel your anger, know who you are angry at and why, express it, and then move on.
11. You must face your losses and grieve your own participation in the stuckness. Incomplete grief results in incomplete separation.



# Rites of Transformation Checklist

| Themes:   | Comments/Notes | Yes |
|---|----------------|-----|
| Self regulation through self transcendence                                    |                |     |
| The protagonist has a sense of breaking apart; goals and outcomes are unknown |                |     |
| A healing of some mind/body condition that prevents desired change            |                |     |
| Disempowerment and humiliation (victim of abuse of power)                     |                |     |
| An ordeal (intense sense experience that leads to insight)                    |                |     |
| Primary relations are with self and higher power (others are incidental)      |                |     |
| Changes are internal, mindful (deep changes in belief, spiritual knowing)     |                |     |
| An emergence of Wisdom, a felt experience of life's dualities                 |                |     |
| Empowerment through surrender of control (a leap into the unknown)            |                |     |
| Disciples, followers who carry on (if the protagonist dies or disappears)     |                |     |
| Images:   |                |     |
| From Fall to Winter   |                |     |
| The cruciform   |                |     |
| Earth, underground, dirt  |                |     |
| Night, darkness   |                |     |
| Birth (tunnels, water, blood, feces)  |                |     |
| Turbulence of all kinds   |                |     |
| Rain, thunderstorms   |                |     |
| Symbols of the union of dualities, i.e., yin/yang                             |                |     |
|   |                |     |
|   |                |     |
|   |                |     |

**Title of Movie:**



## Varieties of Transformation (Spontaneity/Creativity) (Moving from Breaking Apart into a New Whole)

1. Rebels With a Cause: You are part of a troubled system until you become aware that the troubles of the system affect you directly. You become an outsider and rise up to fight it to the finish. (*The Alien Quartet, Blade Runner, Brave Heart, Dances with Wolves, Jerry Maguire, Priest*)
2. Rebels “Without” a Cause: You are a generally accepting, accepted and clueless part of a system until something goes very wrong and you must fight for your survival. (*Bram Stoker’s Dracula, Jacob’s Ladder, Life as a House, Shawshank Redemption, Vanilla Sky*)
3. Whistle Blowers: You have been a deep part of a system that is corrupt and destructive. You put yourself at risk to expose the evils of the system. (*The Insider, Platoon, On the Waterfront, Silkwood, The Truman Show, Zardoz*)
4. Transcendence: You are in a system where meaning collapses. You keep going without knowing where you go or what the outcome will be. (*Breaking the Waves, Close Encounters, Cool Hand Luke, Dead Man Walking, Quiz Show, Schindler’s List*)

### Requirements to “Transform”

1. You must respond spontaneously and creatively to ever increasing challenges even though there are no guarantees that the outcomes will be positive or even productive (and most will not be).
2. You must have enough self and mastery to tolerate being utterly alone.
3. You need faith in yourself and your actions even when you cannot see any future.
4. You must be able to tolerate the feeling of breaking apart. The longer you can prolong the increasing fragmentation, the more profound the transformation.
5. Because of on-going growth and development of emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and spiritual competence, you must come to “know” what you know, act, and let go of outcomes.
6. You must persist, holding on to your intentionality and power in the face of all resistance, and, paradoxically, accept help while resisting take over.
7. You must continue towards the threshold of transformation in spite of your many doubts.
8. Somebody, somewhere makes a “blood” sacrifice. Transformation involves surrender of the body, the one thing that we can truly call our own, to make new meanings.
9. You must surrender to what you “know” in your bones, even though you have been largely unconscious of it until now.
10. You must have a sense of a “spiritual” power greater than yourself and accept and act upon “divine” interventions (luck, chance, synchronicity, miracles) when they come.
11. To accept transformation, you must accept the extraordinary circumstances that drive you to the point of no return, the edge of the plank, the lip of the cliff, the mouth of the abyss: The leap of faith into the unknown.



