

The Quantum Leap: From Hell to Heaven

A Personal Journey

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Two birds living together, each the friend of the other, perch upon the same tree. Of these two, one eats the sweet fruit of the tree, but the other simply looks on without eating.

In the self-same tree the individual (bird) is drowned in grief because of delusion and impotency. When it beholds the other (bird), viz., the adorable Lord, it realizes its own glory and gets freed from sorrow."

(From The Upanishads)

The two birds could be compared to the Little You and the Big You. While one bird enjoys the sweetness of the fruit of the tree, the other is only observing, which enables her mate to do as she pleases. The bird that is tasting fruit is reminded of her true nature, while contemplating the face of her mate: she releases herself from sorrow.

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Prologue

I chose to write the paper on this particular subject inspired by the belief that humans were born to be happy and that this is a viable possibility.

I, myself, walked a long and shaky path until I discovered this truth.

The question of whether we are happy is elusive, complex, threatening; many people are not willing to pose this question, even to themselves. People are asked about their achievements, their status and their economic situation, but rarely about the measure of their happiness.

I would like to shed some light on the questions: What is happiness? What is hell? What is heaven? And what is that quantum leap from hell to heaven?

This paper is the implementation of Process Work on a case study based on my own journey starting with a childhood filled with suffering and confusion, to awakening into a greater and liberating consciousness.

The first chapter describes the consensus reality in which I grew up: the “real” events, issues and problems which influenced my development and maturation. The narration of the story is in the present tense and uses the third person omniscient voice in order to evoke the fullest magnitude of the subjective experience. Writing this chapter was very intuitive and flowing. My choice of third person was sudden and almost unconscious. It took a while to understand that this choice of body, as well as starting the paper with a story, enabled me to authentically describe the suffering of the girl I was without identifying with her too much. It’s as if the happy adult woman I am writes about the little suffering girl, with a lot of love and compassion. The story is about an unconscious girl describing the primary process with no awareness of the secondary.

Towards the end of this chapter the girl surprisingly experiences the Essence level. Her experience is so strong mostly because she has no understanding of psychology and doesn’t understand she’s in a powerful altered state.

One could compare the little frightened girl from the first chapter to an anxious little bird trying to taste the fruit on a tree (see the illustration on the first page), while

the second chapter is written from the point of view of another, more aware bird. This bird can release the scared and sad girl within.

In the second chapter I re-tell my life from a process-oriented point of view. This time I'm much more aware. I am the meta-communicator and can explain Process Work to the reader, illustrating the story and explanation with tangible stories from my life.

This chapter also shines the light of Process Work on the narrative, focusing on pivotal events and relationships, through an analysis of primary processes – the conscious norms and values that bound life, and the secondary processes --- the unintentional and sometimes irrational signals that often gave rise to action and revealed the edges: those borders or barriers that defined who I believed I was and how that could become threatened. Roles and rank become illuminated here as well.

I describe here the powerful enlightenment which I experienced in terms of Process Work. Things did not just happen to me, my Process Work studies enabled me to occupy the meta position. This made the integration of the experience so much more deep and powerful, life altering.

Chapter Three describes some significant therapy sessions that took place throughout the course of studies. I attempt to show the reader different types of work: individual, group and inner. Once again I tell about myself, and every session looks at another aspect of my life. I believe that sharing my personal work here and analyzing them from a Process Work aspect can contribute much to the understanding of the importance of this method as well as to its spreading among therapists and potential clients.

In the fourth chapter I write about what I have learned from the different schools concerning the ideas of heaven and hell, and show how Process Work contains them all.

In chapter five I describe the process of coming to choose the subject for this paper and what I mean by "quantum leap".

May all living beings be happy.

Chapter 1: From Hell to Heaven – A Personal Journey

Birth

September 4th, 1951, at nine o'clock in the morning on a Saturday, they are in a delivery room in a small hospital in Jaffa, Israel.

A woman cries out, and doctors and nurses gather around her: both mother and child are in danger, a high risk birth. The mother was never supposed to get pregnant, she had been warned. She has a serious heart condition, and her blood type is negative. Outside, the father is anxious and worried: what if he loses both his wife and the baby? After all, he told her to get an abortion. They had taken care not to get pregnant for so many years, and they knew it could risk her life. Yet in one moment, they lost control: swept away on a vacation in Haifa, their lives changed forever.

The woman is induced. It is imperative because her weak heart must be spared excessive stress. The baby has to come out quickly; the pressure is rising -- quickly, quickly, there is no time. The baby is worried; she feels rushed and she is afraid. What will happen on the outside? Throughout her nine-months inside the mother she has felt like a burden.

Her mother is sick. She already knows when her mother is out of breath, anxious, angry and sometimes regretting not having had an abortion. Her mother is probably thinking that she should have listened to her husband and gotten rid of the baby. Afraid to come out, but feeling rushed, it is no longer comfortable inside. She is being forced out by her suffering. It was never really comfortable inside, but now it's even worse: something is pushing her and forcing her out. There is almost no air inside, and her mother can barely breathe either: she has to come out. There aren't many options: either die inside and kill her mother too, or try to come out and see what happens.

If she dies on the outside, that might save her mother. Her mother tried so hard to keep her alive, saved her from everyone who was urging her to get rid of the baby.

She must return the favor, to try to save her life. She heard her mother had said that she wanted a brother or sister for seven year-old Dalia, so that she wouldn't be

alone. She doesn't know that she's having a daughter. Maybe she wants a boy -- yes, probably, she wants a son. Was her mother thinking about her at all, or just about providing Dalia with a brother? Dalia would need a brother to protect her when her mother dies. After all, the doctors say that she doesn't have long to live. This brother has a job: he has to protect the whole family, Dalia and their father.

Is there any point to coming out? Will she be able to survive? Will her mother? What happens when they find out that she's a girl? Will they be disappointed? It hurts, and she has no time to decide because they are already pushing her. So she has to come out. There is shouting, yelling, hysteria... She can hear their hysteria. She has no choice: she's coming out.

A Thief in kindergarten

At five years old in her municipal kindergarten, she is already labeled as naughty, a rebel. After all, what can be expected as a result of her mother being constantly sick. She doesn't have time for the little girl who does whatever she wants.

In the afternoons she sneaks out and breaks back into the kindergarten with another friend. They climb the fence, get into the kindergarten. Actually, the door is wide open, so they're free to roam as they please. The whole kindergarten is theirs and it's so much fun and such a sense of freedom when there are no teachers to tell them what to do. They see the desired box of crayons. During the school day, there is constant competition over who gets what color. Now, all the colors are theirs. They decide to take them. They'll sit in the park with sheets of paper and these crayons, and have the best time, just the two of them, without having to share with the other kids. They quickly arrange everything and walk from the kindergarten to the park. Under the trees, there's no one else there, just nature, the crayons and the paper. The afternoon is sheer pleasure. Occasionally some fear creeps in, knowing that they did something wrong, secretive, knowing that they might get caught.

Back home for dinner. Nobody was even looking for her. She has a place to hide the crayons, in the big box in the hallway. No one would even think to look for the crayons there. Rarely does that box even get opened. She sleeps peacefully. She is used to keeping secrets from the others.

On the following afternoon, everyone is screaming at her, especially her mother. They have found the crayons in the box. Her father takes her to the bathroom and spansks her bottom. Her father never yelled at or hit her before. This is the first time, and the last. There was never a second time. In her heart she wonders if she deserved it. She's a thief, just five years old and already a thief, a criminal, bad. That's what she is.

What a disappointment to her mother, who always wanted her to be "the most beautiful girl in kindergarten." She remembers her mother's stress and anxiety when she dressed her. Dressing and changing, measuring and fixing, the mother was singularly focused on whether her child would stand out, and be the most beautiful girl. Yet, somewhere inside, the little girl might even feel some gratification at letting her mother down. Her mother's anxieties and tensions concerning her desire for her to be better than everyone else, exhaust the little girl.

An Above Average Student

She's a good student. God has gifted her with a good mind. She gets things fast, especially her exceptional understanding of math. Though she is quite popular, she is not the most popular girl in class, as she would wish.

Now, Ofra is the "queen of the class." Ofra Offer is her name. She's a beautiful girl with a wonderful name, unlike her own name: Rachel Oliver. Everyone calls her Gulliver, and she detests that name. Now, Ofra's father is an airplane pilot and her mother is a great cook. Sometimes Rachel goes to Ofra's after school for lunch. Ofra has a little brother and a dog; they're the model family.

Rachel, on the other hand, has two elderly parents. She was a mistake, after all, never meant to be born. She yearns for young parents, and a little brother and a dog. She does have a wonderful father, who pampers her and hugs her; but he works so hard and doesn't spend enough time at home. With her mother being ill so often a caretaker has to come every day, to clean and cook. Needless to say, it's no fun being home when her father isn't there. Then, in the evening, when he comes home, her mother tells him what a bad girl she's been. Her father doesn't mind it, but Rachel is furious: what an injustice! What gives her mother the right to tell her father all those bad things about her? And yet, she can't tell her father what her mother has been up to...

Her mother goes to annual meeting with her teachers, knowing what a good student Rachel is. She expects her mother to come home and praise her for being so smart -- but when she gets home, she isn't smiling. "Well, what did they say?" she asks. With an expression of criticism and disappointment on her face, her mother says: "They said you were an above average student." That's it. She will never be the special person her mother wishes her to be. Her mother is still trying hard to make her special, but it never works.

Yossi Messiah from the third grade sometimes calls Rachel a "leper" because she has a birthmark on her right elbow. She has never told anyone that. Somehow she feels that her mother and sister and her extended family don't really love her anyway. And she doesn't want to worry her father, whose love she feels is steadfast.

When Rachel is 10 years old, they leave Jaffa and move to northern Tel Aviv -- where the rich people live -- to a small apartment in a prestigious neighborhood, on Arlozorov Street. The mother doesn't want her daughters to grow up in Jaffa, and she doesn't know how many years she has left; so she has to make sure that the family moves to Tel Aviv before she dies.

