

REFLECTIONS ON THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

A CLINICAL RESOURCE

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THE EXISTENTIAL DILEMMA:
INSIGHTS FOR THE PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC PROCESS

Exultation is the going
Of an inland soul to see,
Past the houses – past the headlands –
Into deep Eternity –

Bred as we, among the mountains,
Can the sailor understand,
The divine intoxication
Of the first league out from land?

- Emily Dickinson

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We fall down and down, until we touch the
Ground, until we relate with the basic sanity of the
Earth. We become the lowest of the low, the
smallest of the small, a grain of sand, perfectly
simple, no expectations.... If you are a grain of
sand, the rest of the universe, all the space, all the
room is yours, because you obstruct nothing,
overcrowd nothing, possess nothing. There
is tremendous openness. You are the emperor of
the universe because you are a grain of sand.

- Chogyam Trungpa

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Straying maps the path.

- Rumi

A pupil asks the master, what is Zen. He replies, "When your mind is not dwelling in the dualism of good and evil, what is your original face before you were born?"

- Suzuki

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The time will come
When, with elation,
You will greet yourself arriving
At your own door, in your own mirror,
And each will smile at the other's welcome,

And say, sit here, Eat.
You will love again the stranger who was your self.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
To itself, to the stranger who has loved you

All your life, whom you ignored
For another, who knows you by heart.
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,

The photographs, the desperate notes,
Peel your image from the mirror.
Sit. Feast on your life.

- Unknown

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Life is a Mystery. A Mystery so awesome that we insulate ourselves from its intensity. To numb our fear of the unknown we desensitize ourselves to the miracle of living. We perpetuate the nonchalant lie that we know who we are and what life is. Yet behind this preposterous bluff the Mystery remains unchanging, waiting for us to remember to wonder. It is waiting in a shaft of sunlight, in the thought of death, in the intoxication of new love, in the joy of childbirth or the shock of loss. One minute we are going about our business as if life were nothing special and the next we are face to face with profound, unfathomable, breathtaking Mystery. This is both the origin and consummation of the spiritual quest.

- Timothy Freke

A hero must learn to escape the undertow of consensus and rise to his own potential, bravely letting go of group support and the fuzzy comforts of participation.

Man must escape the undertow of conformity. The individuated hero may be worshipped or crucified and he must be willing to accept either outcome.

- Edward Edinger

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The fact that many a man who goes his own way ends in ruin means nothing... He must obey his own law, as if it were a daemon whispering to him of new and wonderful paths... There are not a few who are called awake by the summons of the voice, whereupon they are not once set apart from the others, feeling themselves confronted with a problem about which the others know nothing. In most cases it is impossible to explain to the others what has happened, for any understanding is walled off by impenetrable prejudices. "You are no different from anybody else," they will chorus, or, "there's no such thing", and even if there is such a thing, it is immediately branded as "morbid"... He is at once set apart and isolated, as he has resolved to obey the law that commands him from within. "His own law!" everybody will cry. But he knows better. It is the law... The only meaningful life is a life that strives for the individual realization – absolute and unconditional – of its own particular law... To the extent that a man is untrue to the law of his being...he has failed to realize his life's meaning.

The undiscovered vein within us is a living part of the psyche; classical Chinese philosophy names this interior way "Tao", and likens it to a flow of water that moves irresistibly towards its goal. To rest in Tao means fulfillment, wholeness, one's destination reached, one's mission done; the beginning, end, and perfect realization of the meaning of existence innate in all things.

- C.G. Jung

Modern man urgently needs to re-establish meaningful contact with the primitive layer of the psyche. I do not mean by this the compulsive expression of unconscious primitive affects which is a symptom of dissociation. I mean the primitive mode of experience that sees life as an organic whole. In dreams the image of an animal, a primitive, or a child is commonly a symbolic expression for the source of help and healing. Often in fairy tales it is an animal that shows the hero a way out of the difficulty. The images of the primitive and the child serve a healing function because they symbolize our birthright to wholeness, that original state in which we are in rapport with nature and its transpersonal energies which guide and support.

