

PSYCHOSYNTHESIS

THE ELEMENTS AND BEYOND

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PSYCHOSYNTHESIS
THE ELEMENTS
AND BEYOND

Psychosynthesis
in Theory and Practice

WILL PARFITT



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*Will Parfitt asserts the moral right
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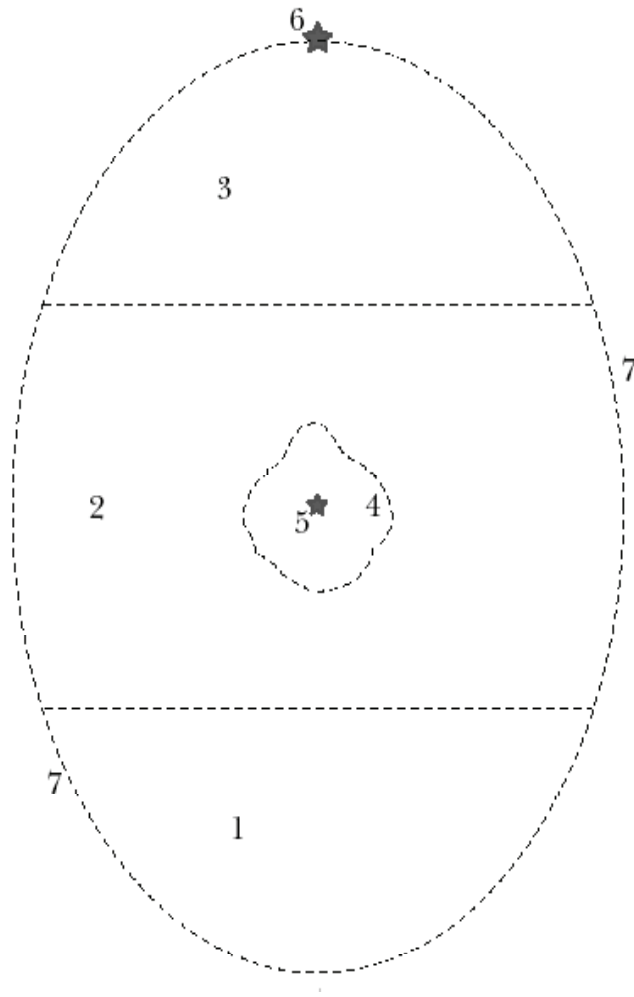


Diagram 1: The Psychosynthesis Egg Diagram

Preface

Part 1 of this book, *the Elements of Psychosynthesis*, was originally published in 1990. My brief from Element Books was to write a book on Psychosynthesis that could be easily understood by a casual reader purchasing the book at an airport bookstand. The reviews I received were by and large complimentary and suggested I had indeed made Psychosynthesis available to a wider audience. After several reprints of the English edition, and translations into Italian, German, Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish and Slovenian, the book only went out of print when the publisher went out of business.

Part 2, *Beyond the Elements*, is new material that takes Psychosynthesis into both deeper and wider realms. The emphasis is towards the psychospiritual and transpersonal aspects of Psychosynthesis, including a detailed description of its esoteric roots. The interface between Psychosynthesis and the Kabbalah, how Psychosynthesis can be used to increase our understanding of various areas, including sexuality, dreaming, connecting with and effectively using the inner witness are some of the topics covered in a direct and practical way.

Roberto Assagioli said that Psychosynthesis may take someone to the doorway of spiritual attainment but not beyond, thus aligning it with major esoteric teachings. To the existential truism that we both enter and leave life alone, esoteric teachings add that each of us has to step through the doorway of spirituality alone. Psychosynthesis offers many perspectives on how to reach that doorway and the potential of companionship along the way. Like the Western mystery schools, it also focuses on how to bring our visions and insights back into the everyday world in a grounded and meaningful way. The purpose of this book is to aid such process, and position Psychosynthesis as the psychology of choice not only as we transit difficult global times in the early stages of a new millennium, but also as we enter more fully into the exciting and challenging times ahead. The aim, to quote Assagioli, is to develop '...the strength and the power to express compassion according to wisdom; the wisdom and compassion to use power for the greatest good.'

PART 1

THE ELEMENTS OF
PSYCHOSYNTHESIS

Introduction to Part 1: The Joy of Being

Roberto Assagioli, the founder of Psychosynthesis, was said to be particularly fond of the spiritual quality he called Joy. Joy, in Assagioli's sense, was an experience that comes through awakening, through remaining connected to a conscious inquiry into the mysteries – and marvels – of everyday life, whether experienced through pleasure or pain. Yet even as the relatively conscious being that I arrogantly believe I am, I know I spend large parts of every day not conscious of my identifications and thoroughly disconnected from a sense of joy. I have a beautiful garden at my home where I can roll on the earth and appreciate the flowers and whatever else, and yet some days it could be the middle of the afternoon before I notice the garden. It's like: wow, that's the first time I've noticed you all day. Taking that slightly wider, I might go for several days without going out of the garden gate, to the fields beyond, whereas, when I first moved here many years ago, almost every day I would be walking in those pastures. So even as somebody who might be slightly conscious, or wanting to be so, or trying to hold a position to be more conscious, I know I fail.

