

THE SPIRITUAL CREATION OF
MENTAL HEALTH: A HOLISTIC
PSYCHIATRIST'S PERSPECTIVE

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THERAPEUTIC ISSUES OF SPIRITUALLY TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES

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Introduce self: Alice W. Lee, MD, holistic psychiatrist, practicing in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

The Presentation: The Spiritual Creation of Mental Health: A Holistic Psychiatrist's Perspective.

—The presentation will allow us time for questions at the end.

—I will be sharing my personal journey and what I have learned about healing as a holistic psychiatrist.

—The presentation will consist of three sections, 1) my journey through healing, 2) clinical methods, involving a spiritual approach, in my practice, and 3) clinical vignettes and the patients' feedback.

—Spirituality in psychiatry can be encountered and addressed in many ways. Today, my focus will be on the use of spiritual connection and energy, in the transformation of mental health, rather than the exploration of spiritual issues in a psychotherapeutic setting.

—Also, my focus will not be on the dramatic effects of life-changing NDEs or STEs, but on the simple effects of spiritual energy that we all have access to daily, through conscious intention, which creates sustainable, long term health and happiness for us.

—Because my practice is an integrative and holistic one, the spiritual aspects of healing works in harmony with other aspects of a person's life: mental, emotional, physical, and social. It cannot function alone, nor is health a hierarchical process with spirituality at the top. Spiritual energy, however, flows through us and is us, and the creation of health can be more profound and powerful, when we strengthen it.

—Today, I will be using a unique approach for teaching clinical information, because I will be using stories, parables, symbols, and allegories to stimulate our imagination, intuition, and subconscious, to help us to open our hearts and deepen our understanding of healing.

THE HEALING JOURNEY:
A FAIRY TALE



We will begin with a fairy tale called, "The Healing Journey."



A Pill

*Once upon a time, in a kingdom far away...
a pill was the only answer for every malady.*

Once upon a time, in a land far, far away, there lived a young woman, who suffered from lost dreams and broken hopes.

"I have lost myself. I cannot remain here anymore," she said. "I will leave my castle and devote my life to healing others."

With selfless intent, she set out on her journey and entered a convent, where she toiled for ten years to master the magical powers of the pill. For, in that kingdom, the only magic known for the treatment of all ailments and maladies was the pill.



The old woman

One day, an old woman came to her to be healed from a life of sorrow and loneliness.

She said, "I was never good enough for my mother. No matter how hard I tried, I could never be perfect enough to please her."



Facing the tiger

“Last night, I dreamed that I was fighting a tiger. I do not know if I will be able to win this fight...” She looked defeated. The healer gave her a pill to heal her sorrow, loneliness, and fear, but its magic was too weak for an empty heart.



Even a chipped teacup is perfect, if it is loved perfectly.

A voice from heaven whispered to the healer, "Even a chipped teacup is perfect, if it is loved perfectly."

"Oh," thought the healer, "It is love that makes one whole and perfect. Without love, life is like a tiger." But she did not know how to help the woman restore the love she never had.



Edvard Munch, The Sick Child, 1885–86

Take a pill. Its magic will heal your broken dreams and lost hopes.

One day, a teacher saw the healer's continued suffering and said, "Take a pill. Its magic will heal your broken dreams and lost hopes." But when she took a pill, it only made her forget her dreams and hopes.

"These pills only make me lose more of myself." She said.

So, she stopped taking any more pills.



A river called Despair and Providence

Immediately, the magic vanished. The healer was suddenly swept away in a river with two names: Despair and Providence.

The river delivered the healer to a new kingdom to further her knowledge of true healing—a land where the magical art of feeding and nurturing the body was known and honored.



The kingdom of nutrition

Here, she learned the healing magic found in foods and nutritional supplements. As she used them, her strength returned, transforming her into a more powerful healer.

“Now I know everything I need to know to truly heal.” She thought.



A chance meeting...

But the next day, she met a sage along a path. He said, "I can teach you how to heal with the mind. The body will follow where the mind leads. You do not always need a pill or even food to heal." And he revealed to her the power of intention and acupressure points for directing the body's energies to heal.



Healing through thought

The healer learned techniques that combined intention and focus with acupressure points to empower healing of the mind and body such as Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) and Tapas Acupressure Technique (TAT). She also learned how to use the mind to heal through guided visualizations and meditation. She began to understand that thoughts were things that could be used as tools for healing.