It is through the child or primitive in ourselves that we make connection with the Self and heal the state of alienation. In order to relate to the mentality of the child and primitive consciously, rather than unconsciously and inflatedly, we must learn how to incorporate primitive categories of experience into our world view without denying or damaging our conscious, scientific categories of space, time and causality. We must learn how to apply primitive modes of experience psychologically, to the inner world, rather than physically in relation to the outer world. To be primitive in our relation to the outer world is to be superstitious; but to be primitive in our relation to the inner world of the psyche is to be wise.

- Edward Edinger

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As the hand held before the eye conceals the greatest mountain, so the little earthly life hides from the glance the enormous lights and mysteries of which the world is full, and he who can draw it away from before his eyes, as one draws away a hand, beholds the great shining of the inner worlds.

- Unknown

Encaved within thyself,
Burrowing into thyself,
Heavy-handed,
Stiff,
A corpse –
Piled with a hundred burdens
Loaded to death with thyself,
A knower!
Self-knower! The wise Zarathustra!
You sought the heaviest burden
And found yourself.

- Friedrich Neitzsche

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Several modern individuals who, feeling no heroic stature, no sustaining mythos, wander from idea to idea, impulse to impulse, morosely changing channels in the hope of finding something better to watch.

- Edward Edinger

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Near and hard to grasp is the God.
Yet, where peril lies,
Grows the remedy, too.

- Holderlin

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Behind the world our names enclosed
is the nameless
our true archetype and home

- Ranier Maria Rilke

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.
Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: somewhere in the sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

- W. B. Yeats

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For a long time it had seemed to me that life
was about to begin – real life. But there was
always some obstacle in the way, something to
be got through first, some unfinished business,
time still to be served, a debt to be paid. Then
life would begin. At last it dawned on me that
these obstacles were my life.

- Fr. Alfred D'Souza

Life has always seemed to me like a plant that lives on its rhizome. Its true life is invisible, hidden in the rhizome. The part that appears above ground lasts only a single summer. Then it withers away – an ephemeral apparition. When we think of the unending growth and decay of life and civilization, we cannot escape the impression of absolute nullity. Yet I have never lost a sense of something that lives and endures underneath the eternal flux. What we see is the blossom, which passes. The rhizome remains.

- C.G. Jung

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The best things can't be told – they are transcendent, inexpressable truths. The second-best are misunderstood: myths, which are metaphoric attempts to point the way toward the first.

- Heinrich Zimmer

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We are in a period that Nietzsche called the period of comparisons. There is no longer a cultural horizon within which everybody believes the same thing. In other words, each one of us is thrown out into the forest of adventure with no law; there is no truth that has been presented in such a way that you can accept it.

- Joseph Campbell

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Evil is thought to abound on Earth. But if you could see the plan of Providence, you would not think there was evil anywhere.

- Boethius

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed.

- Albert Einstein

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Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
Where all that was to be, in all that was,
Whirl'd for a million aeons thro' the vast
Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddy light –
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
Thro' all this changing world of changeless law,
And every phase of ever-heightening life,
And nine long months of antenatal gloom
With this last moon, this crescent – her dark orb
Touch'd with earth's light – thou comest...

Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
From that true world within the world we see,
Whereof our world is but the bounding shore –

- Alfred Lord Tennyson

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For what the center brings
Must obviously be
That which remains to the end
And was there from eternity.

- Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

CLINICAL AND SPIRITUAL PARADIGMS

You see, I want a lot.
Perhaps I want everything
The darkness that comes with every infinite fall
and the shivering blaze of every step up.

So many live on and want nothing
and are raised to the rank of prince
by the slippery ease of their light judgments.

But what you love to see are faces
That do work and feel thirst.
You love most of all those who need you
As they need a crowbar or a hoe.
You have not grown old, and it is not too late
to dive into your increasing depths
where life calmly gives out its own secret.

- Rainer Maria Rilke

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A moment comes to every human being when he feels total hopelessness. Absolute meaninglessness happens to him. When he becomes aware that whatsoever he is doing is useless, wheresoever he is going, he is going to nowhere, all life is meaningless – suddenly hopes drop, future drops, and for the first time you are in tune with the present, for the first time you are face to face with reality... When you are not moving into the future, not moving toward the past, then you start moving within yourself – because your being is here and now. You are present here and now. You can enter this reality.

