

Spirituality and Psychotherapy

The Becoming of the Soul in the Body

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To fulfill our soul and become all that we are is a spiritual push. But that fulfillment of our core, our innate self, our soul, is done with the help of the body, so it is a biological push as well. Then what is the difference between a spiritual push and a biological push?

That all depends on how you define spiritual and how you define biological. And to continue in that endeavor, how do you define the soul?

Here are some definitions I have come to in trying to address those essential questions.

To begin at the beginning, first, my definition of God: God is all there is. Therefore there is nothing that is not God. Clearly then, God has no other. God, being all there is means that all of the material of the universe including ourselves and everything that we can see touch or even imagine, are all actually parts of God. Since there is nothing that is not part of God and God has no other we can come to the conclusion that there is nothing else in the entire universe but God.

Let's take that conclusion to the next step. God, being divine, means that all of what we call the material universe – by this definition being part of God – is naturally also divine. And speaking of what is natural means that what we call nature is also part of God. Clearly then, there is nothing that exists, visible or invisible to our human eyes and senses that is not divine.

So what is generally called natural law must also be traceable to God and must also be a function and an aspect of God's law. For how can nature escape being part of all that is, therefore part of God and therefore divine? Now we can see that what is biological and what is spiritual can arise from one and the same base.

I know that this definition is not in alignment with that view of God which posits that God is outside nature and therefore of another quality, i.e. spiritual and not of what is ordinarily called "that which is material" and therefore other than God. This definition makes spirituality and materiality opposites, which implies that God is outside the material realm, being essentially, "spiritual" i.e. "non-material". In that definition God would no longer be all that is and therefore there would be something existing that is other than God, i.e. nature and that definition simply does not fit my understanding of either, God, nature or the composition of matter and the composition of what is called spirituality.

What is called material, for me is essentially divine and not lifeless, non-spiritual or Godless. For me it is impossible to think of meaningless matter. God's meaning is everywhere and in everything that is, including our living bodies and what one might call dead matter.

All that is, is divine. That means all that constitutes matter and all that is forged into life based on matter, is divine, i.e., spiritual. I can only understand and explain the wonder of consciousness as a spiritual reality while it is so clearly a neurological and therefore biological reality.

There is another element in my definition of God. God being all there is and the universe as we at least now know it is expanding and in that way, still becoming. That leads me to the conclusion that God is also expanding and becoming. I particularly like the notion of God still in the process of becoming because that is linked to the topic of this conference, the spiritual becoming of the soul via the body.

Now we can define the soul. The soul, is all that I am. I am made of others, a father's sperm and a mother's egg and I become who I am by virtue of interaction with those primary others and many others before and beyond them. Therefore I am not God for I am made of others and I must have others in order to fully become myself. If I ever get to a position or place where I feel as if I am all

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there is then I have entered the domain of God and I become omnipotent, at it least in feeling, thought and sometimes action. But paradoxically it is satanic forces and not God-like forces that are set loose when I feel I am all there is and I am the only. Much more on that later.

That means when I am conceived, I am then only the result of the union of two cells and certainly not yet all that I am. For when I am newly conceived my soul is just a possibility and not yet an actuality. I need to have my maturational needs met by the appropriate other for me to complete that process.

So here is an interesting link between the development of my soul and the process of God, endlessly becoming. My personal becoming of my self, i.e. the fulfillment of my soul could be linked and looked at as a part of God's becoming. What a wonderful and powerful thought. It makes me then not only a part of the universe but also a part of the most dynamic process imaginable. In that respect, I and you in our soul-becoming are engaged in the colossal emergence and flowering of the endlessly becoming God.

So now, let's get back to the body.

Now that we have some basic definitions in place, let's look at some of the laws that form us that is, form our bodies and ultimately form ourselves. We can call them the formulas of life, or to make a pun or metaphor, the form-you-laws, or the formulas of life that form you and I and every other living person.

Here we go. Here are some of my fundamental life formulas that I personally live by and professionally work by.