Over a decade passed, as the healer learned about the relationship between thoughts and matter, and refined her approach for true healing.

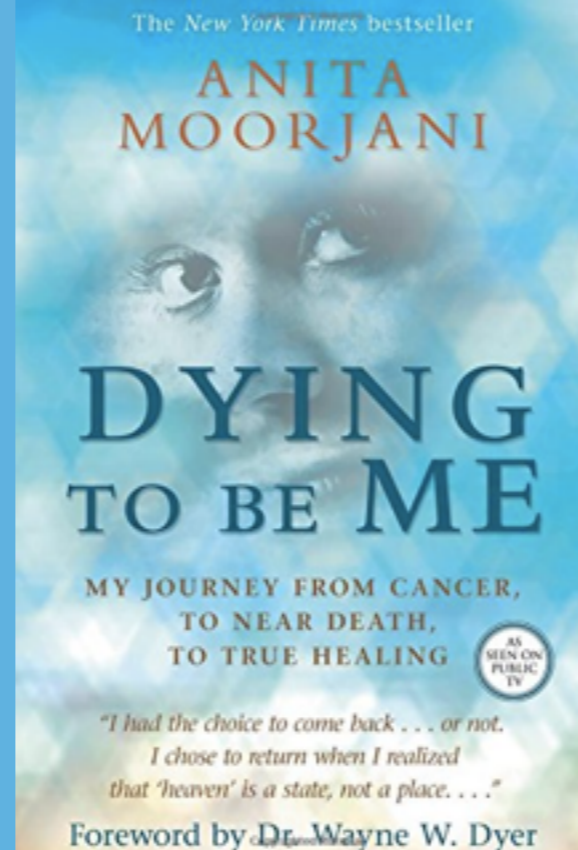


Connecting with life energy from a divine source

In time, the healer went beyond the mental aspect of thoughts and began to use the mind as a bridge made of intention, to connect with pure, perfect, and divine life energy through a relationship of infinite and unconditional love.

What is life energy?

Life energy is a living source of energy that provides all that we need spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, and socially for a state of wholeness, completeness, optimal health, and well-being. It includes a state of peace, love, joy, abundance, mercy, forgiveness, harmony and strength, as well as so much more. It is the transformative force that heals and creates from the raw materials of life, helping us to live our own heaven on earth. Because it is alive, our true connection with life energy is through a relationship of unconditional love.



True healing is being the love that we already are

A woman who healed from end stage cancer reported, from her experience with life energy, what the healer knew to be true: the secret to true healing may be found through our connection to a divine source of infinite and unconditional love. This mutual relationship can be strengthened through our awareness, faith, focus, intention, imagination, and regular practice.



Connection with all-that-is creates healing

She stated, "...My body is only a reflection of my internal state. If my inner self were aware of its greatness and connection with all-that-is, my body would soon reflect that and heal rapidly.

...I understood that merely by being the love I truly am, I would heal both myself and others. I'd never understood this before, yet it seemed so obvious. If we're all one, all facets of the same Whole, which is unconditional love, then of course, who we are is love! (p75-76)



*The entire universe is composed of unconditional love, and
you are an expression of this.*

She wrote, "... It's one of the best kept secrets of our time: the importance of self-love... My NDE allowed me to realize that this was the key to my healing." p138

"...In my NDE state, I realized that the entire universe is composed of unconditional love, and I'm an expression of this. Every atom, molecule, quark, and tetraquark, is made of love. I can be nothing else, because this is my essence and the nature of the entire universe. Even things that seem negative are all part of the infinite, unconditional spectrum of love. In fact, universal Life-force energy is love, and I'm composed of universal energy! Realizing this made me understand that I didn't have to try to become someone else in order to be worthy. I already am all that I could attempt to be." p139

ENERGY BREATHS

- Set an intention to be open and receptive to life energy.
- Close your eyes and focus on your breathing, to help you clear your mind. Allow your breathing to be slow, deep, relaxed, and gentle.
- Visualize light within you and all around you. Let this light represent pure, perfect, and divine life energy, coming from a pure, perfect, and divine source of life energy that is connected to you through a mutual relationship of infinite and unconditional love.
- Set an intention to be one with it, to be open and receptive to it, and allow it to be fully and completely present in your life, at all levels of being—spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, and socially—and through space and time, in your past, present, and future.
- As you breathe in, draw life energy into your being, and as you breathe out, let go of any blockages to life energy, visualizing it flowing away from you into a universal waste basket, where it can be eliminated.

