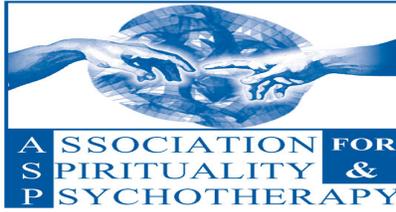


PsychoSpiritual Dialogue

"The integrated pathway of spirituality and healing in psychotherapy"



250 West 57th St Suite 501

New York N Y 10019

Questions: 917-779-0626

Mary Marino, Ph.D., President

Diana Kerievsky, LCSW, Treasurer

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WINTER 2013

ASPSpiritAndPsych@gmail.com

WWW.PSYCHOSPIRITUALTHERAPY.ORG

Our 2013 ASP Membership Drive is on now. Remember, we depend on Membership dues to keep this important work going. For a registration form and to pay visit our website and click on the Membership link.

Please note that our **Abbreviated Professional Directory** appears in every Issue and can be viewed at the **Newsletter Archive Link**

The Subject of this Issue of the Newsletter is
"Do We Create Our Own Reality?
To What Extent Are Our Lives Under Our Control?"
See Pages 5 through 11 for several articles on this topic.

Green Initiative: In order to save trees and greenbacks, a PDF copy of all newsletters will reside on the psychospiritualtherapy.org archive web site for viewing and downloading in June and December of each year

The subject for articles for the next issue is:
"It's Your Fault!" Can Spirituality/God Help Relationships?

See page 3 to learn about ASP's 2013/14 One-Year Program on

Developing A Spiritually Informed Approach to Psychotherapy and Counseling

"Going into graduate school has been such an exciting time for me, however, a year into my program I felt a little dissatisfied. Sometimes you get a sense that you are missing something from your education, or from life--you're not sure but it feels like there could be something more. After my first class at the Association for Spirituality and Psychotherapy, I knew exactly what that 'something more' was; I found just what I was looking for, and I could not be happier."
From a recent student in the One-Year Program

To be notified about ASP Network Meetings, Events and to receive our e-Newsletter be sure we have your email and snailmail address. Send it to ASPSpiritAndPsych@gmail.com or visit our website. Starting in 2012, ASP will publish PsychoSpiritual Dialogue on its web site only, at the Newsletter Archive link. In Addition, ASP will send an e-Newsletter each month, with links to individual articles from our authors.

ASP Board of Directors

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ASP President's Letter

Mary Marino, Ph.D.

During the upcoming year, 2013, ASP is planning to host a series of speakers on one evening every other month, addressing current topics of interest to spirituality and psychotherapy. Responding to requests by members, we are approaching leaders in the field who have recently published and who are cutting edge. These speakers, topics and dates are to be announced. Please check our website after the first of the year and we will also be sending our E-Newsletter with updates.

ASP will also be hosting two ASP Network Member "Evenings of Conversation", one to occur sometime in January and one in the fall 2013. The intention of these evenings is to have members discuss ideas and areas of interest that they would like to have the organization explore and further expand our educational focus. These will also be opportunities for members to meet other professionals, share about themselves, and network among the ASP community.

ASP is currently undergoing a revamping of its web page and membership outreach. The board is in the process of interviewing different web designers in evaluating the best approach to share our mission and encourage expanded professional membership. The current board is also going through reorganization and with the retiring of three past ASP presidents off the board in 2012, we are looking for professionals who have fresh ideas and an interest in helping formulate the new direction for the organization. In that spirit, if you know of

talented designers that you would like to recommend, and/or you wish to become more involved with the leadership of this organization, please contact any of the board members, or Diana Kerievsky, Executive Director of ASP with your ideas, recommendations or contact information.

ASP is also looking for interns who have interest in spirituality and expertise in social media, internet networking and marketing using the latest media technologies. If you know of anyone who would be interested in working in collaboration with us, please pass on their contact information to any board member.

It is hard to believe that we are nearly at the end of the famed year of 2012. Much has been discussed concerning the year that reflects the end of the Mayan calendar, with a range of predictions from harbingers of endings and cataclysm to the spiritual transformation of mankind. Many of you may still be reeling in shock from the most recent violent event that resulted in the death of 27 children and adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Events such as this challenge us in a number of ways both professionally and personally. I believe that we each have the power of choice of how to respond to the events and circumstances that fill our lives, and how we respond has far reaching implications for those we meet in the therapy room, and those we meet in the course of our daily lives. As a practicing Buddhist I find meaning and purpose in a choice of 'heart-centered mindfulness' as a daily, even moment by moment, discipline that guides, and inspires our thoughts, feelings and actions. The greatest challenge is to meet such tragedy with compassion and love, not only for the victims in the event, but for the perpetrators or other contributors to the event. Research has documented the effects of thoughtful and loving focus on those in need, whether it be through prayer, meditation before surgery, or healing touch. There are many methods, all with the core focus of loving kindness. I wish you peace and love, amidst the daily course of your lives and the holiday.

The Association for Spirituality and Psychotherapy (ASP)

A Non-Profit (501c3) Corporation at 250 West 57th St., Suite 501, NYC 10019
www.psychospiritualtherapy.org email: aspspiritandpsych@gmail.com

ANNOUNCES The 2013/14 Course:

Developing a Spiritually Informed Approach to Psychotherapy and Counseling

THE MONDAY NIGHT Year Long CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION PROGRAM

Offers an in-depth exposure to psycho-spiritual theory and method. In addition, the process/project class provides a coherent structure intended to help each student develop a personal perspective regarding spiritually informed therapy.

Course Faculty	<i>ASP therapists experienced in a variety of spiritually-informed orientations</i>
Monday Nights Sept. to June 7:30 to 9:30 PM	<i>Throughout the year 6 different Modules meet Monday nights for 4 weeks each for 2 hours a night: A process/project class meets after the conclusion of each module. All Classes take place in NYC at 250 West 57th St., suite 501</i>
Tuition	<i>\$1,800 –71 contact hours - 10% OFF FOR ASP MEMBERS</i>
NASWNY CEU's	<i>If Approved receive NASWNY CEU credits and a certificate of completion.</i>

Developing a Spiritually Informed Approach to Psychotherapy and Counseling offers the participant a unique program for personal and professional growth in a community of experienced teachers and like-minded fellow students.

Teaching Philosophy:

The Association's teaching philosophy is based on the belief that spirituality is necessary for psychological healing. ASP is dedicated to deepening our students' inner spiritual awareness to enable healing to take place for both themselves and the patients they work with. We believe that a spiritually informed therapy, while working with common presenting problems, can be maximally beneficial for the individuals who seek our help. ASP is committed to helping students work in a more effective, fulfilling way with individuals, couples, families and groups.

Who should take this Course?

We invite analysts, psychotherapists, counselors, and other psycho dynamically oriented healing arts practitioners and ministers as well as individuals who have a spiritual and psychodynamic orientation to register for these programs.

General Learning Objectives:

- Provide a spiritual perspective on working with psychological issues such as depression, anxiety, addiction, somatic problems and relationships, as well as casting "spiritual light" upon them.
- Develop "spiritually-informed therapists" by providing sound theoretical bases and learning experiences that will broaden perspective and increase skills in diagnosis, treatment, therapeutic presence and listening.
- Provide opportunity for psycho-spiritual growth as it relates to personal and professional development
- Offer a professional community.

Teaching methods will include

- Relevant meditations
- Relevant Supportive Psycho-spiritual Readings
- Didactic presentation of theory, method and technique
- Case discussions
- Experiential exercises including practice therapy sessions
- Process papers including the development of personal perspectives on spiritually informed therapy.
- Project and Class Presentation.