We are made out of – or another way to put it – we are formed – by information. As a matter of fact, three different kinds of in-formation. Let me now note, the first kind. What we call our bodies is first fundamentally, extra-ordinarily condensed information. That is, we are made out of the genetic, evolutionary information stored in the genes packed into our father's sperm and packed into our mother's egg that will – at the moment of the union of those two cells which happens at conception – become the physical realization of the information that is the foundation of who we will become.

In that stored, genetic, evolutionarily evolved information is what has successfully lived and reproduced in the world that it found itself born into from the beginning of time. From the first living forms on up to us humans, our genes have kept a record of successful living that created the ongoing possibility of more life. All the failures in successful living did not replicate and therefore our genes have no record of that.

Our genes are the treasure house of success stories going back through time from the beginning sparks of life that rose out of matter to become the first living, replicating organisms. What is more divine than that? Matter has become flesh that grows and knows and replicates.

Our genes are packed with information, not only with what has been successful in the past, but it is packed with information about how to expand that union of two cells and take it on the unbelievably complex journey of creation of more cells in more complex relationships to become organs and then finally the completely developed fetus that will emerge from our mother's uterus as a living, whole being that is equipped with information about how to experience and react to the world it is born into.

Until that moment of birth, we are the creatures only of the first kind of information, which I shall call "storage". That is, the stored information that is packed in our genes that will create what is to become and be called you or me.

So to jump ahead, if we want to fulfill our soul, that is fulfill the potentiality we become heir to in the magical instant of conception, we only have to listen to what is deepest in our body, our cells, our feelings our sensations, our urges that rise from that base. Our soul does not talk to us in words, it pulls us, it pushes us, it compels us, for we are the heirs to its ancient, sacred passion for being alive and seeing to it that its and our own future generations keep on living. It is not just you who owns that passion. You have inherited it from all the living stuff that remembered, recorded, collected and transmitted it through epochs and millennia to end up in your mother's singular egg, that is to become one part of a singular you and your father's singular sperm that is to become the other part that forms the reality of a singular you. Both joined in a union of your singular passion and your singular desire to live and make more life. For your genes not only knew how to construct your life, bit by bit, cell by cell, organ by organ in perfect harmony and organization but, if you are a female, it has deposited in your ovaries, the next possible generations of living folks, and if you are male, it has deposited in your testes, the ability to create billions of possible partners to those darling clustered eggs, not yet beings, sheltered in the ovarian temple of every, littlest, new born girl's sacred interior.

It, or you, or me, are then born with senses that will inform us about the world we find ourselves in, with selective attention to what will enhance the continuity of life, for indeed, we are loaded with expectation and information about how to continue living outside the uterus. We have selective attention, bred into our senses, to those elements we can sense in the outside world that will enhance life or be a danger to life. We are born with a passion to survive – a passion that has survived for billions of years, first in our uni-cellular antecedents and then in all that has lived, long before we humans were a part of life on earth.

We are also born with muscular, moveable bodies that have the inbuilt information and capacity to move in accordance with what our senses have perceived that is either good or bad for our continuity of living. There is a wonderful dance or duet that goes on between our senses and our bodies. Whatever it is that our senses pick up about the world we face, that information instantly mobilizes our bodies to move in accordance with what is seen that will optimally enhance the continuity of life. I sometimes call or refer to this dance, which biologically is referred to as sensori-motor organization, as see/do. That is, the instant of “seeing” produces a program of motor or bodily “doing” behavior that makes us move in accordance with the passion for the continuity of life. That innate system helps us to move in a way that guarantees the furtherance and continuity of our individual selves.

But we are not forever infants emerging from the womb. We are pressed by our genes to mature and to become adults who will then follow the second command of existence, the first being the survival of the self and the second being the survival of the species. That means replication, sexuality.

In order for that to happen – our maturation and growth to become adult creators of life – we must have the capacity to remember those things that added to life and remember those things that were hostile to life. That means we have to have at each moment of perception the ability to remember past good or past bad perceptions and to update our perception of the present in terms of what we have learned from the past. One way of describing this learning process is that we perceive the present not only with what comes into our senses in the here-and-now, but what we have recorded in the there-and-then packed into our memory that is pertinent to the here-and-now. That means that each moment of present consciousness is seen through the filter or lens of memory. We can refer to this by saying that we not only see with our real eye, but we see simultaneously what is stored in our “mind’s eye” that we have learned from past events that is either good or bad.