Rachel has no trouble integrating into the new school. She is fairly smart and studying is easy for her, so many of the other students want her help. It is important for her to do well in school because she knows it is the only thing she is good at: she hears that repeatedly from her family. She is a spoiled brat, who does whatever she wants and doesn't seem to care that her mother is sick, but at least she is very smart. Her older sister, Dalia, has difficulties in school but she is the good girl, and Rachel is smart but "bad." The least she can do is to continue to develop her mind and do well in school; otherwise, why would they want her?

Here, as in Jaffa, she is quite a popular child and she does well in school, but inside she feels bad and selfish. A lot of stress accompanies the compulsive desire to do well in school -- yet she never shares her feelings with anyone.

Even though her mother spends most of her time lying in bed, Rachel understands that her mother is still considered a very special woman by those who know her. Her parents have many friends, and when her mother was well, they would always go out and she would be the center of attention. She has a zest for life -- she knows a lot of jokes, some very rude. Many people visit her at home and she always makes them laugh. Rachel doesn't like it: it always rings false, overdone. After all, when the

guests are gone her mother mostly complains, yells and even hits them. She often pinches Rachel's arm in a kind of painful and humiliating way.

Rachel does not love her mother, looks down on and ignores her; she does as she pleases and runs to her father's arms whenever he is home. She continues to sit in his lap until quite a late age. Her mother, sister, and the rest of their family and friends always say that Rachel is too spoiled, that her father's overindulgence gives her permission to be such a bad girl.

Rachel stands on this battlefield alone. Everyone disapproves of her except her father, who stands up for her, but is rarely home, unfortunately. The one sentence that is engraved deep in her heart -- she constantly hears from her mother and everyone else -- is "your mother is very ill, you have to take care of her, otherwise she'll die and then you'll get a stepmother." She remembers her mother screaming in times of anger: "You'll be the death of me. I'll die because of you and then you'll get a stepmother."

Rachel, however, doesn't take these things to heart, for she knows that they are cruel and stupid. As a matter of fact, she thinks everyone is stupid and obtuse, except for her father, of course, whom she admires. And yet, something in these sentences permeates her consciousness and she does feel bad, selfish, different and mostly lonely. She has friends, even a best friend and still, she feels unhappy, tense. She thinks she was born this way: unhappy, selfish and tense. She feels like no one understands her, no one supports her except her father, who also sometimes stands alone on the battlefield against the barrage of criticisms of his over-indulgences toward her. So on the one hand, she enjoys her father's special treatment, but on the other she feels guilty, because as everyone says, she doesn't deserve it. Something is damaged in her, and yet her father continues to love her so much.

Her mother's condition worsens and she spends a lot of time in the hospital. Rachel becomes well acquainted with the hospital. She goes there by herself after school, on the bus, where she is free to daydream traveling down the eucalyptus-lined boulevard. The caretaker, one-eyed Susie, continues to come to their house every day. When classmates come to her house, she fears with shame that they might mistake ugly one-eyed Susie for her mother; she doesn't know how to explain to them that she is not her mother. In fact, her mother is a beautiful woman, albeit with

a very bloated stomach filled with fluid because of her illness. Still, it is better to have a sick mother in bed than ugly Susie.

She invites many friends to her home, especially when her mother is in the hospital. They make a lot of noise, and mess up the house. She lets her friends do as they please because there is no one at home and her father doesn't mind -- he indulges her. The upstairs neighbor gets mad and yells: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, with your mother in the hospital and you ruining the house, running wild and making noise." She feels like a bad, inconsiderate girl again, but she does not know what else to do. She doesn't understand why everybody is angry with her. After all, she just wants to have some fun at home alone, while the caretaker is away. Yet once again, even the thought that the neighbor is stupid and obtuse does not alleviate her loneliness.

Rachel does not mind that her mother is in the hospital; she likes the bus ride over, and loves sleeping in her parent's bed by her father on her mother's empty side. She loves the peaceful atmosphere her mother's absence brings, without the commotion of her mother's garnering attention and shouting, preaching to or pinching her. Needless to say, she loves having her father's attention, all to herself.

The Test

Rachel is in the 8th grade. She knows that there is a very important test the next day. It is a psychometric test that examines the students' IQ. According to the results, each student is placed in different high schools. While many of the children don't seem particularly affected by this, Rachel is very nervous. It's her character, being nervous before tests: she is used to it.

In the afternoon, she visits her mother in the hospital. Her mother never gets out of bed. As she stands next to her, her mother asks her how she feels about the test. "You should go to bed early, I wish you luck," Rachel's mother tells her. With each utterance, the tension builds. She can hardly breathe. What if she fails and it turns out that all those people who said she was gifted were wrong? She won't be accepted to an elite school. Rachel is filled with the shame and dread growing inside of her. She recognizes this familiar anxiety from her mother. She envisions her mother anxiously dressing in her prettiest clothes before the guests arrive.

Later on, all her classmates go out, enjoy themselves, relax and celebrate the evening before the test. She doesn't go along. Anxiety overtakes her - she can barely breathe or speak, let alone have fun.

A month later, the teacher stands in the classroom with a stack of papers. Every paper has a student's name, and the words "pass" or "fail." She reads the names out loud, as well as the result, and hands each student his paper. Rachel can't breathe. "Rachel Oliver," the teacher says, "Pass." What a relief. Life is possible again. Vera, her best friend, does not pass, and she is really a smart girl, how could it be that she failed? Vera cries a little, but doesn't take it as hard as Rachel would if it had happened to her. She can't stop thinking - what if it had been her instead of Vera.

The Death

January 5th, 1966. Rachel is 14 years old and in the 10th grade. She comes home from school and finds the house empty. Her sister doesn't live there anymore. She's married and pregnant (Rachel does not know about the pregnancy). She knows that it is her mother's birthday, and she should visit her in the hospital. As usual, she'll take the bus. In the meantime, she wanders around the house alone, looking for something to do. She likes to be in her parents' bedroom and looks in the closet, trying on her mother's clothes, especially her nylons and high heels. Knowing her mother would never allow this, she carefully puts everything back in its place, leaving no trace behind. In fact, she has never told anyone, about this favorite pastime of hers. This is another one of her secrets. After all, there are a lot of things she doesn't reveal to anyone.

Nobody needs to know how bad and selfish she really is. While her mother suffers in the hospital, Rachel is amusing herself in her bedroom. As the hours pass, her enjoyment is also fraught with the tension of knowing she is doing something wrong. She puts everything back, leaves no trace behind and gets ready to leave the house.

On the way, on the 74 bus, she tells the woman sitting next to her that she is going to visit her mother in the hospital. She enjoys hearing how impressed this strange woman is with her maturity and initiative to take the bus on her own. Usually it's nice for her to hear compliments, even though she doesn't think she deserves them.

If only this woman really knew her -- But what does it matter, it makes Rachel feel good.

She enjoys the bus ride to the hospital down the eucalyptus-lined boulevard. She gets off and walks towards the building where her mother is hospitalized, enjoying this walk, these moments of being alone and not criticized. She likes herself. As she approaches the building, she notices a gathering of familiar people at the entrance: her aunt, her father and other relatives. Her aunt walks towards her, and tells her that her mother has died.

That's it. It's over. There is no one left to hate, to ignore, to resent. She doesn't know what to do now. She never needed a mother anyway. Her father was everything to her, and her mother just got in the way. She was someone to fight with, to compete with for her father's attention. So that's it, it's over, there's no more competition, it feels as if she froze at that moment, turned into stone. Everyone around her is busy. People are crying, but she doesn't need to cry. What would she cry about? She doesn't even call her best friend to tell her what happened. She doesn't tell any of her friends.

She calls the school to inform them that she will be absent. The following day, her entire class comes to the funeral. She is embarrassed and doesn't know how to behave. What are they expecting of her? At the funeral, she sees her mother's body, with that distended, fluid-filled belly. She doesn't cry. She sees her sister sobbing, and resents her for it. Her sister seems like a hypocrite, crying in front of everyone to get attention. After all, they both had a difficult time with their mother, so why is her sister such a hypocrite? But that's just like her sister – Rachel never really appreciated her.

Rachel's older cousin comes over and tells her that mother received a gift from God, that it is a privilege to die on one's birthday... She isn't moved, but she is polite. She feels totally alone. This loneliness continues throughout the seven days of the Shiv'a (the Jewish mourning period). The house is filled with guests. All her classmates and teachers visit. She doesn't know what to say to them. The teacher speaks to her father, and tells him what a good student Rachel is, how they never even knew that her mother was sick. Nothing touches Rachel, and she doesn't like the Shiv'a: she doesn't shed a tear.

Actually, it's not accurate to say that Rachel doesn't shed a tear. She remembers one evening when the living room was filled with guests -- mostly relatives and friends of her parents and sister -- she decides to go to her parents' room to be alone for a while. She goes into their bedroom and sees the big photograph hanging there, of her parents on their wedding day. Suddenly she is sad. Looking at her mother in that photograph, something is happening to her: a sadness, a longing, she cannot yet admit it to herself.

As she takes the picture off the wall and looks closely at her mother, a little tear rolls down her face. Suddenly, the door opens and her father comes in looking for her, having noticed with worry that she has disappeared. Quickly hiding the picture under the covers and brushing away her tears, she tells her father she is fine and will return to the living room soon. Embarrassed and sad, her father leaves the room. Once again she is alone.

Rachel and Her Father

She starts sleeping in bed with her father, on her late mother's side. Her father understands her need and does not object; it probably alleviates his loneliness as well. Now they live alone in the house. The caretaker who cooked and cleaned comes every other day now. On alternate days, Rachel will have lunch after school with some of the neighbors, who have children her age. This arrangement started while her mother spent long periods of time in the hospital; her father must be paying them. Sometimes she goes by herself to eat at the restaurant down the street. She loves sitting alone in the restaurant and ordering whatever she wants. Since her father always makes sure she has enough money, she prefers this to eating at the neighbors where she is too embarrassed to ask for seconds.