# Rites of Incorporation Checklist

| Themes:  | Comments/Notes | Yes |
|--|----------------|-----|
| Order and meaning out of chaos, traumatization, and meaninglessness          |                |     |
| The loss of a part requires the finding and reintegrating of all the remains |                |     |
| Establish membership in community, community creating                        |                |     |
| Taking in new or lost elements of self                                       |                |     |
| Cleansing and purification, truth telling                                    |                |     |
| Emotional clearing, abreaction   |                |     |
| Forgiveness, amends, justice   |                |     |
| Rebirth and renewal  |                |     |
| Construction of new or alternative structures for meaning                    |                |     |
| Wholeness and the mystery of life  |                |     |
| Images:  |                |     |
| Cleansing (therefore dirt and feces), strong emotional expression            |                |     |
| Animals/Creatures/Bugs   |                |     |
| Standing water   |                |     |
| Moonlight  |                |     |
| Flight from harm   |                |     |
| Helpers  |                |     |
| Twins, the double (döppelganger)   |                |     |
| Seasons from winter to spring  |                |     |
|  |                |     |
|  |                |     |
|  |                |     |

**Title of Movie:**



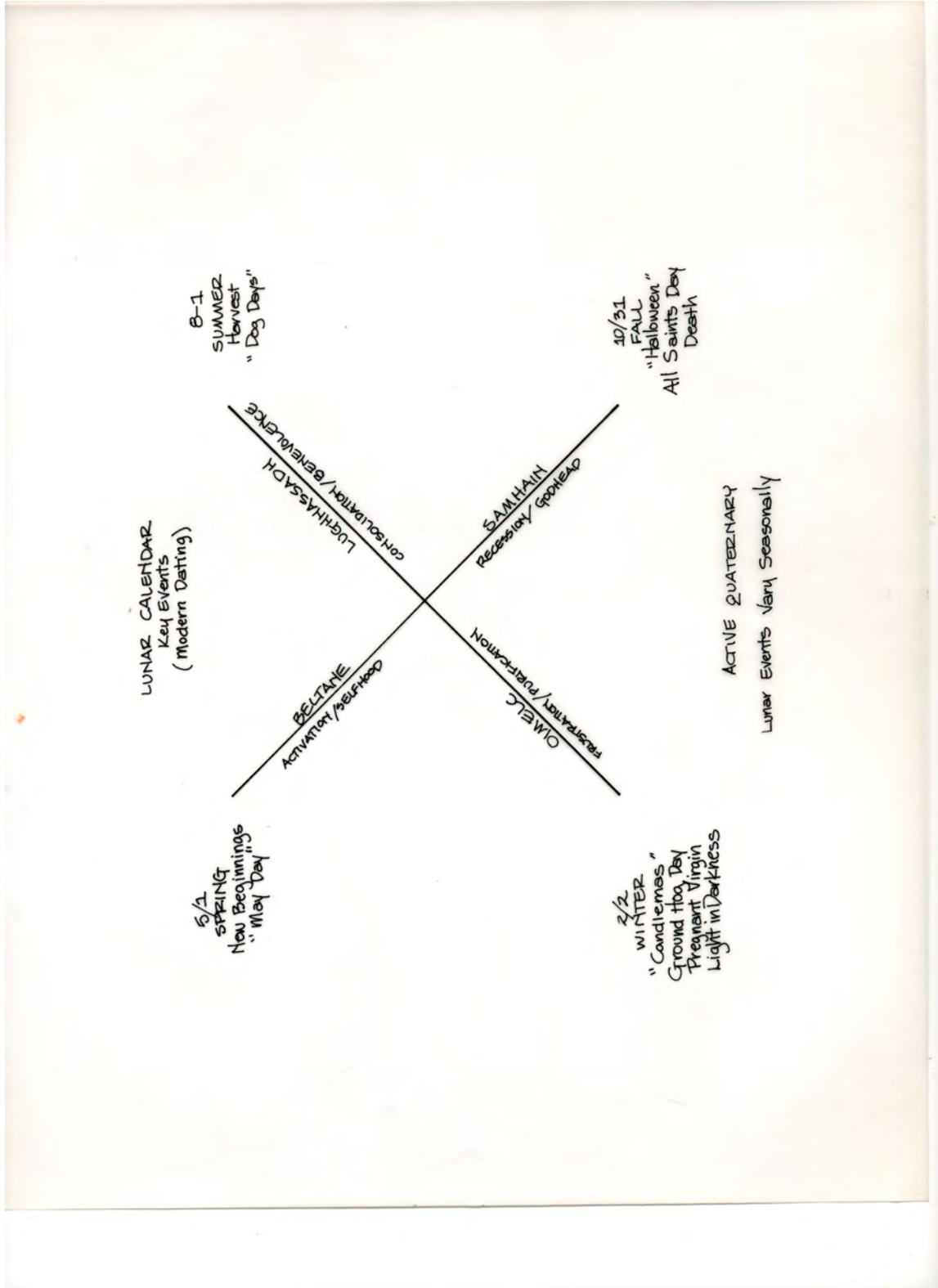
## Varieties of Incorporation (Wholeness) (Moving from “Lost” to “Found”)

