

“The solution of conflicts lies in using vital energies” We will look over later which are the methods. Sometimes the conflict takes a different shape: a pressing movement takes place to the detriment of the others, bloodsucking them like a vampire, it soaks up their energy

CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT EGO

- What we are
 - What we think we are
 - What we would like to be
 - What others think we are
 - What others would like we were
 - What others evoke on ourselves
 - What we would like to represent
 - What we can become
- (by Pirandello “One, no one, 100 hundred thousand)

It is a complicated matter, but we must work out the problem. We have to be neutral to the judgment of the others

There are different situations and types.

- The simple elementary self fulfilment. Security. Good middle-class persons. Self-love. Inflation (Jung)
- Tendency to self overestimation, but on an inner uncertainty. Looking for an external confirmation. Wishing to be appreciated. Masks of personality (Jung) hiding poorness or vacuum.
- More active types whose sense of inferiority creates a compensatory or an ipercompensatory reaction
An example: the shy and fearful guy who talks threateningly, the weak person who behaves as an overbearing one
- Inconstant types: fluctuations between self overvaluation and devaluation (cyclothymia). Mistakes on the quality: we often overrate the conscious components and undervalue the unconscious sides. Sometimes we depreciate what we possess and overvalue our lacking qualities

Conflicts with the images of others (masks), which change into suggestions, models, nightmares on ourselves. What others think we are. Significance of the opinions from those who we love, esteem, worship (parents). Dreadful effects by not being trusted. What others would like we were: images, ideals projected by parents, often accepted on childhood. Conflicts with our real nature Sometimes the mask goes over the real personality. Sometimes freedom conquered after painful struggles, compromises and not harmonic fusions. Conflicts between superconscious tendencies. Spiritual fulfilment drama. Struggle between the Self and the Personality. Efforts to get away...

Conflicts between what we are at the moment and what we would like to be

(the opposite of what before)

The ideal :source of development and of discouragement. We should be glad of being discontented

Yearning, fruitful labour. To hold oneself in hand. To collaborate with unconscious energies. To create a real, true adequate ideal, not an unfeasible or unsuitable ideal.

A task of self acknowledge and self fulfilment
From Chaos to Cosmos

Roberto Assagioli

9

PROBLEMS ARE NOT SOLVED THEY ARE FORGOTTEN

DIANA: Assagioli often made very simple - classic statements - about humanity, about life and about evolution, that carried a depth and a potency that we sometimes miss. If we look more closely at these Zen-like statements we find out how deeply meaningful they really are and how they can provide us with a continuity of revelation.

What a wise person says and repeats again and again is not by accident, yet they may sound like Reader’s Digest phrases. These classic Assagiolian phrases were a point of arrival for Assagioli. They were the culmination or if you want the sublimation of a lifetime of work. We will revisit some of them so can bring them alive again. This is not to glorify Assagioli. When I was studying with Assagioli, he said very clearly to me “In your enthusiasm, do not give me prominence. Do not promote me - please have restraint”. Then he went on to say that: “You know it all. What I have to tell people is not particularly wise. You know it all and the only thing I do is perhaps to add some maturity to it by hammering the

nail once again - and by reminding people of what they have forgotten”.

Assagioli created Psychosynthesis to serve humanity, and he dedicated Psychosynthesis to the redemption of pain and the evocation of potential. Sometimes I think we forget the true purpose of Psychosynthesis. I think we forget that our purpose is to serve humanity. Assagioli believed that Transpersonal Psychology was indeed the psychology of the future.

After several years at the Esalen Institute in training and working in Gestalt therapy, I too had come to sincerely believe that the only hope there was for people to be truly healed was the inclusion of the Transpersonal. Assagioli presented Psychosynthesis as an innovative, bold, revolutionary psychology. In those days, one of the superiorities of Psychosynthesis was that it was faster, it was simpler, it was more efficient, it was short term and it evoked less dependency from the clients. Sometimes I wonder if little by little or step by step we have become like the establishment that Assagioli was challenging.

Sometimes in England it seems that we are adolescents who want to be part of the gang. Who want peer acceptance, who want to be approved of by our peers. I think it's important that we do that, that we communicate as a part of a larger community. And yet, we run the risk of losing our peculiarity - of losing our basic truths - of losing our very identity - and most importantly of losing our purpose to serve.

