

KNOW, LOVE, TRANSFORM YOURSELF

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME II OF THE ENGLISH EDITION by Petra Guggisberg Nocelli

*“INTER-INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOSYNTHESIS,
WORLD PSYCHOSYNTHESIS - In order to overcome the supervaluation of
private, separative interests and local attachments it is necessary to develop the long-
range view, which allows to see the immense benefit deriving to the “part” through
surrendering special privilege and temporary advantages and participating
cooperatively in the whole. This requires release from the “obsession of the present”
(as well as of the past).”*

R. Assagioli, handwritten note, Assagioli Archives

In the introduction to Volume I of *Know, love, transform yourself*, I compared this anthology project on the theory, practice and new developments of Psychosynthesis to an English garden: a place wild, spontaneous and at the same time, neat and elegant; a succession of different landscapes, in which the beauty of each section is respected and valorised and in which conflicting emotions and sensations find their equilibrium.

I also described how, in thinking about the English translation of this book, initially written in Italian, I had felt the urgency to honour the original international and interdisciplinary vocation of Psychosynthesis by inviting colleagues from many countries and active in different fields (psychotherapy, counselling, medicine, coaching, education, self-development, etc.) to participate in this publication.

Thus, **in addition to the 9 chapters of the original Italian edition** - which aims at a rigorous reconstruction of the Psychosynthesis process with its techniques, exercises and methods - **the English edition includes 26 additional chapters**. The amount of material to be organised was huge and it was necessary to divide the publication into two volumes.

Volume I opened with a general introduction to the figure of Roberto Assagioli and to Psychosynthesis (**Chs. I-III**). **Chapter IV** expanded on a necessary premise; namely that Psychosynthesis techniques and exercises must always be contextualised within a meaningful relationship, which is unique and original. The following three chapters discuss the phases, or aspects, of the psychosynthetic journey, offering practical tools for each aspect: the general assessment of the conscious personality (**Ch. V**); the exploration of the unconscious (**Ch. VI**); and the techniques for self-mastery in personal psychosynthesis (**Ch. VII**).

In addition to these first 7 chapters, **Volume I included 11 additional chapters** written by **Rozana Bazec, Ewa Bialek, Joan Evans, Dorothy Firman, Ann Gila & John Firman, Birgit Haus, Catherine Ann Lombard, Tan Nguyen, Will Parfitt, Bonney & Richard Schaub and Michael Wolde**. These contributions reflected on significant issues such as domestic violence, substance abuse, resilience, creativity, psycho-spiritual unfoldment etc., and explored from different perspectives (clinical, educational, managerial) many of the topics already covered

in Chs. I-VII: the subpersonality model, the processes of identification-disidentification and self-identification, the development of will etc.

This second Volume begins with the last two chapters of the original Italian version of *Know, love, transform yourself*. Chapter VIII presents the psychosynthetic view of transformative processes and the tools used to catalyse it (i.e. the training of the imagination, the technique of the ideal model and the use of symbols, the applications of the skilful will, the development of weak or immature elements, and synthesis in its various aspects) as well as interpersonal psychosynthesis techniques (from the couple to humanity).

Chapter IX is dedicated to transpersonal or spiritual psychosynthesis and contains also different techniques and exercises used in this field: the inner dialogue, visualisations, the techniques for the development of intuition, exercises for evoking higher feelings, the different types of meditation, etc.

These last two chapters are complemented by 15 additional chapters that further explore the topics presented. Let us then continue our investigation of the surprising and varied garden of Psychosynthesis and see what sections we will encounter in Vol. II.

Getting straight to the heart of inner transformation, in Chapter 12 - *Anger into power: using the passionate energy stored in frustrations* - **Walter Polt** reflects on a key question: how can I prevent daily irritations from hurting my relationships? He presents a simple five-step process for transforming anger into positive power. This process - illustrated more extensively in the recently published *The anger makeover: discover your power to reform your relationships* (2021) - guides us to stop, look at and feel the impulse of anger, and change our experience to enjoyment through connecting to our personal values. In turn this supports new neural pathways to develop.

Mark Horowitz also addresses the issue of power in relational contexts. *The power of one's being: expressing self in human systems* (Ch. 13) makes the case that not all blocks to the expression of our purpose are internal, e.g. subpersonalities, fears, or lack of will, but that these blocks can also be external, e.g. the dynamics of the groups or systems of which we are a part. The author lays out - with the help of practical exercises - the dynamics of dysfunctional systems and what we need to reconnect with Self in such systems, thus liberating our will, both for our own benefit and for the benefit of the system as a whole.

