

Chapter Fifteen

THERAPY II

The essence of art lies precisely in the concrete representation of the abstract.

Otto Rank, Art and Artist

Most people do not believe what they see. They see what they believe, whether about the external, empirical world, or about their inner being.

LU

It seems so dark at the bottom of the well, but if you look skyward you can see light above, however dim and distant it may be.

LU



SL Is Change Possible?

Your notion that people can change is a good one. I continue wrestling with that question, in regard to others, and in regard to myself. I know important psychotherapists (such as Karen Horney, whom I am reading these days) see the question in mixed terms: some people can change; others can't, won't, or don't. (I know, there's humor in her name, but I pronounce it Hor-*nay*, with the accent on the

second syllable, rather like a French word. A brilliant writer, with great insight. Am presently reading *Our Inner Conflicts*.)

For you and me, it's important to keep the notion, the possibility, and the hope for change clearly in mind. The stronger the intention, the better our chances of growth, development and creative expansion.

That phrase "keep on keepin' on" takes on more meaning for me all the time.

MH Integrating Inner and Outer

Re: Cognitive therapy —

It's rooted in sensory-motor/behavioral perspectives, biology, neurology, chemistry, and actions based on rational directives. It's very useful for giving helpful goals to patients regarding conduct modification (behavior), but perhaps superficial when it comes to deeper psychoanalytic levels where the problems initially take shape and form, and eventually manifest themselves.

Related point: Psychology, like medicine or astronomy, is an evolving knowledge domain; it keeps growing and deepening as we learn more. Its brilliant and courageous pioneers [Freud, Rank, Adler, Jung, Horney others] opened doors. Like Galileo and Newton in their domains, early psychologists got some things right; missed on others; and led the way toward further evolutionary development, which is still going on today — and will continue to progress, as long as we are willing and able to keep on exploring the human mind. No need to trash Freud because he missed on a number of points. He was

a pioneer and innovator, and also made enormous contributions to our on-going study of the human conscious and sub-conscious mind.

Neurological studies of the brain in recent years have given a significant boost to our understandings of physiological mind-mechanizations, and contributed well to our knowledge of the material/external elements involved. Cognitive therapy is a product of that, of course, but it is also only part of the entire psychological picture, a greatly over-emphasized part, as you observe. I think you are quite right to feel uneasy about this branch of psychology — good thinking.

Myself, I like the notion of *integrating inner with outer* — individual psychology ["inner"] with technology ["outer"]; culture [the "inner" of society] with social institutions and processes [the "outer"]. These are Ken Wilber's "quadrants," which I have mentioned during our correspondence.

I normally only suggest various authors, but allow me to by-pass suggestion and heartily encourage you to start looking into Ken's works. His insights can/will ultimately prove useful, even invaluable to you in terms of your own theological/philosophical education, to be sure, but perhaps especially in terms of your own psychological and spiritual development.

I would not point toward him if I did not feel confident that you have a sharp enough mind to handle the concepts and language involved, and that you will benefit immensely. He has looked into the issues and into a multitude of past/present writings comprehensively, and has a mind and a quality of spiritual development unmatched by anyone else I know. The greatest service I can offer you is pointing my finger toward this particular moon.

I think I mentioned to you that he has a new book coming out this month, entitled *Integral Spirituality*. Should be a goodie, even as is his *Integral Psychology*. I'm looking forward to receiving my own copy, in shipment even as I write these words.

I seem to recall having mentioned his *Marriage of Sense and Soul* (science and religion). If you read nothing other than these books the rest of your life, you will find yourself shining from within with the light of luminous clarity.

SL

Jewels In A Treasure Chest

Keep in mind, that events and conversations at your father-in-law's recent funeral brought all sorts of difficult emotional issues to the surface for you. I jumped in with my e-mail, giving to you whatever I could in terms of mental and emotional insight. Insights take place in non-material realms — the domain of mind, spirit, soul, whatever we might like to call it. In a sense, because this domain can't be apprehended by the senses, it is "ethereal," as you characterized it. True, this domain of mind is non-material, but it is also real and immensely important. It has everything to do with how we look at ourselves, our relationships, and the world — and how we interpret what we see.