I was recently involved in writing a chapter for a book entitled *In Search of a Therapist*. Six different therapists from psychoanalysis to psychosynthesis were given each a transcript of an initial interview of the same client. We had to write a chapter on how we would work with that client. None of us met this person of course. I decided I was going to write a pure classic psychosynthesis chapter. I wasn't going to embellish it with object relations and all the neat things I have learned. It was going to be just pure psychosynthesis.

At the end of the book, after the chapters were written, the potential client got to read all six chapters and make a choice of what therapy he would choose. He didn't know anything about us as human beings and of course I wouldn't be telling this story if he hadn't chosen psychosynthesis. But the editor of the book was a psychoa-

nalyst and he framed and articulated the client choosing psychosynthesis as an idealisation of me. I felt really terrible. I thought I don't want anybody to see this book and to know that. How can I make someone idealise me that I've never even met?”.

Fortunately, Piero pointed out to me that I was 'buying' this psychoanalytic interpretation of idealisation. The point is not whether this interpretation was correct or not - the point is really that I 'bought' it. That told me a lot about where I was losing my identity and the identity of psychosynthesis. The client just might have felt seen, and met in his suffering, which I suspect was so.

PIERO: These simple statements that Assagioli used to make remind me of a cartoon I had seen a long time ago before the moon landings. It was about two children who had managed to go to the moon in prehistoric times. They had just landed on the moon and they said, "We've made it." They had gotten there before everybody else and with a spaceship that was made of all kinds of scrap material - like an old wheel or a piece of a coffee machine and tin cans and stuff like that. It was a very strange machine but they had made it and they were the first. Roberto Assagioli reminded me of that cartoon. He would take a little piece from here - a little piece from there and he would give it to you as a very wise statement, which it was, and you'd get there - you'd get to the moon.

At that time I didn't feel enough intellectual substance. Little did I know then that Roberto belonged to the purest and most rigorous intellectual tradition in Europe. Yet he liked to speak in this elementary kind of way, in this homely day to day way of talking that you would not value very much, but if you go deeply into it you find a microcosm. You find crucial attitudes in which these simple statements are rooted.

We will tell you some anecdotes but I already fear some of you will say "Oh no. They are going to tell us some more stories of Roberto." I know that there is a trend, to go beyond Assagioli - to be bold, to be adventurous - not to live Assagioli's dream - but to find our own dreams. I am fully for that. In fact, the moment I started to work with Assagioli, I was reluctant to go out and talk about somebody else's dream. The psychosynthesis community is big enough to hold both tendencies - to be bold for the future - to invent new things - and also to go back to the past, back to the basics and the ABC.

Take the egg for instance. We could write a whole history of the psychosynthesis egg as represented post-Assagioli. The egg with two selves. The egg with no self. The egg with the self all over the place. The egg that has become round. The egg with several little sausages in it representing various subpersonalities. The egg that has become round and square and all kinds of shapes. Some of these developments have been really brilliant, beautiful and useful. But why not also go to the original material?

“OFFER A KIND AND FIRM REFUSAL”

The first statement that I want to tell you about is a “NO” statement. When we start with Psychosynthesis and later as we grow into it, we become more useful. So there are more requests for us and for our work, and we say yes - because we are nice. We have done psychosynthesis, we practice all the good qualities and we say yes to everybody. So we get burned out, and we forget how to say NO. Roberto’s recipe for this is very simple. “A kind and firm refusal. Offer a kind and firm refusal.” That is probably going to save your life. It sounds very simple. As we all know, the capacity to say no is at the basis of the capacity to say yes.

I want to start with what I would call the hardest statement: the statement, which may sound harsh, - that Roberto would make for instance when collaborators or other people were facing some kind of problem. He would smile and say “Well, let’s leave him to his sad destiny”. With a smile - but then he would leave that person to his sad or happy destiny. The idea was to be able to cut - to finish the Gestalt - to complete it - and then move on.

How many of us as therapists have gotten into interminable therapy, not being able to finish - because there is always something to work on - something to say - something that comes up - some need from the client. The capacity to stop - to finish - at the end of a session - Roberto would often say, “THE END -THAT’S IT -BYE BYE - I’ve got something else to do now”. It is the capacity to stick to the essential.