1. Soul Retrieval: You must return to the scene of an earlier serious trauma and retrieve the wounded, denied, and/or dissociated younger you from harm and then take care of him or her forevermore. (*Nell, Hillary and Jackie*)
2. Quickening of newly birthed or discovered parts of self: You acquire a new talent, skill, or knowledge or you discover a quality you already have that you need to face a major challenge that changes your life. You must make meaning of this change before you return to your life and community. (*Dumbo*)
3. Loss: When you suffer the loss of something or someone loved and valued, you must find the new whole created by its absence and claim it. (*The Straight Story*)
4. Purification: You must clean the container before you can enclose the new (you must separate the chaff from the wheat in order to make bread). (*Ponette*)

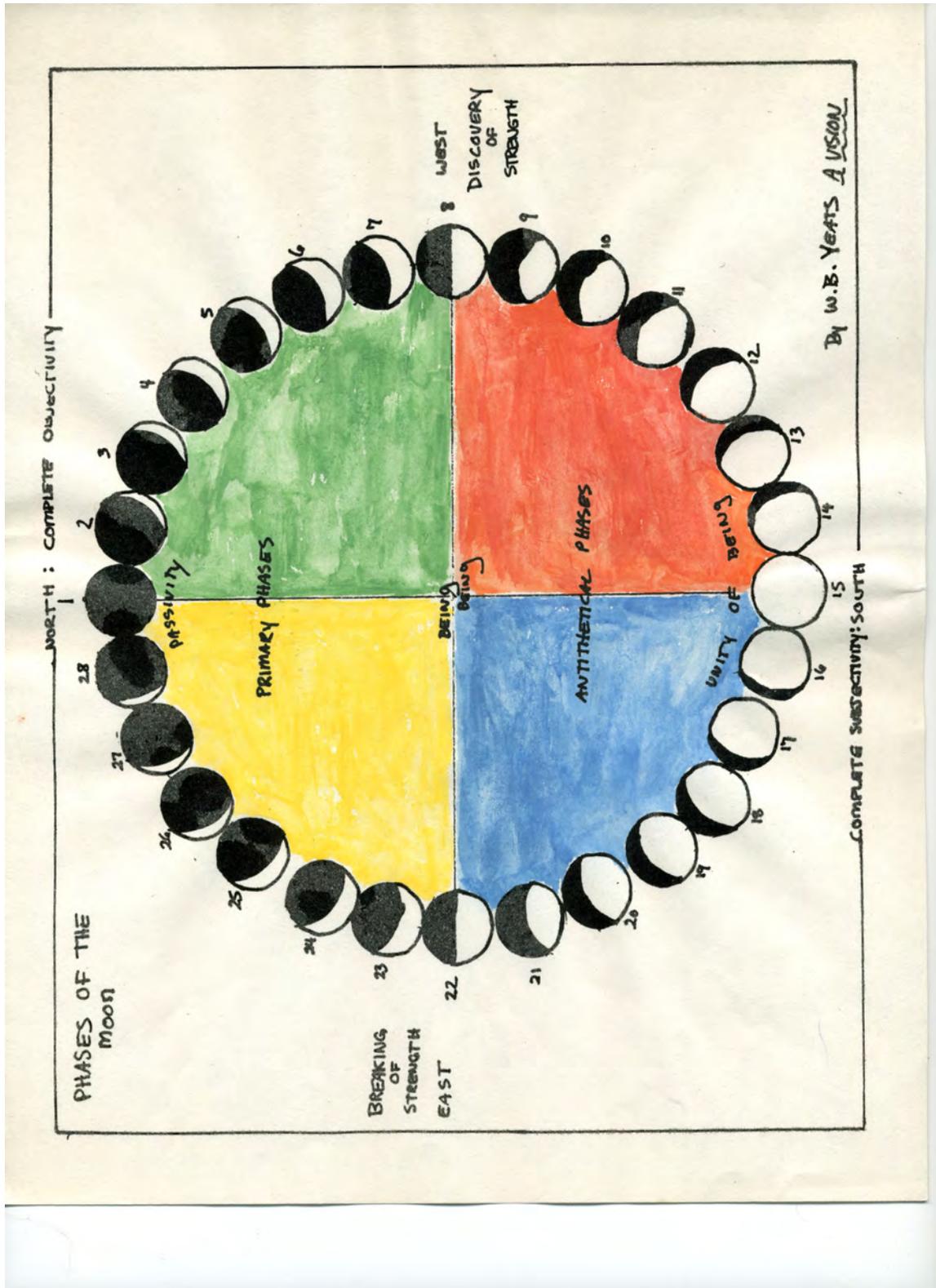
## Requirements to Incorporate

1. You must be able to evaluate the reality of the stimuli from within and without.
2. You must know what you are feeling and express these feelings. Emotions are the main elements that unite right- and left-brain functioning, that cement meaning to experiences, and that convey experiences to memory.
3. You need to have an inner life (hopes, dreams, desires) and a friendship with your unconscious.
4. You need to be able to imagine yourself.
5. You must be “embodied” so that there is some place to put the parts incorporated.
6. You need a functional relationship with yourself (i.e., good enough parent to a younger part of self).
7. You need skill at self-talk.
8. You need a capacity to visualize.
9. You need a functional “observing” ego.

