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Bringing Intuition into Transpersonal Psychology

Intuition is a natural condition of mind. Indeed, all life is intuitive, for instinctive and intuitive merge at the level of biological intelligence. The unerring navigation of migrating swallows over thousands of miles, the use of plying tools by certain bird species, the canine's awareness of an earthquake minutes before it strikes - all these are not rational, thinking processes. They are intuitive knowing. Because animals do not have a rationalizing brain, they are more intuitive than the average human. The constant brain chatter of the thinking mind simply out the subtle guidance of intuition. The field of transpersonal psychology - which recognizes that man's greatest fulfillment lies in superconscious awareness beyond the senses, logic and emotion - is seeking to explore and awaken intuition for psychotherapists.

As reported in the transpersonal magazine *Common Boundary*, a landmark symposium entitled "Expanding Dimensions of Psychotherapy: Opening the Intuitive Gate" met in San Francisco early this year. The meeting was attended by 520 therapists and psychics. Essentially, the conference was a learning discussion, a kind of "here we are with this multi-dimensional and universal phenomena called intuition, so how do we tap it?" Psychotherapists are working primarily with the subconscious of a patient, the underlying personality composed of every single experience an individual has had, not only in this life, but in all lives. Hypnosis has long been successfully applied, and through it has come the best testimony for reincarnation. Over the last decade straight analysis by mainstream psychiatrists has been shown by its own guardians to be largely unsuccessful and problematic for patient and doctor. In contrast, the recent generation of transpersonal therapists are seeking spiritual and psychic wisdom within themselves, then attempting to inject that into their healing work with clients. But they are also groping in, for the West, unexplored territory. The overriding question at the meeting was how to tell when your intuition is genuine or not? The answer came through a process one of the principle speakers called M "third eye" state of intuition.

Helen Palmer, Director of the Center for Investigation and Training of Intuition, unfolded the mapping attention process as a breath-awareness meditation. The mind becomes contentless or empty - much like the quieting of the vrittis (mind vibrations) of classical yoga - through concentrating on the breath. The focal point of the attention is just below the navel. From this empty mind comes the intuitive state. Palmer lists four categories of this intuitive mind: spontaneous intuitive impressions that simply emerge from the stilled mind; contemplation on a subject or object specifically introduced by the meditator; dreaming; and intuition itself which draws impressions from a subject or object the meditator has mind-merged with. The two stages of contemplation and intuition are very similar to the processes of dhyana (sustained meditation) and samyama (identity, knowledge gaining) of yoga. Palmer also explained that many forms of Eastern meditation can tap into other regions of intuition: Tibetan mindfulness meditation develops visual, psychic seeing, a literal "third eye" ability; and Hindu bhakti chanting "helps open attention to the resonating feeling state."

The therapists are also deeply concerned with ethics, as they feel an inner life can only be experienced when personal behavior is selfless and high-minded. Francis Vaughan, a keynote speaker, cautioned therapists against developing intuition outside of an ethical/spiritual tradition. She explained this would maintain authenticity, ethicality and avoid self-deception.

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