I like the Taoist story of a very poor man who went to the market looking for wealth. He wanted to be rich because he was so hungry, he was so poor. He saw a rich merchant coming in with tons of gold. So the poor man just went in and grabbed the gold and tried to go away. Of course they stopped him and brought him to jail. They asked him, “Why did you do it in such an open way without any strategy -without any way of getting the gold and escaping.” He said “All I saw was the gold”. Of course this is one of those examples where the thief or the madman is the good guy. Just seeing the gold gets us into trouble. We have to look at other things, such as our history as a community has taught us. But sometimes seeing only the gold is good, is helpful - forgetting

about the gossip, forgetting about the mumbling, forgetting about everything that is still unfinished - just get on with it. Which of course brings us to what this is all about - THE WILL.

“THE WILL”

The will for some of us is a dirty word - is or has become a no-no . I will tell you why that is so. But first let me tell you that in 1973 Roberto told me “20 years from now my work will be as famous as the work of Jung and Freud.” This was 1973. So I started waiting. Every 1st of January I would think about it... 83... 93 well he is not famous. So what happened? Did we betray his work - what went wrong? He was not a good prophet after all? What’s the matter? And then I thought maybe he was a good prophet after all - because think about this.

Everybody knows about the self now. Everybody talks about the self now with a big S or a small s. You break a fortune cookie and it talks about the self. Everybody knows about imagery. You take an evening newspaper and you find an imagery exercise. Everybody knows that imagery is good for you - very useful - everybody uses it. Multiplicity - the multiple model of the human mind - well that is even more accepted than the two-pole or the tri-pole models of psychoanalysis. There have even been movies about that. This is all part of mainstream culture. What else - what are the other classical psychosynthesis themes? Qualities! Everybody knows about spiritual qualities and how they strengthen the immune system. If you are happy and joyous you live longer. If you are kind you feel better. If you are grateful you are more efficient. Research abounds. The main themes of psychosynthesis are out in the open. Everybody talks about them. Maybe they forget about Assagioli... but he is right there. That is where it all started. This is the most selfless way of having success. Having your work be accepted and serving people without being acknowledged. When Assagioli made that statement “My work will be as famous as Jung and Freud” he was very matter of fact. It was not “ I WILL BE AS FAMOUS AS...” not in that sense, but “My work...” matter of fact.

So what are we going to do now? Maybe psychosynthesis has gone all the way - has done it - has achieved its mission - has become a part of mainstream culture.

That's it. Let's make A funeral of Psychosynthesis and get out and have a pizza. Let us do something else. Is that what we should do? Sometimes I have been tempted to think in that direction. But not for long. For two reasons. One is that, of course, psychosynthesis is not just this or that topic. It is a coherent system and the system itself is the main thing. The order, the cosmos, the whole of psychosynthesis is its main gift.

Also, one topic has not yet become a part of our culture and our everyday talk. And that is the will. Not even for us in psychosynthesis. I think that many of us psychosynthesis workers are a little shy about the will - feel secretly embarrassed - or even openly embarrassed - or unconsciously embarrassed - because of a deep resistance to own our will. Because tied to the will is so much pain - so much cruelty - so much authoritarianism - so much dictatorship - that we are afraid to go fully into it - and use it in our sessions and help people to train it. Even very well trained people in psychosynthesis among us have that ambivalence. So I'm glad that in the year 2000 the Institute of Psychosynthesis in Florence has announced a conference on the will. I think it is a good idea. The conference will be in Bologna.

DIANA: I wanted to talk about classic simple Assagioli tonight, because I don't feel that I or we as a community are able yet to live - to live in our everyday lives and to treat each other and relate to each other from these very simple basic truths of Assagioli's. As a community we are challenged to become spiritually mature. Some of us got a spiritual awakening triggered by being with Assagioli.

A lot of people get spiritual awakening triggered by coming into psychosynthesis. A lot of people have also been in a spiritual awakening and crisis for years and then they come into psychosynthesis and they feel they have come home.

"THE UNIVERSE IS EVOLVING AND IMPERFECT"

I think psychosynthesis is dangerous concerning spiritual awakening. It offers perhaps too much in this area. It gives us so many deep and true experiences of fulfillment. My spiritual awakening was a rather immature awakening. I thought because I could think spiritual

and I could talk spiritual that I was spiritual. The post awakening period, and integration of that experience, the embracing of a more mature spirituality, living my talk, of going forward for many many years without spiritual experience, without mystical experience, without insights, embracing uncertainty, living with my cynicism and my depression, has been the hard part. The awakening was a piece of cake actually. Even the crisis that accompanied the awakening were wonderful compared to the post awakening years for me.