All existence as we know it is just a blink of the eye on a cosmic time scale, yet as I am writing this right now this afternoon, *this* is where responsibility lies, right here in me, a responsibility for how I live my life in relation to other people, other creatures and the earth herself. That ant in my garden who might be really annoying me because it's nesting on a vegetable patch, sure I can squash him but, as part of this biosphere in its entirety, I am equally squashable by something bigger than me. If I squash an ant it's not just between me and it, we are part of a bigger relationship that includes all life.

Truth is, we are all in this together. There are issues at the moment, such as the distribution of wealth, that affect everyone, rich and poor, privileged and not. If I put the cause of this all outside of myself, I feel powerless. If I inquire within myself and make contact with the abuse of power from within, perhaps I am not so powerless after all. If I choose to attempt to

maintain good human relations with my fellow humans, to be respectful of all other creatures and the earth herself, then I am creating more positive energy that helps balance the negative. Each of us has a distinct and relevant place in the unfoldment of human evolution.

I am sometimes aware of my good fortune and joy to have been born and brought up in a relatively rich society, but what do I do with this? How do I bring this richness into the world in a way that participates in the healing process? What do I do with my knowledge and understanding? Asking these questions ensures I cannot just sit back and pretend that everything is alright because if it was I wouldn't need – I wouldn't even know – to ask them. And simply by asking them I keep something awake that burns in my heart and connects me to my fellow inhabitants of our fragile biosphere.

Through supporting our continuing inquiry into ourselves and our relationship with the world, psychosynthesis asserts its environmental relevance. Psychosynthesis offers us a way of mediating between the ultimate source where we are all one and the apparent disconnectedness of our individual personalities. As such it is the prime tool of the soul, not operating just through us as individuals but always manifesting on an evolutionary collective level. The psychosynthesis holographic vision that says as above so below, as without so within, awakens a sense of soul which brings us into a deeper relationship with our interconnectedness and inter-penetrability. Then, as in the words of Roberto Assagioli: "At this time it is the right course and our plain duty towards ourselves, towards others and towards God, not only freely to accept Spiritual Joy but intentionally to awaken it within ourselves and to preserve and increase that which we have obtained."¹

¹ from *Spiritual Joy* published in *The Beacon*, 1942.



1 • WHAT IS PSYCHOSYNTHESIS?

Psychosynthesis is a method of psychological development and Self realization for those who refuse to remain the slaves of their own inner phantasms or of external influences, who refuse to submit passively to the play of psychological forces which is going on within them, and who are determined to become the master of their own lives.

(Roberto Assagioli)

Psychosynthesis is a comprehensive approach to self-realization and the development of human potential. The essential aim of Psychosynthesis is to help people discover their true spiritual nature, then to effectively utilize this discovery in everyday life. Psychosynthesis helps us to realize our creative potential, increase our ability to function harmoniously in the modern world, and improve the quality of all our relationships.

Whilst its application in counselling and psychotherapy is perhaps its best-known use, Psychosynthesis is more than just a form of therapy. Designed to help us move away from what we don't want in our lives and towards what we do, Psychosynthesis is a practical, working method that integrates principles and techniques from many approaches to personal growth. Unlike some other approaches, however, it has no fixed idea of what someone 'should' be like - indeed, with Psychosynthesis, it is quite the contrary. It is only successful when we have become more what we want to be like. This is not in the sense of gratifying unbalanced or partial desires, but when we have become more able to be ourselves in whatever situation

we find ourselves, and to do what we want to do when we tune into our innermost sense of self and purpose. So Psychosynthesis is a kind of therapy, and it is a method of self-improvement, but more than this, it is also a process that co-operates with the unfolding evolution of all nature. It aims to bring awareness, wholeness and connection to the process of evolution as this happens in each of us.

Psychosynthesis has been described as 'a psychology with a soul', and this is what distinguishes it from many other forms of psychotherapy. Emphasizing the value of intuition, inspiration and creative insight, it is a form of 'transpersonal psychology'. Whilst it concentrates on the personality, it also includes the realms usually ascribed to more mystical or esoteric doctrines. Yet, whilst it explores these areas that we could call spiritual, it in no way imposes any form of doctrine or belief system upon the person using it. Psychosynthesis is not a religion, nor would it ever want to be. Although once you start Psychosynthesis it becomes a way of life, one of its greatest qualities is that it allows you to be and do whatever you want, so is equally suitable for Christians, Buddhists, Pagans, Moslems, atheists, agnostics - indeed, anyone at all.