To View the Previous Year's Curriculum, Visit

<http://psychospiritualtherapy.org/2011-2012%20NewOneYearProgram.pdf>

Or Call Diana Kerievsky at 917-834-9228 or

Dr. Kelly Murphy Mason, Curriculum Co-Chairs at 347-497-3741

Understanding

By Dr. Robert Schenck

I fought on the battle field.
I killed and was killed.
I fought on both sides,
on the side of organization,
and on the side against organization.

Now I see that it is foolish men on both sides of the
argument.

It makes no difference who wins.
The defeated simmers underground until it fights
another day.

Now I see that fighting perpetuates itself by fighting
and justifies fighting by remembering former fights.

Now when I see men fight I do not join on either
side;
I feel sorry that men are relating to each other
competitively.

Now I accept both sides of every argument and
don't judge who is right and who is wrong.

I don't fight against fighting.

I teach love of yourself and love of the other.

In a climate of love many problems disappear as if
they had never existed.

Evolution

By Dr. Robert Schenck

The best thing you can do is to get off your case!

It is your mind raising all these questions!

It is your mind tormenting you!

Haven't you noticed that there are no questions in
nature except in human mind, and no answers
either, and that life goes on in its way with no
question and no doubt?

And there is no spiritual evolution and no path to
evolve spiritually; the idea of spiritual evolution is

another mask of the inferiority complex; it means
that you are not loving and accepting yourself as
you are. The real change that happens to us is
when we stop fighting with ourselves and make
peace with ourselves, as we are. When that
happens all is good and all is OK. Striving to be
evolved and improved is self rejection and is a
stuck place.

I don't mean that it is good to be self destructive
and addicted; self harming attitudes come from the
mind; when you accept and love yourself, as you
are, and stop fighting with yourself to be different,
you relax and self harming behavior goes away on
its own; it just stops and disappears.

The mind is like an ice cube; frozen water; it got
frozen by knowledge; it is frozen in its ideas of what
is good and what is bad, what is primitive and what
is evolved; when the ice melts the water is back as
if nothing had ever happened; confusion is a good
sign because it means that your frozen ideas are
melting; you are less sure about things; less
fanatic. From confusion a shift to self love, as you
are, is possible.

Love your self confused and all is good; knowledge
is the minds way of escaping from confusion into
the prison of knowing; confusion is an indication
that you are freeing yourself from the prison of
knowing.

You are so beautiful; just you being you, so
wonderful.

The existence makes the sky the sun and stars the
oceans and mountains the animals and plants and
human beings too; all of existence is so majestic
and beautiful why not love it as it is and stop
wanting it to be better and evolved?

Try loving and accepting yourself as you are; try
rejecting all arguments and suggestions from
anyone as to how you should be and how you
should improve; stop believing the idea that anyone
is better than you; and see if happiness is not there
and has always been there just you haven't felt it
because it was hidden behind conditioned thoughts
and knowledge.

The following section is dedicated to this issue's dialogue on "Do We Create Our Own Reality? To What Extent Are Our Lives Under Our Control?" As usual, we invite all readers to offer their responses, which may appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

**Master of our Fate or Controlled by Outside Forces: Which are We?
By Judy Kuriansky, Ph.D.**

Reflecting on whether we create our own destiny has always been a question of great interest to me. I have pondered this issue over many years, and I'll continue to do so.

The question hinges on one of my favorite concepts learned in graduate school while studying for my Ph.D. in clinical psychology: locus of control. Julian Rotter's 1954 scale poses the opposites of internal locus of control where individuals believe that life events result from their own actions (e.g., getting a job because you are exceptionally qualified), or totally in the hands of fate, luck or destiny (e.g., getting the job was a stroke of good fortune).

After all my vast experiences and reflection on this matter, I have come to my "Rule of Thirds": a third of what happens is the result of one's own actions, intent or desire; a third is affected by the actions or will of others involved; and a third is attributable to coincidence, fate, destiny, or even the mysterious hand of a Godlike figure.

Still, any one event may tilt the balance of these three factors. And there is an important intervening variable: no matter what the cause, we are in control of how we react to any outcome. For this, we need only to look to cognitive behavioral therapy techniques that teach us how to control thoughts. Clearly, for example, we cannot control the forces of nature that cause a natural disaster; or stop a partner from deserting us, but we can control how we cope with loss and trauma, and how we recover.

Along these lines, I am indeed a fan of "reframing" – the technique of spinning a negative experience into a more positive story. For example, I may regret missing the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights gala event this evening, but I feel much better when I realize and rationalize that because I didn't go, I had time to write this article.

Certainly, brain science supports that "What you believe, and conceive, you can achieve." At least, imaging makes it more likely so, but not conclusively. Many people imaged winning the biggest lottery pot ever last week but only one couple did—and since they couldn't plan the numbers they picked, Lady Luck likely played the biggest role.

Phrases play a big role in how we create, and deal with, reality. Idioms help guide us through life and especially disappointment and depression when things don't go our way. Common ones that I've used myself, include: "When a door closes, a window opens," "It wasn't meant to be," and "It all works out for the best." Fatalists can fall back on sayings like lyrics from a popular Doris Day tune I remember my mother singing, "Que sera, sera... Whatever will be will be. The future's not ours to see. Que sera, sera." Another one I've heard lawyer friends using, pounds home the finality of acceptance, "It is what it is."

Given my penchant for psychoanalytic understanding, I am prone to trace roots of my approach to the nature of reality to early experiences. As such, I credit my parents with reinforcing the message, "You can do anything, Judy." Growing up on an army base (Fort Campbell, Kentucky), we did do everything: as a family, we took classes in everything: piano, photography, archery, and rowing.

Thanks to my parents, I was supported and reinforced to make my own reality. When I insisted on wearing pants to school like my brother, even though girls were not allowed to do so, my mother went to the principal to advocate on my behalf with the compromise result that I could wear pants under my skirt. Later when offered to choose between being the editor of the class newspaper or the lead in the class play, I said, "I do choose. I choose both." And so, I did both.

But such control over my fate was not so easy in adulthood, when people in the "cold cruel world" had their own strict agendas, financial goals or commitments that did not always fit what I wanted.

Other early experiences conditioned my intrigue with the concept of “locus of control,” and a related concept of “purpose in life.” I remember a high school English assignment to read Plato and Socrates, and answer the question, “Is an image etched on a cave wall a reality or only a reflection of reality?” Then there were hours in my Smith College dorm, in the bedroom of one of my friends, a philosophy major, deliberating on the nature of reality. The seriousness of the question of “what is” was given a teasing twist, when my fiancé and his roommates at Harvard Law School lay on their couches watching TV sports and jokingly quizzed each other, “What’s it all about?”

Philosophy, psychology, physics and even poetry all consider the question of control. Romantic poets commonly despair over unrequited love over which they have no control. In stark contrast are lines that stick out in my mind from British poet William Earnest Henley’s best-remembered 1875 affirmation in “Invictus”: “It matters not how strait the gate, How charged with punishments the scroll, I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul.” I harness that phrase occasionally to drive me.

In contrast to being driven as I am to make things happen, the experience of studying Buddhism, and doing shaman training in Nepal makes me intrigued – and relieved – by the concept of giving up desire and want. Certainly, when you are not driven to a goal, you can never be disappointed. Despite this, something drives me when the earthquake hits Haiti and I immediately tell my Haitian colleague, “Let’s go,” and we are on a plane the next day.

Modern events like natural disasters dispel any validity to the extreme of being able to control everything. Fires, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, are all acts of nature, where Mother Nature is in control. When the levees broke in Louisiana during Hurricane Katrina, when the water surges of super storm Sandy flooded homes and washed away cherished beaches, when the earthquakes of Haiti, China and Japan buried people under rubble, we had no control. Having done disaster relief in all these situations and other natural disasters around the world, I cannot be naive to think we control everything. Natural scientists, who are experts in water, air, and earth, contributed chapters to my newly released book, “Living in an Environmentally Traumatized World: Healing Ourselves and Our Planet,” opening my eyes to the inevitable changes

in our environment over which we have no control. We can, of course, conserve and preserve our animals, plants and resources as best we can, and stem the tide of negative outcomes of climate change, but the earth will move no matter what we do.