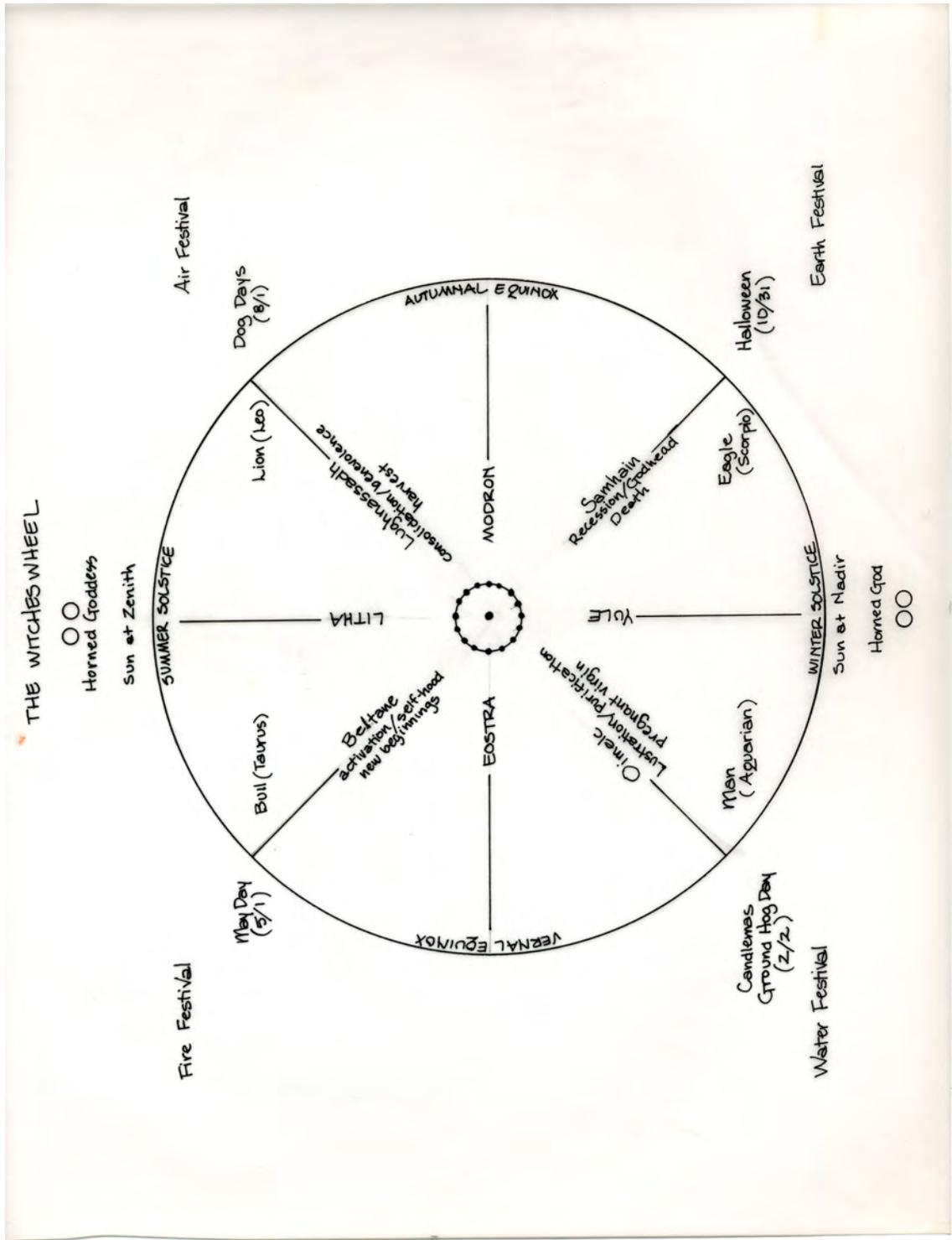














SKY  
MALE  
DYNAMIC YANG  
Aggressive, combative, phallic  
striving for dominance and  
self-assertion