Even as this mind-spirit realm is interior and intangible, so it is not exterior and concrete or touchable. Inevitably, alas, sometimes my words and concepts occasionally become a bit abstract. At the same time, whatever I say to you about your interior life is personal; by that I mean directed toward you and your welfare. It is not mere metaphysical theorizing. It is an effort to help you get a handle on

whatever may be upsetting or confusing or tormenting you at the moment, and offer some kind of empathy, understanding, insight and support. It is my hope that you bear with me and my commentaries, even if sometimes a little patience and effort may be required. Mind-stuff is often difficult to articulate well.

Most people do not believe what they see. They see what they believe, whether about the external, empirical world, or about their inner being.

Hence, although I often speak of the external world and the objects in it, my primary concern is about the mind — how the mind works and/or fails to work; how we perceive clearly (or unclearly); how we are able to set our personal projections aside and view the object *as it is*, rather than viewing it through the distorting lenses of our own egoic needs.

So while I love the external, physical world and love to take free flights into poetic descriptive fancy about it, my primary focus has become the human mind and the ways in which it determines our perceptions. The ways in which we love or despise ourselves and the ways in which we interpret whatever confronts us from the outside are nearly always determined by our mind-sets, with the ways in which we see and the things we believe and project on top of the realities. As a result, I find myself more and more involved with that core issue.

As we evolve vertically from one level of consciousness to the next more expansive and inclusive level, so our perception becomes clearer and more inclusive. Conflicts are almost never about external realities and objective facts or conditions. They are nearly always conflicts between interior levels of consciousness — two people view the same conditions from two completely different levels of awareness and two different levels of insight and understanding. The higher includes the lower and can understand it, but the lower cannot see and understand the higher until it evolves into that higher level on its own. Hence, conflict.

Of course, these mind-issues lead into some pretty abstract linguistic zones, often far removed from body consciousness and the delights of physical imagery. As I say, the mind is interior and immaterial, not external, physical, empirical. As a result, it is difficult to talk about. Language was invented to talk about objects, not about perception. How often I have longed to return to the physical world in my thinking, where skin meets skin, or hot breath merges with hot breath, or cool water bathes my face. So much easier. It's concrete, tangible, visual. This other dimension requires a different way of thinking and feeling and perceiving. It requires, in fact, a different kind of language, where one reaches up into the highest levels of nonverbal abstraction (rather like instrumental music), and brings insights back down to earth to share with others through language.

I think it's wonderful that you talk to me several times a day in your head and heart, because, as you know, you are speaking with your own head and heart, incorporating whatever in our correspondence is relevant to you and whatever you have absorbed into your own thinking. You are transforming some of my words into your own life-substance. It's great, isn't it? If I am rather like a seed or suggestion through the letters, you are rather like the beautiful flower that is blossoming in daily life.

I feel so happy for you, for me, for the "we" of us, that you looked back into our letters and found them comforting. Save them. Never hesitate referring to them. You have written some marvelous letters, as have I, and there is immense energy contained in them, energy that lasts forever. There is truth in them. Insight. Sensuality. Beauty. Long after they are written, and perhaps forgotten in life's on-going rush, their enduring energy remains alight and alive, outside of the timestream, and vibrant. They are there for you and me whenever we want to revisit them, rather like jewels in a treasure chest.

When you mention left-side/right-side correlates to feminine/masculine energy, there is almost definitely some truth in there. Notably, the left side of the brain, which deals with language, logic, mathematics, analysis, structuralizing, and assertiveness, controls the right side of the body in terms of coordination (I'm thinking of right-handed people, in particular). The right side of the brain, which deals with spatial relationships, imagination, spontaneity, and receptivity, controls the left side of the body (i.e., left-handed people).

Of course, these areas are never strictly separated; they work together, coordinating all of our activities. Nevertheless, the left-brain tends to vitalize so-called “masculine” traits, notably varying kinds and degrees of assertiveness, while the right-brain tends to embody so-called “feminine” traits, notably receptivity and varying degrees of nurturing and creativity.