Exerting, as much control over your own life has been a theme throughout all the advice I have given thousands of men and women over decades on the radio on my call-in advice shows, in dozens of TV shows, and in newspaper and magazine advice columns. My themes have been: “Ask for what you want” “Go for your dream” “Take charge of your life” “Listen to cheerleaders; Don’t be dissuaded by nay-sayers” When so many people called me despondent about dating problems and frustration about not finding the “one,” my advice always championed personal control: build your confidence to approach someone you find attractive without worrying about the outcome and go to places where you enjoy your life and your light will attract others without even trying. I inscribed this approach throughout many books that I wrote for dating and mating advice, with very clear and simple affirmations, in “The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Dating” and “The Complete Idiot’s Guide to A Healthy Relationship.” The caveat always was that you cannot totally control what others do, but you can do your best to be your best.

In my experience, when I am totally focused on making something happen, at times, the waters seem to part as they did for Moses. After the tsunami/earthquake in Japan, I had a strong desire to help, but needed a partner on-the-ground to collaborate with. Then, one day I went to a concert to support Japan, held at the United Nations, and talked to a stranger who turned out to run an organization for recovery in Japan. That night, we planned the mission and in less than a week, I was in the epicenter of the disaster with American and Japanese colleagues doing very moving, multi-faceted interventions for the survivors. Friends have explained this realization of my dream variously as “It was meant to be” or “You made it happen” or “Your intention was in alignment with the universe.” Evidently, my strong intention was matched with others’ strong intentions, and then we both coincidentally showed up in the same place at the same time, and were open to possibilities. The experience supports my Rule of Thirds.

In that example, as others, I am reminded that action matters. As I advise others who seek my advice about where to find their dream lover, rarely does one just knock on your door; you have to get out and go places where you are more likely to meet people.

Action to take control of my life gives me purpose in life. In research I have done on the topic, respondents also agree. Action also makes me happy and gives me a sense of well-being. Happiness and well-being is a topic I have become involved in, after being invited to participate in a high-level meeting at the UN on Gross National Happiness as a measure of development more than just Gross National Product, which was hosted by the Bhutanese government. We are now actively planning an event at the UN for the International Day of Happiness on March 20th. Getting the word out about this issue is important; that required action. Once finding out about two women walking from Vermont to Washington (co-founders of GNHUSA.org), collecting stories about happiness, I arranged to meet them on their trip; the day and place perfectly coincided with the border of Maryland, a state where I had initiated meeting with a state official working on a General Progress Indicator including wellbeing; and writing about it took hard work but precisely coincided with the Presidential election issues about the economy, making it perfect for acceptance as an Opinion Piece posted on ABCNews.com. Yes, a confluence of events led me to be invited to the UN meeting, but the follow-up didn't "just happen"; much pro-activity was necessary to move the initiative forward.

I am also intrigued at times by totally giving in to the flow. My more religious friends call this process asking God to use them as His instrument. And my friends in rehab know the 12 steps of giving in to the Higher Power.

At times, I like the idea of submitting, and do not like the feeling of "wanting." Yet, I am resigned that "want," laser-like intention, and a persistent feeling that I must do something, often drives me to action that ultimately feels satisfying and makes a difference in the world, which is the goal I spoke about for my life when I was a child.

As a result, I will continue to be amused, and fascinated, by seeing how events evolve according

to my Rule of Thirds: when I have total control, no control, or a mixture of the two.

Creating Our Own Reality? Michael Grosso, Ph.D.

The notion that people "create their own reality" is a New Age cliché, or perhaps we could call it a meme, even an archetype. Stated baldly, and out of context, it's obviously silly. The truth is I'm a feeble creature in a cosmos that unintentionally ejaculated me into existence. I didn't create my parents or siblings, my genetic endowment, my language, my place or time of birth and culture, my economic status, and so on and so forth. All these are given, good or bad. I might have been born a ground hog, like the one that lives under the shed in my backyard; instead, I was born human in New York City, and that automatically opened up a few possibilities that my ground hog is forever denied. Most of our "reality" we had no part in creating at all: all the physical, social, economic, and historical contingencies we were born into. All these created us in various ways; we certainly didn't create them, and can't take any blame or credit. So a good part of what we are is the babe of pure contingency.

Is there anything of value in the idea that we create our own reality? I would say there is, and perhaps a great deal; but first we need to draw a line through 'reality', and separate the mental from the physical. It turns out that living creatures like ourselves are compounds of mind and matter (only a few blinkered neuro-fundamentalists might deny we have minds). In the universe of mind, certain things are crucial to the notion of "creating our reality". For example, the very strange and scarcely understood capacity we (as mental beings) have for judging, doubting, willing, interrogating, imagining alternate possibilities, fantasizing, desiring, aspiring, and even of praying, hoping, and sometimes revolting.

There are a lots of different senses in which we may talk about "creating our reality", as long as we're specific in how the words "creating" and "reality" are being used. Every time we choose to do something, we take responsibility for the reality (outcomes), and so in a sense "create" a part of our reality. One could bring in the idea of karma, (moral action and reaction) or sin (alienation from God) or crime (landing in jail) -- in America, a grim illustration of how people can create their own reality.

**Do we create our Own Reality?
To what Extent are our lives Under Our
control?
By Sam Menahem, Ph.D.**

Creating our own reality may sometimes describe enormous collective events. For example, there is mounting evidence that human behavior is causing climate change. The links may be indirect and diffuse, but none the less real. So that increasingly instead of thinking of frightful weather events as “acts of God” we may have to learn to say “acts of Man.” Or, we could say that when Americans supported Bush’s Iraq war they were creating the reality of thousands of unnecessary deaths of innocent people. By the way we use our wealth, power, and technology, we create all manner of dubious and perverse realities, unleashing them on the whole biosphere.

So we do create “our own” reality, sometimes in profoundly negative ways, and the old New Age idea takes on new life in view of the magnifying and accelerating effects of technology.

But we should end this note by underscoring a more positive hope in the power of humanity to ‘create’ new and higher, and more humanly rewarding realities. And here in the briefest compass, let me arbitrarily mention two possibilities. There are two broad ways people can (in a more positive vein) create or recreate ‘reality’. One way, in a sense, is officially about what we’re calling creating one’s own reality. It’s called art. All the arts involve creating new realities (depending on media, ideology, etc.). The physical art object (song, poem, painting, sculpture, etc.) is made out of contingent matter – air, pigment, stone, sound, etc. But one also creates the inner object, the esthetic, contemplative values, feelings, and memories. The inner landscape begins to dominate the outer, and that too should count as a “reality creation”.

Finally, we should recall perhaps the highest form of creating our own reality, i.e., self-transformation, how we learn to see and understand the world, and how we decided to act in the world. The question comes down to this: What am I going to do with the world – the life (gifts and defects) that is given me? There are as many ways of answering this question as there are people with uniquely evolving personalities. Creating our own reality here boils down to creating maximum meaning from the raw material of life we inherit by chance.

