

# Psychosynthesis on the move....

An occasional newsletter from the Synthesis Center

Winter, 2012

Welcome again to a brief newsletter from the Synthesis Center. In the midst of winter, we are all seeing signs of change. Assagioli's invitation to see everything through the lens of *both/and* rather than *either/or* is a constant guiding principle for many of us in psychosynthesis, as we face so many potentially polarized situations. And change, whether it is the odd and sometimes-scary weather patterns, the political scene, or our own personal changes, offers us the opportunity to continue the daily practice of psychosynthesis. The Call of Self is not a promise of ease or comfort, of winning the battle or getting what we want. It is simply, the star that guides us through good times and bad, through dark and light. Our job, I believe, is to hear, ever more finely, over all the years of our life, our own call. Didi Firman, editor



## A Poem, with a preface.....

Shortly after my cousin John Firman died, I found this poem on the Mount Holyoke College website, buried in some old archives. It was written in 1906, by our great aunt, Dorothy Firman. It carries the message that psychosynthesis has always carried. It seems important, somehow, to honor the wisdom of our ancestors, in this case, the woman after whom I was named.



photo by Konnie Fox, Hawaii

## Immanence

The sobbing of the winter sea,  
    A child's wide eyes,  
A rosy-blowing springtide tree,  
    Gray autumn skies;  
My lady's step upon the stair,  
    The evening star,  
A city's busy stir and glare,  
    Blue hills afar:  
The vague, dim thoughts that surge and swell  
    the human heart-  
In each and all one thing I spell-  
    Dear God, thou art!

*Dorothy Firman, 1906*

(<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/~dalbino/books/prose/firman02.html>)

News & Events at



See below for: our Presenters' Conference; training at the Center; Thank you's; and much to read in the field!

**The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Presenters' Conference**  
*Everyday Psychosynthesis*

**Saturday, April 28, 2012**

**8:30 am - 6:00 pm**

*With a Wine & Cheese Gathering from 5:30-6:00 pm*



Come one come all to our 11th annual presenters' conference!

**And think about offering a proposal!**

*Proposals are being accepted until February 10<sup>th</sup>. E-mail the Center if you would like an RFP.*

More information with a list of workshops and our post conference seminar will be available on our website in late February!

# Psychosynthesis Summer Intensive Training Program

Once again we open our doors to a new group of trainees for the powerful experience of psychosynthesis training. We invite you to contact us for more information and to share this with folks who might be interested! And come to *Everyday Psychosynthesis* to get a better feel for psychosynthesis and the center. **The intensive** will include all the material covered in the nine-weekend program of Level I. It takes place in three, intensive, four-day sessions. Participants will have the option of continuing on in the Level 2 monthly program beginning in October 2012.

The dates for the 2012 Summer Intensive are:

July 13-16

August 10-13

September 7-10



## Free Informational Evenings

Free Evenings will be held at the Center on the following dates:

Friday, May 18 - 6:30 to 8:00 PM

Sunday, July 8 - 4:30 to 6:00 PM

**New date in Brattleboro to be announced shortly!**

These evenings will be experiential as well as informational to give you a better experience of psychosynthesis and what the training program is. There will be ample time for questions as well. Please call the center at (413) 256-0772 or Email [programs@synthesiscenter.org](mailto:programs@synthesiscenter.org) to register or for more information. You can also contact the Center to speak with staff or graduates of the program to answer any questions you may have.



# Support

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to our annual campaign. We deeply appreciate your vote of confidence and your sharing with us. As a small non-profit organization, we rely on donations to be able to offer scholarships for our training programs. We are happy that we can offer these to all who have a need.