While our Western culture, historically dominated by males, has tended to separate, isolate and strictly categorize these qualities and functions into “male” and “female” *roles*, the truth is that men can be just as receptive and nurturing and empathic as women, while women can be just as analytical, linguistically capable, and assertive/aggressive as men. It's precisely the restrictions that the male dominated culture has imposed upon women that women have been rebelling against in the West for over a century, particularly, of course, since the Sixties — Women's Liberation.

I, for one, am profoundly grateful to the progress women have made in liberating themselves from stereotypical male-female roles. Why? Because men have been just as enslaved as women by the same values and roles. Men have been locked inside of left-brain testosterone prisons for centuries. They're not supposed to cry, dance, empathize, express doubts, or do anything else regarded as strictly “female.” The “male chauvinist” culture has been as hellish for sensitive, insightful, courageous men as it has been for women. When women began waking up and

snapping their chains, they began liberating perceptive men at the same time (although, to be sure, men as a group are still a century or so behind and just as stupid and insensitive as they always were, individual exceptions respectfully acknowledged).

In my mind, women are infinitely more interesting than men, precisely because they have an inner life as well as an intersubjective, male-female social life. They think about things, feel things, observe closely, and they're willing to talk to each other about themselves and relationships.

Men tend to be ignorant about their inner life; terrified of emotions other than anger; even more terrified about revealing their feelings to others, especially to other men; and of course they are socially conditioned to maintain a strong “masculine” persona not only in the marketplace (the “battlefield”), but in their personal lives as well, where they remain isolated. They tend to deeply believe that if it weren't for sports, they wouldn't have anything to talk about with each other. As a result, some of the brightest, most talented, sensitive, aware, insightful men I have known became basket cases — keeping up the front was a killer for them. They couldn't live *with* the lie; and they couldn't live *without* it, either.

Happily, a few pulled out of the destructive tailspin when they came to realize the male-female unity I talked about with you in an earlier letter. Inwardly, human beings are both male *and* female, both intellect and emotion, both assertiveness and receptivity. When a man or woman realizes this fact at a deep level of the psyche and integrates these complementary qualities into a unified cohesiveness, they instantly liberate themselves from traditional cultural role-restrictions and discover that they in fact possess *enormous* creative power — left-brain/right-brain, male/female, logic/emotion, control/spontaneity, anxiety/exploration, destruction/creation, all work together in a balanced, mutually reinforcing, harmonious, hyperenergized Gestalt.

DS

Surfing the Waves of Daily Life

Found your Nov. 12 e-mail to be a both a stunner, and a delight in a madcap sort of way.

That may sound strange, as you are facing the end of your clinic work, saying goodbye to your patients, looking for two new non-therapy jobs, and being forced to return to get your Ph.D. license after nine years of being in charge of your clinic. On top of that, your poor gentle nine-year sober bulimic-brutalized patient was hospitalized the day after you told her therapy with you would have to end, nearly killing herself with alcohol. I guess you're right. Except for me, perhaps there are few people in your life who understand the ironic drama of the clinician trying to use all his skills and love for others while struggling to keep himself sane.

I can't get over how life's complexities compound themselves, not only for you, which of course they have, but for just about everybody. Seems to be the nature of daily life, is it not? We swim out with our boards to catch a magnificent wave, paddle like mad, stand up to surf the sweet slope of it, suddenly finding it swelling, rising, gaining momentum beyond what we anticipated, until we're perched atop a three-story monstrosity that sure 'nuf pitches us forward, out, and down, then crashes on top of us, heave-tossing our body willy-nilly under water into bubbles and roaring cacophony, holding our breath, trying to find the light, even as all the while that still, quiet observer within us simply watches, listens, unafraid, clear, serene, neither hopeful nor hopeless, simply watching, listening, knowing. . . .

No need to worry about not divulging the "light and thought that you have in safe-keeping," even as there is no need to feel "loathe to be a drag, or a parasite." I am not one to pry, nor am I one to resent silence after I prattle on about my modest

preoccupations. And if there is a tidbit in my ramblings that helps soothe the psyche, or open a door to sunlight even a crack, hey, I'm a happy camper.