Rachel feels responsible for her father and she doesn't want him to suffer or be lonely. Sometimes he invites her to a movie in the evening; and even though she loves him very much, she feels ashamed to be seen going to a movie with him, perhaps because he is older than most of the other fathers. She wants him to find a new partner, get married and have companionship; she doesn't want to see him in his loneliness.

When she is 15, during the summer, Rachel's father sends her to a summer school in Oxford, England. She falls in love with one of the other kids, has her first kiss, and

is quite happy there. Yet when she returns to Israel, she doesn't keep in touch with the boy. She is ashamed. She is overcome by the feeling of unworthiness, feels that she isn't good enough for him. Only in a far-away place would she allow herself to be happy with him. She lies to him, telling him she has a boyfriend in Israel, unable to believe that someone as lovely as he would want to be her boyfriend.

Two years after her mother's death, her father remarries. At first she is happy, even though she doesn't really like or appreciate the woman he has chosen to marry; but the burden of being alone in the house is lifted from her. She mostly ignores this new wife, much as she had once ignored her own mother. The caretaker, Susie, is gone, because that is what the new wife wants. Rachel doesn't even know if she misses Susie.

And so Rachel continues to live in loneliness at home, mostly staying in her small room. There is no shortage of food or money. She has the basic security of knowing that her father loves her and would do anything for her. Yet, there is an empty sensation of not knowing exactly what she wants, or what is missing. There are plenty of friends who like to come over, hang out in her room and enjoy expensive candy and nut treats that her father buys for her. She never forms a special bond with the new wife, who -- as her mother did -- claims that her father is pampering Rachel by letting her live at home as though she is a guest, never participating in household chores.

She isn't happy. Though she continues to excel in her studies and acquires a reputation for being a mathematical genius, she suffers from the perpetual stress -- her obsessive need to succeed scholastically at all costs. This is expressed by the tension she feels in her body before each test.

Likewise, though she is quite popular, deep down she doesn't feel worthy enough; the constant effort to look good produces the same stress she felt as a child as her mother dressed her to be the most beautiful girl in kindergarten.

She thinks she is flawed, evil, selfish, and that's why she's suffering. She doesn't see any way out of the painful life she is living. In Rachel's eyes her father is perfect, a good and wise person who helps everyone, and works tirelessly. In contrast she is innately bad, unsatisfied, spoiled. She never shares her pain with him. She doesn't want to make him suffer any more than he already has. She feels that life is but suffering and there is no one to talk to about it all.

One day, while walking up the stairs at school, she realizes she is considering suicide. Suicide would stop this suffering. There seems no point in living and the tension feels unbearable. She doesn't tell anyone, not even her best friend, though deep inside she knows she won't do it. She doesn't have the courage, and she isn't willing to hurt her father so much; he certainly doesn't deserve it. Her suffering is incomprehensible to her, as though she was just born with it: born damaged and suffering.

From Girlhood to Womanhood

At 18, Rachel enters the army. She is at the top of her basic training class, and as such she is selected to serve in an elite secret unit in the Sinai desert. She loves the desert: the serenity of nature. Once again, she is respected and well liked; but here too she still feels tension, dissatisfaction, unworthiness and continuous suffering.

She is courted by the boys, but deep down she doesn't feel worthy, rejecting most of the men that are interested. She rarely falls in love, and when she does, it fills her with fear and anxiety, a gripping dread that something is wrong with her and that the man will eventually reject her.

She falls in love with Sagi on her first day in the unit. There is a strong attraction, a kiss, and immediately after that, a terrible fear that paralyzes her. She can't talk and be relaxed with him as she was with those other men whom she didn't want. Two days later, Sagi isn't in love with her anymore. A month later, he falls in love with a new girl who comes to the unit, Michal. She is not as pretty as Rachel, much less accomplished and popular, but the relationship lasts. Throughout her two-year military service, her jealousy and pain gnaw away at her. This is proof that something really is wrong with her. Sagi prefers Michal -- and rightly so.

With 20 she ends her service, meets Assaf, 10 years her senior, loses her virginity with him and discovers that she enjoys sex. She can be freer in bed than in a face-to-face conversation. She can't really create true intimacy because she is afraid of letting anyone find out who she really is; but in bed she is happy. She loves and enjoys her body and can achieve an orgasm fairly easily. Assaf doesn't really seem right for her: maybe that's why she feels quite comfortable with him.

After Rachel breaks up with Assaf, she is very selective with the men who continue to court her. Rarely, when she likes someone, she feels the old pain in her stomach, the anxiety, the paralysis, of not being able to be herself. After all, she is false, evil, anxious, selfish and unworthy, so how can she show her true self? The few men she does like seem to feel her distancing and break up with her, which reinforces her feelings of worthlessness. She is surprised when someone tells her that she is hard because inside she feels so vulnerable. Later, Rachel realizes how her blindness to that hard shell has protected her from herself.

Rachel goes to university while working as a flight attendant for El Al -- unhappily. The notion that she was born unhappy is embraced with full acceptance. With this knowledge, and aware of this undercurrent of fear and anxiety, she is certain that she will never make someone a good partner. There are no apparent solutions. A friend suggests therapy, but she doesn't believe in it. Convinced of her own innate wisdom, she knows that nobody can really help her.

In the meantime, Rachel's father, unaware of her feelings, is worried that she is too smart and won't find a man, that she'll never get married. Wanting to allay his fears, she promises him that she will be married by the age of 25.

In fact, at 25 she marries. She meets Alex in England, while traveling. After a two-month trip in Europe, Rachel stays on in London. Alex is handsome and sex is good and she feels comfortable with him. Being in love and yet relaxed is a new feeling for her. When Rachel tells her father that she has fallen in love with a non-Jewish English man, her father pressures her to marry him. He is happy that finally she is keeping her promise to him to get married before the age of 25.

Her father's feelings of urgency for her to marry override the possibility that cultural or religious differences might create problems. Her father suggests that they come to Israel and he will help them financially. Two years later, they get married at London City Hall. Her father does not come to the wedding. Her sister comes with her husband and children. Later, her father throws them a big party at "Ariana," one of the most prestigious clubs in Jaffa, and pays for their honeymoon in one of the most luxurious hotels in the north of Israel.

However, Rachel is left with a feeling that she is being swept along by the currents of life - as though she has been dragged into marriage. On the one hand, she is happy with Alex, but on the other, there are substantial cultural differences between them.

Having come to live in Israel because he was in love with Rachel, Alex now finds himself having a difficult time. Their daughter is born two years later. They name her Keren ("light beam" in Hebrew) because Rachel knows she will be a ray of light.

The Crisis

Still, Rachel doesn't really love herself. She knows that Alex loves her, but she doesn't appreciate him enough. She criticizes him constantly, just as she criticizes herself. There are some moments of happiness, of togetherness, but mostly she is troubled, critical and unhappy. Once, when they go out to a restaurant, just the two of them, he says: "The only thing I want is for you to love me." It would be so easy to make him happy; but consumed by criticism of herself and him, she can't do it.

Alex is a wonderful father, a natural at raising a child. He gives Keren her first bath. He bathes, changes diapers and cooks; he loves household work. Yet Rachel, as always, is full of stress. Though she is quite successful working with computers, the old feeling is always there. She feels that is not good enough, certainly not as a wife nor as a mother. So she occupies her mind with work, as she once did with school, and takes out the over flow of stress in her criticisms of Alex.

Everyone loves Alex, her family, her colleagues, the neighbors; but he isn't happy, mainly because he feels that she doesn't love him enough. Even though he is surrounded by love from others, he still feels like a stranger in Israel. So when Alex begins talking about moving to Canada, Rachel supports the idea, despite her own indecisiveness and the growing realization that it was a mistake to marry someone who wasn't Israeli, wasn't Jewish and had no connection to Israel. She is even angry at her father for encouraging her to marry him.

Once they start planning their move abroad, Alex gets excited. They decide that he will go first, find an apartment and a job, and she and Keren will follow. She doesn't feel right about it, but then nothing in her life feels right, as though she is a little girl, stumbling in the dark.

On January 8th, 1980, Rachel is getting ready to drive Alex to the airport; it is early in the morning and Keren, 18 months old, is sleeping. Before leaving the house he stands by her bed, kisses her mumbling "How can I not see you for a whole month?"

Alex never saw Keren again since. Nor did Rachel. The day she brings him to the airport is a day of connection between them. They say they will miss each other. They kiss each other good-bye. Rachel feels an inexplicable peace inside.

During the coming weeks, used to being alone, Rachel feels comfortable staying on her own with Keren, especially knowing it is temporary. Alex writes them letters full of longing and love. Yet after about a month, the letters stop. She doesn't have his address and she feels lost and thinks something bad has happened. Somewhere inside there has been a niggling notion that he can't be trusted. It's not that she's worried about him, but something – she's not sure what – just doesn't feel right. As usual, she doesn't share her problems with anyone, not even her father. After all, this is her familiar modus operandi. Instead, she lies, telling everyone that he is looking for a job, and that she is still getting letters from him. Then she begins to see charges to her bank account from Canada, mostly from pubs in Toronto.

While she tries to assuage her fears with the thought that the English like to drink, still she feels that something must be wrong if he is spending all of his time in pubs. Finally, she manages to get hold of him on the phone in one of the pubs. He says he hasn't found a job, and asks for her patience. Again they lose contact as he doesn't write or call. Once again, she doesn't confide in anyone. Finally, a letter comes, asking her again to be patient, knowing she must think very poorly of him; that this time he must make it on his own, prove to himself that he can. Rachel is miserable, with an occasional frustrating conversation with him when she manages to locate him in a pub. She is furious with him for disappearing, promising to write or call and never keeping his promise .

