

Psychotherapy and Spiritual Practice

By Robert Brumet

Many who practice meditation and contemplative prayer are also involved in psychotherapy, which often precipitates questions regarding the relationship between the two of these disciplines. "Can one grow spiritually without ever having psychotherapy?" "Does psychotherapy enhance meditation practice or vice versa?" "Can meditation be considered a form of psychotherapy?"

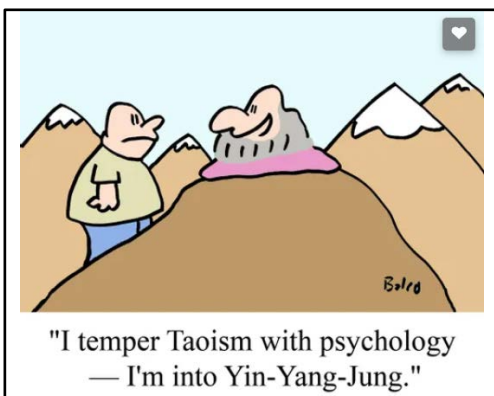
Some authors see psychology and spirituality as simply different parts of a broad spectrum of consciousness, whereas others see these two practices as largely unrelated. Many psychologists encourage meditation as a support for psychological growth, whereas as others, such as CG Jung, saw meditation as a potential impediment to psychological development.

Traditionally, in the East spiritual practice has been emphasized with little attention given to psychological development. In

the post-modern West just the opposite seems to be true; it would seem that for many in our culture psychology has largely replaced spirituality as

the primary pathway to happiness. In our mainstream culture psychological wholeness is usually seen as the highest stage of human development.

We do not have the space to explore all the ramifications of this issue so I will focus specifically on the practical aspects of these questions. A clear



Power of Eight Intention Sessions

We have started weekly sessions of The Power Of Eight as part of the Unity Men's Group meeting. Future Power of Eight sessions will also be available for the entire congregation on Zoom. In addition, there will be in person sessions held every other week at the Victorian after the Sunday service, weather permitting.



Simple Process

1. Select a person in the group to receive the intention
 2. Set the specific intention "Our intention is . . ." (For example: Our intention is the complete healing of bursitis in John's left hip). The intention can be about healing, finances, finding the perfect job, relationships, guidance, etc.
 3. "Power up" with four deep breaths
 4. Feel or visualize your energy flowing into the heart of the recipient. Visualize with all five senses, the person fully accomplished and active in the intention in every way. Recipient just opens their heart to receive.
 5. Continue this for 8 to 10 minutes with or without background music
 6. After completion of the session, share any experiences, sensations, or changes.
- If you would like to participate or be a recipient of an intention, contact:

Rev. Brian Walker revbrian.walker@gmail.com

Larry Conrad ldconradnc@gmail.com

Chris Garey chris@peacefulpoint.com

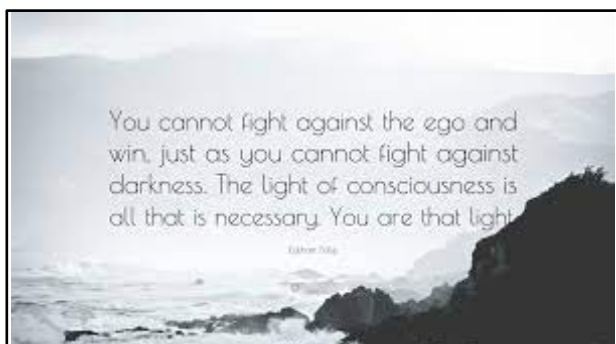


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understanding of the potentialities and the limitations of both psychotherapy and spiritual practice is very important for all spiritual practitioners.

There are many forms of psychotherapy and many forms of spiritual practice so it is unwise to make too many generalizations about either one. What is important is to understand the intention of each discipline to see if they are mutually supportive or not.

A common denominator of psychotherapy and spiritual practice is the admonition to "Know thyself." Virtually



every form of psychotherapy and spiritual practice has an intention of increasing self-awareness; from this perspective these disciplines are mutually supportive.

