

or the like, and work with the heart chakra, we can cultivate the energy of the heart, caring and developing the qualities that are typical of the upper levels of the unconscious: joy, presence, loving care, compassion, and others. These are qualities that, through the mediation of the transpersonal Self, make us aware of the interconnection or entanglement that exists between ourselves and others, between us and the world. These qualities connect us with the Universe.

Cultivating the energy of the heart promotes in us the sense of belonging to the world where everyone, as we go toward our own heart, may use the personal will in its aspects of skillfulness, love, strength, and align it with the transpersonal and the universal will.

Maria Teresa Maraffa

MEETING AT THE WELL SPRING

Another scorching June afternoon in Italy. The bus descends the winding road down from Rocca di Papa onto the autostrada as we head north to Florence. We are thirty pilgrims on our way to Casa Assagioli, the home in Florence where the founder of Psychosynthesis Roberto Assagioli lived, worked, taught, and wrote. The first group to directly encounter Assagioli's archives, we come from all over the world: Canada, Australia, Sweden, Germany, Brazil, Portugal, France, Haiti, Spain, Poland, Ireland, the USA and, of course, Italy.

Our hosts are Alle Fonti della Psicosintesi, translated as "At the Well Spring of Psychosynthesis". Since 2007, this international group has been sifting and sorting through the boxes of material that Assagioli accumulated during his lifetime. Initially gathered and examined after Assagioli's death in 1974, his notes, international correspondence, appointments, articles, books, pamphlets, hand-written reflections, and scholarly assessments were later stored in the "Esoteric Room" of his house. During its recent restoration, the roof of this room was removed and the need to protect and relocate the material became mandatory. And so the archive project and Alle Fonti della Psicosintesi came into being.

As an extension of the June 2012 conference "Psychosynthesis and the World", this group decided to extend a welcome to anyone interested in spending a day visiting Assagioli's house, study, and garden. In addition, we would have the unique opportunity to experience the archives 'hands on.' An afternoon would be devoted to our reading, studying, and perusing the cataloged files including original handwritten material by Assagioli.

Encountering Assagioli's home

We gather the next morning at Assagioli's rose-colored house at 16 via San Domenico. As we sit together in a meditation circle, singular words fly between us,

our shared feelings of Action, Joy, Eagerness, Surrender. Our first task is to stop at a small round table full of wooden blocks. These blocks are stamps especially made by Assagioli to imprint his evocative words. Bang! Bang! We select a block and carry another word into the day. Vitalità is now stamped onto my soul.

We divide ourselves into two groups for the house tour, and soon English, Italian, and French fly up and down the two-story villa. Hung on walls throughout the house, white boards forever carry Assagioli's handwritten words and diagrams. We climb up to his apartment where his portrait as a 20 year old greets us, beckoning all to reflect, know, love.

I enter Assagioli's study to find it dimly lit with the shutters drawn. On the desk is a kitchen timer, a small U.N. flag, model ship, a photo of Assagioli meditating under a tree, and a postcard of Mount Fuji. I sit for a moment on the divan where he would receive guests and try to still my mind, but I am soon drawn to his bookshelves. I run my finger along *The Art of Expression* by Atkinson, *A la découverte du Yoga* by Adams Beck, *Unità Creativa* by Tagore, and *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* by Jung.

Our group then moves outside into the garden where Assagioli would meditate on his roses. A pungent smell of wild ground mint fills our senses, and a tree bares green susine prunes ready to ripen. The trills and swishes of various languages float above me as the frenetic Florentine traffic rushes by. Cicadas vibrate their rhythmic song, a resonance of midday heat.

After lunch we form another circle, only this time we are instructed on how to approach the archives. Take care of the energy his handwritten material evokes. Move slowly. Allow for the paper and words to touch you. Breathe and know this is only a taste.