Ashamed of what is happening, alone with her shame, anger and pain, Rachel blames herself for what has happened. She blames herself for choosing him as her husband, for not being able to show him enough love. She feels helpless and at a loss as to what to do. She can't tell anyone -- that's how much she hates herself.

At work and towards her family, Rachel continues to pretend that her husband is coming back, telling a variety of stories about the letters she receives. She feels very lonely with her pain. Keren misses him, crying "Daddy, daddy" all the time. Rachel hates him for what he is doing to Keren. The shame, guilt and pain she carries distances her from others. Finally, she tells her father, who gets very angry at Alex, and is determined to help her get a divorce. Together they meet with a lawyer, and

about a year later, she gets a divorce by correspondence. As it was a civil marriage, it is relatively easy.

Alone and feeling miserable, Rachel cuts herself off from most people, unable to share what has happened and obsessing over her feelings of failure. She sees Keren's pain, jealousy of other children playing with their fathers, and her violent acting out with them. It is hard for her to raise her child alone, with only her aging father to help her. Once a week he picks Keren from kindergarten and spend time with her. However, he is 72 years old, and can only do so much. In addition, her father's house, managed by his second wife, does not feel like a place of refuge for Rachel.

Rachel is barely surviving, but she knows she has no choice. Inside she feels the familiar sense of unworthiness, which keeps her from developing relationships with men or even new friendships. Somehow, people still want to be close to her. In her heart she thinks that they wouldn't do that if they knew who she really was, and this tidal wave of suffering washes away her ability to communicate with them.

All that changes one day when Rachel touches the great light.

The Light

In August 1982, Rachel is 31 years old and Keren is 4.

She registers for Est workshop with Werner Erhard because some friends thought it would be good for her. She's never heard or read about philosophy or psychology before. Though, since she was a child, she has pondered the meaning of life, until now life has never put any available information in her path. When she was 17, she read Dostoevsky's, *Crime and Punishment*, and sympathized deeply with the suffering of Raskolnikov (the protagonist). It was required reading at school, and it was the only philosophical work she had been exposed to. Her early enthusiasm for reading as a child soon faded to boredom with books, living in a family culture where reading wasn't emphasized.

At the workshop, she listens to the lectures, which fascinate her; she listens to other people sharing and follows with great interest the work that the lecturer is doing

with the participants. She doesn't have the nerve to speak in front of the group. Everything is new to her, especially the notion that all these people are in pain. Perfectly normal people, who remind her of her bosses, colleagues, neighbors and family, all share their great suffering. She thinks about the fact that she has never been intimate enough with anyone to be able to share her suffering or listen to theirs. A sense of sadness washes over her. She thinks about her sick mother suffering and of herself as a child without a mother.

While listening to the fascinating lectures and explanations about the unconscious, Rachel has a strong memory: a 5-year-old girl in kindergarten, her mother dressing her, trying to make her beautiful. Suddenly she is sitting with 300 people in the hall, flooded by the most intense pain, and tears begin to flow. Her makeup is smeared all over her face. She doesn't recognize this phenomenon: crying. The person sitting next to her notices, and gives her his handkerchief, which within seconds is soaked with tears and black makeup. She can feel something powerful happening.

All of a sudden, there are no more barriers. Wanting to share it with everyone, she raises her hand, but the lecturer doesn't see her and keeps talking. She doesn't mind. Suddenly everything is fine. Everything is flowing. Her body feels wonderful. The huge knot that she has carried around in her chest for all these years is gone. She feels great love, for herself, for her mother and for the world. There is no sign of any shame or guilt, there is only flowing.

Still sitting in the same place, she feels like she is someone else, as if she has been reborn. During the break, keeping her distance from people, she sits alone on the floor with an intense experience of happiness. She doesn't mind whether she is alone or with people, everything is alright. There is almost no inner dialogue -- just flow. It is impossible to describe exactly who or what she is.

Late at night, as Rachel drives home alone, she is aware of feeling different to how she has ever felt before. There is no problem anymore. A feeling of floating overtakes her: no need to think, just to live. Everything is different after that night.

In the period following this epiphany, Rachel notices how much she gets done in this unencumbered state. She finds herself unusually efficient at work, and her relationship with Keren just seems to flow without conflict or issues. Rachel knows she has been reborn, even if she can't fully understand it. She experiences something very real that resonates with the very core of life. She is still raising a

four-year-old alone and coping with a stressful work environment, but everything is different.

Everything is just wonderful, simple and flowing. She is full of love for Keren, herself and the people around her. Beginning to share what has happened to her, Rachel wants to send everyone to the workshop. There are no more barriers between herself and other people, no more secrets, and she can create an immediate intimate connection with people. If there is a heaven, this is it. Yishai, a man she has met at the workshop, is courting her, and their relationship, following her experience at the workshop, is something she has never experienced before. It isn't that she loves him more than others, but that she loves herself and him equally.

She has never felt so free in a relationship. Sex is no longer the main focus, rather the conversations after sex and the intimate conversations at breakfast the following morning that are important. She remembers how scared she once was of that breakfast encounter, that they would discover who she really was. Now, she feels that she loves Yishai, and the whole world right along with him, that everything is fine, that there is no fear.

While Rachel can't entirely understand what is happening, she knows that this is the meaning of life, to live and understand this thing, whatever that entails -- just to remain with this truth: love, flow and life without fear or self-loathing.

Having no one to discuss these matters with, Rachel turns to books she has never read before, by Carlos Castaneda, Krishnamurti, Ramhna Maharishi and others. She consumes them ravenously, feeling as though she is personally acquainted with the experiences these writers and teachers describe. Even though most people "don't get it," her fear of people has dissipated, and Rachel shares her experiences as much as she can, creating intimate connections even with strangers.

With the knowledge that people are just parts of the same jigsaw puzzle, there's no longer anything to be ashamed of -- we can help each other. Life is good, flowing, simple and full of love. She spends hours with Keren, playing with her, listening to her, in no hurry to get anywhere. There is no rush, nothing to think about and nothing to accomplish. She knows that what she is experiencing is a miracle, and books she is reading provide her with numerous examples of others experiencing something similar.

At first she thinks that anyone who participates in Est will have this experience; so she sends many people to the workshop. Later Rachel realizes that each person experiences it differently: some of them experience happiness like they never had before, but once they return to their routine, it becomes illusory, not a part of real life as Rachel knows it is. She longs to meet the few people who actually understand what she is talking about, the experience of euphoria and of a great truth.

This feeling of heaven lasts almost six months, till one day she wakes up in the morning feeling anxiety and discomfort. She knows that while the euphoria has gone, the memory and the knowledge of it remain. No longer in the flow of direct experience, she still has a deep connection with the knowledge that everything is okay. This became the meaning of her life: to connect to this place that she had found and explore it. She decides to go to Est for a second time. She goes, but this time nothing happens. Once again, the constant tension accompanies her through life, but the feeling is different this time because she knows that the world of flow and love, a better world, exists; it's there all the time, and for some reason, she can't touch it as she did during those miraculous six months following the rebirth.

Rachel decides to go to therapy. None of the therapists seem to understand her and clearly they have not experienced it themselves -- some even say that this experience might be dangerous. Moreover, the conversations with these people feel shallow and overly rational. Books are more helpful. Many are of a psychological and spiritual bent that bring her back to that place. They help her understand psychologically what happened to her as a child and connect her with spiritual happiness; the profundity of the experiences awakened in her through reading this literature sometimes bring her to tears. So with no direct guidance from people who can help her at the depth she needs, for now she becomes self-taught.

She realizes that she never really loved her mother, never really loved herself and lived in constant fear of being exposed as "a bad girl." She adored her father, the "white" figure, and hated her mother and herself, the "black" ones. A new world has opened up for her, one that she had never known before. It is a world that isn't black or white, but of many intermingling colors. She sees that everyone suffers, that she isn't alone, that everyone is in pain because of their own ignorance, because they don't know what she didn't know either. She begins to connect with her mother, to love her, have compassion for her, and also see her father's weaknesses. She cries as she has never cried before. She cries for the pain of this life, for the ignorance, for

the missed opportunities; she also cries in happiness, for the insight and grace that reveal themselves to her.

Arny

Rachel's life, since that day of enlightenment became a life of spiritual connection. She knew that the material, worldly side of life isn't of importance, and that, as written in *The Little Prince* "what is essential is invisible to the eye." She appreciated the livelihood she gained from her work with computers, but her joy, energy and vitality came from other sources. Rachel continued to read a lot of books, to meet people who did spiritual work, to study different methods, knowing that the world she has been exposed to, is wide and infinite.

Among other things, she studied a Hawaiian method called Huna. During the studies students were asked to connect with their spiritual guide and ask for his name. She sits in meditation in her room, and calls for her spiritual guide. She sees a thin, short man with a smiling face, laughing, almost like a clown. She senses that he is made of love and inspires a sense of serenity. She asks him for his name. The answer she hears within is Arny. She thinks that it is a strange name, one she's never heard. Then she writes the name in her diary, so she won't forget it. The teacher tells them to use their spiritual guide as much as possible.

That night she is in her car, following some friends on the way to a shiva. The year is 1990; there are no cell phones, and she has lost the car she was following. It is important to her to visit the family that night, but she doesn't have their address nor phone number. She has the idea to ask Arny for help. While driving she asks for guidance and hears him leading her. After about 20 minutes, she is instructed to stop and discovers the car she was supposed to be following parked on the street. She parks, gets out of the car, and Arny continues to lead her to the family's home. Life is full of miracles and surprises, she realizes once again. The experience stays with her, even though she doesn't fully understand its meaning.

16 years later, she is 55 years old, studying Process-Oriented Psychology according to the method of Arnold Mindell. She doesn't exactly know or understand why she chose to study this method. Something drew her to it, yet she also felt a lot of resistance. The learning process has been long, expensive and mentally exhausting.

Many of the students quit; but despite her many objections, she has stayed on. She doesn't understand this attraction.