I figure it's a rare guy indeed who can talk about his doubts, sorrows, guilt, fears or resentments to another guy. Women are way ahead of us that way. We guys suffer a truckload of conditioned nonsense about privacy, competition, doubt-and-emotion = weakness-vulnerability, yatta-yatta-yatta. You got a "soul-headlock" these days? Hey, write a poem. It's a good image, and the Big Squeeze is a great state of mind for poesis! Not to mention that in addition to being a brilliant guy and a profoundly insightful therapist, you are also an incredible poet.

Meanwhile, the heave-tossing waves you find yourself riding sound every bit as adventurous as a rip-roaring Bach Partita. Loads of intricate counterpoint, high-level vision, psycho-sonic intensity. I guess that's part of the madcap aspect of your present state of disruption.

Much of it, as you pointed out, stems from the new NY legislation about the Ph.D. requirement. Absolutely idiotic, isn't it? In no way do I intend to trivialize matters when I say it reminds me of one of my childhood traumas —

When I saw *The Wizard of Oz* as a kid, I couldn't get over the fact that the Wizard, a well-meaning shuck-and-jiver, gave the Straw Man, who wanted and needed a brain, *a diploma* and declared him to be, ipso facto, fabulously intelligent. The Straw Man instantly became "a Professor of Thinkosophy." Yes, *the paper itself* gave the Straw Man intellect. He could immediately recite a geometric theorem, and was immediately established as being intellectually "bright."

The Wizard's reasoning? People who had no more intelligence than the Straw Man had acquired a diploma. *Therefore*, here's a diploma, and *that* is what gives you a brain! Whoo-ee!

Tim's *Starsailor* bassist, John Balkin, himself a graduate of the Manhattan School of Music, ridiculed the academic/business/legal establishment, "Yeah, man," he'd say in his best Bronx/Brooklyn accent, "you gotta walk in and rattle your papers — they love it! Rattle your papers and smile and they'll kiss your ass and throw money at you!"

Tim always laughed at that, because he didn't have any papers. "I'm just an ignorant genius," he used to say, which was true. Of course, he was a musician working in a domain where genius, ignorant or otherwise, is appreciated. He did not have to cope in the world of "papers." Unfortunately, we live in a world where even if we're brilliant, capable, and dedicated already, the diploma is the only way through their door. God knows, it's a hassle, but I'll bet you can do it.

I feel so sorry for the gentle, bulimic, nine-year-sober alcoholic who tried to kill herself. And in my heart I weep for you, the shock and the horror of it all. It has always been a source of profound respect to me, that someone such as you can "use all his skills and love for others while struggling to keep himself sane." You and similarly afflicted colleagues deserve a world of appreciation and respect.

I know Woody Allen, a dedicated psychotherapeutic patient, has often poked fun at "the crazy therapist." Many others have done the same without being anywhere near as experienced, insightful or compassionate as Woody (or as funny).

Myself, I have forever found it amazing, and yet perfectly understandable, that a man in personal torment can effectively counsel another person in the same or similar state of mind and help that person survive and perhaps even flourish. The Eastern notion that one has to be Enlightened in order to help another is, in my mind, nonsense. Life is simply not that simple.

We human beings are an imperfect lot, doing the best we can, and when someone such as yourself gives himself in love and empathy to another's sorrow and utilizes

his considerable intelligence to help him/her navigate the rapids (or surf those outrageous waves), he's making a profound contribution to that individual and to Life itself.

Perfect mental equilibrium and Ph.D. requirements are totally, absolutely, completely, unequivocally, unambiguously, and most definitely, certainly, and otherwise without doubt secondary, or even peripheral, I mean without question irrelevant!!!

Depression is, of course, a *serious* refusal to accept the facts. I can understand that, as I am a survivor of sorts. Still have to deal with things like the glacially slow progress of supermarket checkout lines, post office queues, and traffic overload. And once in a while, the level of stupidity I witness in the public arena *does* make me clear my throat. And when I have to endure certain searing negative judgments about myself and my work from more than one malicious critic out there in popmusicland, well, let's say it becomes difficult to keep my finger off the trigger.

