



# THE WAY OF PSYCHOSYNTHESIS

## A COMPLETE GUIDE TO ORIGINS, CONCEPTS AND FUNDAMENTAL EXPERIENCE WITH A BIOGRAPHY OF ROBERTO ASSAGIOLI

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### ABSTRACT

This book is an invitation to anyone who wants to gain a broad and comprehensive overview of the evolution of Psychosynthesis, from the first written works published by Roberto Assagioli in the early 1900s to the great contributions of his students and other contemporary Psychosynthesis practitioners.

Who was Roberto Assagioli and how did his life influence his work? What important contributions did he make to the birth and development of the major forces of psychology? What is Psychosynthesis? What is the Psychosynthesis view of human nature and self-realization? What constitutes the essential core of this approach? In answering these fundamental questions, this book guides the reader through a fascinating journey to discover, step by step, the key concepts and experiences of Psychosynthesis. The most complete guide published so far.

### MY WISH

I really hope that this book can sustain the enthusiasm of all those who feel a resonance with the message of Psychosynthesis, permitting each to recognize - independently from group or institutional affiliation, and beyond the numerous and inevitable differences which are to be respected and supported - that which unites us, that which moves us, at times on different paths, in the direction of the same common destination. This challenge has never been more urgent or vital. Succeeding in meeting it means to develop and improve the extraordinary

potential of the monumental vision that has been given to us. Roberto Assagioli's legacy gives us all the tools to realize this, as well as the methods for activating our Good Will.

### REVIEWS

"In this book Petra Guggisberg Nocelli outlines with depth and clarity its history to this day, its main ideas, techniques, aspects and applications. An essential work for those who want to understand this adventure of the spirit." Piero Ferrucci

"A work of great love and deep scholarship, it is an amazingly thorough book and one we need. Dr. Guggisberg Nocelli has taken on a challenge in Psychosynthesis literature which has not yet been engaged in. I am so very happy to have it in the world." Dorothy Firman

"This book is a real path of research and development of psychosynthetic theory and practice (...) which allows us to look through Psychosynthesis in the multidimensionality of space and of time." Gianni Yoav Dattilo

"'The Way of Psychosynthesis' is a truly large framework that tends toward an essential completeness. This volume deserves to occupy a significant place in the recent development of psychosynthetic literature." Massimo Rosselli

"A great achievement: well written, informative, interesting and engaging. Every training organization should have it on their essential reading list and I will certainly be recommending it to my students." Will Parfitt

"The most comprehensive academic textbook on Psychosynthesis to date. I am happy for the cause of Psychosynthesis that Petra Guggisberg Nocelli has done such a magnificent work and contributed to the legacy of Psychosynthesis and Assagioli." Kenneth Sørensen

"'The Way of Psychosynthesis' is an intrinsic work of psychosynthetic spirit. A vacuum has been filled in the psychosynthetic literature. Definitely recommended as a didactic text." Vittorio Viglienghi

“The Way of Psychosynthesis’ is the result of a great research, a careful, meticulous work that deals with the development of the thought of Roberto Assagioli in a scientific way. This is a text we really needed. I consider this book as a guide for the planning of training courses in Psychosynthesis.” Franco Salvini

“An excellent text of Psychosynthesis, complete and exhaustive. It was written with the mind and heart and deserves wide circulation.” Alberto Alberti, Psychiatrist

“‘The Way of Psychosynthesis’ is a systematic and accurate vision of Psychosynthesis, which also takes into account recent developments in Assagiolian theory.”  
Andrea Bocconi

### **PREFACE by Petra Guggisberg Nocelli**

This book is born out of an attempt to answer a question often put to me by friends, patients, scholars and therapists of other orientations: “What is Psychosynthesis?” This question, despite years of practice and study, fortunately succeeds yet again and always to get me into trouble.

In trying to outline an inevitably compound and multifaceted response, I have been guided by the general purpose of providing the reader with a comprehensive and ample view of the evolution of psychosynthetic teaching, starting with the first writings from Roberto Assagioli at the beginning of the 1900s, up to the invaluable contributions of his own students and other contemporary psychosynthesisists.

It was a difficult a decision to finalize the writing of this text as Psychosynthesis is wonderfully vast, inclusive and fruitful, and I dare say “infinite”: an adequate mirror for the spirit of the human being. Therefore, many of the topics discussed would require further insights, for which I suggest with pleasure a reading of the volumes published by the various authors widely cited in the course of this work.