To carry that kind of process over to our bodily/motor reaction to what we have seen, we can move with our real body based on the memory of how we have moved successfully in the past stored within our “mind’s body”.

This makes it clear that in each moment of the present we can have the genetically inbuilt capacity to automatically access the memory of the past in our mind’s eye and in our mind’s body to successfully engage with what is present at each moment of our becoming mature and taking on the dual passionate tasks of survival of the self and survival of the species.

That means we can, if we wanted, access that information by consciously looking with our mind’s eye and consciously conjure up images of what we have seen before. For instance I can ask you to conjure up in your mind’s eye an image of your mother. Clearly we all can do that.

We can also consciously conjure up the feeling in our mind’s body of riding a bicycle. Try that out and your brain will tick off neuronal firings as if you were actually riding a bicycle.

All well and good, but there is another interesting point to note here and that is not only can we see in our mind’s eye what we have seen before and do in our mind’s body what we have done before, but there is also a very creative inbuilt capacity of seeing in our mind’s eye what we have never seen before and doing in our mind’s body what we have never done before. Just think of what’s happening in our dreams. We are seeing and doing things using our mind’s eye and our mind’s body that we have never seen or done before. What a creative process that is. And who and what is the choreographer or playwright or cinematographer of those events? That question will grow even more intriguing as I speak further in this lecture.

But to get back to the original point, all the above is a second kind of information. The first being genetic information which I have called storage, this second kind of information which is stored in our mind’s eye and mind’s body can be called our “autobiographical his-story”. So our autobiographical history is another kind of storage, but not genetically stored information about our inherited past, but our own lived storage of information about how we have personally found life that is either good or bad for us and directly influences how we act in each moment of the present.

So now you can see we are influenced every moment of the present by the information packed in the

storage of our genes which is constantly pushing us toward fulfillment and the information packed into our autobiographical history which is packed into our conscious and unconscious memory of our mind's eye and mind's body. And, as I said before what is in our memory of our actual autobiographical past endlessly influences how we perceive, experience and act in the present.

Before I go onto describing the third kind of stored information which influences us every moment of the present, I would like to elaborate a bit further in what is pressing out for expression from the storage in our genes.

In order to survive and then to thrive we need to have our basic developmental needs met at the right age and with the right kinship relationship. Our genes know all about that and that is the unfolding of the soul. We are pushed to become mature and to cultivate and reap the rewards of our fulfilled soul not only for ourselves, but for all the rest of humanity.

So it is important that our personal history is replete with opportunities for the fulfillment of the soul. In PBSP terms, that means our basic needs met at the right age and with the right kinship relationship. We need to have been given a sense of place that gives us the license to be in the world, to have been given the nurture necessary for our flowering, to have been given the support necessary for our sense of stability, to have been given the protection for our sense of safety in the world and to have been given limits to the powerful forces of life that we have deep inside us so that that we can use every instant of our lives to safely use the energies of the body to do what it needs to do to keep on living and keep on creating.

Then we need to attend to the integration and unification of the polarities of our being, in order words to become a whole unified self with all parts included and after that, the development of consciousness which includes the acquisition of language.

Acquiring language means the mapping of the world not only with our senses, but also through language, symbol and metaphor. Thus, language is a way of "seeing" the world. Using and hearing language awakens images of what we have seen and even images of what has not been seen. And remember, every time we see or sense something – and now this includes what we have see in our mind's eye when we hear language, we react with our mind's bodies to adapt to and respond to what is seen in our mind's eyes in an optimal way.

To continue on with the task of becoming whole, we also need to have our self awareness and self mastery enhanced. We call that the development of the Pilot, that part of the self that is able to be aware of what is going on inside and outside the self and then can make the most appropriate decisions – decisions that it is prepared not only to implement but to be accountable and responsible for.