But there is only so much of the load someone such as you can carry, or should feel obliged to carry. If I, the client, go kill myself because I'm pissed off that you have to take a vacation or depart because of shifts in the legal arena, does that make you the bad guy?

Seems to me, there are those who suffer, who do that better than anything else, who do not wish to change, who will cling and demand and need as much as they can, and who will use their own self-destructive predilection as a weapon to inflict guilt upon those who serve them. At that point of absolute decision: zero gravity. It's their world and their way of doing things, and you're free.

But again, I prattle about matters I should keep quiet about. I hope things have spun around a bit since last you wrote, and that your lovely wife is in your corner helping

you through these various tidal waves, complexities, miseries, doubts, ambiguities, and neck pains.

When you have time and inclination, do drop me a note, won't you? Always appreciate hearing from you. For all of the heavy weight you carry these days, you remain one of the few bright lights in my life.

Let music be your guide. It will always lead you right.

MR From the Bottom of the Well, Look Skyward

So sorry your mindstate has not been keen these days. Depression, discomfort, anger, doubt, frustration, disappointment and similar negative feelings hurt the psyche and the soul, and make it difficult to generate affirmative creative energy. They can become extreme, of course, which makes it even more difficult to pull out. So happy for you that Osho tapped into some of your feelings and is helping you accept them, see them in a positive light. Indeed, they instigate change, hopefully in constructive directions.

Sometimes it is important to simply lie back and accept discomfoting thoughts, moods, feelings. Don't resist them. Don't nourish them. And don't act them out. Accept them, watch them, be patient and courageous. Give yourself love, compassion, sympathy while you suffer through them, as you would comfort a wounded child. Know they will pass. Know you will heal up. Know affirmation can and will return. It seems so dark at the bottom of the well, but if you look skyward you can see light above, however dim and distant it may be.

I am no expert, and am not above anything at all, but I *have* managed to live through some of these things, and so offer what little bit of perspective I can muster.

You suggested some time ago, if I recall correctly, that you had been talking with a counselor. Have you been continuing that dialogue? Sometimes a therapist, psychologist or psychiatrist can be enormously helpful. The wisdom traditions, valuable as they are, were simply unaware of unconscious, prepersonal psychological mechanizations. They are great in dealing with levels of consciousness from the ego on up, but not always adequate when it comes to dealing with pre-egoic dynamics. This is an important point. The wisdom traditions existed before Western depth psychology; they did not know then what we know today about pre-egoic developmental stages.

A good therapist, seen on a regular basis, can be immensely valuable in helping you see into underlying perceptual entanglements, helping you to understand them, what they are, how they work, and helping you integrate them in constructive ways. Something to consider, not only for you, but for all of us. We humanoids are complicated.

That is why and how Osho created such an extraordinary ashram in the '70s. It was a magnificently original experimental context in which he combined wisdom traditions with all of the known Western psychotherapeutic disciplines of the day. What a great synthesis!

You are putting such good things into your head and heart these days, M. Miles' *Kind of Blue*, Bill Evans, Gabor Szabo, Osho, Yoga. All of these things help enormously, but developmental change takes place incrementally, you know? Some here, some there, a little at a time.

Meanwhile, moods rise and fall and rise again. Emotional cross-currents occasionally swirl around and sling us into eddies. We attain a state of serenity and bliss, only to be thunderstruck down to bottomland darkness, shattered into fragments, howling in shades of near madness. But once again the air clears,

sunlight appears, bushes and flowers and leaves stand straight and strong, and we can hear birds sing, streams rush, cool wind whispering through the trees.

Keep on keepin' on, M. All is well.

MR

East/West

Wonderful you have purchased Jack Kornfield's *A Path With Heart*. I especially recommend Jack to you (and, at this point do not recommend his once-close friend, Joseph Goldstein), because Jack is thoroughly cognizant, not only of meditation and its enormous potential, but also of Western psychotherapeutic processes.

Jack does not see Western psychoanalytic values as being antithetical to Eastern spiritual values. He sees the whole psycho-spiritual spectrum of human development, from infantile fusion (totally unconscious) to egoic development (and the several stages necessary for psychic health) on up through transpersonal spiritual unfoldment (in the postegoic subtle, casual, and nondual domains).