This question has been central to my thinking since 1977 when I was an inquiring young psychologist. I was already working with people as a therapist. My theoretical orientation, however, changed often. My friends in graduate school would kid me by asking, “Hey Sam-what is the therapy of the week?” Then, a few years later, a trip to the Paramus Park Mall changed my life. I was waiting for my wife to finish shopping and went into the Pickwick book shop. Instead of heading to the psychology section, I decided to go to the “occult” area and pick the most ridiculous book I could find. My eye was caught by a purple book with a weird picture on the cover. It was entitled “Seth Speaks.” I picked up the book with the thought, “Let’s see what kind of nonsense this is.” I started reading and thought ...”Oh this is good.” Then, I flipped a few pages and thought, “this is good too.” Soon I was engrossed in this book, whereupon my wife walked in and said, “I’m tired, let’s go home!” So I bought the book.

As soon as I got home, I started reading. I had the next day off and finished the book in one day. I was stunned. It seems that “Seth” was a “non-corporeal energy gestalt, not presently focused in physical reality.” “He” spoke through a medium called Jane Roberts. Neither Jane nor “Seth” had studied psychology, but it was the best psychology book I had ever read. It basically said, “You create your own reality, through your beliefs, conscious and unconscious, period; there is no other rule!!!!” “Wow.” I thought now I understand what I am doing with my patients, helping them change their beliefs. Now, skeptics might just say this is cognitive therapy. But what Seth suggests is more than that. It is not only reframing events that have already occurred, it is changing the events in our perceived reality, even to the extent of healing physical disease. According to Seth, “Your body is a living sculpture, and each of us is our own sculptor!” So I started playing with this idea. For example, I began to change my belief about the difficulty of parking in New York City. I changed, “It is hard to park in New York City” to, “A parking spot is waiting for me.” As you might guess, I get a lot of good spots and everyone wants to go into New York with me. Later, when I went for job interviews, I decided that I was the best candidate. I would affirm, “Who could they

get for this job that is better than me?" I would usually be offered the job.

I began to use this belief changing process with patients also, and it worked. I realized that the difference between positive thinking (which I learned from my grandfather, mother and father), and belief change. No amount of positive thinking will override a negative belief. First, the belief has to be changed. Then, you can affirm your new belief. This again was explained by Seth in his best book, "The Nature of Reality." He tells us not to just believe what he is saying, but to try his belief change techniques. "If you don't like your life, try changing your beliefs about life." Further, he tells us to use our lives as "a playful experiment." He encourages us to "imaginatively pluck out the troubling belief and replace it with what we really want." A whole new world opened up as I used the techniques. Another personal example: Despite the negativity of medical doctors about my wife's ability to have a child, I rejected this negative belief and used affirmations and imagery accompanied by positive emotion that we would have a child. That was 30 years ago. We have a wonderful 29 year old daughter!

Obviously, I realized that we have more control over our reality than I ever thought. Nevertheless, I also realized that I was not practicing magic. I did not always get what I wanted. This was due to one of three things: my own hidden or unconscious negativity, negativity around me, or that my wish was not for my highest good. In other words, I needed humility to understand life better. Too much control is grandiose and narcissistic. None of us is mature enough to always know what is for our highest good or the highest good of the world at large. The world is not just there to please any one individual. We need a great deal of strength and maturity to deal with group disasters like 9/11 and hurricane Sandy. The Serenity prayer tells us to "change what we can change, accept what we can't change, and seek the wisdom to know the difference." I needed to learn that life is not just about creating a good life for me. It is a group learning process. Improving my personal life was just a stepping stone to the realization that most of us have everything backwards. Life is created from the spiritual level. It is fine to want and create a better physical life, material wealth, and psychological happiness. But I was soon to learn that there is much more than that. My next "eureka" realization about life was finding "A Course in

Miracles." Again, I was attracted to a "channeled" book. I liked the idea of miraculous healings, so I signed up for a course on the Course.

The Course teaches us that God or Spirit is "All That Is." We are one with this spiritual reality. Physical experience is just a very lucid dream. All the things we worry about and try to control are in the realm of physical experience, sickness, death, loss, poverty. All are but aspects of the "dream" of physical experience. When we go back and connect with our spiritual source, we will see the Truth. We will have awakened from the dream of preoccupation with our body and psychological ego. The ego is a result of our sensory experience of separation from Spirit and each other. We try mightily to control the guilt, anger and fear of being separate beings, at the mercy of uncontrollable forces. If we have a lot of guilt, we think we need to be punished. The punishment will be in terms of negative experiences and angry "enemies." If we have a lot of fear we will pop endless pills to calm down. Life can be very hard in a crazy uncontrollable world. That is the position most of us think we are in.

The Course fortunately tells us how to proceed in a better way. First, since reality is oneness, we are actually safe at all times. The seeming horrors of everyday life are imaginary. The path to miracles and healing is by healing the mind. The process of healing the separated, fearful, guilty mind consists of forgiving everybody for everything. This is not the usual forgiveness of "bad" people because we are better. It is letting go of what "did not really happen." Our physical experience is a bad dream. The ego, of course, will resist our awakening to this realization of oneness with God at all costs. It thinks we are nothing but bodies, protected by egos. Thus we need denial, projection, rationalization intellectualization etc. to defend the ego and the body. Defense is needed against other people, countries, ethnicities, religions, etc. We even need to defend against the angry judgmental God that many people think is punishing us (because we are at some level guilty!) If we follow the Course's instructions, however, we can find help. Whew!

The help comes from the real self or holy spirit, which transcends the psychologically built ego. We pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance and help in switching from a fearful, guilty ego driven life to a life of forgiveness and spiritual values! This is a

lifetime process. It reverses everything taught to us by scientific public schools and most mainstream western religions. Does this negate the earlier mentioned Seth Philosophy? No. Seth shows us how to improve our daily experience by changing our beliefs. To a large extent it works. Then we realize that true happiness is beyond just improving our belief system. It lies in waking up from our narrow focus on “stuff.” and opening up to spiritual enlightenment. In other words we need to make a huge cognitive shift from positive beliefs about the physical reality we experience to the knowledge that we are really One with Spirit. This may sound arduous. But my experience is that enlightenment means lightening up. We can pursue Oneness with our source with Seth’s playful attitude. We can enjoy our process of giving up harsh judgment and criticism and replacing them with laughing at ourselves and our stubbornness.

As I continue to read and incorporate the Seth material with the Course, I realize that they are very similar. The Course has us look for the Holy instant for Salvation, using Christian terminology. Seth teaches us to playfully change and improve our beliefs, with the underlying knowledge that we are part of “All That Is,” having incredible experiences on many levels of reality at once. In other words, we are wonderfully creative. We are earning spiritual reality from all of our connected selves (Seth’s version of reincarnation.) Life, according to Seth, should be joyful, creative and loving! The Course says that we should turn ourselves over to the Holy Spirit, forgive and realize the joy of being One with Spirit. Compared to the ego driven life, defending itself and its fragile body, Seth and the Course are marvelous alternatives. So do we create our own reality? Yes, if we are coming from the level of Spirit and the real self. No, if we are coming strictly from the ego-body level. Course expert Ken Wapnick says that it is easier to wake up from a good dream than from a bad dream. So I’ll “create a good dream,” then wake up and choose Oneness with Spirit. How about you?

Controlling Our? Reality? By Bruce Kerievsky

The two questions: creating our own reality and controlling our lives call for separate examination.

Reality

If there is acceptance of the idea that there are multiple realities, then it appears that we can and

do create our own reality. But if we can see that it is wise to distinguish “reality” from “experience,” then we might better understand that we each are exposed to different experiences depending on our individual consciousnesses, while the word reality defines and is reserved for a unique actuality.

It is apparent that there are many different realms of human activity and we can loosely speak of different realities. But that imprecision may cause us to abandon the quest for that solitary reality that is in harmony with existential truth. If we are seeking to live well, i.e. in accord with reality, then we reject the notion of multiple realities. The idea of enlightenment as a goal of human aspiration is based on the conviction that there is a singular reality to be discovered.