One day during class, someone mentions the name Arny. This is the first time since her spiritual guidance experience that she has heard anyone mention that name. She asks, curiously, "Who is Arny?" And to her astonishment, she finds out that that is her teacher's nickname: Arnold Mindell, whom she has not yet met. Suddenly everything becomes clear, and in an instant, her whole life unfolds before her, according to the model of Process-Oriented Psychology.

Chapter 2: My Personal Journey: Through the Lens of Process- Oriented Psychology

Introduction

Process-Oriented Psychology was developed by Dr. Arnold Mindell during the seventies. It is influenced by Jungian psychology, Buddhism, Taoism, Shamanism and physics, particularly quantum physics. Dr. Arnold Mindell has a master's degree in theoretical physics and a PhD in psychology. From Quantum physics Mindell got the idea that the world of wave energy exists together with the material one.

Dr. Mindell developed theories and practical tools for working with both individuals and groups, based on the belief that nature shows us the way. Through deep reflection on the nature of things and then flowing with this nature, we can touch enlightenment at every moment. Interesting to note is that in Hebrew numerology, the sum of the letters of the word "nature" is identical to the sum of the letters of the word God. Kabbalah emphasizes flowing with God, meaning nature. Process Work also has the potential to touch nature, God, nirvana or the Process Mind, as Mindell calls it.

Mindell developed the idea of the dreaming body. He discovered that our physical symptoms exist parallel to our dreams and represent deep processes happening within us that we are unaware of. In his book, *Working with the Dreaming Body* (1989), he talks about working with a terminally ill cancer patient which gave him the insight about the idea of the dreaming body. He asked this patient, who knew he had only months left to live, to focus on his pain and describe it, which was contrary to our instinct to repress and ignore pain. The patient readily agreed to consciously "be with his pain". He described the pain as something that wanted to explode. Mindell asked him to try to explode, and then the patient, with Mindell's help, began to express his difficult feelings, until he started to cry and even scream. The patient understood that he hadn't been sufficiently expressing his anger and frustrations. This process was very helpful for the patient. Much to the astonishment of his

doctors, he left the hospital, and under Mindell's care, continued living a few more years.

The technique that Mindell used, which is one of the basic techniques in process oriented psychology, is to amplify what is there in order to understand it. Understanding what is happening may lead to transformation. Over the years, Mindell developed the idea of the dreaming body and the dreaming process. These dreaming processes appear not only in physical symptoms but also in relationships between people, relationships between groups and in world events. According to Mindell, this dreaming process is managed by what he calls the Big You.

We humans experience these processes as a flow of information and signals coming from the unconscious or the dreaming body in a steady stream which we perceive through various channels: visual, auditory, proprioceptive, kinesthetic or movement, relationships and the world events (everything that happens in the world around us). If we do not listen to the signals in these various channels, they will increase so that we pay attention to them. This relates to the Buddhist concept that one of the most important paths to enlightenment is mindfulness, living life with attention.

Primary Process

The primary process is the process that I'm aware of, identify with, feel in control of. The figure that I identify with is called "Primary Identity."

Until the day that I awoke to my internal processes (August, 1982), I identified with smart, naughty, bad Rachel, who constantly had to prove that she was right and that she was smart. In the language of Werner Erhard, who created Est, I lived on two levels: Doing and Having. I had to do things in order to achieve things. In Buddhist language I lived in the cycle of suffering: samsāra. This cycle is controlled by the ego, whose motto is: "search and don't find."

Until the age of 31, I identified completely with that selfish, thieving, bad girl, who constantly had to do things in order to hide these qualities in herself. I played the role of the one struggling and fighting: smart, lonely and independent. It was very important for me to do well in school in order to strengthen the image of the smart girl, which might possibly cover up the bad one.

My childhood memories associated with this image are those of stealing the crayons from kindergarten, wearing my mother's clothes when she was in the hospital, having a lot of friends over while she was hospitalized, only realizing after being scolded by the neighbors, that I was doing wrong. On the other hand, I tried to be the best student; and when the teacher told my mother that I was just above average, I felt humiliated and depressed.

I was helpless, trapped in the cycle of suffering: I believed it was my personal fate. My life was difficult, and I blamed it on my character. No wonder I had thoughts of suicide, especially during adolescence.

Secondary Process

Processes that happen to us without intention, which we don't recognize or identify with, which usually take us by surprise. Physical symptoms, difficult relationships, dreams, physical signals and double signals, accidents, altered states of consciousness and unexpected body movements, all reflect these secondary processes. According to Process-Oriented Psychology, these happen to us so that we wake up and recognize the parts of ourselves that we do not identify with, and get to know new parts of ourselves and other people.

Signals and double signals (physical and bodily signals that contradict the situation - like a smile when we're angry), as well as conflicts and dreams come from those parts within ourselves that we do not identify with and are not aware of. The role of these signals is to awaken us to that which we do not know yet. Awareness of these processes may save us a lot future pain. Either we wake up or they will continue and worsen in the form of diseases, conflicts, accidents etc., until we do wake up.

The secondary process can be seen as the mirror image of the primary process, just like the external reality is a mirror image to the inner reality. What is going on inside us without our awareness creates an external reality that is designed to make us more aware. If I constantly encounter aggressive or difficult bosses or customers, they are mirror images of the aggressive internal mother inside me that I am not sufficiently aware of. Getting to know this aggressive internal mother is to turn the secondary process into a primary process, and then my external reality doesn't need to teach me any more hard lessons about what's going on inside me.

In my childhood, I suffered from headaches and sinusitis. Today I know that headaches sometimes occur when there are tears that are held back, pain that is not spoken. I identified with the bad, guilty and difficult girl, and therefore there was no opportunity to express any pain. I never cried alone or in front of people, not even at my mother's funeral or shiva. I clung to the primary process of having a bad mother and of being a bad girl myself and when she died I wanted to prove to everyone that I had never needed her anyway. In addition, part of my primary process was to regard my father as an angel -- he was enough and therefore I didn't need a mother. But in actuality, (in my secondary process) I suffered from headaches and anxiety, especially when it came to school and intimate relationships with people in general and with men.

I suffered through a difficult relationship with my mother, and later difficult relationships with other people, particularly people at work whose energies reminded me of my mother. I couldn't identify with the part that was like my mother, explosive and out of control. Unfortunately, this explosive energy manifested in the people around me, and caused me a lot of suffering.

The process of my rebirth in August of 1982 also took me by surprise. It just happened to me. I cried for the first time in my life -- uncontrollably. It was like touching this experience of heaven, which was completely different from the hell I had experienced throughout much of my life till then. For the first time in my life, I could cry for myself and I could cry for my mother. I touched new parts of myself and of my mother. I became aware of my weakness and pain, and most importantly, to the fact that I needed my mother. At the same time I became aware of parts of my mother that were weak, in pain and needed me as well. The war between my mother and me gave way to understanding, compassion, love and togetherness.

Since that day in August 1982, I began to express parts of myself that I had never allowed myself to express before. One of the most significant changes took place at work: when I gave myself permission to burst out in anger and cry at work. I remember one managers' meeting where there were ten men and one woman, me. The meeting was very frustrating. Everyone was yelling at everyone else, and when they asked me to speak, I suddenly burst into tears, said that I didn't want to speak to them in this atmosphere and left the room. In the evening the CEO of the company called me, and told me that he was jealous of me for allowing myself to cry. He wanted to cry, too.

I had many outbursts of anger at work. Before my "rebirth" I had only allowed myself to get angry at my daughter and my husband, and those were uncontrollable explosions, secondary process outbursts. That event brought my anger into consciousness and made it a part of my primary process, and since then I let myself get angry at people at work. I gave myself permission to be like my mother. I stopped being ashamed of my anger, I allowed myself to express it, but unlike my mother, with consciousness and control.

Rachel, who had suppressed her feelings until the age of 31, learned to express them instead, sometimes in an unskillful manner. If I use the Fight/Flight model, my primary process consisted of a flight response, while my secondary process consisted of a fight response. After I turned 31, I turned my secondary process to a primary one, and began to use my fighting instinct. I gave an outlet to my anger and all the emotion that had built up inside, becoming more and more like my mother, who had been a secondary figure within me until then.

I had always tried to be like my father. Being like him was the primary figure I identified with and wanted to show: smart, in control of his emotions, calculated. I completely marginalized the secondary figure inside me, even though it was running my life: that of the creative mother, emotional and full of life, sick, but very much alive, dead, but very much alive within me. Becoming aware of her, having her inside me and forgiving her, saved my life.

These primary and secondary processes were also reflected in my work. I studied mathematics and computers at university. Again, I wanted to be like my father. I worked as a project manager in the world of computers. That was my primary process. But underneath, my secondary parts were stirring: they wanted to get in touch with people, love them and help them to transform, but my competitive job did not allow for that. Eventually, I realized that the primary reason I wanted to work in computers was to earn a good salary, but the secondary reason was to grow psychologically and spiritually. This stressful and demanding job challenged me to grow and transform, and once I got that it became easier for me to accept the fact that I still worked as a project manager in the computer field, and not yet as a therapist.

The Edge

The edge is the threshold that separates the primary process from the secondary process. It creates a complete separation between the two processes, and makes us feel as though whatever lies beyond the edge of the primary process has nothing to do with us. It consists of our beliefs, fears, traumatic experiences, and cultural norms, among others. Usually edge figures who stand vigil appear just at the line of separation.

We experience the edge as the sensation that we cannot do or be something that is not compatible with our primary process, or that we cannot stop doing something that is compatible with our primary process (in Buddhism it is called habit energy). The edge can take many different forms, such as confusion, embarrassment, physical symptoms, boredom, stagnation, loss of control, unfinished sentences or movements, the use of the third person ("the boss said to do it this way"), the use of belief and value systems ("it's inappropriate to act this way in public").

Attention to the edges and careful, meticulous work with our edges are one of the main tools in process work. Edge work is focusing on feelings or experiences that come up when someone is on the edge, or close to it. During therapy "missing" an edge often leads to a decrease in energy, fatigue and feeling of "losing our train of thought." If that happens, it is wise to go back to a point when the energy was higher (before reaching the edge).