- Bhagwan S. Rajneesh

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If you want to experience the joyous ecstasy that life offers,
There is one commitment that is absolutely fundamental: the
commitment to live in the moment. With that commitment as
your guiding focus, whatever you do in your daily life is part of
your transformational process. Your commitment to living in
the moment becomes your vehicle for spiritual growth.

- Amrit Desai

Human Beings are afflicted... Our true affliction is not our inability to get what we want, or our inability to get rid of what we don't want – mostly sickness, old age, death. The true nature of our affliction is that we are unable and unwilling to come into our inheritance as fully alive human beings.

Life's disappointments coupled with a maturing self-observational capacity will eventually force us to release our attachment to the false self... And as we begin to penetrate the surface of the ideas in the ego-ideal, and subtly break our attachment and identification with them, we begin to experience how things really are, not how they should be. It is only when the false self has been exposed that we are ready for the pilgrimage to the center.

- Stephen Cope

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All human beings are quite deluded.

- Buddha

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Brother, stand the pain.
Escape the poison of your impulses.
The sky will bow to your beauty, if you do.
Learn to light the candle. Rise with the sun.
Turn away from the cave of your sleeping.
The way a thorn expands to a rose.
A particular glows with the universal.
What is it to praise?
Make yourself particles.
What is it to know something of God?
Burn inside the presence. Burn up.

- Rumi

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Truth is one; the sages call it by many names.

- Hindu scripture

There is nothing wrong with God's creation.
Mystery and Suffering only exist in the mind...

- Ramana Maharshi

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The solution to the problem of the day is the awakening of
the consciousness of humanity to the divinity within.

- Hazrat Inayat Khan

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Your life is much deeper and broader than you conceive it to be here. What you
are living is but a fractional inkling of what is really within you, what gives you
life, breadth, and depth. And when you can experience it, you suddenly see
that all religions are talking of that.

- Joseph Campbell

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Myths provide a field in which you can locate yourself. That's the sense of the
mandala, the sacred circle. The symbols are laid out around the circle, and you
are to locate yourself in the center.

A labyrinth, of course, is a scrambled mandala, in which you don't know where
you are. That's the way the world is for people who don't have a mythology. It's
a labyrinth. They are battling their way through as if no one had ever been
there before.

Myth helps point beyond the phenomenal field toward the transcendent, A
mythic figure is like a compass that you used to draw circles and arcs in school,
with one leg in the field of time and the other in the eternal...

And this is the meaning of the Buddha consciousness, the consciousness that
is both the entire universe and you yourself.

- Joseph Campbell

Do you want to know my secret? I don't mind what happens.

- Krishna

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The dawn state of the beginning (of consciousness) projects itself mythologically in cosmic form, appearing as the beginning of the world, as the mythology of creation. The psyche thus experiences its own becoming as a world-becoming, its own images as the starry heavens, and its own contents as the world-creating gods.

In all peoples and in all religions, creation appears as the creation of light. Thus the coming of consciousness, manifesting itself as light in contrast to the darkness of the unconscious, is the real "object" of creation mythology.

The symbolic story of the beginning, which speaks to us from the mythology of all ages, is the attempt made by man's childlike, prescientific consciousness to master problems and enigmas which are mostly beyond the grasp of even our developed modern consciousness.

- Edward Edinger

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I want to know the mind of God, the rest are details.

- Albert Einstein

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I am reality without beginning, without equal. I have no part in the illusion of "I" and "You", "This" and "That". I dwell within all beings as the soul, the pure consciousness, the ground of all phenomena, internal and external.

- Shankara-Eighth Century Hindu Mystic

With all its eyes the natural world looks out
into the Open. Only *our* eyes are turned
backward, and surround plant, animal, child like traps,
as they emerge into their freedom.
We know what is really out there only from
the animal's gaze; for we take the very young
child and force it around, so that it sees
objects – not the Open, which is so
deep in animal's faces. Free from death.
We, only, can see death; the free animal
has its decline in back of it, forever,
and God in front, and when it moves, it moves
already in eternity, like a fountain.

Never, not for a single day, do we have
before us that pure space into which flowers
endlessly open. Always there is World
and never Nowhere without the No: that pure
unseparated element which one breathes
without desire and endlessly knows. A child
may wander there for hours, through the timeless
stillness, may get lost in it and be
shaken back. Or someone dies and is it.
For, nearing death, one doesn't see earth; but stares
beyond, perhaps with an animal's vast gaze...