Psychosynthesis is a way of understanding our lives, of helping us to know ourselves and trust in our own processes of growth and unfoldment. But Psychosynthesis does not deal only with the individual, for each of us is part of many different groups of people, including our families, our friends, our work mates, and so on. We are also members of a society and of the one human family that covers the whole planet.

Psychosynthesis honours both the individual and the groups of which the individual is a part. Partly because of this inclusive attitude, and partly by the nature of its transpersonal connection, Psychosynthesis is not a way of putting ourselves above or over anyone else. We can honour and utilise our own wishes and power but not at the expense of other people. Psychosynthesis does not rigidly analyse or label people and it is expected that we will not do this either.

Psychosynthesis theory says that each of us is constantly growing. This viewpoint helps to put meaning and value back into life, and helps us make decisions about who we are and

what we want. It can also help us realise our responsibility both to ourselves and the world as a whole. It can add a dynamic sense of self to the present moment, and a sense of meaning to ourselves and to our future. Psychosynthesis can help you to 'know yourself' in the fullest sense of these words. Anything that helps people know themselves better, both as individuals and in the context of living a life in accord with others, has to be useful. To summarise, Psychosynthesis offers:

- a means whereby we can grow and learn more about ourselves;
- more ability to do our will, to take actions that improve our situation both from an inner and outer viewpoint;
- a connection to the transpersonal realms of soul and spirit;
- a clearer connection to our conscious life processes and to the unconscious realms behind these;
- more creativity;
- a way of grounding creative energies and manifesting our true life purpose;
- an improvement to our inner life;
- better interpersonal relations.

BACKGROUND

Psychosynthesis was founded by an Italian called Roberto Assagioli early in the 20th century. He had trained as a psychoanalyst but also had a deep interest in the esoteric. The more he worked with people in the analytical mode, the more he felt there was something missing, some vital aspect of the person that was not being honoured or addressed in any way. This was the transpersonal or spiritual realm that includes spiritual understanding, wisdom, love and inspiration. Assagioli once said that psychoanalysis was primarily concerned with the basement of the psyche whereas Psychosynthesis is concerned with the whole building. Once we learn to access the whole building, it is then possible to include all aspects of ourselves. We can live in a more holistic way, including not only ourselves but, through the connections that are inevitably made once the spiritual realms are accessed, also all other living beings.

The key to understanding the development of Psychosynthesis out of psychoanalysis can be found in the words themselves. Analysis is the separation of something into its component parts so that its nature and function can be understood. This, indeed, forms part of Psychosynthesis. Synthesis goes further, however, by putting everything back together again, in a new way that more harmoniously synthesizes these component parts. They create a new unity, placed around a centre at the core of the being, from where the individual can more effectively direct his or her life. Synthesis actually means putting together the parts of something so as to form an integrated whole. All our parts - mental, emotional, physical and spiritual - have to be included for the synthesis to be effective and complete.

Modern psychologists, particularly those working with people in a practical way, whatever their discipline, take the role that was once ascribed to the 'wise person' or 'shaman' in the society. They are expected to have an understanding of the inner world and to be able to use this understanding to heal people. If you want to heal someone you have to 'make them whole' (the word heal is connected to the word 'whole'). Psychosynthesis, by including the spirit and soul, allows a more thorough healing to take place. It also, incidentally, has a connection through this to esoteric traditions that are much older than modern psychology.

Since Assagioli's death in the early 1970s, Psychosynthesis has grown worldwide and there are now training centres in many countries in the world, and Psychosynthesis practitioners in all walks of life. Psychosynthesis does not only teach you how to work with and 'heal' other people. Many people who train in Psychosynthesis do just that, but the majority of people who undertake Psychosynthesis - either as a training, with an individual guide or simply through using the techniques they learn from books - then utilise Psychosynthesis in their own field of work. This includes education, medicine, social work, the arts, engineering - you name it and the principles of Psychosynthesis can be applied to it. All the signs suggest that Psychosynthesis is continuing to grow, for unlike some other similar methods for personal understanding, it is not a finished system but one that is willing to change and grow as the world changes and grows.

HARMONIOUS GROWTH

Psychosynthesis is not only a method for self-realisation, but is a continuous and organic process that is happening in the psyche of everyone at all times. This process happens naturally, but it tends to get blocked. The methods of Psychosynthesis include techniques for unblocking this process. These techniques are not used mechanically, but are applied with care and attention. They can then act as transforming agents in our lives, and put us in touch with the natural flow of growth and development.

