

The Basis of Psychological Healing and Emotional Wellness

Hammer Max, and Hammer Barry*

Psychotherapist, Deceased Emeritus Full Professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Maine, USA

*Corresponding author: Barry Hammer, PhD. Tel: 207-866-3223, E-mail: mhbj58@gmail.com

Citation: Hammer Max, Hammer Barry (2018) The Basis of Psychological Healing and Emotional Wellness. J Psychiat Mental Illness 1(1): 101

Received Date: February 21, 2018 **Accepted Date:** March 13, 2018 **Published Date:** March 15, 2018

In this paper, authors discuss some questions involved in understanding the basis of effective psychotherapy and psychological self-healing, as a basis of experiencing greater inner peace, wholeness, and experiential authenticity.

1. What is the best way for us to heal or liberate ourselves from emotionally painful inner conflicts, and develop greater inner peace, happiness, true experiential self-understanding, and beneficial transformation in our individual psychological and spiritual development?

The best way to heal emotionally painful inner conflict is to stop resisting, controlling, censoring, judging, or interpreting our painful or uncomfortable feelings. When we take an attitude of nonjudgmental unconditional self-acceptance of all of our emotional feelings and experiential states, and no longer interfere with or interpret the painful feelings, then there is no longer any sense of division, distancing, or duality between our conscious mind, as knower, and the energy in the feelings. Being unified with our feelings, without judging or interpreting them from the outside, enables the feelings to speak for themselves and resolve themselves without interference. Being unified with the energy in our feelings, by not standing outside of the feelings as the separate interpreter, controller, censor, value judger of them, or approver and disapprover, restores our natural wholeness of being, which undoes the unnatural and psychologically unhealthy inner self-division that is the basic source of painful inner conflict. That natural state of undivided wholeness and nonjudgmental unconditional acceptance of our feelings is the basis of psychological healing, health, and happiness, epitomized by Max Hammer's psychotherapeutic dictum, "wholeness heals."

Healing ourselves of emotionally painful inner conflicts also involves releasing our energy and conscious attention from being covered over and blocked by the superimposition of predetermined self-definitions, self-evaluations (self-approval or self-disapproval), and rigid social roles. When we no longer superimpose preconceived self-interpretations and presumptive definitions of ourselves, then our energy is no longer blocked by rejecting aspects of our own energy and experience that seem inconsistent with our preferred self-definitions, in the attempt to live up to or validate those mental and emotional self-interpretations. Therefore, when we let go of predetermined self-definitions and judgmental self-expectations, we feel freed of the heavy dead weight of excessive mental-emotional baggage, which makes us feel light hearted and naturally happy. Presumptive self-definitions and idealized or disparaging judgmental self-expectations cover over, block, distort, stifle, and distance our actual feelings, experiential states, and life energy flow. That self-distancing from the energy abiding in our actual feelings and experiential states produces self-division, self-rejection, emotionally painful self-conflict, self-estrangement from what is genuine, authentic, sincere, natural in us, as a process of self-numbing, or inner deadening. We readily become addicted to unhealthy substances as a distracting escape from our subliminal experience of inner emptiness. Such toxic addictions often involved an artificial attempt to imitate and replace the genuine joyful vitality that is inherent to our naturally unblocked, undistorted life energy.

Being honest with ourselves involves being open to directly experiencing whatever is actually arising within us, from moment to moment, without superimposing any kind of extraneous conceptual filters, or distracting, distorting, predetermined self-interpretations and self-expectations. Furthermore, being true to ourselves involves intuitively discerning what options seem consistent or inconsistent with the integrity of our core being, or intuitively distinguishing between what options would connect us to or distance us from whatever feels natural, genuine, truly precious, and life-affirming in our self and in our responsive relational contact with others. When we are truly honest with ourselves, or open to the actual experiential truth of ourselves, then we are no longer self-divided between what we actually are being and experiencing, and what we presume or tell ourselves that we "should be" or "should not be" validating about ourselves, as idealized/desired or disparaged/rejected egocentric self-definitions. Not rejecting our actual experiential states, through the absence of superimposed idealized self-expectations and self-definitions, ends psychologically painful inner conflict rooted in that kind of self-divisive self-rejection and self-estrangement. Metaphorically speaking, our predetermined, idealized or disparaging ideas of ourselves, or self-definitions and rigid social roles,

are like mental and emotional “masks” that cover over, stifle, or prevent breathing or ventilation of our real face, our actual real feelings, experiential states, and the energy that abides within them, as a process of self-confinement, self-blockage, self-division, of our energy, through the rejection of what we are actually experiencing in favor of what we presume we “should be” or “ought to be” validating about ourselves.