The next two chapters continue to explore transformative processes but focus on another fundamental point of Psychosynthesis: imagery. Chapter 14 presents a paper by **Martha Crampton** - *The use of mental imagery in psychosynthesis* - first published in 1969 in the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* and still highly relevant. The author affirms that, because Psychosynthesis is fundamentally an open system and a point of view, rather than a dogma or doctrine, fixed rules about the use of mental imagery in its practice do not exist. Notwithstanding this premise, she then rigorously reconstructs the different types of techniques used (introductory techniques, combinations of techniques, directed and spontaneous techniques, identification techniques, transcendence techniques) and their possible applications.

In Chapter 15, **Jan Taal** focuses on the same topic affirming that imagery, besides representing a wide variety of forms and techniques, above all can lead to a direct contact with our "Greater Self", where all our drives, complexes, traumas, potentials and resources reside. *Imagery in therapy, counselling and coaching* presents the different stages of imagery, how imagery works and can be applied, requirements and pitfalls, with clinical case examples. This is enriched with many interesting illustrations of creative expression which have been created by clients.

The following chapters (Chs. 16-23) focus on another of the fundamental experiences of Psychosynthesis, the one that most characterises it: synthesis. The concept is explored from different and complementary perspectives and, starting from the individual, the various contributions gradually expand their horizon of reflection to include interpersonal relationships, couple relationships, groups and systems, until they embrace the whole planet Earth, seen as a single, living, interconnected organism.

In part one of *Psychosynthesis as a universal and practical guide towards synthesis in contemporary times*, **Sonoe Hiramatsu** presents two exercises, contrasting and complementary from the point of view of Psychosynthesis: the first, Voluntary, Guided, Abdominal Breathing [VGAB] is a breathing exercise with probable influence of the Japanese “DO”; the second combines the [VGAB] with the dis-identification and self-identification exercise. The second part of Chapter 16 discusses some of the themes of the two exercises presented in part one to investigate the true nature and purpose of developing Psychosynthesis as a practical guide towards the Psychosynthesis of Humanity. The Japanese context is also examined, offering an example of the inclusive nature of Psychosynthesis in light of cultural diversity.

In Chapter 17, *Awareness of the body, awareness of the soul*, **Franco Salvini** illustrates some significant practical exercises, which demonstrate how in Psychosynthesis awareness of the body and awareness of the soul are two starting points to initiate self-knowledge, self-acceptance and transformation. He posits that paying attention to our body and developing a broader awareness of its relationships with our inner life can bring us closer to our soul, through recognizing the signals that “it” sends us. This experience of unity between body and soul develops a greater knowledge of our potential and amplifies the vision of our relationship with the world.

Chapter 18, written by **David England**, also contemplates the dimension of the body by integrating it with a reflection on inclusion of sexuality. The first part of *Sex: self: spirit* provides a comprehensive, contemporary account of the Shamanic Energy Map. In the second part the author seeks a deeper understanding of the Psychosynthesis conception of “Self” by bringing together Assagioli’s Egg Diagram and the Shamanic Energy Map. This synthesis realises a dynamic model of the whole human personality and offers a reframing of the Psychosynthesis understanding of “Self”.

Reflection on the theme of sexuality continues in Chapter 19 and extends to the question of gender identity. The purpose of *Through, with and in* is to illustrate how **Angie Fee** works with these topics within a psychosynthesis framework, with a particular focus on exploring beliefs based on dualistic thinking. She suggests the idea of intersectionality as a possible nondual way to think about sexuality and gender identities, exploring how Psychosynthesis can work with identifying and reflecting on core belief systems that have led to our identifications.

In *The will to love: on psychosynthesis and couples’ therapy* (Ch. 20), **Eva Sanner** shares her experiences from working with couples emphasising how our intimate relationships are an opportunity to open ourselves up to a wider perspective of growth. The awareness of one’s own wounds and the willingness to make new choices is a basis for this important work with relationships. The article also includes a description of a model called the Double Egg, which is the egg model expanded to include two persons in a relationship and a discussion about their different parts.