Another common denominator might be that of "impulse containment". Both disciplines usually encourage the recognition of impulses and desires without unconsciously acting them out. If one is encouraged to act upon his or her desires then it should be done consciously and with clear intention.

The biggest difference between psychotherapy and spiritual practice is the nature of the self that is being considered. In psychotherapy the concept of self usually references the personal self or the ego. We could say that most forms of psychotherapy are designed to strengthen the ego.

With most spiritual practice the self addressed is a transcendent self--something far beyond the personal sense of self. The general intention of spiritual practice is to dissolve attachment to the ego. The ego is seen as something that we have rather than as what we are. In this regard these two disciplines seem to work at cross-purposes with one another. As one student said to me, "My psychotherapist is working to strengthen my ego and my spiritual teacher is committed to dissolving it!"

"A Different Perspective on Aging" Class is Complete

The class was well attended, shining a new light on the process of aging and the fact that we have a strong influence over that process by which we can increase our "Healthspan" not just our "Lifespan." We have control over the choices that we make in many areas effecting aging including these:

- Finding purpose, having a positive mindset, and keeping our brain exercised
- Physical exercise and sleep
- Diet emphasizing foods that turn on the longevity genes and turn off the aging genes. Drink more water.
- Stress reduction, meditation, spiritual growth
- Cultivate connection with others, being part of a community



Unity Five Cities Supports Aging Gracefully

We are working on having future related classes, workshops, and possibly an ongoing support group so we can learn from each other and grow in these areas.

Questions or comments, contact Chris Garey
chris@peacefulpoint.com



"Today is St Patrick's Day. It'll be a good time to eat up this stuff with the green mold on it."

Church Financial Summary

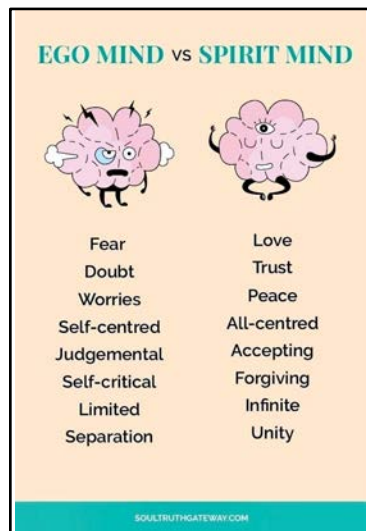
January 2023

Total Income	\$5,200
Total Expense	\$4,567
Net Income	\$633
YTD Income	\$5,200
YTD Expense	\$4,567
YTD Net Income	\$633

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This apparent dilemma need not be problematic if we understand the right function of the ego and the right relationship between these two disciplines. We need a healthy ego to function in the world, and yet ultimately the ego is not who we are. Psychotherapy can help us to heal and strengthen the ego; spiritual practice can help us realize that we are more than the ego.

Much the same could be said regarding the physical body: we need to have a fairly healthy body to function in the world and yet we are more than the physical body. A healthy body is helpful in our spiritual practice, which in turn can help us see that we are more than the body itself. When we are ill or in great pain it is much more difficult to realize this because all that we are aware of is the body and its discomfort.



In similar fashion, a healthy ego can help us realize that we are more than the ego itself. When we experience emotional turmoil or mental instability it is much more difficult to see this because all that we are aware of is our psychological distress.

Psychotherapy and spiritual practice can be mutually supportive if we have clear understanding of the intention and purpose of each, and of their proper relationship. All too often we try to use one to do what the other is designed to do! For example, we may be trying to use spiritual practice to avoid issues that may need to be addressed in psychotherapy. We can try to use our spiritual practice as a form of escape. (This is sometimes referred to as "a spiritual bypass.")

Conversely, I have encountered many individuals who are frustrated with psychotherapy because it does not address their deeper spiritual needs. Psychotherapy can be very helpful, but it alone can take us only so far.

Also, I have seen psychotherapeutic interventions used

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to treat what are actually spiritual emergencies. These interventions are often unsuccessful, and when they do seem to work they simply mask the symptoms while leaving the real issue unaddressed.