Self-discovery of our actual experiential realities and nonjudgmental unconditional acceptance of them eventually leads to inner peace, arising from resolution of psychological inner conflicts. Emotionally troubling inner conflicts are often produced by rejecting what is actually true for us in the attempt to prove, validate, or live up to an idealized self-definition or judgmental self-evaluation that we presume to be “better” or more acceptable to ourselves and others in our life who we wish to please. We naturally feel more joyfully alive, secure, relaxed, and fulfilled when we no longer block our own energy by superimposing extraneous, restrictive ideas, definitions, and expectations of ourselves, as a kind of self-confinement in preconceived, presumptive self-interpretations. The only effective way to resolve psychological pain is to let yourself experience it fully consciously, without distancing or evading it, as a process of full experiential self-unification, whereas escaping from psychological pain, such as by superimposing more “positive” preferred self-definitions, self-interpretations, and artificially or prematurely pleasant experiential states, such as intense distracting sensations, actually preserves the psychological pain, often in subconscious levels of the psyche. We must let our painful feelings spontaneously speak for themselves to conclusion, rather than distancing and thereby blocking the energy in those feelings by controlling, censoring, and speaking for them with preconceived conceptual interpretations. As epitomized by the psychotherapeutic maxim, “*wholeness heals*”, the state of consciousness in non-duality, or non-resistive, unmediated, nonjudgmental, unbiased, direct contact with our actual emotional feelings and experiential states is the only true therapeutic and transformational growth-producing state of awareness, because it is the only conflict-free state of consciousness.

However, unifying with our painful feelings does not necessarily mean identifying with them, agreeing with them, siding with them, justifying them, or acting upon them, particularly feelings involving an impulse to express intense anger in inappropriate or abusive ways. Consciousness in unmediated, unblocked, undistorted full contact or non-duality with and nonjudgmental, nonreactive, nonpartisan, unconditional acceptance of our actual feelings and experiential states is in a state of being or natural indivisible wholeness, whereas when consciousness seeks to validate, defend, enhance, or aggrandize its egoistic self-definitions, then it is in a state of becoming or presumed deficiency and compensatory desire, seeking to become more than what we believe that we already are. The attempt to deny and reject awareness of our actual experience by trying to become, achieve, prove, or validate some kind of idealized self-image or presumptive self-definition that we presumed to be “better” or more acceptable to ourselves puts us into an unnatural process of self-division and inner conflict, which perpetuates and exacerbates psychological pain.

Ceasing to identify with psychosocial masks, such as predetermined self-definitions, idealized self-images, positive and negative value judgments (or approved and disapproved self-evaluations), and predetermined social roles enables us to liberate our energies from psychological self-confinement in those superimposed mind chatter coverings, so that our energies can be restored to their naturally joyful, peaceful, unrestricted free flow. Letting go of extraneous self-definitions and self-expectations also enables us to gain liberating transformational insights into the actual experiential truth of ourselves, as well as resolve emotionally painful, psychologically unhealthy inner conflicts rooted in rejection of our actual experiential states in favor of an idealized presumption of what we “should be” or “ought to be.” Self-discovery of our actual experiential realities and nonjudgmental unconditional acceptance of them eventually leads to inner peace, arising from resolution of psychological inner conflict, as well as enabling us to feel more joyfully alive and fulfilled by liberating our energy from confinement in preconceived self-interpretations.

The only effective way to resolve psychological pain is to let yourself experience it fully consciously, whereas escaping or distracting oneself away from psychological pain, such as, by superimposing more “positive” self-definitions and pleasant experiential states, actually preserves the psychological pain, often in unrecognized subconscious or subliminal levels of the psyche. We must let our painful feelings spontaneously speak for themselves to conclusion, rather than controlling, censoring, and speaking for them with preconceived conceptual interpretations. The state of consciousness in non-duality, full unification, embracing, or unmediated, uninterpreted, unbiased, direct experiential observation with our actual feelings is the only true therapeutic and transformational growth-producing state of awareness, because it is the only conflict-free state of awareness. However, as previously mentioned, unifying with our painful feelings does not necessarily mean identifying with them, agreeing with them, siding with them, justifying them, or acting upon them, especially in the case of intensely angry feelings involving abusive or destructive impulses.