To help understand the process of Psychosynthesis, it has been found useful to split it into two parts - 'personal' and 'transpersonal' (or 'spiritual') Psychosynthesis. Personal Psychosynthesis concentrates on building a personality that is effective and relatively free from blocks of any kind, is able to direct its energies constructively, and has a clear awareness of its own centre or 'I'. At the core of Psychosynthesis is the idea that each of us has a centre or 'self' which when contacted helps us organize, and ultimately synthesize, all the various parts of our make up. To reach this centre we have to use our will. This will is not at all like the old fashioned concept of will power - something that you have to struggle with in order to make things work - but is rather something fluid and easy, something which, as we approach our self or centre, we find becomes easier, and is even fun.

To really harmonize all the various parts of the individual, it is essential to have this centre, called the 'I' in Psychosynthesis, around which the synthesis can take place. The more the sense of this 'I' is realised, and the more contact is made with it, the more we can then realise our even deeper connection with the transpersonal or spiritual realms. In Psychosynthesis this deeper centre is called the Self (with a capital 'S' to distinguish it from the self with a small 's' which is another name for the 'I').

When we succeed in unifying the different parts of ourselves, we experience the release of positive energies such as Joy, Truth, Happiness, and Unity. Psychosynthesis facilitates this process and helps us to enjoy beauty, sharpen our minds, become more self determined, creatively utilize our vital energies, enrich our imagination, awaken our intuition, express our potential,

and realize the power of undistorted love.

The first stage of Psychosynthesis is, therefore, analysis which helps the individual get a thorough knowledge of the personality. Next comes the work of personal Psychosynthesis, focussing on ways to control and integrate the various parts of the personality. This is based on the main principle of Psychosynthesis which states: 'We are dominated by everything with which we become identified or attached. We can dominate and control everything from which we disidentify or disattach ourselves.'

We can achieve this disidentification through contacting our unique and unattached centre. When we feel the surge of an overwhelming wave of anger, for example, we no longer either need to suppress it or let it take us over and explode out in whatever form it chooses - both ways in which it has us rather than us having it. Instead, we can have the anger and find ways to express it appropriately, or to discharge the energy in other ways (for example in creative acts) if the anger is inappropriate.

When you have it rather than it having you, the 'you' that has it can say 'I have anger (or whatever it is.)' Who is this 'I' that has it? The 'I' that is your centre or self, the you that is pure self awareness, unattached to anything but willing to identify with the contents of your consciousness as appropriate. Once you have made good strong connections with this 'I', the next step of Psychosynthesis is the reconstruction of your personality around this centre.

Transpersonal Psychosynthesis explores the spiritual regions, areas beyond our ordinary awareness. It is in such areas that we find the source of all intuition and our sense of value and meaning in life. For many people personal Psychosynthesis is enough, as it helps them become harmonious individuals, well adjusted within themselves and within the communities or groups to which they belong. However worthy an achievement this may be, however, for some people it is not enough and they touch on a real need inside to develop spiritually as well - this is when transpersonal Psychosynthesis comes into its own.

Psychosynthesis includes the whole person, which is composed of the personality plus the spiritual realms, including the Self that is, in this sense, our connection to the divine (whether

that is seen as some outside energy or ultimately within us). Using Psychosynthesis we can learn to grow on all these levels - so we can develop as a personality and find more effective ways to experience life and to express ourselves. We can also grow in our connection to the transpersonal realms, thus unleashing more positive, beneficial qualities into our lives. We find more effective ways of utilising our creative energies. Creativity, in the Psychosynthesis sense, is not just about drawing, painting, making music, sculpting or whatever (although it is these things as well), but acknowledges the fact that we are all creative in our own ways. With the right attitude we can be as equally creative doing housework as in painting a masterpiece, in changing a baby's nappy as in encouraging it to walk and talk.

Everything in nature appears to be evolving towards increased wholeness. This could even be considered to be the definition of evolution. Psychosynthesis co-operates with this process. An atom comes together with other atoms to form a molecule, and these form cells, which then group into tissues that become organs that make up a whole body. A similar process of synthesis can be seen in our psychological world, too, as all the parts of us come together to make us into one, whole person. We can use Psychosynthesis to help us explore all these parts so we become more centred and able to function more effectively. If one molecule was at war with another, and your heart didn't agree with your lungs, you'd have problems. So it is with the psychological functions too - when our sensations, feelings, thoughts, emotions, imagination, intuition, everything that makes us up, are harmoniously synthesized, then we work well and without conflict.

For a true synthesis, the individuality of each part must be respected. No bit of us is 'better' or 'worse' than another bit. On the contrary, each part has to be whole before it can truly be synthesized and integrated. The conflicts we experience can be seen in this light - as the source of the energy which allows us to know more about ourselves. When we work on our inner conflicts, we can utilise the released energy to bring ourselves through into more effective functioning. In other words, apparent obstacles can be seen as gifts which we can value as much as the more obvious gifts when things are going well.