- One of the strongest edge signals in my life has always been feeling guilty. Whenever I felt blamed the edge would appear in the form of freezing, stuttering, anxiety or an inability to explain myself.

My primary identity was that of a bad girl, blamed for the death of her mother. When anyone criticized or blamed me, especially for something I didn't do, I couldn't get past the edge and connect to the innocent little girl. My mother would appear as a primary edge figure, accusing me and saying, "You will be the death of me, I'll die because of you and then you'll get a stepmother" (in fact she did indeed die and I did get a stepmother).

At work I insisted on doing everything perfectly and as fast as I could so that nobody could accuse me of not keeping my word. In other words, I was considered a perfectionist. I'd get into panic attacks or tantrums whenever something unexpected came up and made me go back on my word. As difficult as it is to admit, I could hit

my daughter when I lost control if I felt that she was keeping me from getting to work on time.

Once, when my husband accused me of making us late somewhere and I thought it was his fault, I lost control and threw a glass of water in his face. My primary identity identified so strongly with the blame, which I couldn't bear to hear being expressed by someone else. Ever since I was a child I had a fear that someone would call out: "Rachel Oliver stole those crayons from kindergarten," or "Rachel Oliver did some other terrible thing."

Another example of blame-guilt reactivity took place in my thirties, when I was driving, and I was putting on my makeup at a traffic light. Suddenly I heard a police officer shouting on the megaphone: "Lady in the blue car, stop putting on that makeup or I'll give you a fine." I remember my breath just stopped, and I felt so ashamed in front of all those people on the street; it was as if the police officer had arrested me for murder.

In addition, I had a powerful edge to feeling weakness and vulnerability. Throughout my childhood I struggled to prove that I didn't need my mother and I was strong, just like my father. Of course I was unaware of it. A friend in my class used to tell me that I was tough; but back then I didn't see it that way, and I couldn't understand what he meant.

I have a strong memory of my fear of appearing weak from age 14, very near to my mother's death. I liked a boy in my class named Mickey. One day one of my closest confidants on the subject got mad at me and wrote on the board in big letters: "Rachel Oliver loves Mickey Graf." Even now as I write this, I feel the pain in my chest of the humiliation I felt when I walked in and saw it. I had the feeling of wanting to bury myself. I couldn't even respond, get angry or speak. Maybe I even smiled (a double signal). A powerful edge arose, expressed in freezing and wanting to disappear. It was as if someone had discovered that I was weak because I liked a boy in class. In my youth I never showed when I liked a boy; loving someone or wanting to be in their company seemed like an expression of weakness to me. The image I presented was "I do not need anyone; I get along fine by myself." I thought that my father's support was enough.

Another significant edge was my fear of my own strength. My mother, the edge figure there, would say: "I'll die because of you." I was unaware of this edge until I

started studying process work. I thought I was inherently bad; unconsciously I also knew that I was powerful and had a strong influence on others. I didn't express this power, because of my great fear that it could kill. Deep down I believed that I had killed my mother: I won our competition. She died and I moved to my father's bed. For years I experienced this internal conflict of whether to express what I know or to remain silent and small. To this day I think that I do not fully live up to my potential because of this edge.

Edge figures such as my mother mainly affected my professional life. Difficult customers, bosses and employees would criticize me, say that I was dangerous and I had wronged them. This kind of criticism, as though I was "killing people," always cut me deeply. The most common symptom was a kind of depression that was accompanied by a lack of energy and a desire to sleep. During these times I would climb into bed and think of my mother, who spent a lot of her time being sick in bed.

Roles

This term, used by Mindell, refers to our sometimes over-identification with our primary identity without the understanding that we represent only energetic fields (as in quantum physics). Identification with a particular role makes us think that other roles belong to other people and have nothing to do with us, which makes us feel separate from them. What Mindell says is compatible with the Buddhist belief that our sense of separateness is the main reason for our suffering.

In process oriented psychology, a person is considered to be so much more than their role, and the role is seen as much more than the person. Therefore we must not identify with our roles. Thich Nhat Hahn coined the Buddhist concept of interbeing. We are all one, energy particles within the same field.

My father's role in my life was: an angel.

My mother's role in my life was: the devil, the spoiled woman.

My sister's role in my life was: the dumb one, the good and obedient girl.

My own role in my life was: the smart, bad, selfish, disobedient, spoiled girl.

I know what a high price I paid for holding on to these roles. The role of the smart girl caused me many fears, anxieties and heart palpitations. I had to be the smartest. I couldn't ever fail. Smart was the only positive role that I had, and therefore I had to maintain it at all costs.

A repeating childhood dream comes up in that context: I dreamed that I had failed an exam, and I would wake up in horror. Of course I actually did well at school; but as a child I assumed that my dreams predicted the future in reverse. Whatever I dreamed indicated what would happen, but with opposite results. Now I know that the dreams were meant to point out a powerful edge: fear of failure. And perhaps, in order to open up and live a more meaningful life, I had to fail on occasion. I never failed the exam, but my greatest failure came when my husband abandoned me and left me alone with a little girl of eighteen months. At that point I could no longer ignore the secondary process that was trying to reveal itself.

I always felt bad, so I never tried helping others. I left that role to my sister. My sister never felt guilty. On the contrary, she always blamed everyone else and didn't take responsibility for anything. No wonder I took all the guilt. When I first realized that at the age of 35, I burst into great and healing tears. Once I realized that, I took the role of the unifier of the family. Everyone gradually got used to my new role as the initiator, helper, supporter, teacher and giver of love. With awareness, I embraced a new role -- the good girl -- that had been previously reserved for my sister.

Over the years I began to see the "bad" sides of my sister, and that she is/was far from being "the good girl." I started to help and support her during the difficult conflicts between her and her family. Slowly, I got rid of my bad girl role. I also rid my sister of the stupid good girl role; I found that she actually wasn't that obedient, and I began to appreciate her great love for me. I began to appreciate her ability not to feel guilt, to cope with the difficulties of life, to be at peace with herself and to not envy others.

The role of the spoiled girl wasn't easy to handle either. To prove it wrong, I constantly struggle with my tendency to ask for help and take up space. As a child, without knowing it, I competed with my mother over how much space each of us was allowed to take. My mother was very popular, beautiful and friendly, and she was also very sick. Obviously that competition was very painful for me.

Only through Process Work did I connect with my mother's energy. Although I never loved her when she was alive, I got in touch with her energy, started to accept it, enjoy it, love it, and through this process, also to love myself as well. I finally understood that there is enough room for both: me and my mother, which also means there is enough for me and anyone else. In fact, there is room for everyone. That is the 'one.' When I got rid of the role I assigned to my mother, I began to see the joy in her, her playfulness and her ability to express herself, even if she lost control sometimes. I saw how I inherited her playfulness, her uniqueness and her joy of life.

I realized that my mother's vital and happy energy existed in me, too. In one of the Process Work exercises I did, I was asked to play my mother as I remembered her. I played her taking space and being loud. When I was asked by the therapist to amplify that and get even more into that role, I amplified in the movement channel, and went completely into the secondary process. At once the overbearing energy changed into liveliness, happiness and love. I enjoyed the experience immensely. I felt the love for my mother and realized that I have the same lively energy, and that I need not fear it. I know that I often try to suppress this energy and do not identify with it, rather, see it as overbearing and vulgar. The suppressions result in unconscious and harmful expression of it, in the form of raging against my husband, daughter and employees. Being able to express it consciously transformed the energy into positive love and vitality.

While I saw my father as an angel, it came at a heavy price. It meant that I, on the other hand, was bad. When I compared myself to him, I felt worthless. I thought his love for me was undeserved. I felt like a spoiled child who likes to sit in her father's lap and refuses to grow up (that's what everybody told me). He was hard-working, smart, did everything around the house and was both a father and a mother to me while I was a spoiled, lazy girl. He served as the mediator between me and my mother, and later between me and his second wife. Although I love my father dearly, I had to go through a process of disillusionment in order to heal myself. Through that process I understood that my father loved the role of the angel and avoided being anything else. He never insisted that I open a direct channel of communication with my mother, with his second wife and even with my sister.

The role of the mediator was quite flattering for him. He also liked the role of the father who spoiled his daughter, and those roles of his didn't allow me to grow and

develop. He felt sorry for me, for growing up without a mother, and so spoiled me excessively. He didn't allow me to cope with any difficulties, solved my entire problems, which in turn made me feel small and spoiled. In addition, everyone else envied this preferential treatment and that isolated me from my family even more. The feeling that someone was showing me preferential treatment, which others resented, stayed with me for many years.

Whenever anyone gave me anything, when anyone loved me, I felt like I didn't deserve it. My admiration for my father kept me from developing healthy relationships with men. In my fantasy I wanted them to be perfect, like my father. Understanding that my father, just like everybody else, also had his difficult aspects, made him more human in my eyes and also made me more human to myself: it allowed me to love myself and to love others in our imperfectness.

In Buddhist terminology no self means that I am not separate or solid. We are all interwoven into each other -- we are all part of the great process and only together can we bring about wholeness. The roles we give ourselves or others just petrify us and them, blocking our development and the love we can give to ourselves and others. The term no self is closely related to the concept of impermanence in Buddhism. We are constantly changing. Everything is in constant motion, including what happens to us. Therefore, our identification with the illusion that any part of us is solid, is a source of ignorance and suffering.

The book, *Who Am I? The Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi*, says: "It is your responsibility to be, and not to be one thing or another. The words - 'I'll be whoever I'll be' reflect the whole truth. Be quiet and peaceful. And what do the words quiet and peaceful mean? They mean: destroy yourself, because any name and any form lead to trouble. I am me, the same as myself. I'm this or that is the same as ego. When the I remains the I, it is the self. When it jumps from one thing to another it says: I am this, I am that, I'm like that, I'm like the other. This is the ego."