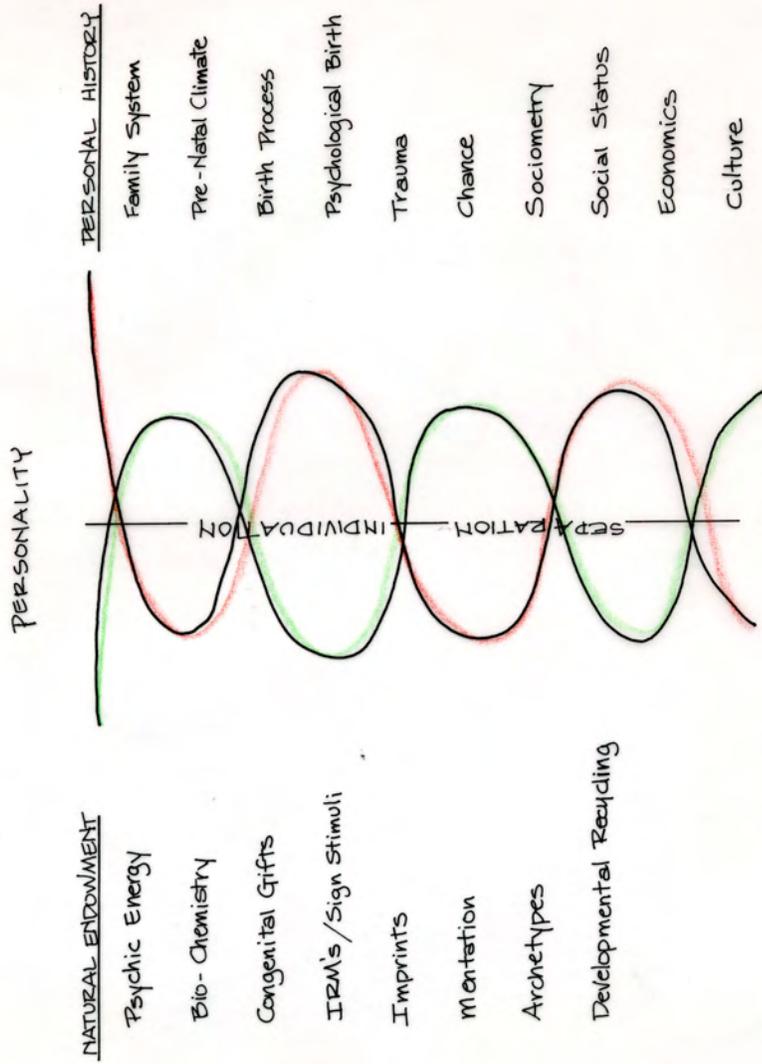


STATIC YANG  
Reason, reflection,  
discommitment, respect  
for order, justice and  
discipline, Logos