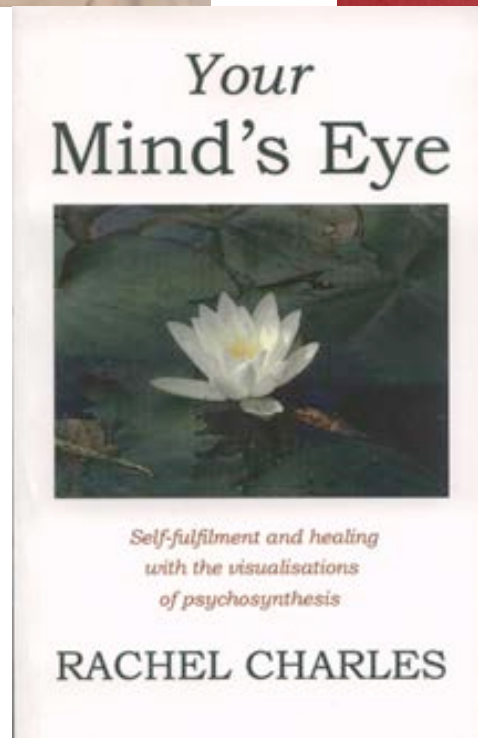
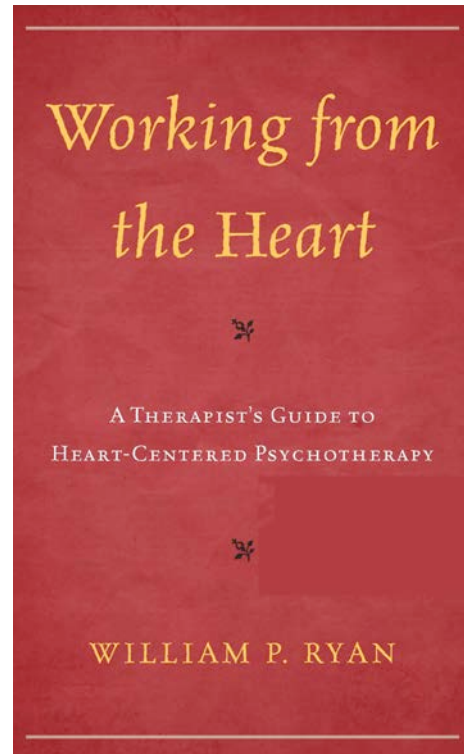
Thanks, too, to the many volunteers making our conference happen. **Jan Kuniholm, Jean Gran, Bill Gran** and **Michael Walden** are organizing the conference this year. It wouldn't happen without them!



Water color by Rebecca Savage

## *Things to read!*

*Books, a blog and (yay) a special edition of the International Journal of Psychotherapy devoted to Psychosynthesis!*





*L'Amour Deraisonne Reclaiming Self:  
Transformational Teachings from Psychosynthesis and A  
Course in Miracles* by Olivia De Gage

As someone who also found Psychosynthesis and A Course In Miracles simultaneously, these two systems of practice were profoundly intertwined in my claiming Self. I valued reading Olivia De Gage's personal evolutionary journal as a reminder of my synthetic processing now 32 years after commencement (and still on-going).

Even though I have been involved in Psychosynthesis counseling at the Synthesis Center for all these years. Ms. De Gage's book reminds me of the freshness, and the pain of the process that those we counsel, or join with as witness, are experiencing.

This book is especially useful for those starting out in counselor training, as it provides a glimpse of a whole process of evolving toward Self Awareness. It is a great resource also for clients in the middle of their process as it may be useful to know they are not alone or unique in experiencing the process of "Reclaiming Self". Ms. De Gage's journal is a painful, yet comforting model of growth.

This deeply personal story is a gift to guide or traveler. The gift is in the joining with Ms. De Gage as she reveals how such personal transformation evolves, with Will and Awareness, from the Psychosynthesis process and the loving-wisdom teachings of A Course In Miracles.

*By Konnie Fox*

*Konnie is one of the creators of the Synthesis Center. She is on sabbatical in Hawaii, listening to the call of self. She can be reached at [konniekfox@gmail.com](mailto:konniekfox@gmail.com).*



*Working From the Heart: A Therapist's Guide to Heart-Centered Psychotherapy* by William P. Ryan

In his laudable new book *Working From the Heart: A Therapist's Guide to Heart-Centered Psychotherapy*, Dr. William P. Ryan displays core qualities of psychosynthetic practice in his life and work that would have made Roberto Assagioli smile. As Ryan states early in this lovely, lovingly considered book "The ultimate goal of the heart centered therapist is to be a synthesis of a highly skilled professional and a loving human being."

*Working From the Heart* presents a philosophy and methodology cultivated over thirty five years of the author's clinical practice, and his life as a reflective, caring, human being. Like a bullion cube of therapeutic essentials, the book is packed with useful techniques, illustrated through skillfully interwoven case examples which are both instructive and occasionally heart-rending.

Entire books might have been written on the subject matter of any of these succinctly realized chapters ie: Wisdom of the Heart, Self-Forgiveness, Touch, Men, Recharging, Sanctuary, Small Heart, Big Heart. But the author's intention is not so much to introduce new theory or set up a specific model, as to illuminate the process of creating resonant therapeutic relationships. He shows us, by example, how a return to our most human interactions, tuned by compassion, and high-self wisdom, can be healing balm for psychic wounding.