We can know what we want, and have an idea of where we are going in life, but once we start moving in that direction we find there are all kinds of blocks that stop us. If we see these blocks as our helpers, then through looking at them and dealing with them, we can more effectively move in the direction in which we desire to go. The blocks are, indeed, the very energy of our being, so the more we deal with the blocks the more we are moving towards our true being, rather than cutting off from ourselves and not allowing our potential to grow and blossom.

Once we start making choices about where we are going or what we want in life, one of the first major obstacles we meet is all the conditioning we have received as children (and often are still receiving through advertising and political control). This conditioning is most clearly seen in the things we believe we 'should' do - should go to bed early, should wash your teeth, should be a good girl and so on. We have to move towards a freedom of choice and not allow these 'shoulds' to control our actions. This is not always so easy. We know we 'should' do something even though it is not what we really want to do, so how do we do what we want to do without being in conflict with the part of us that says 'you should...'? One of the aims of Psychosynthesis is to help us understand that we are always bigger than the dynamic of any such conflict - if we move out of the conflict and connect with the self, from this better vantage point we can make clearer decisions.

When we have peak experiences, times when we feel really connected and 'right', when everything around us feels harmonious, and our lives are filled with qualities such as Love, Joy, and Truth, we can make positive affirmations that will expand us and help us to include more of these qualities. But we also have to find ways of manifesting or grounding these energies or they will dissipate into illusion. Psychosynthesis deals both with the connection to these qualities and the ways we can ground them. In Psychosynthesis the work is never a process of 'getting rid of' something but is rather aimed at transformation through inclusion. Nothing that exists in the transpersonal realms of the spirit is in conflict, so all qualities can easily co-exist. Yet when they come through to the realm of the actual (that is, the personality) then we find that conflicts do

exist. Through honouring the transpersonal qualities and getting more in touch with them, then expressing them clearly, we can bring more harmony to our personality. In other words, we are able to manifest more of our potential.

Although you can go to a Psychosynthesis therapist (sometimes called a guide) for individual sessions, or to a Psychosynthesis group either for training or group therapy, Psychosynthesis is basically a system of self help. This is not to say that seeing a guide or going to a group does not enrich and often speed up the movement towards wholeness, but the ultimate aim of Psychosynthesis, whether we learn about it through a book or go to a guide, is to enable us to do it for ourselves. Psychosynthesis does not promise any kind of standard result; how any individual's Psychosynthesis unfolds depends upon that person alone. With practice, experience, intelligence and intuition, however, real and satisfactory results can be achieved.

EXERCISE: THE SYNTHESIS OF PARTS

The exercises in this book are placed at the end of each chapter so that you have a greater choice when to practice them. You might like to do so immediately after reading the chapter, or you may prefer to leave them until later, for instance if you are reading this book whilst travelling.

Before starting any exercise, spend a few moments relaxing and centring yourself, ensuring you have enough time to complete the activity without being disturbed. Take as long as you need to go through the instructions, as it is always better to err on the side of slowness rather than rushing through it. At the end of any exercise it is good practice to find a way of expressing what you've learned in your everyday life. Mostly, however, have fun with the exercises as taking a light approach can help you connect with and keep a perspective on the work.

If you are the sort of person who doesn't do exercises in books, then at least read them so you know what they are suggesting. For many people, simply reading through an exercise has a powerful effect.

Make yourself comfortable, take a few deep breaths and allow yourself to become as calm as possible. Imagine a single atom. See the nucleus and the electrons spinning around it. Take some time to really imagine this atom in your mind's eye.

Now imagine this atom combines with another atom, then several more atoms until they form a molecule. Clearly imagine a molecule composed of several atoms.

Molecules can come together to form cells. Imagine you see this happen, your molecule merging with other molecules and cells forming. Take time to really imagine this process.

Every living thing on our planet is composed of such cells. Your body is made up from an innumerable number of cells that have formed themselves into tissues, organs, blood, bones - everything which makes you what you physically are.

Realise that you are made up from cells. Your unity is dependant upon the harmonious interaction between countless cells that are, in turn, dependant upon the synthesis of equally countless numbers of molecules and atoms.

On a physical level, all these parts come together to make up 'the whole you'. Allow yourself to really connect with how wonderful this is.

Realize the same is true for your inner world, too. All the parts of you - your thoughts, feelings, emotions, sensations - everything that makes you up, is part of this one, whole being you call 'myself'. Allow yourself to really connect with how wonderful this is, too.

In your own time, bring your awareness back into your room and spend some time simply being with any thoughts, feeling and sensations you may be experiencing.





2 • THE INNER JOURNEY

Spiritual development is a long and arduous journey, an adventure through strange lands full of surprises, difficulties and even dangers. It involves a drastic transmutation of the 'normal' elements of the personality, an awakening of potentialities hitherto dormant, a raising of consciousness to new realms, and a functioning along a new inner dimension. (Roberto Assagioli)

When we are exploring ourselves and our relationship with other people and the world around us, it is very helpful if we have a map. There are lots of different maps of consciousness, some better than others. One of the best maps is that used in Psychosynthesis which is sometimes called 'the egg of being' or quite simply 'the egg diagram' (see diagram 1.)