STATIC YIN  
Death (Rebirth to Come),  
Collective, Instinctive,  
Physical, unconscious,  
return to great mother

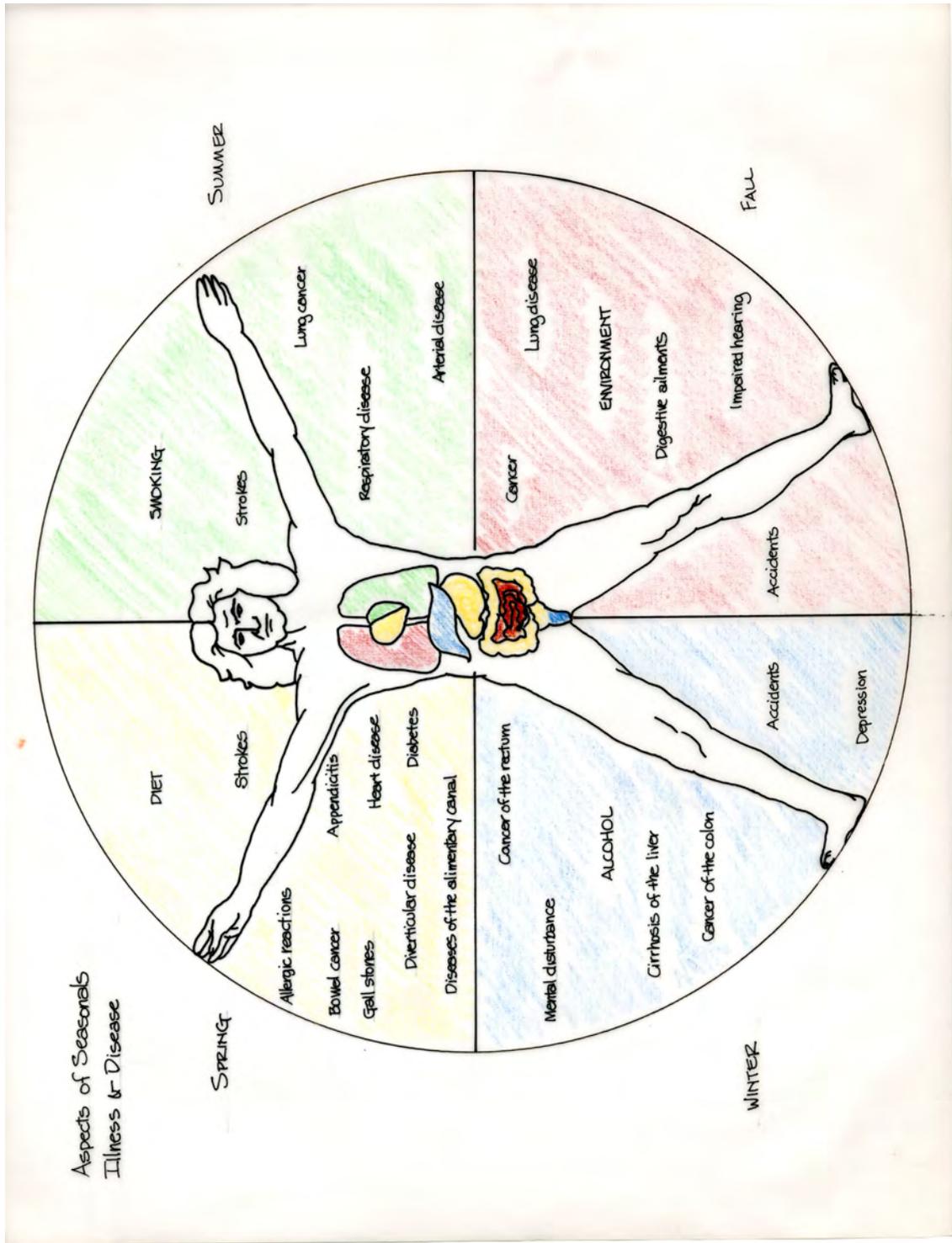
EARTH  
FEMALE  
DYNAMIC YIN  
Interpersonal involvement, subjective  
personal eros.