The final life/maturational task of becoming who we really are, i.e. our soul, is to fulfill our personal uniqueness and potentiality, another way of saying to bear fruit. Of course the fruit is what will be of benefit to those that come after us, our children and society at large. Bearing fruit does not have to be the sexual reproduction of other living creatures, but can also be all those creative activities that add to the human race and planet at large – those things which will further not only human existence but planetary continuity and well-being also.

Remember I spoke of the two passions, the passion for the survival of the self and the passion for the survival of the species as arising from our genetic heritage. Survival of the self can be reduced to the topic of work, and survival of the species can be reduced to the topic of love. Yes, indeed, we are made to arrive in the world ready to work in ways that will keep us alive as individuals and ready to love in ways that will keep the species alive long years before we ourselves as individuals die.

Work and love is often seen to be all there is to life, but there is more. There are two fundamental drives that I haven't talked about as yet, and one is the need to make things whole to make things complete. That drive is behind the push to mature – to strive for completion and wholeness; it is behind the push to get all our needs met which leads to completion and wholeness; it is the push to finish things and make things work both for the good of others and the world. All of that comprises the push to bring things to completion and create wholeness.

That drive is so basic and innate that we often take it for granted. Here I will demonstrate an example of seeing something that is not complete, though it is just so simple, but it is unbearable to part of the psyche which needs to make things it sees that are incomplete, more complete. That is our life task, just as much as surviving of the self and survival of the species. In fact that completion gestalt is operant in both of those arenas.

The fourth and last basic push of human life is to do justice. That is, making things right, making

things fair, making things balanced. Clearly there is a relationship between making things complete and doing justice.

Getting to that stage requires maturation and our genes have installed in us a kind of agenda of what has to happen in our interpersonal lives that will result in a pleasurable maturation. Isn't it interesting that I bring in pleasure at this point? For indeed when we follow the dictates of our genetic storage, pleasure is the natural/spiritual re-inforcer of those life-enhancing behaviors.

But some of us have not had the good fortune of a personal autobiographical history which would result in the pleasurable experience of life and gene-anticipated maturation. What then? To jump ahead what we do in the work of PBSP is to examine the client's present consciousness, which as I said before is a perfect reflection of what has happened in the past and then determine what history they experienced that did not fulfill the genetic expectations. Micro-tracking is the name we use to describe the process of examining client's present consciousness of their emotions and thoughts. Micro-tracking naturally leads to the recollection and re-experience of past history which is the foundation for clients' distress and dissatisfaction with their present lives.

Since it is clearly a given that the past controls and predicts the future, we have learned how to make new, experiences in the present as if they had taken place in the past, but this time with all the needs that our genes have anticipated will be met, and we do indeed see to it that they get met in the therapy session. Not in a sense of a corrective experience in the present in the therapeutic relationship, but the work is skillfully organized to be taken in by the client's brain as if these events had actually happened in the actual past. In the creation of those new memories the satisfiers of the maturational needs of the past are role-played by group members as if they were exactly the kinds of kinship figures anticipated by our genes. They are therefore called ideal figures, such as ideal mothers and ideal fathers, Sounds incredible, but that is exactly what we have learned to do. We call that doing a structure.

But sometimes people find it simply impossible to take in the very experiences that they so achingly long for. Their "receptor sites" for intake of needs simply won't open. The structure supplying new memories simply doesn't work for them.

That brings us to the third form of information about life that powerfully influences the quality of our earthly existence. The first I have described as "storage" which means the information we inherit at conception which is the basis for the becoming and realization of the soul. The second is our personal autobiographical "history" which includes satisfaction of basic needs but can also be the source of experienced deficits and experienced traumas.

You must have noticed that I have root verbal theme here with the word "store" in it. The first is storage (store-age), which has store in it and the second is autobiographical history, (hi-store-y) which has store in it. Store means that which has been collected and can be recollected from memory and those memories are running our lives.

Now I will bring up a third characteristic of store and that is Stories. (Store-ies) We are amazingly influenced by the events in the stories we hear, in some ways even more so than the events we actually experience. Remember, when we hear words, we see the pictures they awaken in our mind's eye and don't forget our mind's body moves in response to the pictures that are seen in the mind's eye.