Dr. Rabbi Michael Laitman, a well-known Kabbalah teacher in Israel was asked by his student, a famous actor, how to play Hitler in a play. The Rabbi answered: "Find Hitler in yourself, that's how you can play him." In Process Work, we use the term "Deep Democracy" which means that every role must be given equal importance.

They all have a place and they all have a purpose in the great process. No role should be marginalized.

Thich Nhat Hanh wrote a beautiful song that explains how anyone can be anyone. Here is the song, as well as what Thich Nhat Hanh wrote about it. This poem embodies the essence of what he calls "interbeing," the interconnectedness of all things.

Call Me by My True Names

by Thich Nhat Hanh

From: *Peace is Every Step: (The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life, by Thich Nhat Hanh)*

"In Plum Village, where I live in France, we receive many letters from the refugee camps in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines, hundreds each week. It is very painful to read them, but we have to do it, we have to be in contact. We try our best to help, but the suffering is enormous, and sometimes we are discouraged. It is said that half the boat people die in the ocean. Only half arrive at the shores in Southeast Asia, and even then they may not be safe.

There are many young girls, boat people, who are raped by sea pirates. Even though the United Nations and many countries try to help the government of Thailand prevent that kind of piracy, sea pirates continue to inflict much suffering on the refugees. One day we received a letter telling us about a young girl on a small boat who was raped by a Thai pirate. She was only twelve, and she jumped into the ocean and drowned herself.

When you first learn of something like that, you get angry at the pirate. You naturally take the side of the girl. As you look more deeply you will see it differently. If you take the side of the little girl, then it is easy. You only have to take a gun and shoot the pirate. But we cannot do that. In my meditation I saw that if I had been born in the village of the pirate and raised in the same conditions as he was, there is a great likelihood that I would become a pirate. I saw that many babies are born along the Gulf of Siam, hundreds every day, and if we educators, social workers, politicians,

and others do not do something about the situation, in twenty-five years a number of them will become sea pirates. That is certain. If you or I were born today in those fishing villages, we may become sea pirates in twenty-five years. If you take a gun and shoot the pirate, all of us are to some extent responsible for this state of affairs.

After a long meditation, I wrote this poem. In it, there are three people: the twelve-year-old girl, the pirate, and me. Can we look at each other and recognize ourselves in each other? The title of the poem is "Please Call Me by My True Names," because I have so many names. When I hear one of these names, I have to say, "Yes."

Call Me by My True Names

Do not say that I'll depart tomorrow

because even today I still arrive.

Look deeply: I arrive in every second

to be a bud on a spring branch,

to be a tiny bird, with wings still fragile,

learning to sing in my new nest,

to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower,

to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.

I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry,

in order to fear and to hope.

The rhythm of my heart is the birth and death of all that are alive.

I am the mayfly metamorphosing on the surface of the river,

and I am the bird which, when spring comes, arrives in time to eat the mayfly.

I am the frog swimming happily in the clear pond,

and I am also the grass-snake who, approaching in silence, feeds itself on the frog.

I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones,

my legs as thin as bamboo sticks,

and I am the arms merchant, selling deadly weapons to Uganda.

I am the twelve-year-old girl, refugee on a small boat,

who throws herself into the ocean after being raped by a sea pirate,
and I am the pirate, my heart not yet capable of seeing and loving.

I am a member of the politburo, with plenty of power in my hands,
and I am the man who has to pay his "debt of blood" to, my people, dying slowly in
a forced labor camp.

My joy is like spring, so warm it makes flowers bloom in all walks of life.

My pain is like a river of tears, so full it fills the four oceans.

Please call me by my true names,

so I can hear all my cries and laughs at once,

so I can see that my joy and pain are one.

Please call me by my true names,

so I can wake up,

and so the door of my heart can be left open,

the door of compassion.

Taking the Other's Side

One of the most meaningful aspects of my Process Work studies was learning to take the other side. I remember the moment when our teacher Gary Reiss told us that Mindell said that a qualified Process Work therapist can only be a person who can, in one hour, understand his opponent's side of things. I felt chills in my body and the happiness of understanding this sentence. Suddenly, I was proud to be studying Process Work. For me, that was the essence.

Exercising in class with the other students brought up many difficulties. I argued with what they told me, I resisted, I got angry, I tried to justify and defend myself and I felt helpless and weary. And then I got it! A quantum leap and I changed my attitude. I listened and tried to understand what was true in what the other side was saying about me, even the little things. I reflected to the other side my understanding of their arguments and emphasized the points I agreed with. I saw the other person's face change, how they suddenly calmed down and could attentively listen to my side. I used Process Work techniques and really became them and expressed their point of view. This practice was life-changing for me.

All my life I defended and justified myself, and felt very guilty inside. I was angry, and constantly explained to anyone who would listen that I wasn't to blame; I lied because I didn't want to admit to thoughts that weren't ethical enough (like stealing crayons from kindergarten at age 5); I couldn't handle or listen to any reproach, and there were many of those in my childhood. I suppressed them, I never dealt with them; I didn't want to talk about them, I just ran away from them (slamming doors, my sister says), but all these admonishments settled deep inside me: I believed what I didn't want to admit. I always wanted to be perfect like my father. Whenever I had a conflict with anyone, and there were many, I could feel my heart beating so fast (afraid they'd find out that I killed my mother), the helplessness and shortness of breath.

My work brought up many conflicts. After each one, I'd be useless for a few hours or the rest of the day, sometimes even for several days. I couldn't stand being criticized, especially when it wasn't true and I didn't know how to prove it wrong. I became paralyzed and couldn't explain myself; I could barely even speak. This was apparent already in my childhood, I would slur and stutter when I was stressed.

With my husband and daughter, I'd have tantrums, lose control whenever they challenged me. It was too edgy, I felt too much guilt and the shame which didn't allow me to listen to what was being said and address it. With practice, I realized that I'm not perfect and that's fine. I crossed the edge of not being perfect and surviving anyway. I allowed myself to see my own shadow (according to Jung), to feel the pain of it, to cry for what I put others through and to know that it was all human.

I realized that the journey of life is one of growth and development, and its goal is to allow us to learn from our mistakes. I tried to learn to enjoy the journey, mistakes included, and not want it to reach the goal. I realized that there is no guilt -- that it was all in my head -- there are mistakes and that's natural. Life is trial and error. This understanding enabled me to take my own side first, completely, and to be an ally to myself. I hugged the little girl that I once was, the girl who needed a mother, who suffered from loneliness because everyone except her father were against her. When I could support myself and understand my own side fully and without any guilt, when I could cry for myself, I could also understand the other side.

Suddenly I understood my mother when she complained that I was a naughty girl. I felt her pain as a very ill woman with just a few more years to live, who cares about her daughter yet feels her distancing herself, refusing to listen to her, belittling her and wanting nothing to do with her. Her daughter only wanted her Dad. I felt that even as a child I hurt her very much, and immediately asked for her forgiveness in my heart. I could do this only when I fully forgave myself, and saw my own side as a little girl who spent most days alone with her Mom sick in bed or in the hospital. I was able to make peace with my mother, and it completed my relationship with myself.

I understood all those relatives and neighbors who were just concerned with my mother's health, and tried to quieted and discipline me. I could also understand my father's second wife's jealousy, when my father made my importance over her importance crystal clear. I understood everyone who was jealous of me because of my father's preferential treatment of me, especially my sister, who used to hit me when our parents were out. She knew I was my father's favorite; without even having to try.

At work, I came to understand Tammy. She was an employee of mine who was very slow and made many mistakes. For years we had a difficult relationship. I felt that because of her limitations, she could cause my projects to fail, so I would berate her or hurry her along. Tammy, in turn, would get angry with me, belittle and gossip about me. And then one day I finally was able to understand her distress, being unable to live up to the standards of her supervisor and the difficulties of feeling like the weak link.

Suddenly it occurred to me that I was criticizing her and treating her as my mother had treated me. When I understood that, I cried. That insight enlightened and transformed me. I called her in, apologized to her and told her about myself. That helped her to open up and tell me about herself; and from that day on our relationship was very different. Tammy was one of the great teachers in my life. Thanks to her, I decided that people were more important than projects.

Another teacher is my husband Yossi. At the beginning of our marriage we fought a lot. I'd get angry when he accused me of anything and I'd respond in a very hurtful way. Busy defending myself in the face of his "unjust" accusations, I never noticed that I hurt him. One day we went to an Osho (Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh) workshop. One of the exercises was to stand opposite each other, look each other in the eyes and take turns saying: "You hurt me when..." When he told me how much I hurt him, I listened for the first time. I burst into tears: I hurt Yossi just like I hurt other people. I thanked him for telling me this from an open and vulnerable place. This understanding came as another leap for me: I took another step. It became clear to me that the victim and the victimizer are one and the same and that the victim may become the victimizer.

I learned to listen to people, to what is said both explicitly and implicitly. People differ from each other, what is easy for one is difficult for another. I realized that listening deeply to the other side was healing for both. My teacher Thich Nhat Hanh, says: "Happiness is not individual, if you want to be happy, make those around you happy." This is fully compatible with the practice of taking the other side. You do not do it for them, but for yourself, for your own happiness, to resolve the conflict within yourself. This is consistent with the idea that we are all one. As Thich Nhat Hanh says: "I am in you and you are in me, there is no separate me, and there is no separate you."

This point is well-illustrated in a story of the Baal Shem Tov, a great Hasidic Jewish rabbi. The Baal Shem Tov used to dress up in costumes and travel to various small towns in Poland, to see how his students were behaving. One day he came to the town of Polonnoye, dressed as a simple farmer, and started talking to the people on their way to synagogue. The town rabbi's secretary reported back to his rabbi that a villager was standing in the street, telling stories and holding back the public from synagogue. The rabbi sent for this farmer, and when he arrived at his office, the rabbi began to berate him harshly. The farmer, who was the Baal Shem Tov, asked

the rabbi's permission to tell him something. He said: "One rabbi was riding in a wagon drawn by three horses, when it suddenly became stuck in the mud. The rabbi lashed the horses, but to no avail; the wheels only got more and more entrenched. The rabbi was helpless, when a country boy suddenly came and told the rabbi: "Let go of the reins! Stop whipping the horses!" The rabbi did as the child said, and in their natural wisdom, the horses got the wagon out of the mud. "Do you understand?" asked the farmer. The rabbi began to cry, and later became a devoted disciple of the Baal Shem Tov.