*The Way of Psychosynthesis* springs from the complete rewriting of my degree thesis that I presented in July 2000 at the Università Statale di Milano. At the time, I had devoted much effort, energy and passion to that work. And so, after 10 years, driven by an inner desire

that is bringing me back to reconnect the threads of the present with those of the past, I decided to resume what I had developed and update it entirely.

Writing this book really meant a lot to me, and marks the symbolic fulfillment of a long, difficult, and troubled period. I consider this text as the tangible fruit of a surprising process that involved me on multiple levels, reconciling myself with parts of myself and my past, relieving me and liberating an unexpected amount of will, joy, pleasure and satisfaction. The hope is that some of this energy can filter through the pages to reach those who read it.

I would like to conclude with a practical recommendation. This text lends itself to be read in an orderly and progressive manner, but can also be readily consulted as a manual, in its individual parts, chapters or paragraphs, according to the needs and interests of the moment: discover the biography of Roberto Assagioli, get an idea of the relationship between Psychosynthesis and Psychoanalysis, or between Psychosynthesis and Transpersonal Psychology, study the evolution of thought regarding the image of the individual illustrated in the Egg Diagram, learn about the techniques of the psychosynthesis process, analyze specific topics such as subpersonalities, superconscious, Ideal Model, and so on. I refer the reader to the Contents for a total overview.

### **PRESENTATION by Dr. Gianni Yoav Dattilo**

It is with joy and heartfelt appreciation that I welcome the English edition of this excellent guide to the path of Psychosynthesis.

As a matter of fact Roberto Assagioli, the Italian psychiatrist, decided to publish his major books first in English, and paradoxically never saw the Italian translation of his masterpiece, *The Act of Will*, which appeared after his death.

The founder of Psychosynthesis was clearly aware of the importance of the English language in the international scientific community; and Psychosynthesis is in its essence international, going far beyond all cultural boundaries and barriers of any kind, in an overall spirit of synthesis and integration.

Petra Guggisberg Nocelli's lovely book was created in a period of fresh blossoming of works on Psychosynthesis, each having its own special physiognomy, a sign of creative evolution of our concept. Each chapter of this work, although having its thematic independence, is an organic whole and offers a real path in the research and development of psychosynthetic theory and practice. It gives the impression of viewing a harmonic Mandala, rich in colors, allowing us to look through psychosynthesis into the multidimensionality of space and time.

*The Way of Psychosynthesis* opens with a detailed personal and cultural biography of Roberto Assagioli, which makes it possible for a deeper understanding not only of the person, but also of the very genesis of his new concept of the psyche.

The second part examines the environment in which psychosynthesis is born and develops. Our orientation is re-examined and compared to the panorama of contemporary psychology: behaviorism, psychoanalysis, analytical psychology, the humanistic-existential trend, transpersonal psychology and the new frontiers of psychoenergetics.

The third part allows one to fully enter the psychosynthetic experience by exhaustively expanding the times and the ways of the path, the concepts and the fundamental diagrams, while taking into account the proposals for change and development. All this is essential if you hold to the idea of psychosynthesis as a dynamic process in continuous evolution in the various areas of application, rather than a static and definitive theory.

In the fourth part, among other things what is striking is that the fundamental ideas of our model, "the seven fundamental experiences of psychosynthesis" as the author calls it, are made accessible to the inexperienced public, while at the same time also very useful for the expert reader, offering new and original ideas of thought and experimentation. For example, issues such as disidentification and self-identification, will, the subpersonalities, 'I' and Self, the Superconscious, the principle of Synthesis—none of which are simple from a conceptual point of view—are dealt with clarity and depth.

Psychosynthesis does not come from nowhere and in

a vacuum; it has complex roots, still not yet sufficiently discovered and explored. The pragmatic spirit of our research has often favored the empirical and applicative aspects, but here we are faced with a true, complete guide to the visceral experience of psychosynthesis, where clear theories and practical ideas find a wonderful balance. The various themes are studied in light of the sources, thus favoring the possibility of new investigations, without weighty text and always bearing in mind that Psychosynthesis is basically a psychological practice to be experienced.

It is not often that a work is both a clear and complete introduction to a theme and also an in-depth study with spurts of originality.

Petra Guggisberg Nocelli was a brilliant pupil of the psychotherapy school of SIPT, and it is my great pleasure to welcome her contribution, written with a genuine psychosynthetic spirit which enriches our bibliography. This book will surely contribute to the dissemination of Psychosynthesis worldwide and I deeply trust it will be an invaluable general introduction for beginners and a precious tool for the seasoned practitioner as well.