In her healing sessions, the healer would begin with Energy Breaths to connect the person to pure, perfect, and divine Life Energy.

If you would like to experience this, close your eyes as I read this approach.



The healing approach

She would continue by focusing on specific areas of healing, directing life energy through her intentions, and visualizing life energy flowing directly to the person as well as flowing through her body, and pouring out through her hands.

This is the pattern she would often follow when healing through life energy (if you would like to experience this, please close your eyes and follow along):

We set an intention that life energy would flow through the soles of your feet and into your being, to help you feel grounded, stable, and resilient to stress.

We set an intention that it will direct your path in life, that it will be for your highest good—nurturing, strengthening, inspiring, protecting, and supporting you along each step that you take along your path in life.

We visualize life energy transforming the toxins within your body to water, and healing you from any harm or damage caused by toxins in your spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, and social states of being, eliminating any blockages to life energy and neutralizing the toxins' ability to harm you.

We visualize life energy flowing through the top of your head, to balance the flow of energy through the soles of your feet. We set an intention that this energy will bring you greater balance, love, peace, joy, truth, strength, success, harmony, goodness, mercy, and forgiveness, and that your life will be whole, complete, and optimally healthy.

PATTERN OF TREATMENT

- Chakras and meridians
- Over the body: atoms, molecules, cells, tissues, organs, and systems
- Organs: liver and spleen, gastrointestinal system and kidneys, cardiovascular/lymph/immune/pulmonary systems, nervous and hormone systems
- Release of stress, blockages, or specific issues.
- Replacing the cleared areas with life energy.
- Finishing with balance, protection, and gratitude.

The healing would continue by visualizing and directing life energy through various levels of being, setting intentions, and healing through life energy.