So it is reasonable to consider that we each create our own experiences, but not our own reality. The distinction is important, since experiences are evanescent, like dreams that come and go, but reality is classically defined as unchanging, and becomes known when some aspect of the real is realized, when we become aware of some truth that transforms our outlook on life for the better.

It is easy to be misled by relativism into noticing that no one description of reality can be proven to be authentic and hence that any individual’s sense of reality is as valid as any other’s. And there are certainly aspects of life, like spiritual values, that cannot be “scientifically” shown to exist because science requires the visible and the replicable. It is also extremely difficult to know what another is thinking and valuing. They seem to dwell in a separate reality.

Nevertheless, there is a reality that can be known by observing that being in harmony with it creates a fulfilled existence. Although rarely precisely or persuasively articulated, it can be observed that many individuals appear to enjoy a more positive existence than others, a status that can be attributed to a more accurate awareness of reality.

Control

The extent to which our lives are under our control obviously varies with the individual, the society, and the environment (as we recently re-learned from Superstorm Sandy).

In psychotherapy we are oriented toward helping individuals address those experiences that can be

changed (see the Serenity Prayer: *God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference*) by learning more about reality and how to live in harmony with it. Moreover, suffering may be substantially mitigated by our acceptance of those things over which we have no control. Ultimately, it is the attitude that we adopt that determines the quality of our experiences. In this sense there is a great deal of control available in our lives.

So we work with patients to clarify the issues plaguing them by allowing them to identify the thoughts and values associated with their problems, or, if they are unable to do so, by suggesting to them the potential sources of their discomfort. When the troublesome ideas are recognized, it becomes possible for them to entertain and assess alternative ways of approaching their lives.

As the Serenity Prayer indicates, much distress can be avoided by being able to discriminate between those things we can and cannot alter. We are able to respond to (i.e. we are responsible for) the content of our consciousness. We can direct our attention to existentially valid thoughts and values that improve and redeem our lives instead of continually suffering from habitual ways of thinking about ourselves, others and reality. We need not exist as victims.

The prayer states that courage is required to change our lives. But epistemology reveals that it is understanding that is needed for transformation. When we know what is real and how to live, then courage is not necessary to follow that course.

Addendum

Readers interested in engaging in a more complete study of these issues can consult Thomas Hora, M.D.'s book, "Beyond The Dream: Awakening to Reality."

Do We Create Our Own Reality Kenneth Porter, M.D.

A very interesting question. The answer is a paradox, like most things on the spiritual path: "yes and no!"

"Yes," meaning that as many of us have discovered over the years, our thoughts, feelings and

intentions have a profound and often (to us) hidden effect on our lives. As the first cognitive therapist ever, the Buddha taught this 2500 years ago. But what is important to see here is that it's not as simple as the formula that we often hear - "thoughts create reality." This formula is only true if we understand deeply what we mean by "thoughts." "Thoughts" here means not the left-brain, linear thoughts of the ego-self - but rather, thoughts that express our whole being - in other words, what most of us mean by "thoughts plus feelings plus intentions." For us to create our own reality we have to intend it from the deepest place inside us. Only then can we create.

But also: "No." No, because in the end, at the same time as what I have just written is true, it is also equally true that we are never truly in control of our lives. Some greater higher force - call it God, Destiny, Fate, the Universe, Karma - is ultimately always in charge. "Man proposes, God disposes." True freedom - so hard to achieve - comes from sensing and seeing the deepest currents of our lives - who we truly are - and, whether we like it or not, instead of fighting them, surrendering our small self to a larger purpose, even if at times we do not understand it or like it.

Our minds work in simple, binary, black and white, linear "logical" categories. But reality is a swirling, amazing, beautiful, frustrating, messy mystery that does not conform to our simplistic ideas. When we try to cram reality into our over-simplified mental categories we wind up with contradictory results - like the answer that we both do and do not create our reality. This is because on the level of reality - not our ego-minds - both answers are true, in a way that is a fascinating and wonderful mystery that can keep us engaged in unending and ever-expanding exploration for the rest of our lives.

Book Review: Use Your Body to Heal Your Mind By Henry Grayson, Ph.D Reviewed by Sam Menahem Ph.D.

"Use Your Body to Heal Your Mind" is the ultimate self- help book!!! I am not just saying that, I mean it. I have sometimes been accused of reading every self- help book that was ever written. Well, I have read a lot of them and this fine piece of writing is superb. I will explain why.

First of all, Dr. Grayson explains the philosophy underlying his healing techniques in a very readable, understandable manner. Most people see the world as primarily physical, secondarily psychological, and maybe there is some sort of God or Higher Power. Dr. Grayson reverses the order. He explains how we are primarily identified with our Higher Power or energy source. We are one with this source. It is rare indeed for anyone to have that belief. The popular view is that, somehow, through a collision of ovum and sperm, we come into the physical world. We develop body and become completely absorbed with it. Then we have experiences, begin to feel separate from other people and assume that this is reality. Life is random. Things happen for no reason. We are thus victims of these random experiences and develop negative beliefs. For example, many believe that they are “unworthy” of having a happy life. Out of this kind of negative belief we develop negative thoughts and emotions. Then we feel victimized by random events beyond our control and illnesses of all kinds. We begin to feel angry, and we have a right to be angry. This is the dismal picture of humanity that most people have.

Dr. Grayson brings us good news!!!!!! We have everything backwards. Once we realize that we can get on the path to healing, the key element is “using our bodily feelings, pains and illnesses” to guide us to what has to be healed. In fact, it is not really the body that needs to be healed, it is the mind that is the problem! Once the separated mind realizes the spiritual truth of reality, the body will naturally heal itself. Dr. Grayson’s reasoning closely follows the “Course in Miracles” philosophy and cognitive psychology. He explains that the separated mind provides a toxic environment for the cells and organs of our body. Thus, the body becomes ill because the separated mind is ill and deluded that we are separate, isolated abandoned pieces of flesh. This view is very stressful. Once we realize we are actually emanations of the one true power source, we can change our belief in the separated self which leads to negative thoughts, we are healed!!!!!!!!!!!! Both mind and body are healed in the “holy instant” of spiritual realization! First we heal the separated mind, then the emotions and body follow.

Dr. Grayson gives many examples of healings of physical illnesses that he and his patients have experienced. This lends credence to a seemingly “far out” theory of life. When theory leads to health

we feel heartened and want to know how to get healed. This is where the inspirational book gets even better. He shows us the nuts and bolts of “how to” heal ourselves. First, he provides many checklists so we may recognize and evaluate which negative beliefs and traumas are troubling us. Then we use this information to actually change the troubling ideas and beliefs. Dr. Grayson is well schooled in the modern “energy psychologies like EFT (emotional freedom technique) and TFT (thought field therapy). He explains the idea of muscle testing to ascertain problem areas. Muscle testing involves putting our arm out and having a therapist push down to see how strong we can be. When we are telling the truth, we are strong. When we are telling a lie or thinking about a trauma we are weak. Once we determine our problem areas we can work on changing our negativity and replacing “untrue” or troubling beliefs with positive and happy beliefs. We learn to “clear the traumas” that underlie our unhappiness and change them. All the techniques to clear trauma and negativity are here. It is hard to imagine how anyone with an open mind could not benefit from this book, physically as well as mentally and emotionally. It is a handbook for the modern therapist or anyone who wants to feel better. So run, don’t walk to your computer or Iphone and order this book! You will be glad you did.

Happiness is a Choice
By Marcia Blau, L.C.S.W.

It was early morning in Bath, England, many years ago. As I left my hotel, I stumbled upon a woman who was scrubbing the patio floor. She looked up at me, beaming, and chirped “Cheerio! And how are you this beautiful morning?” I stood mesmerized. This woman was absolutely blissful. There she was on her hands and knees, scrubbing, yet she was basking in the delicious joy of being alive. The contrast was astounding. And at that moment I came to understand that one’s life is only as good as one’s willingness to enjoy it. Happiness is a choice.