Forever turned toward objects, we see in them
the mere reflection of the realm of freedom,
which we have dimmed...

If the animal moving toward us so securely
in a different direction had our kind of
consciousness --, it would wrench us around and drag us
along its path. But it feels its life as boundless,
unfathomable, and without regard
to its own condition: pure, like its outward gaze.
And where we see the future, it sees all time
and itself within all time, forever healed...

And we: spectators, always, everywhere,
turned toward the world of objects, never outward.
It fills us. We arrange it. It breaks down.
We rearrange it, then break down ourselves.

- Rainer Maria Rilke

PASSAGES OF INSPIRATION

Oh, I could sing such grandeurs and glories about you!
You have not known what you are, you have slumbered upon yourself all your
life,
Your eyelids have been the same as closed most of the time...

Whoever you are! Claim your own at any hazard!
These shows of the East and West are tame compared to you,
These immense meadows, the interminable rivers, you are immense and
interminable as they.

- Walt Whitman

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With music strong I come, with my
Cornets and my drums, I play not marches
For accepted victors only, I play marches for
conquer'd and slain persons

Have you heard that it was good to gain the day?

I also say it is good to fall, battles
Are lost in the same spirit in which
They are won.

I beat and pound for the dead,
I blow through my embouchures my
Loudest and gayest for them.

Vivas to those who have fail'd!
And to those whose war-vessels sank in
the sea!

And to those themselves who sank in the sea!
And to all generals that lost engagements, and
all overcome heroes!

And the numberless unknown heroes equal
to the greatest heroes known!

- Walt Whitman

Who gets up early to discover the moment light begins?
Who finds us here circling, bewildered, like atoms?
Who comes to a spring thirsty
And sees the moon reflected in it?
Who, like Jacob blind with grief and age,
smells the shirt of his lost son
and can see again?
Who lets a bucket down and brings up
a flowering prophet? Or like Moses goes for fire
and finds what burns inside the sunrise?

Jesus slips into a house to escape enemies,
and opens a door to the other world.
Solomon cuts open a fish, and there's a gold ring.
Omar storms in to kill the prophet
and leaves with blessings.
Chase a deer and end up everywhere!
An oyster opens his mouth to swallow one drop.
Now there's a pearl.
A vagrant wanders empty ruins.
Suddenly he's wealthy.

But don't be satisfied with stories, how things
have gone with others. Unfold
your own myth, without complicated explanation,
so everyone will understand the passage,
We have opened you.

Start walking toward Shams. Your legs will get heavy
and tired. Then comes a moment
of feeling the wings you've grown,
lifting.

- Rumi

What is commonest, cheapest, nearest, easiest,
is Me.

Me going in for my chances, spending
for the vast returns,
Adorning myself to bestow myself on
the first that will take me,
Not asking the sky to come down
to my good will,
Scattering it freely forever.

- Walt Whitman

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Long enough have you dream'd contemptible dreams,
Now I wash the gum from your eyes,
You must habit yourself to the dazzle
of the light and of every moment of your life.
Long have you timidly waded holding
a plank by the shore,
Now I will you to be a bold swimmer,
To jump off in the midst of the sea,
rise again, nod to me, shout,
and laughingly dash with your hair.

- Walt Whitman

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If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavours to live
the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in
common hours.

- Henry David Thoreau

Listen! I will be honest with you,
I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer
rough new prizes,
These are the days that must happen to you:
You shall not heap up what is call'd riches,
You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you
earn or achieve,
You but arrive at the city to which you were
destin'd, you hardly settle yourself to satisfaction
before you are call'd by an irresistible call to depart,
You shall be treated to the ironical smiles and
mockings of those who remain behind you,
What beckonings of love you receive you
Shall only answer with passionate kisses of parting,
You shall not allow the hold of those who
spread their reach'd hands toward you.

- Walt Whitman

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The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me,
He complains of my gab and my loitering.
I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.
The last scud of day holds back for me,
It flings my likeness after the rest and
True as any on the shadow'd wilds,
It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.
I depart as air, I shake my white locks
at the runaway sun, I effuse my flesh in
eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.
I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow
from the grass I love,
If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.
You will hardly know who I am or what
I mean, But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood
Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you.