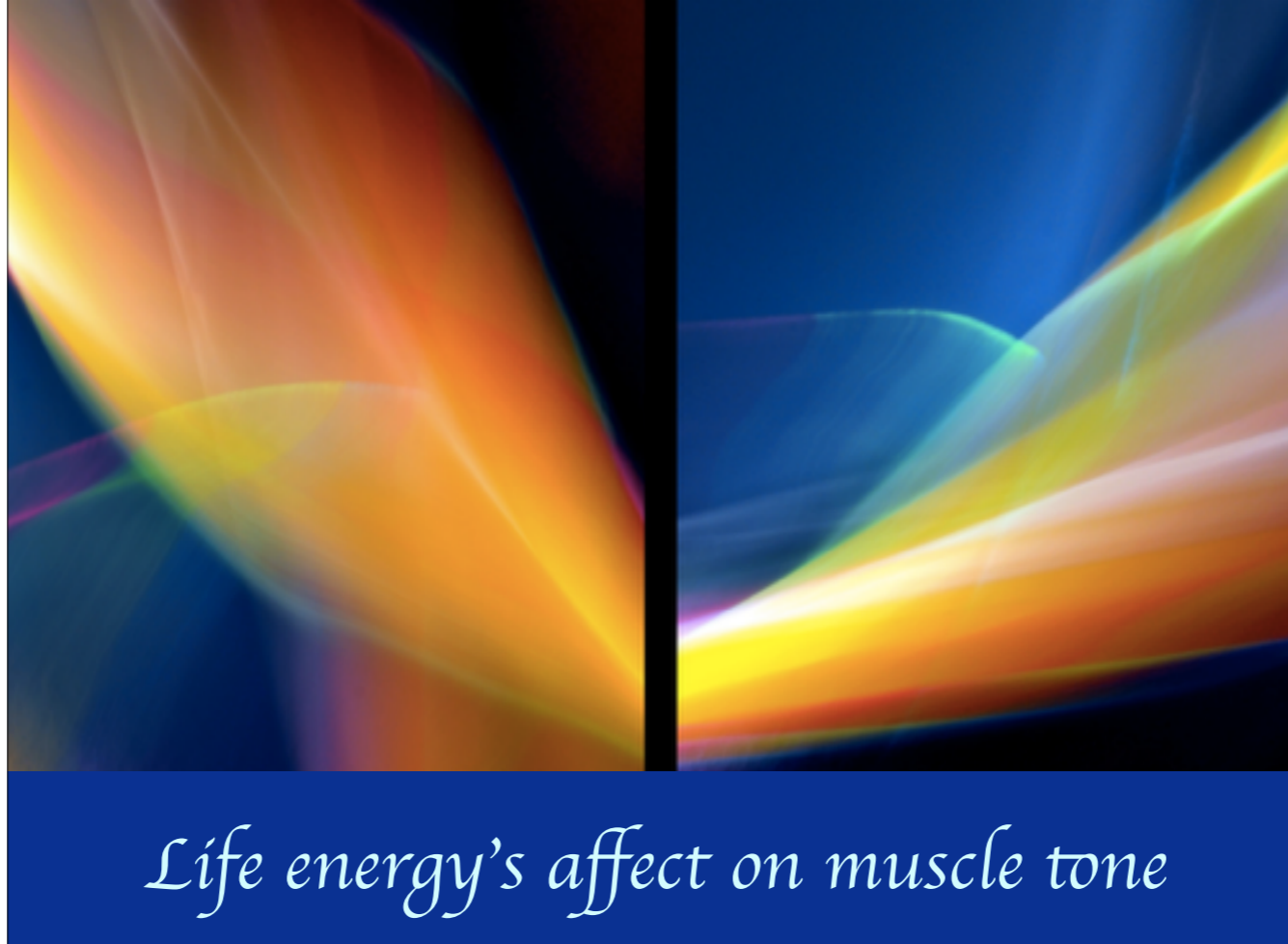
Parable of the Banquet

She shared the parable of the banquet with those who suffered from an empty heart. This is what she would say.

“Once there was a girl who sat at the head of a banquet table, laden with delicious food, waiting for the waiter and waitress, who were there to serve her, to bring her the food. But they neglected her, and she was always hungry. She tried to be good and refined her manners until they were impeccable. But day after day, her plate would barely sustain her and nothing could change the way the waitress and waiter served her, for they could not see the feast and seldom ate themselves. And when they had some food, they would eat it for themselves first, and bring only the crumbs that remained.”

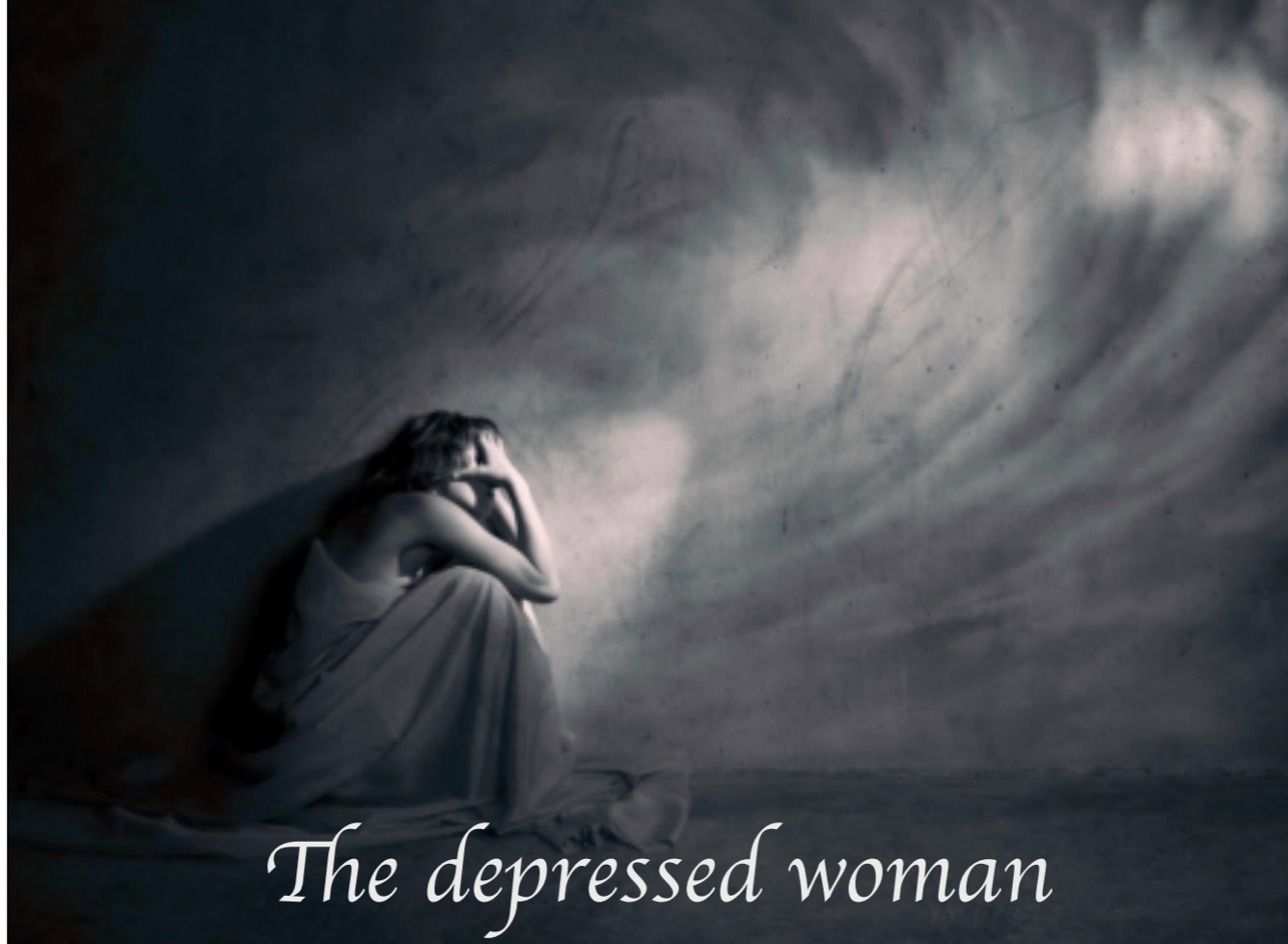
“Life,” said the healer, “is like sitting at a banquet, and love is the food that sustains us. The waiter and waitress are our parents, from whom we expect to receive love, but often they do not know how to provide it. They are unable to have the love they need for themselves and are starved of love also. When they have some love, they often choose to keep it for themselves, rather than share it with you.