My general advice (for those who want it) is to find a psychotherapist who has a clear understanding of the nature and the purpose of spiritual practice, and to find a spiritual teacher who is psychologically literate and able to discern when psychotherapeutic intervention may be called for.

We are blessed to live in an era when we have access to both of these very powerful disciplines; yet this opportunity emphasizes the need for the wisdom to use each of them effectively.

New member Class

In March, there will be a New Member class, which is designed for anyone wishing to become a member of Unity Five Cities. However, it's also appropriate for anyone wishing to improve their knowledge of Unity or to connect with and support those who are becoming members. Contact Pastor Brian if you're interested - revbrian.walker@gmail.com.



Visioning and Focused Ministry Committee

The Focused Ministry Committee has put together a list of recommendations for future classes, workshops, and support groups that help address the needs of our membership.



Some examples: dealing with grief, finding purpose, stress relief, how to meditate, keeping the mind active, etc. That list has been submitted to the Board of Trustees and they will use it to plan for a year focused on some of the specific needs of our membership.



Sound Healing

with Charmian Redwood

Sunday, March 26th, 12pm
Victorian Estate
789 Valley Road
Arroyo Grande

- ☆ *Quartz Crystal Singing Bowl and Gong Sound Bath*
- ☆ *The vibrational sound is traveling throughout your entire physical body, chakras and energy field clearing and removing imbalances or blockages to your ideal and healthy vibration*

Bring a yoga mat

Love Offering



LIVING A LIFE OF PURPOSE

**** New Class Beginning Wednesday, March 15 ****

March 15 - May 3, 2023
(no class April 19th)

6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
On Zoom

Facilitated by:
Rita Conrad, Ph.D.
[**rmconrad99@gmail.com**](mailto:rmconrad99@gmail.com)

"Hasn't nearly every human being stood alone and looked at the clear night sky? Either at peace looking into the night sky or anxious and afraid of tomorrow, we often dance with the question *Why? Does life have meaning? Is there a purpose for being? Can I make a difference?*" ~J. Rosemergy

Join in the group discussion of the book *The Quest for Meaning: Living a Life of Purpose* by Jim Rosemergy
(available on Amazon)

Explore how to create your Life of Purpose.

Contact Rita for more info.

Board of Trustees & Staff

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Prayer Chaplain - Martha Aivaz	805-481-1335
Prayer Chaplain - Ethel Landers	805-550-0348
Prayer Chaplain - Sheila Cochran	619-540-0665
Prayer Chaplain - Deborah Hall	805-788-4777
Volunteer Coordinator, Chris Garey	805-440-1693

Schedule

<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Music</u>
Mar 5 Rita Conrad	Jan Grigsby & Nina Ryne
Mar 12 Rev Brian Walker	Gale McNeeley & Bob Moloznik
Mar 19 Christine Young	Steve Kindel & Karen Wilkins
Mar 26 Rev Jan Limberg Morgan	Richard Inman
Apr 2 Rev Joyce Zorger	Jan Grigsby & Nina Ryne
Apr 9 Ethel "Tink" Landers	One Mighty Light Choir
Apr 16 Kevin Hauber	Steve Kindel & Karen Wilkins
Apr 23 Richard Inman	Richard Inman
Apr 30 TBA	Robbie Kimbal

Vision Statement

Aligned in peaceful Oneness, we co-create a world of love, harmony, and abundance through shared spiritual awakening.

Mission Statement

We are a heart-centered spiritual community dedicated to empowering personal growth and living the unlimited possibilities of Spirit.

Belief Statement

- We believe that prayer works.
- We assist in discovering and living spiritual purpose and potential.
- We facilitate a stronger connection to our highest potential.

We feel we are:

- Empowered Grateful
- Peaceful Inspired
- Accepting Connected
- Loving Affirming

Unity Five Cities

Sunday Celebration 10:00 am
Meeting at The Victorian
789 Valley Road, Arroyo Grande, CA
805-788-4777
P.O. Box 1005
Arroyo Grande, CA 93421
Email: info@unity5cities.org
Website: www.unity5cities.org

A Spiritual Community

P. O. Box 1005
Arroyo Grande, CA 93421