- Walt Whitman

Tell secret that I should be desperate if my figures were correct, tell him that I do not want them to be academically correct...Tell him that my great longing is to learn to make those very incorrectnesses, those deviations, remodelings, changes in reality, so that they may become, yes, lies if you like – but truer than the literal truth.

- Vincent Van Gogh

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Just as a white summer cloud, in harmony with the heaven and earth freely floats in the blue sky from horizon to horizon following the breath of the atmosphere – in the same way the pilgrim abandons himself to the breath of the greater life that...leads him beyond the farthest horizons to an aim which is already present within him, though yet hidden from his sight.

- Lama Govinda

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Come, come, whoever you are.
Wanderer, worshipper,
Lover of leaving – it doesn't matter.
Ours is not a caravan of despair.
Come, even if you have broken your vows
A hundred times, a thousand times.
Come, come again, come.

- Rumi

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
Some momentary awareness comes
As an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
Who violently sweep your house
Empty of its furniture,
Still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
For some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
Meet them at the door laughing,
And invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
Because each has been sent
As a guide from beyond.

- Rumi

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I began to understand that the promises of the world are for the most part vain
phantoms, and that to have faith in oneself and become something of worth and
value is the best and safest course.

- Michelangelo

EXPLORING THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

My friend, I am going to tell you the story
of my life, as you wish; and if it were
only the story of my life I think I would
not tell it; for what is one man that he
should make much of his winters, even when
they bend him like a heavy snow? So many
other men have lived and shall live
that story, to be grass upon the hills.

- Black Elk

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At some point, most of us begin to perceive that even when our goals are met over and over again...they fail to bring lasting happiness and contentment. Try heroically as we may, we cannot sustain the illusion of this solid, idealized self that we've been working so desperately to achieve. From the yogic point of view, the statue must crumble. The identity project is not a final destination for the human being, but only a transitional structure. It is only a vehicle meant to prepare us for the next step in our journey. In our culture, we have mistaken the vehicle for the destination. As a result we suffer from a kind of arrested development.

- Stephen Cope

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Far over the misty mountains cold
To dungeons deep and caverns old
We must away ere break of day,
To find our long forgotten gold.

- J.R.R. Tolkien

...Not you, his mother: alas, you were not the one
who bent the arch of his eyebrows into such an expression.
Not for you, girl so aware of him, not for your mouth
did his lips curve themselves into a more fruitful expression.
Do you really think that your gentle steps could have shaken him
With such violence, you who move like the morning breeze?
Yes, you did frighten his heart; but more ancient terrors
Plunged into him at the shock of that feeling. Call him...
but you can't quite call him away from those dark companions.
Of course, he *wants* to escape, and he does; relieved, he nestles
into your sheltering heart, takes hold, and begins himself.
But did he ever begin himself, really?
Mother, *you* made him small, it was you who started him;
in *your* site he was new, over his new eyes you arched
the friendly world and warded off the world that was alien.
Ah, where are the years when you shielded him just by placing
Your slender form between him and the surging abyss?
How much you hid from him then. The room that filled with suspicion
At night: you made it harmless; and out of the refuge of your heart
You mixed a more human space in with his night-space.
And you set down the lamp, not in that darkness, but in
Your own nearer presence, and it glowed at him like a friend.
There wasn't a creak that your smile could not explain,
as though you had long known just when the floor would do that...
And he listened and was soothed. So powerful was your presence
As you tenderly stood by the bed; his fate,
tall and cloaked, retreated behind the wardrobe, and his restless
future, delayed for a while, adapted to the folds of the curtain.