But you can serve yourself, because you have a direct relationship with life energy that is yours any time you choose to have it. The banquet is spread before you, and you can reach for it through your own will. You can do this through your awareness, intention, and focus, to connect with life energy, which is love, and to be one with it.”



Life energy's affect on muscle tone

She showed them the effect of connection with divine life energy on their muscle strength, to prove to them that through their intention and focus, love can strengthen them immediately. The ability of life energy to strengthen a person's muscle tone was dependent on the person's openness to unconditional love from divine life energy. Resistance to life energy, or lack of openness and faith, blocked its ability to increase strength and resilience. This too, could be shown through the shift in muscle strength as the attitude changed. The idea of a relationship with life energy created much stronger shifts in strength than merely a connection through an intellectual definition of life energy as being universal qualities, such as love, truth, and joy.



A woman who suffered from sexual abuse and an overly controlling mother came for help to heal from depression. She was given nutritional supplements and taught how to meditate and do EFT. She was able to feel well and go back to work, reducing her medication gradually. When asked about her use of life energy, she said...



You don't feel alone

It helps me to feel calm and centered. It makes me feel peaceful and experience self-love. It gives me an overall healing of my soul and body. I don't feel alone or powerless. It's there to support me. It is experienced as a relationship. It is a higher life source: universal love.

It enhances my religious background. It makes me open to all sources of spiritual support. I was raised methodist and was converted to catholicism. I was for a while a practicing Catholic, but now I am using more personal spiritual guidance in my life.



One day a man came to the healer saying, “I feel that I should have been a woman. I have agonized over whether I should change my body, so that I would look on the outside, what I feel I am on the inside. I am afraid of what people will think of me, if I do this, for I am the leader of many at work. I will do anything to heal from these feelings, uncertainties, and fears. If you want me to take a pill, I will.”

The healer asked questions to help him explore his thoughts and feelings, recommended a few nutritional supplements to support resilience to stress, and taught him how to connect to life energy. During their sessions, her energy work supported his connection to infinite and unconditional love and life energy. The man experienced life energy flowing through him as waves of energy, heat, or colors that felt calming, or sometimes draining.

After a few months, the man felt comfortable with who he was. He no longer felt the need to change his body. His sleep, mood, and confidence improved. When asked about how the spiritual aspects of his healing supported his recovery, he said...