Consciousness in non-duality with and nonjudgmental unconditional acceptance of our actual feelings and experiential states is in a state of being, as a naturally self-unified, self-consistent indivisible wholeness. That undivided wholeness heals or resolves emotionally painful inner conflicts arising from distancing our self from our actual experiential states and the energy within them. However, when consciousness seeks to validate, defend, enhance, or aggrandize its egoistic self-definitions, then it is in a state of becoming or presumed deficiency and compensatory desire, seeking to become more than what we believe that we already are. The attempt to deny and reject awareness of our actual experience by trying to become or validate some kind of idealized self-image or presumptive self-definition that we presume to be “better” or more acceptable to ourselves puts us into a process of self-division and inner conflict, which perpetuates and exacerbates psychological pain. Judgmental disapproval or disparaging of some of our actual emotional feelings and experiential states, as well as the pursuit of desired or positively valued self-enhancements, are like two

opposite sides of the same indivisible whole coin of biased self-interpretation, both of which produce the same kind of self-division, self-estrangement, and unhealthy self-conflict. Any kind of predetermined self-interpretation or judgmental self-evaluation functions like a selective filter that restricts and distorts our ability to observe and acknowledge whatever actual experiences, feelings, or motivations are actually arising within us, in a given moment. Similarly, those kinds of predetermined interpretive filters also distort our view of other people, which reduces our ability to communicate effectively and to be empathetically attuned to other individuals.

Genuine experiential self-understanding arises when the mind is open, receptive, relaxed, quiet, without preconceived ideas and presumptive interpretations of ourselves, our feelings, and our experiential states. Various kinds of intensely exciting sensations, soothing substances (particularly addictive narcotic substances), and hectically driven activities are used to distract oneself as a way of escaping from the actual experiential truth of oneself, and can readily become addictive and psychologically unhealthy. Psychological health, maturity, and strength of character involves being willing and able to tolerate painful or uncomfortable feelings and experiences; otherwise, you withdraw from various aspects of life and psychologically deaden or numb yourself. The process of self-distracting escape from uncomfortable feelings and experiential states, in which the conscious knower stands dualistically distant and separated from the painful feelings, and tries to cover them over, evade, disguise, control, censor, eliminate, or change them, in some way, that kind of self-distraction, distancing, and reactive judgmental interference only preserves and intensifies the psychological pain, sometimes at an unrecognized subliminal or subconscious level of our being. However, courageously contacting our actual psychological pain head-on, and letting it do its worst, enables us to regain or retrieve energy trapped in hitherto rejected painful feelings, so that more of our energies can become available for productive, adaptive, vibrant, enjoyable living. Facing, embracing, or welcoming our psychological pain heals and dissolves it, whereas trying to escape it, distract ourselves from it, disguise, control, overcome, eliminate, or change it only perpetuates it, often at unrecognized subliminal or subconscious levels of our being. Escaping from uncomfortable feelings and experiential states produces a kind of psychological self-deadening, self-estrangement, numbing, or desensitization and alienation from what is experientially real and alive in you. However, being open to genuine experiential self-understanding can liberate you from psychologically burdensome, restrictive, fear-based, self-defeating, repetitive, habitual patterns of thinking, perception, and behavior, and enables you to experience significantly greater levels of vitality, acuity, and inner peace.

The personal entity self or conceptually defined egoistic sense of identity is merely a presumptive illusion, whereas our real self includes our moment-to-moment responsive experiential states, as well as our undefinable timeless permanent being or transpersonal self, as objectless undifferentiated pure conscious awareness indivisibly united to our vibratory life energy, and its natural inclinations and innate qualities, which comprise our experiential particularity or distinctiveness, and which need not be conceptually defined. The ego fears lack of self-definition or letting go of a defined sense of identity, which is presumed to be an inner emptiness and nothingness, but when we cease to escape from the indefinable pure simplicity of our being, we experience its intrinsic qualities of inner peace and joyful vitality.

2. How can psychotherapists best help people to achieve greater levels of psychological well-being and maturity of character? How can friends and family also do that for one another?

The best way that a psychotherapist, counselor, professional helper, friend, or loved one can help someone achieve greater levels of psychological well-being and maturity of character is for the mentor to empathically tune into the experience of the person who they are advising, with great caring, attentiveness, and an attitude of nonjudgmental acceptance. That process of empathic communion involves tuning into the unspoken as well as the spoken aspects of the mentored person's experience. The energy of empathic communion and genuine warmhearted caring builds a kind of psychological bridge of connection between the mentor and the person who is being mentored; and that bridge of experiential connection brings deeply penetrating incisive contact with previously subliminal or subconscious aspects of the person's feelings, which produces liberating insight into the person's feelings and why they are arising, and reveals what it will take for the person to reach a greater level of psychological well-being. The mentor should lead the client to their own truth; and should not impose his/her own biased views or predetermined presumptions upon the protégé, so that the protégé can self-discover his/her own liberating truth and separate individual path to beneficial transformation. Any kind of predetermined theoretical or interpretive bias prevents individuals from self-discovering their own liberating experiential truth and healing process of beneficial self-transformation, be that theoretical or interpretative framework a particular school of psychology, philosophy, social conditioning, or theological/religious teachings. Every individual has their own natural process of insightful self-observation and self-transformational development, which would only be stymied by the psychotherapist or mentor superimposing an extraneous agenda upon the client. The therapist's perspective and values may not necessarily be helpful/useful for the client, in a given moment, and may distract the client from directly observing their own feelings and experiential states and thereby gaining liberating insight into them, through that process of direct unmediated unbiased self-observation.