With chapter 21, we broaden further the horizon of reference to social Psychosynthesis. Roberto Assagioli’s work on synthesis and polarity holds important and unrealised potential in relation to the challenges we face in society today. *Working towards synthesis: context,*

guidance and techniques for engaging with polarisation briefly explores the wider context of our emergent societal psycho-pathology, introducing concepts of tribal identification and memetic mind-viruses and how these coalesce with polarisation. A meta-theme of **Aubyn Howard**'s chapter is the polarity interdependence of individual and collective consciousness and the need to hold and work with both simultaneously.

Psychosynthesis and humanity's great turning by **Molly Young Brown** (Ch. 22) explores how Psychosynthesis can help us face the enormous challenges of our world today: the climate crisis, systemic racism, pandemics, and corporate and fascist threats to democracy - all part of the Great Unravelling of the global Industrial Growth Society based on profit, greed, and competition. Psychosynthesis can help our communities, governments, and socioeconomic systems shift in a Great Turning to a Life Sustaining Society - based on love, reciprocity, cooperation, and interdependence within the web of life. The four dimensions included in the Great Turning are also described.

The reflection on these times of deep insecurity continues in Chapter 23, entitled *Surrendering to our common home*. When all possibilities for controlling and organizing our own lives have gone, we feel helpless at the mercy of an unknown fate. We long for a stable place. But the longing goes deeper, like a wordless appeal: we experience a kind of "divine homesickness". **Kristina Brode** shows us how Archetypal Psychosynthesis offers tools and practical exercises to facilitate this process of awakening leading us to "our common home". The chapter also discusses the hourglass-model created by the author.

In *Pioneering educational psychosynthesis in an international school*, **Isabelle Clotilde Küng** remembers her training with Dr. Roberto Assagioli in Florence and her two decades as a teacher of adolescents and young adults in Switzerland. The first section of Chapter 24 describes the school setting where the author pioneered her approach. The second section, outlines some different areas of applications of educational Psychosynthesis and, for each of these domains, presents also one technique she used in her work.

Our exploration of the garden of Psychosynthesis concludes with the last two summary chapters which, it is no coincidence, do not discuss any specific topic, but collect and organise many exercises and techniques developed over decades by different authors.

The exercises in Chapter 25 - edited by **Jan Kuniholm** and entitled *Exercises in various aspects of psychosynthesis originated by: M. Crampton, G. Delaney, J. Kuniholm, W. Polt, J. G. Vargiu* - have been gathered from diverse sources. They cover a wide range of practice and have been developed for use in training or clinical settings. The first five focus on awareness. The next two point toward the unconscious, with focus on dreams and intuition. Exercises related to personal psychosynthesis follow, with focus on subpersonalities, the observer, use of ideal model; exercises focusing on specific negative attitudes; and one that covers all of the psychological laws that Assagioli presented in his book *The act of will*. Finally Jan presents an exercise for going beyond personality to retrieve transpersonal qualities.

The last contribution (Ch. 26), by **Tom Yeomans**, includes a series of practices, which are designed to support the process of psychosynthesis in individual work. Taken together they provide an experience of the dimensions of personal growth, and how these are intimately interrelated within one experiential process. *The process of psychosynthesis and planet earth* also includes a relatively new practice designed to explore our relationship to the living planet as a whole, and our place and part in the emergence of "a new civilization characterized by a harmonious integration and cooperation" and "the Supreme Synthesis".

As I had already written in the Introduction to Volume I, I would like to point out again that the aim of giving an inclusive overview of the development of Psychosynthesis at an

international level has only been partially achieved. Despite its more than one thousand pages, *Know, love, transform yourself* provides only a glimpse of all that Psychosynthesis can offer. There are many more countries, cultures, fields of application and themes I would have wished to include. There are many colleagues, groups and Institutes whose work would have deserved to be represented. It was not easy to set a limit to the number of additional chapters.

Despite my regret in having to make these necessary sacrifices, this experience has also made me aware of the incredible vitality, dynamism and potential of Psychosynthesis that still awaits realisation. And how each of us can, as Assagioli wrote, actively contribute to this process by “*insisting on the necessity and value of connecting, relating, creating: bridges, links, active interplays, coordination, harmonious cooperation, increasing blendings, between the various aspects, functions, etc. and particularly between Soul and personality.*”¹

I hope therefore that *Know, love, transform yourself* will inspire other colleagues to continue in this direction, joining the many who have already done and continue to do so. Just as I hope that this initial review will encourage readers to explore Psychosynthesis further.

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Trainer, and Author of *The Way of Psychosynthesis* -
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¹ R. Assagioli, handwritten note, Assagioli Archives: www.archivioassagioli.org