“It was a meditative state that allowed me to think differently and to feel differently about what had been going on, even though it may not have been conscious at the time. It helped because it enabled me to get to a different place than where I was. I don’t think I would have been able to do it by myself. It allowed me to release, let go, cope, liberate, accept, and experience mercy, grace, and forgiveness during the process.

It’s a matter of setting the stage in the energy work and then with the stage set you can go out and do the acting better, because everything is in its place. You can then maneuver through it more confidently, because everything is in its place and aligned, so you can do a better job than before with your lines when you go out on stage.

From a spiritual side, it aligns with my views. It’s a useful adjunct. It doesn’t challenge anything that I’ve believed in.

I see myself doing this for many, many years, even when I am no longer taking my supplements. It’s not a one time thing. It’s there as needed and accessible and able to be utilized.”



The Accountant

An accountant came, saying, "I have been on a pill called Wellbutrin for over 25 years. I am tired of taking it. Would you help me to stop it safely?"

The healer put the woman on nutritional supplements that supported her ability to lower Wellbutrin and taught the woman Energy Breaths, connecting her to life energy during their healing sessions. The woman was able to feel the energy as waves of warmth and see it as brilliant colors of green, purple, blue, pink, and gold. She was able to lower and then stop her pill after three months and remained well.



Life energy is the foundation

When asked to describe the spiritual aspect of her healing process, she said, "I've always felt that it was like a prayer. If I could use accounting as a metaphor for the energy work, it would be the strategic planning part. It is the mission statement, outlining the purpose and goals, and the tactics used to achieve them. It is the foundation. The Energy Breaths reinforce the foundation. The supplements build on the foundation."



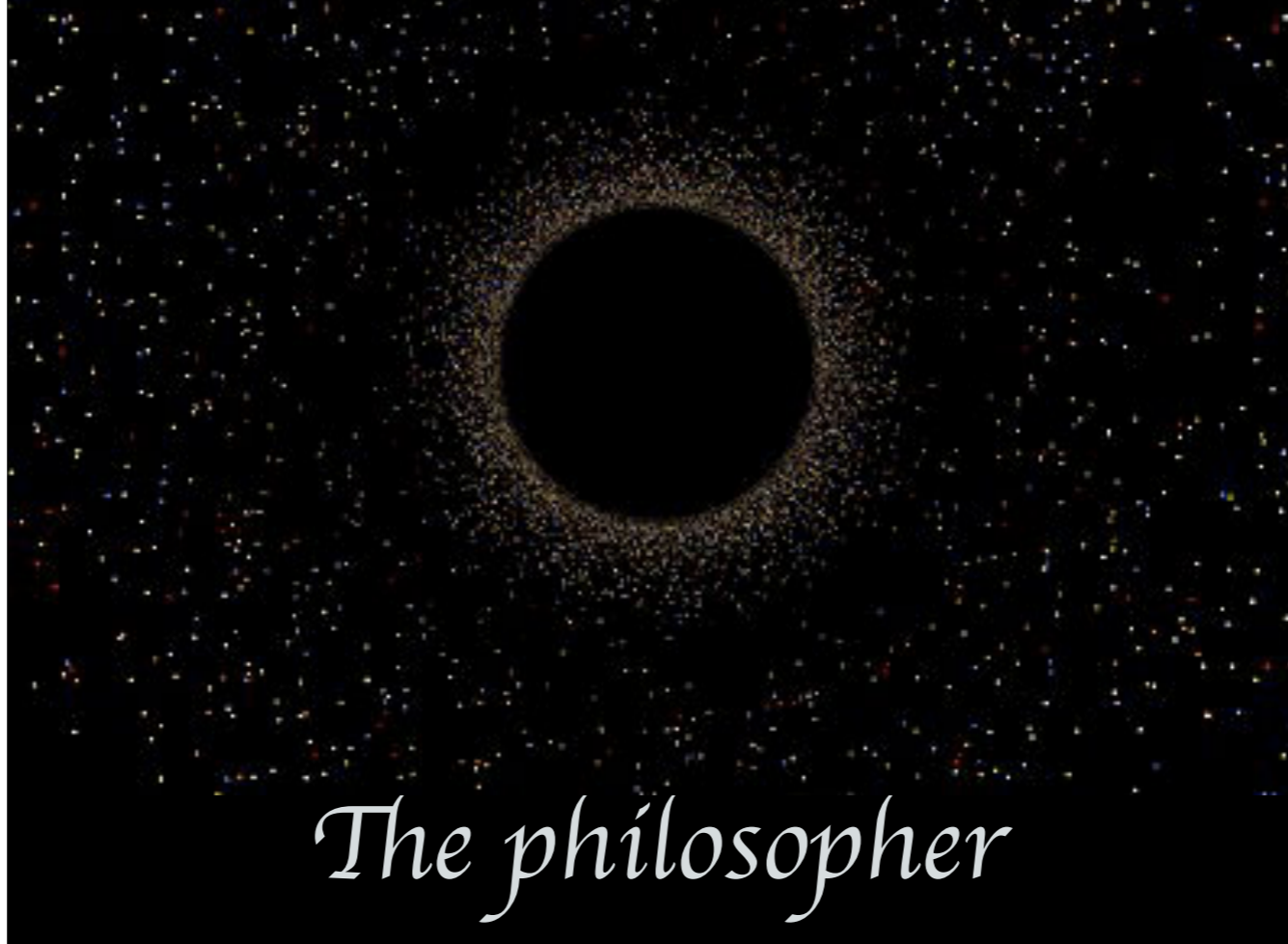
A 42 year old woman who had been abusing alcohol for 30 years asked the healer to help her stop drinking and to be able to come off Xanax.