3. How can we make deeper contact with all aspects of our life experience?

When the mind is empty of self-generated thought, desire, and predetermined goals, then it can be fully invested in communion with our inner and outer experience. That fully invested contact, without distracting mind chatter, produces deep penetration into

whatever inner or outer phenomena or experience we are observing, and that kind of keenly penetrating observation produces incisive insight. Making direct, unmediated, undistorted, deeply penetrating, intimate contact with our inner and outer experience involves not obscuring that experience by superimposing preconceived presumptive interpretations, habitual reactions, and judgmental expectations upon our experience. Letting go of excessive mind chatter enables us to intuitively, empathically, contact a deeper level of experience beyond words. Creative insight involves a penetrating process of intuitively “seeing” or exploring into the core of any experience through fully invested non-dualistic communion between observer and observed, not mediated and distorted by extraneous mind chatter and demanding judgmental expectations. Labeling puts or force fits our experience into familiar, repetitive, generic categories, whereas unmediated observation through intimate communion enables us to intuitively discern the relative uniqueness and vivid immediacy of any experience. Life is experienced as an overly familiar dull bore when we bring our past conditionings, memories, future expectations, and predetermined conceptual interpretations to it, whereas removing the covering or filtering of preconceived interpretations connects us to the intrinsically joyful, beautiful flow of life energy experience, in the here and now moment.

Not all knowing involves conceptual interpretation and definition, and not all experience can be known and communicated with words. Predetermined conceptual labeling puts phenomena into static, stale, generic categories, which removes our consciousness from direct experiential contact with the vivid, vibrant immediacy of changing phenomena in their distinctive particularity. That process of defining our experience puts psychological space or distancing between us and the phenomena that we encounter, which produces a psychologically disturbing sense of alienation or estrangement from what is experientially real in ourselves and others, whereas viewing our experience in its immediacy, not mediated by preconceived interpretative categories, enables us to experience a greater sense of joyful vitality, vividness, and limitless unrestricted possibilities arising from contact with the beautiful flow of life energy experience, in the here and now moment.

4. How can we tap into our inner power center, the inner source of creative insight, inspiration, integrity, vitality, and other higher noetic or expanded, empowering, abundant states of consciousness?

We can tap into the energy power center level of our being by following the winding trail of the intuitively discerned experiential truth of ourselves and our core integrity. That openness to the experiential truth of ourselves gradually reveals deeper and deeper levels of our experience and being, until our consciousness penetrates into and thereby consciously awakens the hitherto subliminal energy of the core of our being, which is the source level of our creative power and insightful intelligence. Through openness to fully consciously embracing all of our life experiences, including our uncomfortable feelings, the core integrity level of our own being is gradually moving us, our consciousness, deeper and deeper toward itself, as the most essential level of our own being. Following the changing flow of our authentic inner and outer experience ultimately leads to and reveals the grandest, most essential, permanently enduring, Divine level of reality, which can only be directly intuited with the core of the heart, and cannot be grasped by the divisive, speculative, ego-mind. Following the moment-to-moment changing experiential truth of ourselves is what ultimately leads to awakening the essential core reality nature of our own permanent being, metaphorically symbolized by the Wizard of Oz story, in which Dorothy and her companions “follow the Yellow Brick Road” to its source, the Wizard of Oz.

The awakened energy core level of our being can unfold limitlessly greater levels of abundance from our own being, like a limitless fountain flowing from a limitless reservoir, and it can also “magnetically” attract greater abundance, blessings, or generosity from others around us. Expressing unselfish caring or true love to others also releases deeper and deeper, or greater and greater, levels of energy from the core of our being, metaphorically like pumping out deeper and deeper levels of water from a wellspring, which can be released only when the more superficial levels are first exhausted or used up. When we view ourselves, other individuals, and the whole world through the “eyes” or viewpoint of the maturely developed heart of love, it reveals and manifests the essential goodness and loveliness that pervades this entire world, and dispels illusory appearances and experiences of inner and outer negativity as a powerful transformational true vision of reality, rather than a naïve self-delusion. The maturely developed and consciously awakened presence of love in the heart removes fear and other kinds of negativity from the heart, which uproots all forms of unnecessary evil and suffering experience.