As a holistic psychotherapist, I have observed that many people wrestle with the wrong idea that their happiness is dependent on something outside themselves. Happiness is a

self-directed state. And just like that internally wealthy English scrubwoman, anyone can choose to be happy. The key word here is “choose.”

The very notion of choosing a feeling state goes against the relationship many individuals have with their emotions. They are much more likely to see their feelings as dictates, predictions, and even judges of their self-worth. In this line of thinking one’s mood upon waking will determine how one’s day begins. The person’s sense of worth becomes dependent on feelings about how much he or she has or who gives attention to that person. And being sad or afraid is experienced as a prediction of how things will turn out.

When this is how patients relate to their own emotions, they have a crummy deal with themselves. Basically they are being bullied by whatever feelings happen to be churning within. The bottom line is that we each get what we focus on in life. And if we don’t like where our focus is leading, we can change that. It is our thoughts that evoke feelings. More than anything else, all day long, we are reacting to our own reflections.

When I communicate this to a patient who is ready to absorb it, there is generally a huge sense of liberation that is followed by a growth spurt. The notion that happiness is in one’s own hands is a highly empowering thought.

I then show how this works. I explain that one may wake in the morning with that sense of dread and it feels like another day of dodging scary stuff. Or maybe a person remembers an upsetting event from yesterday. It is a choice to dive right into those emotions and bathe in them or instead to choose to direct one’s mind to other thoughts. If the effort is made to think about anything else, something one actually can change or maybe even something silly that leads to laughter, then the focus is in a new position. And from this fresh vantage point, things may look somewhat more promising.

Of course this is not so simple in the living of it. It takes some doing to train oneself to think in ways that are uplifting. And if the individual is depressed, there isn’t any singular thought or feeling that will fix his or her life. But there are thoughts that will bring relief, bit by bit. And once one is able to get on that path, that person is making decisions about how he or she feels.

Obviously this becomes more difficult in relation to the degree of stress or pain in any given situation. But the process is always the same. So, even if someone recently lost a job or perhaps was abandoned by a lover, how one reacts is still a choice. Initially it is important to acknowledge the deeper feelings that go along with a big loss. Sometimes the most meaningful response one can have is to crawl back under the covers and cry for a while. But after a point, it becomes a decision about how long one is willing to endure those feelings. Taking the first step out of pain by changing focus is about reaching for the next part of one’s life.

A wise friend once said, “It’s not what happens to you that counts, it’s how you react to what happens.”

Thoughts are structural tools. If we focus on pain, they validate us and build a case for our being miserable. However, if we can begin to think ourselves into a more comfortable position and maybe even reflect on something that brings joy, they will begin to build the bridges to get us there.

As I stood in admiration of that English scrubwoman so long ago, she could not have known how magnificent she appeared to me. Nor could she have imagined how much she would influence me and the many patients who, over the years, have learned from this tale.

Let's Play Make Believe

By Jon Mundy

*It is certain that you will never find satisfaction in
fantasy,
so that your only hope is to change your mind
about reality.*

A Course in Miracles, T-9.IV.10:1

Making and Creating

According to *A Course in Miracles*, since the separation and our choice for the ego's thought system instead of Oneness, the words "create" and "make" have become confused. Spirit creates. The ego makes. We did not create ourselves. Thirty-five times the Course says, "God *created* you." In fact, "God created you perfect." We did not 'create' ourselves, and we certainly did not 'create' God. We *make up* an image of God and an image of ourselves.

*God created man in his image,
and then man returned the favor.*

Russian author, Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821-1881)

Perception's Fundamental Law

According to the Course, *projection makes perception* and Perception's Fundamental Law is, "I see what I believe is there, and I believe it is there because I want it there" (T-25.III.1:3). The more "make-up" we use (symbolically, not literally – there is no "sin" in putting on makeup), the more distorted our frame of reference and the greater our sense of isolation. The more we make up a "story" about ourselves that is not true, the more artificial our world becomes and the deeper our unhappiness. We wonder why life seems meaningless, all the while we are the ones who deprived life of its meaning.

I am happy in so far as I know that I am moving further and further away from that which is artificial (made-up) and deeper and deeper into awareness of the truth of my natural reality as a child of God. We're all here to learn a lesson and life becomes increasingly meaningful as we pay attention doing what God is asking us to do, knowing that someday we will graduate. We will return Home. We will attain perfect happiness.

Being Self-Made Men and Women

The Self which *God created* and the 'self' that we *make up* are *not* the same self. One 'Self' is wholly real and eternal; the other 'self' is a distortion of reality. We make up a world in which we think we live. Being artificial is by necessity an unhappy state. The more we *make up* a separate 'self', the

more isolation we feel. The more desperate we become, the more disconnected we are from our brothers and sisters. In Kabbalah, this unreal self-image is called a "shell." Dr. Carl Jung (1875-1961) described this false self as one's "persona," a mask designed to make an impression on others while also concealing our true feelings.

From 1982 to 1990, I taught psychology courses for Mercy College inside Sing-Sing Prison in Ossining, New York. Many of the men I worked with adopted a "persona" — a fantasy world in the midst of others who were inventing their own fantasy worlds, and therefore, moving ever deeper into separation, solitude, and aloneness, while surrounded by hundreds of other bodies. They adopted tough sounding nicknames. I met, "Big Lynn," "Butch," "Cowboy," "Doc," "Tiger" and "King." They pumped iron, developed big muscles, wore distinctive tattoos and bandanas, grew beards, and/or wore sleeveless shirts.

Deeper and more isolating, however, was the frequent adoption of a cool, seemingly non-caring attitude and an air of toughness. Behind each mask there remained a frightened, forlorn man. A heavy secure wall surrounded the exterior of the prison; and inside, many of the men were building a dense, nearly impenetrable wall around themselves.

There is nothing deadlier than the religionized ego.

American psychiatrist, Dr. David R. Hawkins
(1927-2012)

Similar personas can just as easily be developed in the leading of a "good life," maybe as chairman of the board of trustees for the local congregation, as an army officer, police officer, doctor, psychologist, professor, or "royal master" of the local masonic lodge. I attended a conference where a martial arts expert insisted on being called "Master." There are no captains, no lieutenants, reverends or doctors in Heaven.

*Beware of any occupation
which requires you wear special clothes.*
American Transcendentalist,
Henry David Thoreau (1817-1856)

There is a story about a fellow who dies and ends up standing in front of St. Peter at the Pearly Gates. While he is being interviewed by St. Peter, he sees a little man wearing a white doctor's smock with a stethoscope around his neck running around the Pearly Gates. The man who just died asks St. Peter, "Who is that little man running around? Is he

a doctor?" "Oh no," says St. Peter, "That's God. He just likes to pretend that He is a doctor."

A Course in Miracles is about *looking* at the ego. It is a Course in our becoming aware of how possessed we are by illusion. Love is there inside. It simply needs to be uncovered because, while the masks we wear, the face we paint and show the world may seem quite dense: *Sometimes, only a thin veneer, keeps our sight from being clear.*

I had a friend with a rough exterior, a hard man, not easy to get to know. He had a stroke, and after the stroke, he became very childlike and emotional. Knowing perhaps that death was near, he cried often and told everyone how much he loved them. The love was there all along but it was covered over.

One of the things that keep us from the truth of our Being is the fear we have that annihilation or loss of our ego's thought system will mean the loss of our perceived self. Nothing could be further from the truth. Those who have made the greatest contributions to humanity are those who have been most willing to turn total direction over to God. Englishman William Booth (1829-1912), the founder of the Salvation Army, one of the most successful humanitarian organizations of all time said, "I told God He could have all there was of William Booth."