And he himself, as he lay there, relieved, with the sweetness
of the gentle world you had made for him dissolving beneath
his drowsy eyelids, into the foretaste of sleep - :
he *seemed* protected...But inside: who could ward off,
who could divert, the floods of origin inside him?
Ah, there *was* no trace of caution in that sleeper; sleeping,
yes but dreaming, but flushed with what fevers: how he threw himself in.
All at once new, trembling, how he was caught up
And entangled in the spreading tendrils of inner event
Already twined into patterns, into strangling undergrowth, prowling
bestial shapes. How he submitted -. Loved.
Loved his interior world, his interior wilderness,
That primal forest inside him, where among decayed tree trunks
His heart stood, light-green. Loved. Left it, went through
His own roots and out, into the powerful source
Where his little birth had already been outlived. Loving,

He waded down into more ancient blood, to ravines
Where Horror lay, still gluttoned with his fathers. And every
Terror knew him, winked at him like an accomplice.
Yes, Atrocity smiled...Seldom
had you smiled so tenderly, mother. How could he help
loving what smiled at him. Even before he knew you,
he had loved it, for already while you carried him inside you, it
was dissolved in the water that makes the embryo weightless.

No, we don't accomplish our love in a single year
As the flowers do; an immemorial sap
flows up through our arms when we love. Dear girl,
this: that we loved, inside us, not One who would someday appear, but
seething multitudes; not just a single child,
but also the fathers lying in our depths
like fallen mountains; also the dried-up riverbeds
of ancient mothers --; also the whole
soundless landscape under the clouded or clear
sky of its destiny --: all this, my dear, preceded you.

And you yourself, how could you know
What primordial time you stirred in your lover. What passions
Welled up inside him from departed beings. What
Women hated you there. How many dark
Sinister men you aroused in his young veins. Dead
Children reached out to touch you...Oh gently, gently,
Let him see you performing, with love, some confident daily task, --
lead him out close to the garden, give him what outweighs
the heaviest night.....

Restrain him.....

- Rainer Maria Rilke

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We are required to accept that there is no parent to lead the way, no guru, no ideology to save us from the complexity and ambiguity of life. The measure of our personal development will hinge on two factors: Our willingness to accept responsibility for finding our own myth, and our ability to sustain the ambiguity that always precedes a new experience of meaning.

- Edward Edinger

I say unto you: one must still have
chaos in oneself to be able to give
birth to a dancing star.

- Friedrich Neitzsche

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One day you finally knew
What you had to do, and began,
through the voices around you
kept shouting
their bad advice –
through the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
“Mend my life!”
each voice cried.
But you didn’t stop.
You knew what you had to do,
through the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations,
through their melancholy
was terrible.
It was already late enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen branches and stones.
But little by little, as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do –
determined to save
the only life that you could save.

- Mary Oliver

...It is only those who know neither an inner call nor an outer doctrine whose plight truly is desperate; that is to say, most of us today, in this labyrinth without and within the heart. Alas, where is the guide, that fond virgin, Ariadne, to supply the simple clue that will give us courage to face the Minotaur, and the means then to find our way to freedom when the monster has been met and slain?

We have not even to risk the adventure alone; for the heroes of all time have gone before us; the labyrinth is thoroughly known; we have only to follow the thread of the hero path. And where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find a god; where we had thought to slay another, we shall find a god; where we had thought to slay another, we shall slay ourselves; where we had thought to travel outward, we shall come to the center of our own existence; where we had thought to be alone, we shall be with all the world.

- Joseph Campbell

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At first a childhood, limitless and free of any goals.
Ah sweet unconsciousness.
Then sudden terror, schoolrooms, slavery,
the plunge into temptation and deep loss.

Defiance. The child bent becomes the bender, inflicts on others
what he once went through. Loved, feared, rescuer, wrestler,
victor, he takes his vengeance, blow by blow.

And now in vast, cold, empty space, alone.
Yet hidden deep within the grown-up heart,
a longing for the first world,
the ancient one...

Then, from His place of ambush, God leapt out.

- Ranier Maria Rilke

As once the winged energy of delight
Carried you over childhood's dark abysses,
Now beyond your own life build the great
Arch of unimagined bridges.

Wonders happen if we can succeed
In passing through the harshest danger;
but only in a bright and purely granted
achievement can we realize the wonder.

To work *with* Things in the indescribable
Relationship is not too hard for us;
the pattern grows more intricate and subtle,
and being swept along is not enough.

Take your practiced powers and stretch them out
Until they span the chasm between two
contradictions... For the god
wants to know himself in you.