There is a terrible thing called perfectionism. Assagioli's statement again and again was "The universe is evolving and imperfect". He often said, "Remember each one of us is a microcosm of the macrocosm. We live in an imperfect universe. How can we expect to be perfect in an imperfect universe? Striving for perfection and feeling shame that we don't make it, is an old Victorian reaction." He said, I heard this on tape recently, "I couldn't say anything worse about it than that is a Victorian reaction."

"Remember the universe has patience - no push - no repression - no striving. You prepare yourself for decades and decades and decades". "Meditate on eternity". I think he didn't just do this with me. I think he did it with many students when they were studying with him. They were impatient and they were pushing and striving. He had a photograph of the galaxies and stars in his study. He would take the photograph and stick it right about two inches from your eyes and he would say aggressively, well as aggressive as a wonderful little grey haired man can be, "How dare you! How dare you be so arrogant as to try to be perfect when all of this is imperfect!" Now we all know that - don't we? We teach it, we preach it, we talk about it. We try to get everybody else to be human. Laura Huxley said to me recently "In each of us still - deep - deep - deep there's this little place that won't let go of trying to be perfect. That won't stop being tormented by being a cheap imitation of ourselves". I think she's right. Beyond the spiritual awakening - beyond blatant crisis of duality, we suffer a lot of demons of our own making. The awakening ideals are dangerous - and our spiritual immaturity is dangerous. Especially the ideals that are born out of a spiritual awakening and of psychosynthesis.

“HARMLESSNESS”

I come to another classic Assagioli phrase, or rather a word, “Harmlessness”. I remember being impatient with him and thinking “Yeah, yeah, harmlessness of course. We all know that. There is no need to make a big fuss about that. We are harmless - we are good people”. Then a few years ago I was preparing to train trainers at my centre in England and I did some research on the subject of ethics. I discovered, much to my surprise, that of the ethical values harmlessness is generally said to carry a higher value than helping. I was really surprised by that. When faced with a choice to help or to be harmless perhaps it’s a higher thing to be harmless.

Our ideals in psychosynthesis may not include enough of its opposite. Take for example depression. I think that the soul expresses itself in all the colours of the rainbow and includes the blacks and the greys and the deep blues and the dark colours. In a psychology that is so devoted to the light we have to resist the temptation to only respond to the bright colours - to the oranges and the golds and the yellows.

Depression to a spiritually awakened person can appear to be an enemy - can appear to be an unredeemable lady. I once had an experience of this with a client who was very much into transcendence. All her transpersonal experiences were of a transcendent nature. Disidentification and a sense of right proportions came easily for her, and I didn’t feel that it was inauthentic. It felt very authentic.

Then a very close friend of hers died of cancer and that of course threw her into a deep dark depression. I noticed in her depression that there was nothing there for her. All her great models and principles of psychosynthesis were totally worthless - she felt empty. There was no enthusiasm - no energy - no life - and yet as we stayed with that for a very long period of time, gradually an appreciation for the simplicity of life started to emerge for her - an appreciation for the beauty in the small things that she was discovering around her. I realised that what had happened for her was that she was including the possibility and the capacity to see the divine in an immanent way in her own journey. Her depression was not something she had to get rid of - it was something she needed to embrace.

I have another case I would like to share with you which illustrates this point about embracing the darkness and the imperfection. I had a client quite a long time ago who was into S&M. He presented the sado-masochistic behaviour as a problem, something that he wanted to address. Of course as a good psychosynthesis person I wouldn’t judge his S&M as a bad thing - would I? So he presented it as a problem and working with this behaviour in him and staying with it in its darkness -and going into it - we began to explore what he was trying to get from this extremely distorted behaviour. After a long period of depth work he recognised a need to surrender to a power greater than himself, and that his S&M was a distorted way of meeting that need. Once we knew that was the need he was trying to meet, we could find other ways of meeting that need. Of course the S&M went away and he lived happily ever after! I am being facetious, but it’s true the behaviour did go away.