Think of those who have been most willing to surrender their own will, folks like: Buddha, Jesus, St. Francis of Assisi, Meister Eckhart, Ramakrishna, Helen Keller, Gandhi, Albert Schweitzer, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Theresa, Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama. Those who have been the most selfless – those who gave the most, who loved the most, lost nothing; they gained, in fact, the respect of the whole world.

Private Thoughts

The Course encourages us to abandon 'private thoughts.' Private thoughts are projections we keep secret. They are "my" thoughts related to guilt, to feelings of superiority and inferiority, to fantasies and "dreaming of the world." Not having private thoughts simply means not creating a fantasy story. Abandoning private thoughts does not mean we need to go around boring the world with our thoughts. The world is not really interested. Abandoning private thoughts simply means that *there are no thoughts we need to keep hidden.*

Alonement, Depression and Inspiration

The addition of the suffix "ment" onto a word describes a process. If I could coin a word for the ego's sorrowful position, it might be "alonement." "Alonement" is our *seeming* entrapment in our secret, private thoughts in time, in a dream, in a body, in a drama, in a soap opera, in history or her-story. "Alonement" is depressing. Alonement is isolation. Depression, misery, suffering, and fear of loss accompany alonement. To be depressed is to be fatigued. Being depressed is dispiriting. Depression and the feeling of being trapped in a body is the very opposite of *inspiration*. Inspiration is the opposite of being fatigued.

The Thinking of the Universe

There is an interesting phrase that appears only once in the entire Course.

***Would I not rather join the thinking of the universe
than to obscure all that is really mine
with my pitiful and meaningless "private"
thoughts?
W-52.V.2-7***

The "thinking of the universe" **is** the Mind of God. What we call 'thought' is the combination of words in some sort of sequence. But the 'Thoughts of God' are so far beyond words and what we call thinking, that we can't "think" about it. We can, however, "know" these 'thoughts' experientially, just as we "know" there is something called love, though we cannot define it. This "knowing" is often described as a mystical experience because it is so different from our ordinary egoistical thoughts; yet it is, in fact, the most natural thing of all.

Politics and religion are just different ways of supporting the belief in separation. Just as there are no doctors or reverends in Heaven, there are no Democrats, Republicans or Communists. There are no Christians, Hindus or Jews in Heaven. There is no division. The more that we project the world – the more we believe the dream is real. Thus, it is that "the thoughts we think we think, are not our real thoughts" (W-15.1.1). Our real thoughts are those we share in the "thinking of the universe." The thinking of the universe is awareness in alignment with the Mind of God.

What Happens When the Mask Freezes Over? The Death of Superman

Though he was a good actor and he played many roles, George Reeves (1914-1959), who played Superman during the 1950s, was so typecast as

Superman that he could not get out of what he called his “damn monkey suit.” After the Superman series finished, Reeves got a role as a romantic character in “From Here to Eternity.” When the audience (children in particular), saw him on the screen, they hollered, “Hey, look that’s Superman!” Subsequently, Reeves could not find parts in other movies. In order to earn a living, he was forced to make special appearances at children’s events dressed in his “monkey suit.” After a decade of being Superman, on June 16, 1959, George Reeves was found dead from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Three years later, Marilyn Monroe (1926-1962) would also be found dead from a drug overdose. Two months before she died, she told an interviewer from *Look* magazine, “I am not a sex goddess. A sex goddess is a *thing*, and I am *not* a *thing*. I am a person. I’m just Norma Jean.”

*If we lose control of what is happening to us
our lives become controlled by fate.*

Brazilian author Paulo Coelho (1947-present) in
The Alchemist

A wonderful example of a famous person who refused to get trapped behind a mask is German physicist Albert Einstein (1879-1955). Einstein saw the game that society played, and he refused to play it. He was too smart for that. We’re probably all familiar with the picture of Einstein sticking out his tongue at photographers. Einstein was so well-known that he would be stopped on the street by people wanting him to explain “that theory.” In order to handle the incessant inquiries, he would reply “Pardon me, sorry! Always I am mistaken for Professor Einstein.” Einstein was just Einstein – a great mystic who said that more than anything else he wanted to know the “Mind of God.”

*Psychotherapy is necessary so that an individual
can begin to question their reality.*

Psychotherapy, Purpose, Process Practice
Scribed by Dr. Helen Schucman (1909-1981)
P.in.1:5

Therapy works as patients begin to let go of the need to hold on to their insane stories. Enlightenment comes to every mind that begins to let go of the ego’s story. The message of a modern fairy-tale, *The Polar Express*, is the importance of our not losing the mystical awareness we had as children. Speaking of a bell dangling from a Christmas tree, the last line of the story of the *Polar Express* is “Though I’ve grown old, the bell still

rings for me, as it does for all who truly believe.” Does the bell still ring for you? Can you remember Home? I sometimes joke that dying may be a bit like waking up in the morning. We can then turn to our friends and say, “I just had the strangest life!”

Jon Mundy, Ph.D. is an author, lecturer and the Executive Director of All Faiths Seminary International in NYC and the publisher of *Miracles* magazine. His latest book *Living A Course in Miracles* published by Barnes & Noble, is now in five languages and according to Amazon.com one of the best-selling books based on the teaching of *A Course in Miracles*.

www.miraclesmagazine.org.

Network Meeting of November 16, 2012 By Bruce Kerievsky

Jeffrey Rubin, Ph.D. presented ideas from his latest book, “The Art of Flourishing” at Ripley-Grier. Dr. Rubin discussed how to integrate meditative, psychotherapeutic, and yogic theories and practices in order to live well and thrive, even in these challenging times.

We began (and ended) with Yogic meditations with varying foci on parts of the body and consciousness and with the instruction to accept all thoughts and sensory perceptions regardless of how annoying they might seem. We were asked to pay attention to them and examine their effects on our being.

After each meditation several attendees were asked to report their thoughts. Dr. Rubin responded with clarifying insights for each attendee.

The presentation also revealed that at a Buddhist conference panel on which Dr. Rubin served, a questioner asked each well-known expert on Buddhism about his or her meditation practice. Two of the 5 panelists reported that they didn’t meditate regularly. The reason that Dr. Rubin gave for such abandonment of meditation is that it remains a difficult activity because it confronts us with our habitual problematic thought patterns. A conclusion that was given is that there are no permanently enlightened individuals, that no matter how insightful we may appear at certain times, we are all subject to being distracted by troublesome thoughts.

I think that all attendees found the presentation to be very enlightening and inspiring. We are grateful to Dr. Rubin for his insights.

ASP ABBREVIATED 2012 PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY

Psychotherapy. Business telephone numbers were used where they were available. To update your listing, notify aspspiritandpsych@gmail.com. We will be mailing the full Professional Directory with the 2013 membership dues letter. We need your continued support to publish our newsletter, arrange networking meetings, and plan ASP conferences.