None of this is rocket science, but rocket science is not what the walking wounded who come to our doors most deeply need. They need – as we all need- a quiet, receptive and loving presence who can listen without judgment and assist the mysterious dynamic of our own healing natures to realign and come into functional balance. Call it the wisdom of the heart; call it psychosynthesis.

As a clinician, I found the stories Ryan presents- not only about patients, but also about the struggles and learning of his own life- to be both deeply nuanced and quietly instructive. For me, the mark of a good book is when its influence radiates into the life of the reader. *Working From the Heart* is that



kind of book.

The Council is Ryan's merging of subpersonality and guided imagery work -- variously called in other models, the "committee", "ego state" or "parts work". In Ryan's technique the creation of one's Council happens through the evocation of a safe and healing place with all its sensory specifics, and follows with who comes in, their specifically drawn personalities, and characteristics.

Another important concept that I take away is the author's permission to buck the dominant psychological paradigm and talk openly about Love in the therapy room. We've been running scared for so long, that it has become taboo to mention the word Love as part of the healing dynamic of the therapeutic relationship. Dr. Bill tells it like it is. We love our clients, not sexually--as if that were the only way to love-- but deeply, sincerely, as in Agape, the unlimited positive regard Carl Rogers set as a template for us. We care for them with compassion and non-judging awareness, and they respond by opening their hearts to us and to their own stories and so, in the entrainment of listener and listened to, creating an environment--a mystical substrate for healing to happen.

In my opinion, this lucid and accessible book should be required reading for all of us in this profession called therapy, not only to antidote a medical culture which values empiricism over compassion and common humanity, but to encourage us to acknowledge the deeper truths of the therapeutic encounter. Let's cut to the chase: In a fractured world, *Working From the Heart* offers a way of practice in which Love in the therapy room is recognized as both source and ground for all real healing. Amen to that!

*Author Bill Ryan can be reached at [www.williampryan.com](http://www.williampryan.com). His book is available on-line at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), or through his web site.*

*Reviewer Molly Scott, EdD is a singer, poet, therapist who was on the counseling staff of the Synthesis Center for nine years, taught Applied Psychology at Antioch New England and leads trainings in her Creative Resonance work internationally. She has a private practice in Shelburne Falls, and Charlemont, MA [mollyscott@mollyscott.com](mailto:mollyscott@mollyscott.com), [www.creativeresonance.com](http://www.creativeresonance.com)*



*Your Mind's Eye: Self-fulfillment and Healing with the Visualizations of Psychosynthesis* by Rachel Charles

In the book *Your Mind's Eye: Self-fulfillment and Healing with the Visualizations of Psychosynthesis*, author and psychosynthesis counselor Rachael Charles invites readers to explore their own inner resources through visualization in order to bring about healing, change, and transformation. And though the book is not designed as an introduction to psychosynthesis, the author helpfully describes, in brief, some of the main themes found in Roberto Assagioli's work in order to put the rest of the book in context. Charles uses numerous examples from her personal and professional experience, regarding the use of visualizations. This lived experience makes the writing feel authentic and accessible.

The book is composed of many different visualizations that a lay person or counselor might use—from basic work—*Getting to know Yourself*, a chance to meet your subpersonalities and make friends with them, all the way to the transpersonal and *Heaven in a Wildflower*, with visualizations on peace, mysticism, love and wisdom! And along the way there are more specific visualizations for health, work and relationships, among many.

If you want a comprehensive guide to visualizations for all aspects of living, then this is a good resource. If you use visualizations with clients, this book will expand your repertoire. The book comes with an audio cd of visualizations and if, for your own personal growth, you want to get down and dirty with visualizations, a journal, a pen, and maybe some markers— then this is the book for you!

*By Rebecca Savage*

Rebecca Savage is trained in psychosynthesis, tends gardens both inner and outer and has a wonderful Beauregard, who she is fond of painting! See him in

her picture above. 

# Psychosynthesis Blog on PsychologyToday.com

Visit <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/living-life-purpose> to see a little bit of psychosynthesis coming in to the public eye. Didi Firman's blog *Living a Life of Purpose: Spirituality in Real Time* offers an occasional essay on a variety of topics, all with a decidedly psychosynthetic underpinning!  
Recent Posts Include:



Hmm.... is it better to give than to receive?

**SELF.....ish: The call of Self: neither selfish nor self-sacrificing; Take Off That Mask; The Risk of Living Deeply & Defenseless!**

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PSYCHOTHERAPY  
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**PSYCHOSYNTHESIS AND ROBERTO ASSAGIOLI (1888-1974)**

**Editorial**

*Tan NGUYEN*

What is Psychosynthesis? A practical philosophy, which we could use to guide ourselves in times of personal crises? An integrative psychotherapy methodology, which articulates body, feelings and mind so as to facilitate realizing a joyful and soulful presence? A life-education inspired by platonic and neo-platonic philosophy?