Expanded modes of awareness such as intuition, empathy, inspiration, creativity, and spontaneity arise from a process of relaxed openness, receptivity, non-striving communion with our actual inner and outer experience, when we are not locked into any predetermined, exclusive, restrictive, mode of self-definition, perception, goals, and functioning, letting the experience evoke in us whatever response it will, without having any controlled, preselected agendas. Genuine creativity and spontaneity involve openness to the full range of experiences, options, and all levels of the psyche, including insights coming from not fully conscious or subliminal levels of the psyche. Just as the hidden depths of an iceberg below the surface of the water are often much vaster than the visible appearance of the iceberg above the surface, similarly, when we are willing to go beyond the limits of what is already known or familiar to the conscious mind, then we can tap into qualitatively greater, more powerful, profounder, levels of creative energy and insight, providing greater vitality, productivity, and enhanced appreciation of all that is truly precious, sublime, or grand in the reality of life. Creative insight and masterful inspired performance, in any field of endeavor or area of inquiry, are enhanced when we are in deeply invested, heartfelt, caring communion with our actual experience and with the task at hand, without separate egocentric or distracting narcissistic self-awareness.

Metaphorically similar to water flowing from an open faucet when the valve is released, when we open our heart by connecting to someone or something in objective reality, outside, in deeply invested, heartfelt empathic caring communion, then our heart or energy center also becomes open to impartations from the inner source of creative intelligence, arising from the relational core level of our own individual being as the connective energy of love. Like a two-sided valve or door, our openness to self-forgetful, deeply invested, heartfelt, loving, relational contact with other individuals, experiences, and activities in objective reality, outwardly, or objectively, also opens us to the relational energy of the deepest level of our own individual creative intelligence, inwardly or subjectively. The inner relational core level of our creative intelligence can flow into our conscious awareness only when we acknowledge the relational nature of reality, or the natural intrinsic wholeness of inner and outer reality, the natural unity of subjective and objective reality, by engaging in deeply invested heartfelt caring empathic communion with someone, something, or some activity in objective reality, outwardly.

Tapping into the source of creative intelligence is not a process of introspectively turning your consciousness inward upon itself to know yourself as the most subjective knower. That would be a kind of extreme narcissism, self-deification of the ego as continuous introverted self-awareness. Instead, tapping into the source of creative intelligence involves the knower, your pure conscious awareness, going outward to lovingly contact visible forms in the world, in deeply invested, self-forgetful, loving communion with them. The self-preoccupied ego does not have access to the source of our creative intelligence because that core level of our being is a relational wholeness that can be accessed only by living or expressing the relational wholeness nature of reality, by engaging in deeply invested, heartfelt, caring communion with someone or something beyond the self-absorbed ego, thereby accessing the greater relational wholeness that unifies or integrates the subjective knower and objective reality within itself. That holistic relational reality is a connective energy of pure spiritual love, which is our true self, our essential being. The self-preoccupied ego is not a principle of wholeness and limitless abundance of creative intelligence because it constitutes the subjective or inner knower dualistically divorced or distanced from objective or outer reality. That divisive orientation is partial and, therefore, not whole, limited, and restrictive, impeding access to creative insights and productive transformational energies coming from the core of our being as a relational wholeness, inclusive rather than exclusive of the unified inner and outer or subjective and objective realities.

To be open to creative insights intuitively arising from the mystery core level of our being, we must also be open to mystery, lack of knowledge, which involves tolerance of uncertainty, ambiguity, lack of premature closure, as a process of ongoing exploration of the experiential truth of ourselves. If we are intolerant of or impatient with lack of knowledge, and seek a premature sense of certainty and closure, then we shut off the process of exploration into new possibilities and block the mystery core level of our being from imparting new insights, particularly insights that are inconsistent or unfamiliar with the views that we already hold. Openness to mystery, uncertainty, exploration, lack of closure, is a zone of receptivity involving openness to limitless variable transformational possibilities, limitless insights beyond the scope or parameters of what is already known. We call this zone of limitless creative insights and transformational possibilities the Plenitude or Pleroma.