The archives – accumulators of energy

Thick blue boxes wait for us at various tables throughout the villa. Some of us move to rooms where Assagioli and his wife once slept, ate, received guests. Windows are open and dry hot breezes waif in from the street and neighboring courtyard. At first, we buzz with excitement along with a touch of anxiety, dividing ourselves amongst the boxes like kids at Christmas, in a candy shop, in the school library. Boxes labeled: "The

Will-Italiano,” “Transpersonal Self-English”, “Writings of others”, “Handwritten Notes of Assagioli-English” call to us. Without much thought, I sit in front of the first free box I find, one labeled “Superconscious Material-English”. I unsnap the box’s clip, unwind the protective blue cover, and discover folders and folders of material. Reverently I open each folder. Staring back through time are onion-skinned papers lined with typed quotations, handwritten notes, various pamphlets and letters all concerning superconscious material. Suddenly I stop shifting through these pages, frozen by a simple note of Assagioli’s: “The Will of God”. It is paper-clipped to a small book on prayer written by an American minister. The book’s margins are full of penciled notes. Double vertical lines run along the edge of a paragraph he once noted, some words in the text are underlined for emphasis. The Will of God. I shudder and cry.

It is all so much, so I stop, climb the stairs to the apartment where his principal collaborator, secretary, and the first president of the Institute of Psychosynthesis after his death, Ida Palombi, once lived with her cats. I sip black coffee, ease myself into a chair on the terrace and breathe in the room’s empty silence.

Soon I return to sit at yet another table. The others around me are filled with determination, a kind of hurried mission. Some scribble notes, others run the pages through their hands. A Parisian woman gasps. I look up and our eyes meet across the table in acknowledgement of the profundity before us. She is weeping.

I am now surveying a small yellow folder on the Will. There seem to be endless slips of small, sepia-stained pages, 8x12 cms in size. Some have been visibly torn to size, others are purposively folded together to form small, loosely-bound books. Assagioli’s hand varies from dancing loops, to bold strokes, to indiscernible scratches. His notes appear in Italian, English, French or German, depending on what language he was reading at the time. I discover quotes from Dante. The verses float before me, anchored between my fingertips. “Luce intellettuale piena l’amore. Intellectual light full of love” (Paradiso XXX:40).

I remember Assagioli’s quoting this verse in his essay on the synthesis of polarities when he discusses Logos verses Eros.

Turning away from Dante, I am delighted to discover a small drawing of the egg diagram, a brief sketch concerning inner obstacles to the will. I wonder, what made Assagioli consciously select this size paper? A week later I find the answer in Massimo Rosselli’s article “Roberto Assagioli: A Bright Star”. Andrea Bocconi, one of Assagioli’s youngest students, once posed the same question. “They are accumulators of energy” was Assagioli’s smiling answer. Amongst these ‘accumulators’ I find he has written on the back of an invitation to attend a meeting in Rome. It is 1930.

I am so full, I hardly know what to do anymore. Half of the three hours allotted to this encounter has flown by. I

move again to another room, sit at an empty table, allow my thoughts to soar out a high window open to the greenery across the street. Where did he find the time to write all this? We are thirty students all engaged with our own box and still more material lines the bookshelves. What a great scholar he was, carefully quoting others, meticulously studying all that he read. How much life flowed through him!

Suddenly, I realize that what I really want to see are his notes on polarities, something dear to my own professional and personal experience. At the recent conference, I had presented my research which included my own polarities of culture shock. During the past year, I had spent many hours intimately working with these triangles to express my ideas. I hurry to obtain these three folders and suddenly before me are Assagioli’s own triangles, penciled with question marks, deletions, and additions. I too had spent much time drawing triangles, crossing out words, waiting for intuitions. How closely my own struggle to best define the polarities of culture shock and their higher reality seem to mimic his. What a gift it is to see his reflections and thought process on the higher synthesized realities of compassion, spiritual dignity, and revelation.

Sadly, the time is over and we must leave the boxes to return to the group circle. As I leave his apartment for the larger meeting room and the others, I find that I already miss Assagioli’s presence, whole in my hands.

Beyond the Well Spring

Another group meditation, imaginary sunlight pouring onto our image or word. We share our impressions and visions. I am walking alongside Assagioli and then we are walking with everyone else in the room. At the Well Spring of Psychosynthesis.