The stories we hear from our parents about their lives when they were children with their own parents -- or about their own parents' lives as well as their long gone ancestors -- all these stores have a profound effect on us. Further than that are the stories about our ethnic groups our nations and our religious foundations and history. Here is where the force to do justice comes in and with great power. Whenever we hear stories of incompletions or injustices in our parents' lives, their own parents, lives, etc. -- for instance they were orphaned or someone's mate died at an early age, or our ancestors were forced from their homeland, etc. -- whatever the age is that we hear them, no matter how early in our lives we hear them, the justice motivation, coupled with the completion motivation jumps powerfully into play.

It is absence of justice in those stories that mobilizes an essential part of us to make those family members more whole and to heal the injustices to our ethnic, national and religious forebears.

You may wonder how it is possible that stories could have such a powerful influence on the quality of our lives. Let me show you how it works, using the ideas mentioned previously regarding the mind's eye and the mind's body. Remember that whatever we see with our senses we are inclined to do something about it with our bodies. And remember we don't just have a real eye, we have a mind's eye and we don't just have a real body, but we have a mind's body. And that is where stories come in. For when we hear a story, we immediately see what is being described in words, as images in our mind's eye even

though it is something we have never seen before. Remember I told you that the mind's eye can somehow create and see what we haven't seen before and the mind's body can create and do with our mind's body what we haven't ever done before. In these cases the mind's eye and the mind's body are the choreographers of the unconscious "movies" shown in the internal theater of perception and action that goes on in our brain.

So when we hear a story about such an incompleteness we see the incomplete situation in our mind's eye and our innate tropism to make things whole and do justice goes to work at once and our mind's body goes to the rescue and does the job of completion and justice in all those simply heard, storied events. I call that action the work of the "Messiah gene". We have all been raised to the notion that one day there will be a single Messiah, but my experience is that all of us are born with that inclination and that is why I call it the Messiah gene.

What follows is a complex picture and here are the steps to illuminate it. Recall that when we work with clients who have had a history of frustration of maturational needs, that we make an interactive event in the therapy room where they can experience a new, gene-satisfying history. Well, we have found that a goodly number of clients simply cannot take in that new history. Though they have longed for those satisfactions possibly during decades seeking their satisfaction at the wrong age and with the wrong kinship figures, but nonetheless, simply cannot receive what they want and simply can't take in those good, sorely needed experiences.

Now to go back to the Messiah gene. When we hear stories about injustices and incompleteness before we ourselves have become mature, our Messiah gene goes to work and we become the one and only answer to the injustices heard about in the stories. In that way, we, under the unconscious influence of the Messiah gene have put-out for the other too soon. The unexpected consequence that occurs when people put-out, albeit totally unconsciously in the mind's body actions of the Messiah gene, they become virtually unable to take-in, in reality, in real-time. Their receptor sites or receptivity for their personal satisfaction simply don't open up.

That is only one of the consequences of the too-soon action of justice in the unconscious mind's body from listening to stories of incompleteness. The other consequence is that we, as the Messiah, having become the **only**, transgress into God's territory of being without an other. Remember, this is not done consciously. The children who hear those stories have no idea that their mind's body has gone through time and space to become the healer of every injustice they ever heard about. One way to describe this process is that some part of their automatic and unconscious brain processes makes an internal "movie" of themselves in the starring roles. In those unconscious but deeply engrained and psychologically influential movies, we can all become superman, wonder-woman, the lone ranger and whatever other cinematic or literary or visual figure people have created and imagined through history to bring justice to the universe.

Let me describe further one other consequence of these internally and unconsciously created movies of the actions our mind's bodies have taken to heal the world. To do that, I would like to go beneath the four basic pushes of work, love, completions and doing justice. All those actions are the consequence of two fundamental dynamic energy sources. Those energies in their un-integrated and un-modulated form are the capacity to destroy and the capacity to create. In other words, what Freud has described as the Id, unbounded aggression, to kill, and unbounded sexuality, to create. In the natural gene-anticipated process of maturation, those forces become limited, i.e. integrated and modulated by our parents during our maturation. Only thus limited those nuclear forces can be safely used as the energetic basis for emotional expressions of every kind. Nonetheless the underlying sources are the nuclear energies of aggression and sexuality, though now safely channeled to metaphorically light the cities and run the emotional machinery of our lives.