One way of testing a map of consciousness is to see whether it becomes dated as new information about our human consciousness and how we operate comes to light. Just as if we were travelling in, say, Spain, we would fare much better if our map was up to date, and showed Spain as it is now, not as it was a hundred or a thousand years ago. It is also important that we choose a relevant map - a map of Italy would be of little use to us on our trip to Spain. Similarly, an out-of-date map of human consciousness will also be of little use to a modern day traveller.

A good map helps us to see where we are, and our relationship to both where we have come from (the past) and to where we are travelling (the future). It will help us to see who we are, particularly as it focuses us onto our present moment in both time and space. And a good map should help us understand

ourselves, both intrinsically and in relation to other people and things.

A map shouldn't really need too much data to be read properly, but all maps need some explanation. At the very least we need a guide to the symbols on the map. Without it how would we know that a little black circle with a cross above it is a church with a spire? A good guidebook will help us to read the map in the most effective way. It might tell us, for example, that the brown lines with numbers are contour lines, and that when they are close together the ground is steep, or when they are far apart it is flat. A good guidebook will also give us some information to help us really appreciate where we are, the 'local colour' of the place, so to speak. It is the primary purpose of this chapter to act as a guidebook to the Psychosynthesis map, 'the egg of being'.

It is of vital importance, wherever we travel inside or outside of our own consciousness, to be ourselves. But when we travel in unknown or new places, it is well worth remembering to proceed with caution, checking with our map and guidebook more frequently than we might once we are familiar with the territory. And, finally, it is of most important to remember that if any particular map doesn't work for us, we are probably better off finding a different one that does. Psychosynthesis will work for us even if we don't really like or wish to use 'the egg of being' map. Indeed, Psychosynthesis will work equally well with other maps such as, for example, 'the tree of life'. Whether we choose to use another map or this one, it is always worth remembering and reminding ourselves that the map is most definitely not the territory. All maps are static versions of a dynamic reality. They are not the truth, but representations of it. They are, however, useful tools for facilitating our inner exploration.

When we get right down to it, and are 'out there' exploring ourselves, we have to really experience the territory, to become fully involved in the experiences we are having. Thus it is well worth spending some time studying the map so that when we are actively travelling - climbing a psychological mountain, bridging an emotional river, descending into a well of spiritual understanding, whatever we are doing, we are helped through our familiarity with the territory.

THE EGG OF BEING

The main Psychosynthesis map (diagram 1) called 'the egg diagram', represents the whole psyche. The three horizontal divisions of the egg stand for our past (1), present (2) and future (3). All three are constantly active within us, although in different ways. This is obvious when we consider the present moment - after all, we are here and now not then and there! Within this present moment, this 'here and now', we carry the past with us in the form of all our memories and experiences whether we remember them or not. It is everything from the past, in one sense, that makes us what we are in the present moment. In another sense, perhaps more 'esoteric' but no less real, we also carry the future within us. It has not happened yet, but all of us have right now the potential to become something else, to have new experiences, to find new ways to express ourselves. Or perhaps someone's potential might be to always remain the same, to experience or express nothing new - but that, too, is something they carry within themselves.

If we look at the egg of being in this way, we can see it is a complete map of the continuum of time. Whilst its primary focus is on the present moment, because that is, after all, the moment in which we want to use the map, like all good maps it will help us tune into where we have been (the past) and where we are going (the future). By reference to the past, we can get a clearer understanding of where we are in the present moment. This then helps us decide where we want to go and how to get there.

The egg of being is chiefly concerned, however, with our inner journey and so its 'divisions' represent the different aspects of ourselves as individual beings, and our connection to other beings too. Study the map as you read the following descriptions so that, as your familiarity with the map increases, so does your familiarity with the different aspects of yourself.

(1) represents the lower unconscious, our personal psychological past which includes repressed complexes, long-forgotten memories, instincts and physical functions over which we (ordinarily) have no conscious control. All our fundamental

drives and 'primitive urges' are part of this realm as are the activities of basic bodily functions. It is primarily the repressed material, often experienced in the form of unconscious controls upon us, phobias, obsessions, compulsive urges and so on, with which we are primarily concerned in Psychosynthesis.

If you had recently travelled through, say, Turkey, all the experiences you would have had would have changed you, and would 'colour' your experience right now. Some things might have happened to you that you have pushed out of your consciousness because they are too unpleasant to remember (equivalent to repressed material). Although you might have chosen to 'consciously forget' these incidents, they would nevertheless have an effect on you. If you had been chased by a pack of growling dogs, for example, and you only escaped by the skin of your teeth, you might not want to remember their glaring eyes and dripping fangs. Their effect would still be there, however, as shown by your reaction right now to that friendly little poodle!