5. What is the difference between our true/genuine self, our real being, and the ego as false ideas about ourselves?

Our real self is comprised of our actual momentary experience and enduring life energy presence, in contrast to the ego as acquired, changing, presumptive, ideas about ourselves, self-interpretations, self-definitions, and judgmental self-evaluations, or beliefs about ourselves, which are not intrinsic to our permanent energy being and momentary experience. Put more concisely, the real self is comprised of energy, whereas the ego is comprised of thought. The real self is a relational, connective self, whereas the ego is a separate, narcissistically detached, separate, false, presumptive sense of self or identity. The real self is our actual experience and energy presence, whereas the ego is our imaginary or presumptive ideas about ourselves, and the continuous mind chatter or inner monologue and the separate sense of self-awareness that that involves. Our real self is an intrinsic nonjudgmental unconditional self-acceptance, wholeness, and well-being, whereas the ego is a conditionally acquired, conceptually defined, approved and disapproved or value judged, sense of relative proficiency and deficiency, or relative self-approval and self-disapproval. The real self is a spiritual or divine nature, in the sense of having intrinsic, limitless, inalienable, worth, value, wholeness, well-being, and grandeur, whereas the ego seeks a conditionally acquired, conceptually defined, comparative, competitive, adversarial, sense of worth, value, well-being, and greatness, as self-delusional grandiosity.

The real self is our divine or spiritual IAM, the real knower of everything that we know, as objects of knowledge, an unmodified pure consciousness, which is a mystery unto itself, beyond all changing ideas, definitions, and presumptions about ourselves. We intentionally write the IAM as one word with no hyphen in it to show that it is one indivisible seamless whole self, not a compound self, comprised of a mixture or conglomerate of disparate elements. Our unacquired, undefined being is an intrinsic wholeness, purity, and greatness of being, as the source of the true greatness nature in human beings, the source of our sublime qualities, our true nobility of character, our states of exaltation, the intuitive higher mind and pure energy-feeling-heart, our intrinsic non-deficient flawless wholeness of being, our true creative intelligence, abiding at the deepest energy-center level of our being, in contrast to the more superficial psychological mind, comprised of brain activity, such as memory, reasoning, and ego-oriented thought. The ego may hold extremely positive or favorable views of itself, but those ideas are merely presumptions, as empty grandiosity, lacking the actual energy presence of true greatness abiding at the core of our permanent being, and manifested when we deeply give of our energy in caring empathic communion with other individuals, activities, and experiences in the world. We all share the same being or self, as an intrinsic wholeness, purity, goodness, value, divine or spiritual nature, an individualized

connective love-being, but we differ in our level of awakening and development of it through the expression of unselfish caring and openness to the experiential truth of ourselves, and we also differ in terms of the particular blueprint or pattern of our soul or being, guiding us in the development of our relatively unique potentials, abilities, interests, and natural inclinations. Our permanent being, and the pure, unmodified, undistorted, undefined energy that flows from it, is the source of our true greatness, the Kingdom of Heaven, Kingdom of God, or paradise within us and relationally between us, the source of all true states of inspiration, beauty, enchantment, wonder, exaltation, nobility of character, creativity, intuition, empathy, compassion, courage, and charisma. Some psychologists refer to our unmodified being as the source of peak experiencing and peak performing, while some religious or spiritual people refer to it as a state of grace, blessing, blessedness, redemption, or salvation, the powerful “genie” or true genius in us.

Before our real self, real being, soul, or IAM awakens to its true experiential nature as intrinsic wholeness, well-being, goodness, and undefinable purity, it tends to reject being an undefined mystery unto itself, and identifies with acquired or changing ideas about itself, like identifying with a distorted image of oneself in a concave or convex mirror. In contrast to the ego, which presumes itself to have a separate self-awareness, a detached sense of identity, our real self is naturally embedded in a web or matrix of responsive relational connections, and knows itself through its responsive relational encounters with others, from moment to moment, rather than holding any static fixed or enduring ideas about itself. The relational nature of reality makes all living beings and all branches of knowledge naturally related to one another in their being, experience, and meaningful significance. Therefore, anything or anyone is best understood within the context of their interactions with others and with larger connective wholes, whereas viewing any aspect of reality in isolation often produces false, distorted, superficial perception. Unselfish true love or genuine caring is a great power for healing, blessing, creative insight, and beneficial transformation.

6. What are the basic components/aspects of a psychologically healthy, satisfying, successful personal/interpersonal relationship? How can we develop good communication, empathic experiential closeness or intimacy, and true love in our personal/interpersonal relationships?