We are tired, overwhelmed, grateful, inspired. With great effort we learn a circle dance and send the well spring around the world. A final card is taken from underneath an illuminated candle that is shaped like the egg diagram. A gift from the archives, scanned and printed for us to take home. Mine is in English: Solution written in his hand, a small token of his accumulated energy. I am laughing inside. Of course, I would receive the ‘Solution’. Why not?

Solution

Inner width

Inclusiveness, universality,
in - dependence

Outer concentration

attention - painstaking
training and perfecting

Analogy: a good actor
who studies carefully

and temporarily

puts his life into

the roles he plays, into

the characters which

he “represents” - but

remains ever himself -

ever conscious of not being

those characters - of having

his own independent life.

Caterine Ann Lombard

Note: A longer version on this article appears in the Association for Advancement of Psychosynthesis September newsletter. See aap-psychosynthesis.org.

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DETERMINING A GOAL: HAPPINESS

Nowadays happiness as a topic has become very fashionable. Actually it is a subject that is always up-to-date because it deals with the existence of man in a wider sense.

Roberto Assagioli has marked a turning point on this subject by looking differently on human beings: it is not a question of curing or healing something bad which is present in a suffering person but to release the healthy part.

Assagioli suggests working towards the positive thus allowing that what makes us feel good to come out instead of combating against that what makes us suffer. When we think of all that a person desires we can conclude that at the end all of us are looking for only one thing: happiness! No matter if we are wealthy, famous, successful, admired, or acknowledged: the ultimate aim of all of us is happiness.

Often we have a problem without knowing how to solve it. The solution always seems to be reached by something concrete such as: “When I reach my goal X, my problems will disappear.” It seems to be that every bad thing can be cured once we have reached our goals (to graduate, to marry, to find a job, to be promoted, to overcome an illness).

Being happy doesn't always mean being in an euphoric state of mind. A person can suffer from an emotive pain and, nevertheless, be a happy person in general. Happiness doesn't refer to a concrete event but a general state of mind. Once we can appreciate life, we can experience that pleasure is the rule and pain is the exception.

It is true that you can be overwhelmed by a strong emotion when you reach your goals, but later on, when everyday life takes over, the sense of emptiness can come back. Therefore there is a need to distinguish between the emotion connected to reaching a goal and the sentiment of lasting happiness. It is not by chance that we imagine happiness to be the end of a process, a precise point which indicates the conclusion of our ambitions.

Nevertheless this point doesn't exist and it is unavoidable that the mere idea of its existence makes us feel unsatisfied and frustrated. Once we have achieved all that we wanted, we have noticed that it is not enough and that we want more. On the other hand, thinking of happiness in terms of an infinite process will enable us to perceive it as a progressive evolution. Instead of asking ourselves if we are happy or content we should ask ourselves: “How can I be happier today than I was yesterday?” This question recognizes the nature of happiness as an infinite process and not as a goal. Instead of being unhappy for not having yet reached a certain objective, we can consider happiness as a lifelong ambition, trying to feel happier in the present than in the past. This will help us to increase our contentment.

What can we do, therefore, to live our life in the most joyful manner?

Emotions play a fundamental role in all types of research within the field of psychology, this includes research for happiness since it is the emotion that gives us motivation and drives us on to further action. Deprived of emotions we would almost be vegetating; we could maintain cognitive function but we would then live in a state of total indifference towards the events of life and our thoughts.

Indeed emotions are so important in terms of choice and behaviour that “Positive psychology” is even attributing them to intelligence.

On an emotional level we have the capacity to recognize our sentiments and those of the others, to motivate us and to direct our personal and social relationships. Actually, it is these emotions that help us to control any impulses and to postpone any gratifications, they help us to modulate our moods thus avoiding losing our power of reasoning. Therefore our emotions should not be controlled but be recognized and channeled.

On the one hand happiness requires positive emotions and a meaning to our actions. This means that a happy person enjoys positive emotions that give a meaning to their actions. We create our own choices and give meaning to our actions. We need a purpose with personal signification not dictated by norms and social expectations that is often the case. Therefore, rather than to