“IT’S NEVER EITHER/OR BUT BOTH/AND”

So the simple phrases of Assagioli carry a lot of meaning. Another one is “Never either/or but both/and”. How many times have you heard that in psychosynthesis? So many times. “It’s never black or white but all the shades of grey and then the colours. “ Assagioli often said that. Especially with people who were pushing and frustrated. He always said it with a giggle, and I always felt irritated with him when he said it to me. Again we all listened to the lesson and we all thought that was a very beautiful lesson. “It’s never either/or but both/ and. It’s not black or white...”” But I think the noise of our spiritual awakening just blocked out that lesson. We have our values that emerge in our spiritual awakening. The opposite of those values is bad. So we polarise.

We live in an age of entertainment and we like life to be a good show. We seem to need something to push against just like children seem to need boundaries. The Latins talked about “Spiritus Rector”, the part of us that wants to compensate and to rectify. Jung called it the compensatory function. So that if I am with a person who is loving and altruistic, I want to say to them, come on be tougher - be a little stronger - people are going to walk on you and take advantage of you. Or if I am with a perfectionistic person, I definitely say come on, you are only human - it’s OK. And if I’m with a sloppy and chaotic person, I say to that person, come on get organised. (You should see the trunk of Piero’s car. It’s where his filing system is). It’s almost a physiological, immediate ever present need that we have to evoke the opposite. I think it’s the saving grace for us all, it’s really healthy because it’s the thrust of the organism for unity. It’s the thrust of the organism for wholeness.

There is something in us that wants to include duality and yet we fight it and polarise with it. We can see this universal inclusion in images of the Self. On the one hand we can say that the Self is pure emptiness - it’s nothing - it’s silence. On the other hand we can say that

the Self is everything - everywhere all the time - it's colour - and it's light - it's all the spectrums of light and energy there are.

In California there is a lot of emphasis on bringing transcendence and immanence back together. In my experience Assagioli kept those two together - the transcendence and immanence were two sides of one whole. He never promised us enlightenment. He never promised that we would live happily ever after. He always conveyed that we would have it all. We would have pain and illness and suffering. He always conveyed that self realisation is a life style rather than a state of consciousness. I don't think in his phrase "It's never either/or but both/and" he was making a must of synthesis, and we should resolve all opposites and live in blissful peace. His message was that we need to embrace both - that we need to include both.

When I was working with him, he helped me a lot with the crisis of duality. That was a very big issue for me. He said you cannot resolve the crisis of duality. There will always be unmanifest potential. The only thing you can do is find the place inside and get big enough inside where you can embrace duality. Duality can be painful but it is not pathological. It is only pathological when we repress one or try to eliminate the other.

"It's never either/or but both/and" was best exemplified in my experience of meditating with Assagioli because when you were meditating with Assagioli, which he did every day with whoever happened to be there, there was an enormous amount of noise around. There was a very loud traffic noise outside, there were two dogs that lived in the Villa that were always barking, Assagioli's two beloved servants Carmela and Dante were always running around shouting in the house.

Then there was the egg timer ticking in the background. Because Assagioli apparently would go rather far off when he meditated and he needed something to remind him that it was time to stop. Assagioli was deaf, so this egg timer would be a very gentle little 'ping' in his experience. But for you, there was this absolute earthquake of a bell. Assagioli loved his egg timer. He called it the spiritualisation of matter.

PIERO: "YOU CAN ALWAYS FIND THE TIME"

There was a time when I was working with Assagioli - some student would go to him and he would give him a session - then send him to me and I would give him a series of sessions - and then send him back to Assagioli. Once a student came and he brought his autobiography and he gave it to Roberto - it was an autobiography of 500 handwritten pages. I said, this is outrageous -I am not going to read that biography. This is a form of resistance - this is a form of aggression on the part of this person, and I am not going to read it. So, Roberto said "Alright - give it to me - I will read it - I will find the time". That to me was a big lesson in humility. Since then I have read all the autobiographies - even if they are 1,000 pages. "You can always find the time". Those were the words that Roberto would often say. In a way they are the opposite of the other batch of phrases that I was talking to you about. The first batch was about not wasting time - time is precious. We have so little. We have a lot of work to do - let's not linger - let's not dissipate our energy on useless things.

This is complementary- "You can always find the time". However overbooked you may be - you can always find the time to be with your child - you can always find the time to take care of yourself - you can always find the time to take care of somebody who is less lucky than you - and you can always find the time to do what is really important for you. "I didn't have any time" is no excuse. Which to me really shows how time is not a set geometric entity that we have to divide in bits and pieces. Time is something that has to do with the mind - and you can take a bit and just expand it - and in one moment so many things can happen. If we care enough. And to me that's about the art of giving attention - of where we are going to direct our attention - our care - our energy - our whole being.