You might have had it instilled in you as a child that you must wash your hands every time after using the toilet. This in itself is sound advice, but you were conditioned into believing you have to do this or you are naughty. But here in 'Turkey' you cannot always do this and after every time you use the toilet you keep feeling a little sick. Of course it may be that you are being affected by some bacterium. It could equally be that, although you have forgotten it, you are really being affected by the parental voice that somewhere in your unconscious still tells you off when you don't do what you are told.

These are just two examples of items within us that may affect us at any moment. See if you can think of other such examples but don't be surprised if you find it difficult - after all, part of the power of such items from the past is that they are no longer remembered and thus exert a much stronger hold on us.

When we explore our lower unconscious it helps our growth because as we learn to integrate more of these 'older' or repressed aspects of ourselves, the more whole we become. When we release previously repressed energies, we feel healthier, have more energy available to us, and feel more freedom in our lives.

(2) represents the middle unconscious, the place where all states of mind reside which can easily be brought into our field of awareness (4). For example, in our readily accessible 'middle unconscious', we carry all sorts of information and knowledge that is not always relevant. We know how to do simple arithmetic, but do we really want to choose to have that in our consciousness when we are making love? We know how to bake a cake but do we want to be thinking about that when we are reading these pages?

You might know that later tonight you have an important meeting with a friend, but you can safely let that knowledge reside in your middle unconscious until later. Of course, if it is a very exciting meeting, then all through the day it will keep popping into your mind, perhaps distracting you from whatever else you are doing.

The middle unconscious also holds suppressed material. This differs from repressed material that has been 'pushed down' into the lower unconscious. With repressed things we no longer 'remember' or own them as part of us. Suppressed material, on the other hand, we know is there, it is just that we are choosing, for one reason or another, not to bring it out at this moment. For example, you really want to eat something, but you have to suppress the desire until lunchtime when you are free to go to a cafe. Or you know something about a friend of yours but you are choosing to suppress this knowledge for fear of upsetting or hurting them.

There is nothing wrong with suppression, but we have to be careful that things that we suppress in our consciousness do not get completely forgotten, and then become part of the contents of our lower unconscious from where they will start controlling us rather than us controlling them.

The field of awareness (or consciousness) (4) is shaped like an amoeba to emphasize how it is constantly changing as our field of awareness changes. Often it is simply shown as a circle, but I prefer to shape it like an amoeba to emphasize how it constantly changes. The field of awareness is constantly alive with sensations, images, thoughts, emotions, feelings, desires and impulses all of which we can observe and act upon or not

as we see fit. One moment you are relaxing with your lover, say, and have a 'pseudopod' stretched out to your feelings. Then the phone rings, it is a call from your work and now you retract the pseudopod that was into feelings, and 'stretch yourself', as it were, into a mental place, where you can connect with the conversation about work.

Our field of awareness is constantly fluid, changing as our feelings or thoughts or sensations send us information about our environment. If we become really cut off from our experiences it can be as if the amoeba of awareness 'encysts', it hardens its semi-permeable skin and stops letting through clear messages, either from inside to outside or vice versa. Part of the work of Psychosynthesis is to bring freedom of movement to our amoeba, and to increase our awareness of its function and abilities.

(3) represents the superconscious, our evolutionary future, the region from where we receive all inspiration and illumination, however we experience it. Indeed, true inspiration can come to us in artistic or scientific, very grand or very simple ways. It is the source of our 'inner genius' and is thus perhaps the major area of exploration for us when we wish to more clearly and successfully move into our future. We will be looking at the realm of the superconscious later in this book.

Perhaps the most obvious way that most people connect with their superconscious is through insights and 'inspirational flashes' that just seem to appear in their consciousness. For instance, you might suddenly realize the solution to a problem that has been bugging you for days or even longer. Or you might suddenly know more about what you want to do with your life after months of feeling uncertain and directionless. Usually such insights, and other similar experiences, show that the superconscious has been contacted.

The exploration of these three realms, the lower, middle and higher unconscious, is one of the main tasks of Psychosynthesis. Any distinction between higher (or super) unconscious and lower unconscious is developmental, not moralistic. The lower unconscious is not bad, or in some sense not as good or as

important, it is simply earlier in our evolution. It is described as 'lower' simply because it is behind us, and forms the 'foundation' of our present awareness. The superconscious is not merely an abstract possibility but a living reality with an existence of its own. Calling it superconscious (or 'higher' unconscious) does not mean it is above us or better than us in some way, but is merely meant to describe the sense that as we evolve and move towards it is as if we are raising our consciousness into new experiences. Alternatively, when insights come from this realm of the unconscious, we often get a sense of things 'dropping into place'.