Chapter 14 is a good one to look into as a starting point, and then maybe give the whole book a focused read from the beginning. In this way, you will add to your awareness of what has been happening in the field of consciousness studies, and will develop a more well-rounded, multi-faceted perspective on your own interiority.

Osho is great, as we both know, but, like many of the Eastern masters, he has a number of conceptual limitations. That's okay. Some of them have to do with the fact that much that is known today about psychology was not known in the Ancient East.

Buddha had certain conceptual limitations for the same reason — in his case, he did not have the evolutionary developments modernity has brought to virtually all of the knowledge domains — astronomy, Nissan trucks, global television, nutrition guides, physics, biological evolution, psychologists such as Abraham Maslow, Jack Kornfield, Karen Horney, Carl Rogers, etc.

So when Osho starts putting down psychology and psychologists, read him with an alert and skeptical eye. In most instances, he simply did not know what he is talking about. He mentions Freud, Jung and Adler often, which makes it sound as if he is thoroughly knowledgeable about them, but I don't think he is.

In terms of post-personal (or transpersonal) development, Osho and other Eastern mystics know what they are talking about ("the psychology of the buddhas"). But they are lacking in the understanding and terminology of pre-personal development (pioneered by Freud and then developed extensively by others who corrected Freud's conceptual and perceptual errors and expanded his many valid innovations).

So Osho is not strong in this domain. In fact, he is often misleading, although certainly without hostile intent. While his criticisms of Western psychology for the most part do not hold water, his great saving virtue in this area is the fact that he included in his ashram dozens of highly qualified practitioners — psychologists, psychotherapists, psychiatrists, and all schools of psychology known at the time! Good for him.

And one of his basic perspectives was right on the money: psychotherapy helps clean out and integrate the psyche so higher post-personal developmental progress can be made more easily and effectively. Good for him again.

When I bring these various people to you, I am simply trying, from this great distance, to help you discover some of the luminaries of consciousness you may or may not already know about, wonderful folks who may live today, or perhaps lived

a century or several centuries ago. As you read them, you might choose to incorporate their thoughts directly. If you do, great. But even if you don't, you get a sense of the different kinds of work that have been done in these various areas, and, by no means least, you develop a VOCABULARY that in itself can help you come to greater understanding of your own inner workings.

The whole idea, of course, is not merely to read a lot of books and acquire knowledge, but to find ways and means of seeing more deeply into your own heart and mind, and eventually to begin relevant and potent practices that will address your developmental needs, help dissolve whatever barriers and blocks may exist, and open new doors to higher (and sometimes lower, more basic) psycho-spiritual levels of your own being.

Your Prozac can help stabilize body chemistry, while these new readings in psychology can be a nourishing complement to your already considerable spiritual readings. Between chemical stability and intense connections with good writers and new subject areas, you create a marvelously energizing context that can help you conceive and formulate and pursue directions that can be healthful, constructive and enormously energizing for you. The whole idea is the healthy realization of your complete physical, mental and spiritual self, is it not?

Guitarist John McLaughlin used to have a beautiful double-guitar on which were inscribed the words "Guru Alo" — *He who leads from darkness to light*. That means self-actualization.

Self-actualization means fulfilling your potential on all of the levels, not just one or two. It means developing from pre-egoic instability, to egoic stabilization, to transpersonal flowering — in other words from darkness to light.

You can't skip stages and hope to become fully self-actualized. But you most certainly can seek and find stages that need working on, and then work on them.

The first step is discovering what those stages might be. After that, it is important to find the right kind of qualified person to help you do the work, right?

If it's a meditation teacher, a Yoga teacher, a Master like Osho or Buddha, great. If it's a psychologist like Kornfield, or a psychotherapist right there in Manchester or Liverpool, that's great, too. Whatever is needed and whatever works is good for you, do you agree?

Suffering is not fun, nor is it one's destiny, nor does it have to be forever. You are not alone. You *can* grow and change. At every level, in every domain, assistance is available. And this is a great time of life for you to jump into some of these things. It's the greatest and most exciting journey anybody can embark upon. You're gonna luv it!