It has been one hundred years that Roberto Assagioli met Jung at the Burghölzli psychiatric clinic in Switzerland. From their meeting, sprouted the idea of psychosynthesis, first formulated by Jung, and explored up to its limits by Assagioli. The early twentieth century was a time of ferment of ideas in all areas of arts, philosophy and science.

This special issue about Dr Roberto Assagioli (1888-1974) and Psychosynthesis is somehow a journey back to the roots of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. It is also a present state of the art of psychosynthesis psychotherapy and some of its applications. After one hundred years of existence, it is questionable whether psychosynthesis has become a wise old lady well assured in her slippers or if it's still a blooming youth full of vigor and creativity?

It will be up to the reader to decide, after having read the nine articles written by a few trainers in psychosynthesis !

Dr Massimo Rosselli, who studied with the founder, portrays the man and his research-work which cannot be separated from his life's journey and human sufferings. In the next article that was written by me, I showed how Assagioli reinstated the philosophical approach in psychotherapy while Freud established the unconscious as radically different from the consciousness of philosophers. Assagioli followed the same line of thought as Jung, but recommended using active techniques to support the maturation of consciousness. In fact, he invented the first integrative psychotherapy in the West!

Chris Robertson who has a thorough knowledge of Jungian thought, uses the concept of the numinous to compare and to contrast the views of Jung and Assagioli in relation to spiritual experience. Note that Assagioli warned against the disruptive effect of spiritual opening on the psyche and recommended therapeutic work in order to restore a new psychic balance. Both Jung and Assagioli considered spiritual dimension as inherent in man and to be included in a psychotherapeutic approach.

Articles by Dr Richard Schaub and Bonney Schaub, Dorothy Firman, Dr Kristina Brode, Joanne Graham-Wilson show how Psychosynthesis could be applied in such a diversity of fields as the recovery of addictions, chronic illness, psycho-oncology, corporate stress. These practitioners used the specific approach of Psychosynthesis to facilitate among their patients the emergence of meaning and purpose in times of stress or illness.

In the field of psychiatry, Dr Alberto Alberti, out of his wide experience with psychotic patients, describes a way of getting into empathy with the patient so that healing of the soul may eventually take place through the communion and consonance between the Self of the therapist and the Self of the patient.

And last, but not least, Keith Silvester, who is well versed in the matter thanks to his past experience as a director of training, will discuss the process of transmission of psychosynthesis. The crucial subject of the training of psychotherapists and its impact as a force of transformation for the trainee is usually not dealt with in the professional organizations focusing more on regulations and standards.

*Well, now, dear reader, we hope that you will have some pleasure in reading these nine articles and make up your mind whether Psychosynthesis in this century, has become a wise old lady well assured in her slippers or if it's still a blooming youth full of vigor and creativity!*

**Tan NGUYEN**, Editor for the IJP Special Issue

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Special Edition Editorial Committee:

**Dorothy FIRMAN, Chris ROBERTSON, Massimo ROSSELLI, Keith SILVESTER**


### **Articles:**

 **Roberto Assagioli, a Bright Star**

*Massimo Rosselli, M.D.*

 **PSYCHOSYNTHESIS, A WAY OF OPENNESS**

*Tan Nguyen, MPhil. , MBA*

 **The Numinous Psyche: a spiritual tension in Jung and Assagioli?**

*Chris Robertson*

**+ Psychosynthesis and Recovery from Addictions**

*Bonney and Richard Schaub,*

**+ The Call of Self in Chronic Illness**

*Dorothy Firman, Ed.D.*

**+ Psychosynthesis and psychotic suffering**

*Alberto Alberti, M.D.*

**+ From Corporate Stress to Inner Balance: the Manager's Search for Fulfilment**

*Joanne Graham-Wilson*

**+ Psychosynthesis in Coping with Cancer and Dying**

*Kristina Brode-Thies, PhD*

**+ Perspectives on the Training Journey**

*Keith Silvester*

***To pre-order this wonderful addition to the psychosynthesis literature, see below!***

The price range is around:

- 15 € per a single copy (including postage) to Europe. 12 € a copy for any order 10 issues. 10€ for any order over 30 issues.

- 20 € idem to USA/Australia. 15€ a copy for any order 10 copies; 12€ for any order over 30.

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