- Rainer Maria Rilke

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And so we are very busy indeed. For a long while, perhaps even for our entire lives, we identify with the persona we create in our mind's eye, and we assume that this is who we are. The anxiety of nothingness, of emptiness, of no-self, is assuaged. We feel valued as human beings for the contributions we make as we manifest our identity and interact with the world. We feel a sense of belonging. We feel normal.

- Stephen Cope

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Lonely one, you are going the way to yourself. And your way leads past yourself and your seven devils. You will be a heretic to yourself and a witch and soothsayer and fool and doubter and unholy one and a villain. You must wish to consume yourself in your own flame: how could you wish to become new unless you had first become ashes!

- Friedrich Nietzsche

To some extent, most of us are unconsciously driven by our ego-ideal. The ego-ideal is simply a set of ideas in the mind about how we should show up, how we should look, feel, behave, think. This collection of ideas and mental images is created out of fragments of highly charged experiences with important love objects in our lives, and out of the messages we receive in our interactions with the world as we grow. It remains mostly out of our awareness. The blueprint for the ego-ideal is first laid down by parental injunctions about how to be, or how not to be. These highly charged messages are taken in whole. They become the foundation of our scripts for life. The ego-ideal is certainly capable of modification and change, but for most of us it's deeply hardwired into our unconscious by the time we enter early adulthood, and it matures only marginally in later life.

- Stephen Cope

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Build your cities under Vesuvius!
Send your ships into uncharted seas!
Live at war with your peers and yourself!
...you lovers of knowledge!
Soon the age will be past when you could be satisfied to live like
shy deer, hidden in the woods!
At long last the pursuit of knowledge
will reach out for its due:
it will want to rule and own, and you with it!

- Friedrich Nietzsche

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“He who seeks easily gets lost. All loneliness is guilt” – thus speaks the herd. And you have long belonged to the herd. The voice of the herd will still be audible in you. And when you will say, “I no longer have a common conscience with you,” it will be a lament and an agony. Behold, this agony itself was born of the common conscience, and the last glimmer of that conscience still glows on your affliction. But do you want to go the way of your affliction, which is the way to yourself?

- Friedrich Nietzsche

PSYCHOTHERAPY CHALLENGES AND PROCESS

Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life, and you will call it fate.

- C.G. Jung

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“How concerned is this patient with reality?” Patients who don’t really care about knowing how it really is or how I really am will never get better.

- Elvin Semrad

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Under normal conditions, every conflict stimulates the mind to activity for the purpose of creating a satisfactory solution. Usually – i.e., in the West – the conscious standpoint arbitrarily decides against the unconscious, since anything coming from the inside suffers from the prejudice of being regarded as inferior or somehow wrong. But...it is tacitly agreed that the apparently incompatible contents shall not be suppressed again, and that the conflict shall be accepted and suffered. At first no solution appears to be possible, and this fact, too, has to be borne with patience. The suspension thus created “constellates” the unconscious – in other words, the conscious suspense produces a new compensatory reaction in the unconscious. This reaction is brought to conscious realization in its turn. The conscious mind is thus confronted with a new aspect of the psyche, which arouses a different problem or modifies an old one in an unexpected way. The procedure is continued until the original conflict is satisfactorily resolved. The whole process is called the “transcendent function”.

- C.G. Jung

The unconscious sends all sorts of vapors, odd beings, terrors and deluding images up into the mind-whether in dream, broad daylight, or insanity; for the human kingdom, beneath the floor of the comparatively neat little dwelling that we call our consciousness, goes down into unsuspected Aladdin caves. There not only jewels but also dangerous jinn abide: the inconvenient or resisted psychological powers that we have not thought or dared to integrate into our lives.

- Joseph Campbell

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I try to find out from my patients what they are hiding from themselves, and so, when they come to me, I am only a listener... After a while in our interviews they speak of something with difficulty, and then it becomes evident where the conflict is. Sometimes it is very childlike – some mistaken idea they have of life which holds them fast and keeps them from true living, and has even set up a nervous ailment as a sign of its existence. If my patient comes to realize that this conflict is real, and is tragic, and that all of his efforts to get away from it are useless as well as unworthy of him, then I can help him.

- C. G. Jung

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Even the self in its first impact is hostile and dangerous. Everything from the unconscious, every powerful content, even what we define as the highest value of the personality, when it turns up first, it is destructive.