Such a relationship involves relating to what is experientially real or genuine in the other person, and not to our preconceived ideas, definitions, or interpretations of them, or their interpretations of themselves (such as contrived, imaginary psychosocial images, as psychological masks or personae), and revealing what is experientially genuine and sincere in ourselves to our partner, rather than presenting them with some kind of fake ideal image and seeking to impress them by pretending to be something that is not truly real or natural for us to be or to feel and experience. Furthermore, psychologically healthy relationships are growth oriented rather than possession oriented. That involves being open to new insights and transformational development in the relationship, as the basis of liberation from psychologically unhealthy old rigid patterns, rather than seeking to possess and mold one's partner in order to pressure them to gratify selfish egocentric preconceived desires or expectations. We relate to and as what is genuinely natural and spontaneous, which the philosopher Martin Buber calls the I-Thou relationship, rather than relating to fake or artificial idealized or disparaging images and demanding expectations in one another, which Buber refers to as the I-It relationship, in which people basically treat one another as defined labels and possessive uses rather than valuing their being or living presence for its own sake, appreciating its intrinsic value or inherent lovable quality. A preconceived, labelling, controlling, judgmental way of relating to another individual restricts rather than enhances the transformational growth of each individual, and of the relationship itself, in contrast to relationships in which greater levels of openness, flexibility, insight, and creative transformation exist. In contrast to a growth-oriented relationship, an exploitative, manipulative, psychologically unhealthy object relationship exists if one relates primarily not to the whole person, but rather, to the particular aspects of another individual that one can exploit for one's own gratification. In such an exploitative relationship, we resist our partner outgrowing stale old habits and developing liberating insights and new transformational breakthroughs that could jeopardize their providing us with the selfish egocentric gratifications that we seek and expect from them. Psychologically healthy, satisfying, successful relationships involve nonjudgmental unconditional acceptance of the whole of the other person, in terms of their whole range of constructive natural experience and expression, without condoning inappropriate or abusive tendencies in them, rather than selectively relating only to partial aspects of them that impact the particular selfish egocentric gratifications that one is seeking from them.

When we truly love someone, we do not conditionally value them only when they conform to our own selective needs, expectations, and idealized images of them; instead, we view them as having inherent unconditional value because of their intrinsic whole being or distinctive living energy presence. To truly love someone is to relate to, appreciate, and cherish what is actually naturally real in them, rather than projecting imaginary idealized images and judgmental demanding expectations, and valuing that in them, as a conditional sense of approval or disapproval. We intuitively recognize that the beloved simply feels right for us, they simply belong with us, their energy presence feels like a naturally compatible “good fit” with ours. We intuitively recognize a deep sense of natural inner familiarity with the distinctive life energy presence of the other individual, so our love or caring is not dependent or conditional upon the other individual conforming to some kind of idealized image of perfection, demanding expectations, or preconceived roles. That intuited sense of natural relatedness of being, inherent belonging, inner familiarity, or natural compatibility, enables individuals to remain unselfishly devoted to one another and to unconditionally remain together “for better or for worse,” as suggested by the traditional marriage vow, but that is also applicable to other kinds of non-marital caring relationships. True love is enduring, not temporary, because it is not dependent upon any conditional reason. There is no “I love

you because...”; it is not conditional, because our intuitive recognition of natural relatedness of being or inner familiarity does not depend on changing circumstances or upon altering or distorting the other person’s natural real being, experience, and expressions. True love is free of conditional valuing based on self-seeking motives, so our love does not depend on, or is not conditional upon, having the beloved provide us with intense feelings of excitation and gratification, be they sexual, sensual, intellectual, emotional, entertaining, financial, etc. We love the other person for their own sake, and are contented to relate to what is actually experientially real and spontaneously natural in them, regardless of whether they gratify particular needs, ideals, fantasies, and expectations that we may value.

Psychologically healthy relationships involve feeling emotionally or energetically or experientially close to one another by developing mutual understanding through good communication, i.e. respectful, nonjudgmental, constructive, non-abusive, open, honest, sincere, non-evasive, direct, meaningful communication, involving empathic attunement not only to the other person’s spoken messages but also to deeper subliminal non-verbal aspects of their experience and being or living energy presence.

Investment involves a mutual reaching out to the other for contact. Each individual must go outside oneself and give of oneself to the other, or reveal oneself to the other, and not expect the other to go the whole way in bridging the psychological gap between the two. The investment is like a seed we plant in the other, and permit the other to plant in ourselves, with the hope that the other will nurture it with the warmth of their caring so that one day it will grow and blossom into a flower of fulfillment.

Compatibility of values produces mutual empathic understanding of one another and experiential intimacy or emotional closeness. Empathy involves the ability and willingness to feel what the other person is feeling, which involves at least occasionally letting go of separate egocentric or narcissistic self-awareness self-will and self-seeking, and related mind chatter, in order to tune into the feelings and experience of the other person. Empathy also involves the ability to transcend one’s own psychological boundaries and to “stand in the other person’s shoes”, psychologically speaking, or to intuitively tune into the other individual’s experiential frame of reference or view of reality. This involves the ability to perceive and experience the world, or particular situations and issues, as the other person does. Without it, one is not able to make full experiential contact with the other person, which is necessary to provide optimal understanding and experiential closeness.