(7) represents the collective unconscious that is common to all living beings. We are not isolated pieces of individuality, we are not islands, so although at times we may feel isolated and alone, in reality we are part of a collective field in which all other beings play a part. There is a constant and active interchange between us and all other sentient beings, whether we are aware of it or not.

Note how in the egg diagram the lines are dotted to show there are no rigid compartments impeding free interplay between all these "levels". If we become too rigid it is as if the egg 'hardens' and our work might be to crack it a little to let more fluidity into our lives. On the other hand, if we are too sloppy, too 'nice' for our own good, if we find it difficult to separate ourselves from other people, then it is as if the spaces in the egg have become too large, letting in (or out) too much. Our work is then to strengthen the eggshell, and create more of an individual identity.

(5) is the personal self, our individual 'I' who experiences all these different states of consciousness. It is the 'I' that experiences itself as having thoughts, emotions and sensations. It is not these changing contents of consciousness (thoughts, emotions, sensations, and so on) but is the inner you that experiences these contents. Generally during life we do not experience this 'I' in a very clearly defined way. The more we work on ourselves through Psychosynthesis, the more we can start contacting the 'I' and making it a living, experienced reality in our consciousness.

In one sense we could say on both a psychological but also a physiological level, that the more we get in touch with our 'I' the healthier or more whole we become.

This personal self is a reflection or spark of the spiritual or transpersonal Self (6) that is both universal and individual. The realization of this 'transpersonal' Self is a sign of spiritual success and achievement. Awareness of the personal self is the primary goal of Psychosynthesis, being the place from where we can effectively direct the personality. This leads to a clearer and fuller contact with, and understanding of the Spiritual Self.

THE INNER WORLD

Although it may seem obvious that the map is not the territory, often in our lives we confuse the two, and think that what we know about something is what it actually is. If we look into our inner world, using the egg diagram as a map, we find that all the divisions and so forth are very static representations of what is really an ever-changing, dynamic reality. But the map can help us to find our way round.

Similarly, when we start investigating our inner world, we find that certain images and symbols seem to easily represent various aspects of ourselves. In Psychosynthesis exercises, use is often made of the image of a meadow. This 'meadow', which you can visualize quite easily, corresponds roughly to the 'field of awareness'. Anything we then find in the meadow, or imagine to be there, is something within the contents of our middle unconscious.

We can imagine a track leading from the meadow down through some thick undergrowth into a mysterious, dark valley. This 'valley' can then represent our lower unconscious. We can also imagine a track leading up to a mountain on top of which we might imagine a Temple of the Self. This 'mountain' would then correspond to the superconscious. Of course, the mountain, the meadow, and the valley are not 'real' places, but how you imagine them, and what you imagine within them, are real representations of your inner world. In the following exercise, use is made of such imagery.

EXERCISE: VISITING THE MEADOW

Either lie down or sit in a comfortable position. Loosen any tight clothing you might be wearing, take a few deep breaths, then close your eyes.

Imagine you are in a meadow. Let your imagination really take you to a meadow on a summer's day...Feel your feet on the grass. How long is it?...Look around you - what can you see? Are there birds, insects, trees? Really fill in as much detail as possible, and remember it is your meadow, there is no right or wrong way to imagine it.

Let your other senses come into play. What can you hear - perhaps the humming of insects, bird song, the sound of wind gently swaying distant trees... What can you smell in your meadow on this warm summer's day?...If you breathe in deeply, what can you taste?...Really take your time now to build the image of your meadow so that you feel really present in this place. Perhaps you might like to walk around a little, exploring the field. What are you wearing? What does it feel like to be in this meadow?

Be aware that at one edge of your meadow the ground gets rougher, and starts to slope away into what looks like a deep, dark valley. You can decide that perhaps one day you will explore that valley, but for now just be aware of its presence. How do you feel when you look towards that valley? What can you see in that direction?

Now turn around in your meadow and see that in another direction there is a path that leads up to a mountain. Really picture this mountain in all its splendour. Again decide that one day you will explore that mountain, but for now just be aware of its presence. How do you feel when you look towards the mountain? What can you see in that direction?

As you look towards the mountain, you see a bird flying towards you. See the bird getting bigger and bigger as it gets closer to you. In its beak it has a jewel and as it flies over you it drops this jewel and you catch it in your hands. Thank the bird for this gift, and sense the power and strength of this object as you hold it tightly in your hands.

Now look at the jewel. What does it look like? What colour is it, what size, do you know what kind of jewel it is? Get a clear picture of this jewel, then, when you feel ready, open your eyes, come back to your ordinary, every day consciousness, and bring the jewel with you.

You might like to draw a picture of this jewel, or write about it in your diary. This jewel is a gift from your superconscious, and you can use it as a magical talisman that will protect you on your explorations into the depths - and heights - or your unconscious. Use it wisely and its strength and radiance will grow with you.