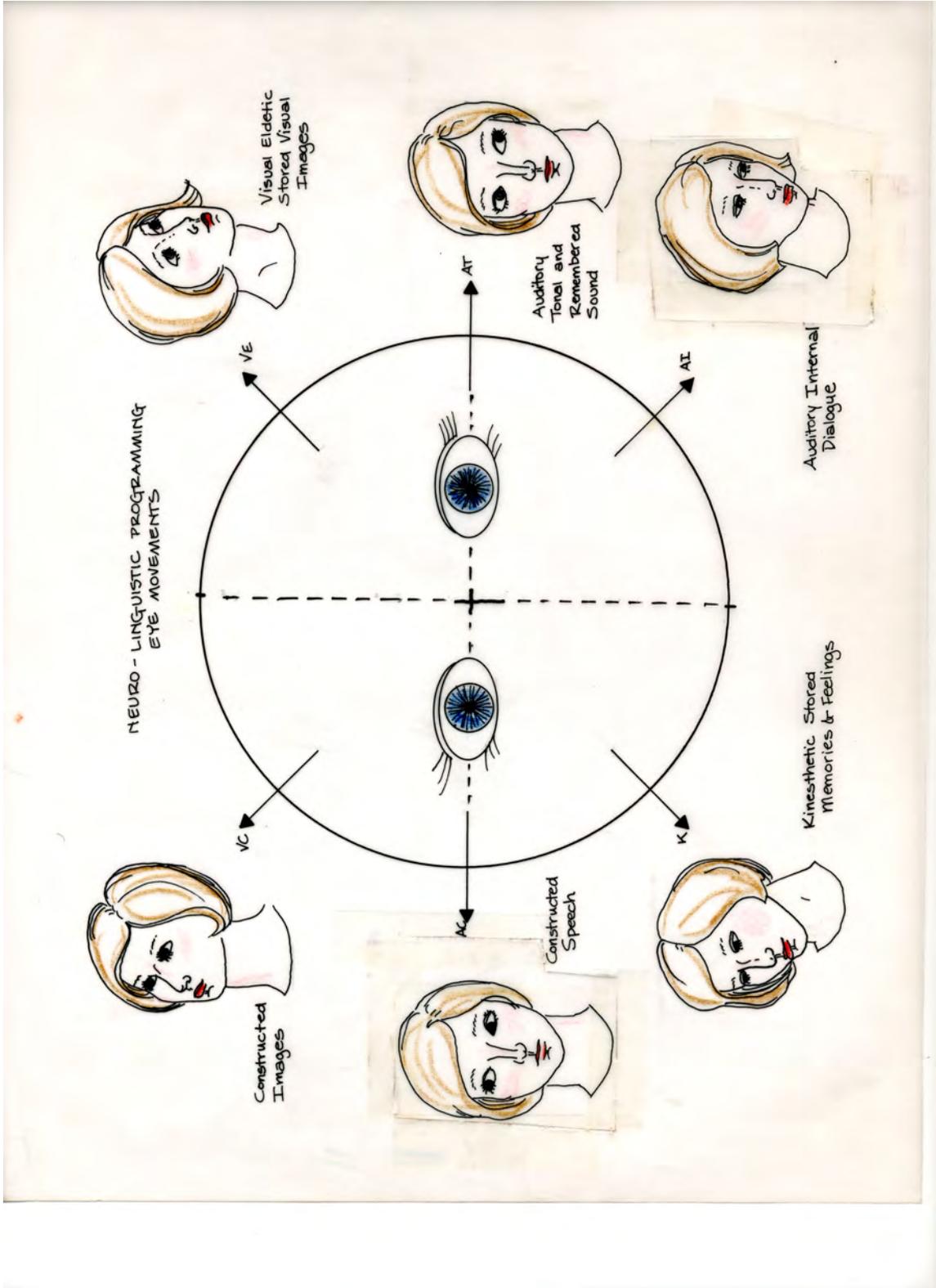


Between natural endowment and personal history, growth is simply the continual balancing act of the self spiraling along the tightrope of separation/individuation.











PSYCHO SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