So when we are the Messiah and the one and only, it has that dual consequence: that of shutting down our capacity to receive; and breaking loose the binding of those nuclear forces that are usually attributed to God as the one that Giveth and the one that Taketh way. Giveth meaning creation, i.e. sexuality and Taketh away, death or aggression.

So when we what we now call, the process of filling holes in roles, all hell breaks loose. Our genes have supplied us with a template of what a complete family structure should be like and we are forced by our genetic storage to make things whole and bring justice to the world. By holes in roles, I mean hearing stories about our forebears losing parents, losing partners and losing children. Those roles were not filled properly. And when we fill those holes and become the only, all hell breaks loose for our killing forces and our sexual forces are no longer limited, modulated or bound.

Our psyches mobilize defenses against that “internal Armageddon” that are not conscious but automatic and highly effective. To keep things on an even keel, we may become depressed, or dissociated or re-direct those unbound forces at ourselves, or keep ourselves from ever making our personal completions or allowing us to be fully content or have pleasure. All too often those systemic defenses fail and we can all too often read about mass murder and mass mayhem carried out in the world, sometimes in the name of justice. That brings up the distinction between exclusive and inclusive justice. Exclusive justice is immature justice that is extended only to those like us and inclusive justice is mature justice that is extended to everyone and to the planet itself as well. But that is beyond the scope of this lecture.

To jump ahead to the therapy session, when we micro-track a client’s present and then find the history of dissatisfactions and then learn that they cannot receive the beneficent input of ideal figures, we immediately ask, who did you care about? That question surfaces compassion and concern about figures in their lives that they have seen or only heard stories about. When they recount stories of injustice and in-completions we take the step of making “movies.” In those movies the client does not play a part and is simply viewing the “screen” where the movie takes place in the room. In that “looked at movie” the history of those figures is replayed but now with the appropriate figures who would not have died, or disappeared but are fashioned as ideal figures who would have filled the holes, done the completions that one’s unconscious Messiah gene had accomplished in the unconscious movies filmed, created and viewed in the back of the client’s mind.

When the client “sees” those “movies” in the therapy session, their own energies shift dramatically. They are no longer the only, no longer God-like, the unbound forces of aggression and sexuality are now limited, bound and modulated. Their bodies show that effect at once as they visibly relax, become more centered, balanced in their energies and more quiet. Without hesitation, they regularly say, if all that had happened to my grandparents (or whomever) my whole life would have been different. In the therapy session, we have changed the stories and their bodies instantly show the change. Then they become ready to imagine what it would have been like to have had parenting that was available from their now believable ideal parents. In that point of the therapeutic work called a structure, they are no longer watching a “movie” that they are not in, they begin to experience a symbolic event, in which their ideal figures and they, as only themselves, take part in it. In that self- experience they take in the ministrations of those ideal figures in their real body as well as in their mind’s body as if they were back in time when those experiences should have been available. Their expressions of satisfaction are palpable and evident in their gaze, their posture and their breathing rate. The relief and then the consequent grief that follows the recognition of all that had been missed is heart rending to watch. But the grief subsides and the relief settles deeper as the wonderful effects of oxytocin the hormone which is released in a loving embrace with ones well-attached parents takes place. This is a holy moment and is reminiscent of the Madonna figures and other religious icons where the images that are represented are just right. Yes, indeed they are just right, just and right and fitting the expectations of the storage in our genes of how the world should be met and enjoyed.

What we have done in the therapy session is to provide precisely what their genetic storage has built into their anticipation and expectation of life on earth. In that way we have used their bodies, which are made of the divine stuff of God, to help them to realize with the impulses found in their bodies to become their fuller realizable souls. They have participated successfully in the becoming of themselves and perhaps also personally contributed to the endless becoming of God.