Respect involves permitting the other person to have interests and needs of his/her own, apart from you. You recognize that the other individual is not your possession. You treat the other individual as an adult, as intrinsically equal in value to you, which means not taking the other individual for granted or exploiting them.

Trusting and being trustworthy, honoring one’s commitments, and being responsively alert to fulfill the legitimate needs and wishes of the other person, within reason, as an expression of genuine caring for them and for the relationship.

7. How can true love help us overcome psychologically unhealthy addictions and emotional negativity, and enable us to develop greater spiritual awareness, including experiencing an enduring spiritual connection to our loved ones?

True love fills our heart, mind, and body with regenerative life energy, producing a greater sense of genuine security well-being and vitality that replaces addictive dependency on unhealthy unwholesome substances to produce a pseudo sense of vitality, excitement, and euphoria that only distortedly mimics the genuine vitality that only true love or loving warmth can provide. Furthermore, when we experience the genuine security, euphoria, and well-being that comes from true love, that eliminates more negative or unpleasant, disturbing energies that induce addictive dependency on unhealthy substances as a way of distracting ourselves from or covering over those uncomfortable, chronic, sometimes unbearable, negative feelings.

Experiencing an enduring spiritual connection to our loved ones is rooted in the intuitive experience of inner familiarity or natural relatedness of being, being joined together with a related spiritual blueprint or overlapping spiritual pattern at the root level of our being, the spiritual archetype, or the level of timeless permanent being, which is the basis of the marriage or other caring relationship “made in heaven”

The energy of love and sexual passion flowing between two individuals can include an element of sacred communion with the spiritual core of one another’s being, and the unifying divine source level of all being, which arouses or energizes the experience of the spiritual root core of your own being, producing enhanced self-understanding and creative transformational development.

8. How can we apply principles that contribute to individual psychological well-being and good personal relationships as a way of compassionately transforming society for the better?

A psychologically healthy community encourages its members to recognize the relational reality of life, epitomized in the Latin Motto, “E Pluribus Unum” or “unity in diversity; and diversity in Unity”, as well as epitomized in the African principle of Ubuntu or fellow feeling, caring community spirit, or solidarity. A psychologically healthy community encourages win-win solutions rather than adversarial win-lose strategies; as well as encouraging people to refrain from stereotyping, scapegoating, devaluing, demonizing people of different ethnic backgrounds or viewpoints/outlooks. Some ways of developing caring cohesive participatory community spirit or genuinely caring neighborliness can include, publicly recognizing the contributions of others through good citizenship awards, holding neighborhood social events and volunteer public service projects, and communally celebrating people’s

birthdays and other significant public and private events. A truly compassionate society embraces, includes, creates employment and other empowering opportunities for people who have been marginalized, unemployed, isolated.

By denying our natural existential relatedness to other individuals and groups, the divisive ego produces lack of empathy, compassion, and ethical responsibility. We need to deeply understand and thereby overcome the individual and collective ego's attempt to feel superior to others by ridiculing, marginalizing, abusing, and/or seeking to destroy people of other persuasions or social backgrounds than oneself and one's social group affiliation or identity. Psychologically healthy and mature individuals do not need to try to feel superior to other people and groups in these ways, because they have developed a substantial experience of their real being or true self as love, which produces an experience of intrinsic worth/value, security, and well-being that does not need to be validated or conditionally acquired by trying to prove a competitive adversarial prideful sense of superiority over other individuals and groups. The psychologically healthy and mature recognition that helping others do better can also enable us to do better is metaphorically epitomized in the metaphorical biblical adage, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person strengthens another." (Proverbs 27:17). A psychologically healthy society also lets go of exclusive, absolutist, procrustean ideologies that try to force fit everyone into the same standardized controlling idealized mold of belief and behavior.

Summary and Conclusions

In summary, the primary basis of psychological healing and emotional wellness, as well as psychologically healthy personal relationships and societal values, involves letting go of predetermined interpretations of our self and other individuals, and also letting go of distracting narcissistic mind chatter, so that we can contact whatever is experientially genuine in ourselves and in others with an undistracted, uncluttered, mind and a warmly caring empathetic heart. Then we are able to be fully attentive or fully present to the genuine experience and living energy presence of our self and other individuals, with our whole being. That is the basis of genuine caring for oneself and other individuals.

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