The healer supported her with supplements, EFT, and life energy. For the first time, the woman was able to comfortably take supplements and to stop drinking. In time, she was able to lower her Xanax.



The sunlight of the spirit

When asked about the spiritual aspect of her healing, she said, “In AA, alcoholism is considered a spiritual malady and that the remedy is a connection with a higher power. When one is actively anxious and depressed there is a disconnect with the ‘sunlight of the spirit.’ Darkness can’t exist where light shines. It shines light into that darkness. This work here helps me with that connection to the light. When you’re open to divine spirit, you will get exactly what you need. I know it’s not an accident. I know it’s an openness. I am able to kindle that connection through mindfulness, practice, and discipline.”



A philosopher and sage came to the healer. "I have lost all sense of who I am," she said. "I am afraid of everything, and everything seems overwhelming. I can not tell what is real and what is my imagination or dreams. I feel that I will never be well again."

Through the healing process, the philosopher recovered and became even wiser from her experiences. She became a leader of a group whose purpose was to support the evolution of innovative thinkers in the world.



She said, “I feel that my mental illness manifested as a pathway for my spirituality to bloom. It’s as if my soul or inner self, or consciousness needed to find a way to express itself through me and first needed to shift my physical, mental, and emotional bodies to prepare for that manifestation. In my belief system, I think embracing spiritual development was the purpose of my mental illness. It’s like mental illness is a key to spirituality.

The connection with life energy enabled me to trust the process I was going through as a necessary transition in my life evolution. Reconnecting with love was essential. It helped me to deal with fear of everything and of uncertainty, different realities, not knowing who I was or what I could do.

Introducing elements of spirituality, allowed me to be open to the existence of many truths about life and therefore, helped me release the false expectation of having to believe or follow just one truth about life. Introducing spirituality, allowed me to recognize these different dynamics happening to myself which allowed me to know I was not mentally ill but in a transition process, re-defining what it means for me to be human.

Connecting with life energy (as golden light), empowered me to “surrender” to life’s flow (like the perfect functioning of nature) but not to give up. It allowed me to feel/sense I could be one with that energy and therefore be ‘so much potential.’ So I had a tool to use, to heal myself, which empowered me to know that I had to be responsible for my process and setting the intentions for my recovery. The Energy Breaths were key to invite my mind to focus (like in mindful meditation) and be able to connect to life energy. “



Stories within stories like Russian nesting dolls

Over the years, as the healer healed with life energy, giving light to help others along their journey, life energy flowed through her, and blessed her also, though it was beyond her conscious awareness.

One day, as the healer was preparing a lesson, stories within stories flowed through her, like Russian nesting dolls. And she remembered that, long ago, she had suffered from lost dreams and broken hopes as a writer. But Love had guided her back to herself, helping her to gather stories, from hidden places within the soul, along her journey.

She realized, "I have always been a writer. My being cannot be separated from its love and essence, but now I am also a healer who has healed."



A Lady Writing by Johannes Vermeer

The return to love

And she finished writing, "The Healing Journey" about her return to love.