"CALM, CALM - WE ARE IN ETERNITY"

When people were in a rush, Roberto would say often - "Calm, Calm - we are in eternity". If you just say "Calm, Calm" to somebody who is in a rush - they will rush more. But if you say "Calm, Calm - we are in eternity" maybe their response will be different. There is a switch and there is an opening and we will realise that we are there the whole time - there's nowhere to rush to. We're right here - we've always been here. So what's all the rush. When Ramana Maharshi, the Indian sage, was dying he heard his devotees crying desperately and he said "Where do they think I am going?". There is nowhere to go, except remaining here and now - in the Eternal Now. This has a lot to do with where we direct our attention. What we tune into and how we do it. Assagioli did experiments with lilies in the 40's and 50's. He would take a set of lilies -I don't know why the lilies in particular - maybe because they are the symbol

there's not only learning but there is also fun - there is also wonder - and eternity.

DIANA: "PROBLEMS ARE NEVER SOLVED - ONLY FORGOTTEN"

This phrase of Assagioli's puzzled me for years and years and it also slightly depressed me. As a colleague said to me when we were preparing to come to give this talk "Well why do we do therapy and why do we train people if problems can't be solved? Can't you choose a more uplifting topic to talk about?". That's my reaction too to the phrase "Problems are never solved - only forgotten". If we go into problem solving with our clients and if we try to fix the problem instead of help the client to forget the problem, we are operating from a context that says there is a fixed state to get to. A state where we will be healthy - where we will be whole - where we will be healed - where we will live happily ever after. It is our ego that wants to solve the problem. Where the Self can forget the problem. Something that really grabbed me and made me want psychosynthesis early on was this idea that psychosynthesis doesn't have a normative chart on the wall that tells what a healthy, full functioning human being should be like. That felt so freeing - I felt so much freedom in that.

Coming from a Gestalt background - which of course doesn't have any shoulds!! - it was, you should be open and honest, and you should be able to express your anger and you should be able to be totally resolved and clear with your parents. Psychosynthesis instead is saying - Well it is not about how you should be but whether or not you have the choice to be open or honest or not - the choice to assert or express your anger or not - what it is that you deem valuable to do or be.

The phrase of Assagioli's that "Problems are never solved - only forgotten" is talking about a unitive state of consciousness. He is talking about the fundamental alrightness of the Universe that mystics and saints throughout the ages have talked about. He is talking about a state beyond duality, where the sublime is immanent and a part of everything that is.

I don't know how it is for you, but I've been in therapy for about 27 years now and I can tell you with great sincerity that I still have many of the major issues that I started therapy with. I haven't "solved the problems", but I am a lot more graceful with those issues. I am no longer controlled by them. I can go forward in my life. I can do what I want to do now in spite of and with those issues. So for me "Problems are never solved, only forgotten" means taking up my bed and walking.

Why don't we heal? Why doesn't therapy make people better always? Maybe we keep ourselves unhealed through an identity of being wounded - through an identity of working on our wounds and defining ourselves as a wounded person who is trying to be healed. We can use our wounds for power and we can use our wounds from the past to control the present. We can let our

of Florence, but he would then pay a lot of attention to one lily and not to the others. Of course the one that was being paid attention to would grow faster - and that was in the 40's. That's about the art of giving attention and finding the time - finding the care. But also how we do it - how open are we - how present are we.

You may have read the story by H.G. Wells in which the young child runs to a door in the wall and opens it. Beyond the door he finds a heavenly place full of the greatest beauty in the world. The child is delighted. He shuts the door and goes back home. Then he wants to go back to that door but cannot find it anymore. Even though he seems to know the way, the door is not there. Eventually he finds it again but it's his first day of school and he doesn't want to be late - so he says "Well, I will take notice of it and when I come back from school, I will open the door". But when he comes back, the door is not there. And so it goes on throughout his life. He keeps looking for the door and the door is not there and when the door is there he is too much in a rush. There always is something very important that is going to happen in his life - he is becoming a big business man - he is becoming a Prime Minister. But: "I will do it later. I don't have the time now". And he misses the door in the wall because he doesn't open it when he finds it.