Appearing below is the yearly, abbreviated listing of all Professional (\$70 or more membership) members of the Association for Spirituality and

Name	Degrees	Location	Telephone	Email Address/Web Site
Louise A. Abitbol-Kesler	LCSW-R	Shelter Island Hts, NY	917-969-5834	Labitbol@msn.com
Dennis Alne	Ph.D.	Brooklyn, NY	718-769-4001	alned@aol.com
Ruth Ann Amberstone		Forest Hills, NY	800-804-2184	tarot@tarotschool.com
Wald Amberstone		Forest Hills, NY	800-804-2184	tarot@tarotschool.com
Karen L. Arthur	MSW	NY, NY	212-947-7111 x364	karenkamala@aol.com
Susan Lee Bady	L.C.S.W.	Brooklyn, NY	718-638-8113	susanbady@aol.com
Marcia Blau	LCSW	NY, NY	212-666-2715	marciablau@aol.com
Mary Bromley	LCSW	East Hampton, NY	631-324-8720	mbromley2@verizon.net
Cheryl Dolinger Brown	LCSW	NY, NY	212-595-0986	soulwisdom@aol.com
Penny Cohen	MSSW	Pound Ridge, NY	914-764-1708	penny@pennycohen.com
Marcus Daugherty		Bronx, NY	718-733-0840	mvd60@aol.com
Nancy Davidson	Ph.D.	NY, NY	203-494-6440	drnancy@drnancy.net
Janine de Peyer	LCSW LP	NY, NY	917-434-5964	jdepeyer@gmail.com
Joseph Diele	Hospice Chaplain/Pastor	Brooklyn, NY		popa_joe14@hotmail.com
Elaine Dill	LCSW	Berkeley Heights, NJ	908-490-1923	edill2@comcast.net
Robert M. Dreyfus	M.D.	Swarthmore, PA	215-545-1566	rdrey001@yahoo.com
Frances Duggan	LCSW	NY, NY	646-596-9112	fduggan@francesdugganlcsw.com
Neil S. Elson	LCSW	NY, NY	212-685-0954	neilson@aol.com
Benjamin Evans	DD,DNP,RN,APN	Jersey City, NJ	201-320-2359	BEJCITY@aol.com
Lisa Fawcett	LCSW	NY, NY	212-724-6959	lhawcett8@gmail.com
Virginia Flanagan	MSW, ACSW	Greenlawn, NY	631-757-1443	jinnfy@msn.com
Gerald Gargiulo	Ph.D.	Stamford, CT	203-406-7070	jerrygargiulo@gmail.com
Miriam Gilbert	RN, LMHC,	Brooklyn, NY	718-283-6131	mgilbert@maimonidesmed.org
Phyllis Gildston	Ph.D.,LMHC,LMFT	Great Neck, NY	516 482-4444	drgildston@optonline.net
Margaret Giltanan		Shaker Heights, OH	216-752-1411	majobely@aol.com
Audrey Goldrich	Psy.D.	Teaneck, NJ	201-692-0960	audreygoldrich@gmail.com
Henry Grayson	Ph.D.	NY, NY	212-582-1792: Conn. Office 203-454-1745	henrytgrayson@gmail.com
Tina Greenbaum	LCSW	Old Bethpage, NY	631-988-1109	tina.greenbaum@gmail.com
Diane Greene	LCSW	NY, NY	212-496-7836	dglehrer@aol.com
Jeffrey Gurian	DDS	NY, NY	212-826-8125	Jeffrey@jeffreygurian.com
Barbara C. Hoffmann	Rev., LCSW-R	NY, NY	212-580-0476	bcohenfollmann@aol.com
Emily Jane Howard	MSW	NY, NY	212-562-7346	ejh492@yahoo.com
Wendy Hurwitz	M.D.	New York, NY	212-877-2031	whurwitzmd@aol.com
Regina Jennings	LCSW-R	NY, NY	212-496-2817	rjenningsc@aol.com
Michele Kabas	LCSW	NY, NY	516-348-4695	michelekabaslcsw@gmail.com
Anie Kalayjian	Ph.D.	Cliffside Park, NJ	212-636-6346	drkalayjian@gmail.com
Mary M. Keller	Ed.D., Interfaith	Southampton,	631-259-2122	drmarykeller@post.harvard.edu

	Minister	NY with offices in Westbury & Sag Harbor, NY		and getreliefwithdrkeller@gmail.com
Bruce Kerievsky	A.B.	Monroe, NJ	516 662-9709	bruce@industriallogic.com
Diana Kerievsky	LCSW-R	Monroe, NJ	516 829-5027	dianakerievsky@gmail.com
Ronit Kishon	Ph.D.	New York, NY	646-724-4171	ronit@kishon.com
Peter Konrad	LCSW	Saugerties, NY	845-246-3188	pkonrad4448@hotmail.com
Ceci Kotkin	LCSW	Brooklyn, NY	718-986-0743	ckotkin0@gmail.com
Gracie Landes	LMFT, AASECT	New York, NY	917-238-0170	glandes@mac.com
Renate Lanotte	MS, LCSW.	Riverdale, NY	718-601-5433	renotte@aol.com
Alan Levin	M.A., LMFT	Tomkins Cove, NY	845-558-7692	alevin@SacredRiverHealing.org
Gila Levran	Reiki Master Teacher	NY, NY	646-385-3399	gilalrn@yahoo.com
Carolyn Connolly Liot	MSW, ACSW	East Hampton, NY	516-383-4679	poppy31@optonline.net
Eli Mallon, Rabbi	M.Ed. LMSW	New City, NY	845-639-5366	elimallon@aol.com www.rabbielimallon.wordpress.com
Angel Marcano	M.S., LMSW	Bronx, NY	718-960-0445	no email call to notify
Mary Marino	Ph.D.	NY, NY	917-478-4816	mmarino1133@gmail.com
Kelly Murphy Mason	Psy.D., QCSW, M.Div., M.S.S.W.	Riverdale, NY	212-947-7111	k.m.mason@caa.columbia.edu
Celeste E. Mattingly	LCSW	West Hartford, CT	860-586-8700	cmattingly100@comcast.com
Maureen McSweeney	Ph.D.	New York, NY	212-247-3205	mcsweeneym@msn.com
Ann Megyas		NY, NY		
Samuel Menahem	Ph.D.	Fort Lee, NJ	201-944-1164	smenahem@aol.com
Michael Moran	LCSW	NY, NY	646-298-5277	mgmoranlcsw@gmail.com
Beverly Myers				myersstacy@aol.com
Juliana Neiman	LMFT	NY, NY	212-362-1524	jneiman@nyc.rr.com
Tarah Spencer Newfield	LCSW	NY, NY	212-734-7267	tarah63@aol.com
Nancy Newman	Psy.D.			
Teresa Palmer	NP	Scotch Plains, NY	908-377-0274	teresapalmernp@verizon.net
Jeannine Poler		Curaçao, Neth. Antilles	305-467-4707	jeanninepf@gmail.com
Kenneth Porter	M.D.	NY, NY	212-289-7431	rokeisland@aol.com
James-Gerard Powers	M.A.		212-340-4701	healingpowersnyc@gmail.com
Patricia Quinn	MS, LCAT, NBCCH, CASAC	Unionville, NY	845-649-0953	patriciahquinn@frontiernet.net
Joyce Reilly	M.A.	Chatham, NJ	973-674-6330 x 259	joycereilly@aol.com
Natalia Romana	M.A., LMFT	Jersey City, NJ	714-585-5373	nataliaromana@aol.com
Sylvia Rosenfeld	LCSW	NY, NY	212-799-7800	sylvia@eintelligence.com
Robert Schwab				rschwab@gmail.com
Irene R. Siegel	Ph.D., LCSW			
Albert J. Speranza, Jr.	M.D.	Brooklyn, NY	718-570-7701	Albertsperanza13@gmail.com
Bernard Starr	Ph.D.	NY, NY	212-369-2640	starrone@aol.com
Alan Steinfeld	D.O.M.	NY, NY	212-473-6388	newrealities@earthlink.com
Zulema Suarez	Ph.D.	NY, NY	201-577-2756	zulemasuarez@me.com
Linda Tarack	MFA	NY, NY	212-874-1601	lindatarack@nyc.rr.com
Judy Tudiver	Ph.D.	Johnson City, TN	423-341-4752	judytudiver@comcast.net
Judy Vartelas	LCSW NCPsyA	Kinnelon, NJ	973-838-0607	judy@createjoywithin.com
Charlotte Wolovsky	LCSW	Brooklyn, NY	718-788-4314	charwol@gmail.com