- Marie-Louise Von Franz

Man's task is...to become conscious of the contents that press upward from the unconscious. Neither should he persist in his unconsciousness, nor remain with the unconscious elements in his being, thus evading his identity, which is to create more and more consciousness. As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being. It may even be assumed that just as the unconscious affects us, so the increase in our consciousness affects the unconscious.

- C.G. Jung

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In about one-third of my cases, the patients are suffering from no clinically definable neurosis, but from the senselessness and emptiness of their lives.

- C.G.Jung

But this realm, as we know from psychoanalysis, is precisely the infantile unconscious. It is the realm that we enter in sleep. We carry it within ourselves forever. All the ogres and secret helpers of our nursery are there, all the magic of childhood. And more important, all the life-potentialities that we never managed to bring to adult realization, those other portions of ourself, are there; for such golden seeds do not die. If only a portion of that totality could be dredged up into the light of day, we should experience a marvelous expansion of our powers, a vivid renewal of life.

The first work of the hero is to retreat from the world scene of secondary effects to those causal zones of the psyche where the difficulties really reside, and there to clarify the difficulties, eradicate them in his own case and break through to the undistorted, direct experience and assimilation of what C.G. Jung has called "the archetypal images".

- Joseph Campbell

The widespread current usage of the Freudian term, narcissism, is a good example of the general misunderstanding concerning self-love. The myth of Narcissus implies something quite different from an excess of indulgent self-love.

Narcissus was a youth who rejected all suitors for his love. In reprisal, Nemesis arranged for him to fall in love with his own reflected image in a pool and he died in despair at not being able to possess the object of his love.

Narcissus represents the alienated ego that cannot love, that is, cannot give interest and libido to life—because it is not yet related to itself. To fall in love with the reflected image of oneself can only mean that one does not yet possess oneself. Narcissus yearns to unite with himself just because he is alienated from his own being.

We love and yearn for what we lack. Narcissism in its original mythological implications is thus not a needless excess of self-love but rather just the opposite, a frustrated state of yearning for a self-possession which does not yet exist. The solution of the problem of Narcissus is the fulfillment of self-love rather than its renunciation. We meet here a common error of the moralizing ego which tries to create a loving personality by extirpating self-love. In the case of Narcissus, fulfillment of self-love, or union with the image in the depths, requires a descent into the unconscious.

- Edward Edinger

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Modern man experiences his situation in the first place as nothing more than a crisis affecting his conscious mind and his ego. The conflict is interpreted as a breakdown, a defeat, a failure to deal with a specific situation or vital problem.

Almost without exception, the psychic development of modern man begins with the moral problem and with his own reorientation, which is brought about by means of the assimilation of the shadow and the transformation of the persona.

The individual is driven by his personal crisis into deep waters which he would usually never have entered if left to his own free will. The old idealized image of the ego has to go, and its place is shaken by a perilous insight into the ambiguity and many-sidedness of one's own nature.

- C.G. Jung

Stand still
The trees ahead and bushes beside you are not lost
Wherever you are is called here
and you must treat it as a powerful stranger
must ask permission to know it and be known
the forest breathes
listen, it answers – I have made this place around you
if you leave it, you may come back again
saying here
no two trees are the same as raven
no two branches are the same as wren
if what a tree or a bush does, is lost on you
you are surely lost
stand still
the forest knows where you are
you must let it find you

- Unknown

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I come not to entertain you with worldly festivities
but to arouse your sleeping memory of immortality.

- Paramahansa Yogananda

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you
Cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make
them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bow from which your children as living
arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
And He bends you with His might that His arrow may
go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also
The bow that is stable.

- Kahlil Gibran

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Martin Heidegger...arrived at the important insight that the awareness of our personal death acts as a spur to shift us from one mode of existence to a higher one. Heidegger believed that there are two fundamental modes of existing in the world: (1) a state of forgetfulness of being or (2) a state of mindfulness of being.

When one lives in a state of forgetfulness of being, one lives in the world of things and immerses oneself in the everyday diversions of life. One surrenders oneself to the everyday world, to a concern about the way things are.

In the other state, the state of mindfulness of being, one marvels not about the way things are but that they are. To exist in this mode means to be continually aware of being.

- Irvin D. Yalom