"LA VITA È MAGICA"

Another Assagioli statement is very much related. I don't know how to translate this - in Italian it is "La vita è magica". "Life is magic" sounds too much like publicity. But in Italian, maybe because of the rhythm, it sounds like a line from a poem. "La vita è magica" again has to do with this unfathomable dimension - in human life - in the here and now - in whatever is happening - the dogs barking - and the people making noises in the other room - whatever interruption there may be in whatever we are doing - the Self is there - the Spirit is right there - but we may easily miss it.

"Life is magic". When I was working with Assagioli at some point I had to do military service and that statement, find the magic even in the barracks, was very helpful to me. It is even more useful than "Life is a school" and we can learn from each situation. That's already useful, but "Life is magic" takes that extra step. That

wounded state determine how we behave in the present. For example if I have an issue around intimacy and the opportunity to become intimate with you comes up, I will have all my past wounding regarding intimacy be a validation for my having to control you.

If we do not at some point forget the problem - if we do not at some point stop trying to solve the problem, we remain attached to it and we have interminable therapy. We all know that to forget the problem is to go to a place where there is peace and unity, gratefulness and happiness. But think of it more as, you know how a child makes problems that aren't really problems and then at a certain point they realise that it isn't really a problem.

My son Jason when he was very small, for a while was certain that black widows were going to bite him. So at night we would have to wrap his feet very carefully under the sheets so the black widows couldn't get them. You know - six months later that wasn't an issue any more and he realised that there wasn't really a threat from black widow spiders.

It feels a little bit that way for us. We can do the same. At a certain point we can grow up and see that the problem wasn't really a problem. Assagioli did this for me in my work with him.

I gave Assagioli my case history and I had been working on my mother for years and years and years. He just took this writing that I had poured my life story into and he put it down and said "Aren't your lucky! Aren't you lucky!". And I was irritated. "Your mother gave you the most perfect training that you ever could have possibly had to do the work that you are doing today". And in that moment, I forgot the problem. That really did it for me. Of course I wasn't able to maintain that state, but it made a big difference.

"WE ARE ALL DOING THE SAME WORK"

So after many years of practising as a therapist, I have come to terms with this question of problem solving and forgetting problems. And I question therapy - I am not even sure that therapy works. I question interminable therapy. Sometimes it feels to me like we have an obsession to solve the difficulties and the major issues in our life. We still live somehow in a promised land mentality that if we work on ourselves enough there is a place to get to where God will reveal to us why we didn't have a perfect childhood. The point Assagioli was simply making was "forget your problems - recognise that in your problems is ultimately concealed your Self".

PIERO: Crisis happens. Especially as a psychosynthesis worker - I don't know if it happens to any of you - I start thinking that maybe all this work that I have done has been ineffective. I see darkness in the future. My doubts become bigger and bigger and then go away. But I think we all have those times - I think they are part of the vicissitudes of the path. We have to take them for granted and they are going to come even more, I think, or much

more if we regard our work as our own little garden - as our own work and nobody else's. We put all of our ego and all of our ambition into it. Then there will come a time when it will look very big and beautiful and strong and successful and then suddenly it will look empty. Whereas if we see it as something that we do with somebody else, it would take on a very different appearance.

I remember when people were going to meet Assagioli. I sometimes would sit in on part of the meeting, maybe at the end. Or I would meet the person who had gone to see Assagioli. Whatever their path in life, Assagioli would often say "You know, I'm doing the same work as you do. We're doing the same work". This person would come to me afterwards and be very happy. "Assagioli told me that I am doing the same work that he does". He said it to many people and I am sure he was sincere. I realise this only much later - the deeper meaning of this phrase - That we are all doing the same work - we are all working together - that your work is my work - that your success is my success - and your failure is my failure. That we all share this common field. That there is no "my" work that is different or better or worse than "your" work.

When I was with Assagioli, I often would have an intellectual temper tantrum. Because psychosynthesis didn't make sense to me and I protested and I didn't like this and I didn't like that. I wanted guarantees - give me some guarantees. I would like to do work like the plumber. He does his work and then at the end he can see the result immediately. I instead cannot even be sure that I am growing - that something is happening. One moment I am sure and the other moment I am not sure. Then I realised that uncertainty is part of our path and I realised it the moment in which Assagioli looked at me and smiled and said

"Are you ready to make a bet?"

I suppose we can leave you to your sad or happy destiny. But remember, be calm, because we are in eternity. And we are all doing the same work.