When I read that story for the first time, I found myself crying. I saw the rigid, horsewhipping rabbi as myself. I whipped my employees; I whipped my daughter; I whipped my husband and anyone else I didn't agree with. Sometimes I hurt them by actions, sometimes with my words and sometimes only in my thoughts. I couldn't connect to the other side and become softer.

Being able to experience this understanding through my practice in process work has changed my life. It became much easier. When my relationship with Tammy changed, my projects became much more successful. I stopped whipping Tammy, and in her natural wisdom (which might be different from mine), managed to make the most of herself. I felt as if miracles were happening at work. Work became so much easier; yet I was achieving so much more. Deepak Chopra calls this the "law of minimum effort." I was able to create a relationship of love and encouragement between myself and my employees, and among the employees themselves. Love creates miracles.

Types of Rank

Definition of rank

Rank is a way of indicating a level of status, privilege and power and can be derived from different bases or sources. The three main sources are: social , psychological and spiritual.

Rank is an important concept in Process Work: we must be aware of ours and other people's rank. Rank should be addressed in our communication with ourselves and with others. People are usually aware of their lower rank, but unaware of their higher rank.

Unconsciousness of rank, or misuse of it, is a continuing source of conflict. When people with high rank are confronted with unconscious or disowned rank or obliviousness of the impact of their rank on others they are often bewildered, confused, hurt or angry and will often react with denial. Since their health, wealth, skin color is not intentional it does enter their awareness that they reflect "rank" and they cannot see how they can be held responsible for something they did not do. Such lack of rank awareness and its impact can violate or provoke violence in those who feel powerless or marginalized by it. Lack of awareness of rank and its impact tends to draw attack, revenge or retaliation from victims of such misuse.

Social rank

I realized that my social-economic rank was very low. I was Rachel Oliver, an orphan from Jaffa (a city of poor, simple people). My parents had immigrated to Israel in 1948 and settled in Jaffa. My father never learned to write Hebrew, and didn't speak it very well. My parents were old and I was ashamed of them. When I was born, my mother was 37 and my father was 44. I always envied children who had young parents. There were no books in our house. My language skills are relatively impoverished, and I envy people who speak Hebrew fluently. In our house, intellect and education were not that important. My mother's father was a dentist, and that was the only thing I could be proud of. It was important to my mother that I do well at school, but not so for my father. He was a wise man born to a family of manual laborers.

When my mother died, there was no one to push me to go to university. I did study computer science for two years, but when it became too hard for me, I left. During an exercise of Process Work I had an interesting insight that I refused to get an academic degree out of solidarity with my father. Continuing my academic career meant that my mother had won. When I realized that, I decided to stay and finish my process psychology studies no matter what, until I receive my diploma. I wanted to quit a million times because it was too hard, but my mother's soul pushed me to finish my studies. I'm still ashamed of not having a college degree.

Nowadays I'm officially recognized as a lay-teacher in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh; and so I teach and am also a therapist. Even though people appreciate, compliment me and seek my help, I still have that niggling feeling that I am the same little girl that orphan from Jaffa. I don't understand how my clients keep coming and even refer new clients to me. I still see myself as inferior to all those educated, strong-minded people, who speak Hebrew so fluently. I am of course aware of this, and every time I get that feeling of being small, I take a deep breath and I know that it has nothing to do with my reality. Comforting the little girl inside me who is ashamed of who she is, I give her strength and become my own ultimate mother.

Psychological Rank

As a child, I had no psychological awareness. I was just lonely and unhappy. My father's love for me gave me a sense of relief, but sometimes that just made me feel more "wrong." I had no one to share with, and I couldn't believe that anyone could help me. Growing up I didn't believe in therapy. As a computer professional, I only believed in what could be proven mathematically: 0 or 1, a binary point of view. The image I presented to the world was that of a strong girl, and so there was no chance that I would accept help from anyone. My psychological rank was low. The belief that I was smart and my father's support provided me with survival resources. Yet my father's preferential treatment evoked envy and criticism, especially from my family.

Today I understand that it's important to be modest when being treated preferentially, which helps me relate to others in a non-discriminating way. This understanding has made me aware of the way that I relate to other people, and

helped me to try not to discriminate. As a manager of large teams at work, I had to become aware of different people's emotions, and try to make each member feel their goodness. A great leader has an ability to highlight the best in every individual, and make them fully realize their potential. I know my father's preferential treatment was not wise, and made me suffer.

After my revelation in 1982, I decided to study the psychological world in depth. Today I feel that my psychological rank is very high, and that I have good intuitions that can help me as well as others. My father's love and my psychological knowledge allow me to be very open and honest with people, and to share my deepest pain and needs. Knowing that my sharing not only helps me personally, but also supports many other people, inspires me to use my high psychological rank to listen to people, to be patient with their questions and to support their development.

The fact that people listen very carefully to what I say, helps me to be very skillful, mindful and careful. I try to use right speech (a Buddhist term which means mindful speech). It means paying attention to what is right and appropriate to say to any given person at any given moment. I know now that the most important thing is to convey love and caring, give people the feeling that they're not alone, that they're not different in their suffering from anybody else. Sometimes the best thing to do is to be quiet, and just be with the other person's pain.

Spiritual Rank

I thank God for the moments of grace and enlightenment that I have experienced. I know that it is not possible to understand the world just using the five senses. Deep down, I know we are all one, that there is an absolute world, without suffering, and I can sometimes touch it with my sixth sense. The spiritual world is the source of my strength; without it life is just hard work.

Learning is an ongoing process and I feel connected to a number of spiritual teachings. I find that the differences among the various teachings are not significant. The basis of all of these theories is true, unconditional love; and that kind of love can be learned and developed. I am aware that most people still cannot relate to this world, and that my Spiritual Rank is relatively high.

It is very important to me not to impose the spiritual world on anyone, with the understanding that it has to be a choice; so I don't talk about it when I see that

there is no interest on the other side. In times of trouble I pray. For me, God is nature, the wisdom of the universe. I ask this wisdom to help me, and I know that when I have strength it is not mine, but given to me from nature. In the words of the Course of Miracles: "the power is within me, but it is not mine." This understanding allows me not to try to force solutions on problems, to know that everything is for the best, and to wait for a solution to come when the conditions are favorable -- and in the meantime, to continue to pray for all living things on earth.

Levels of consciousness

According to Process Work, there are three Levels of consciousness; and as I understand it, there are two worlds or two dimensions. These two worlds are the relative world and absolute world. The relative world is a dualistic world, a world of good and bad. It is also called the historic world, one that is full of problems. It contains two levels: Consensus Reality (CR) and Dreamland. The third level in Process Work is called the Essence Level, and it belongs to the absolute world.

Consensus Reality (CR)

This is our everyday reality as we perceive it with our five senses. In this world, we distinguish between good and bad. There are victims and victimizers. This world is full of human suffering. Until the age of 31, this was the only world I was aware of. I was aware of my own suffering. There were people I liked and didn't like. My greatest suffering was that I didn't like myself.

Dreamland

This is a world of dreams, which is present in our sleep, but also when we are awake. If we look carefully at what happens to us during the course of a day, we can see it as a dream, as a story.

Guantzu, a Chinese philosopher tells the following story. It's called "a butterfly's dream:"

"A man dreams in his sleep that he is a butterfly. He flies,

fluttering from flower to flower, opening and closing its wings.

He is light, graceful, delicate and fragile. Suddenly he awakens and is amazed to discover that he is a man. But is he really a man who dreamed he was a butterfly, or is he a butterfly who is now dreaming that he is a man?"

Interestingly, I had an experience which I had actually dreamed about a year before. I was amazed to realize I had dreamed it when six months after it happened I found the dream in my journal.

In reality, the traumatic event occurred on a visit to Kathmandu with my husband and a group of friends during a pilgrimage tour following the life of the Buddha. We were walking around in the Old City of Kathmandu in the dark, and I was angry to find once again my husband walking ahead of me instead of with me. I even thought to myself, "I wish I would be lost and then he'll suffer!". Then I suddenly found myself alone in pitch blackness, without my husband or anyone else in the group.

I sped up, thinking they had gone further ahead, but as I went on I realized that I was lost. I went straight ahead and found myself in a god forsaken place, without any people or houses – a scary, desolate area. Stories of people who were kidnapped in India and Nepal, their body parts sold, came to my mind. I didn't have my cell phone because my husband had both phones. I felt the anxiety and panic in my body, but I continued walking straight ahead and praying. I walked around, afraid -- for about an hour -- without knowing where I was.

Suddenly, I saw a light on the horizon. The light reassured me a little, and I walked toward it. Amazingly, I found that it was a bookstore in the middle of nowhere. When I walked in, I saw a man sitting there, who seemed reliable. All the tension inside me dissipated and I burst into tears, telling the shopkeeper: "I lost my husband." He calmed me down. I didn't even know the name of our hotel and I knew my husband was probably terrified that he couldn't find me. I remembered that when we were on the tour bus, someone mentioned the name of the hotel, and said that it was a common name to hotels in Nepal, so I asked the storekeeper to read me the names of the hotels in town, so I might recognize the name. When he said the name "Everest" I knew that was the hotel. We called the front desk; they were waiting for my call, and hurried to reassure my husband that I was safe.

It goes without saying that the reunion with the husband was very moving. It turned out that he had become terribly anxious, and started running around the alleyways of the old city looking for me. All the scary stories about kidnapping people ran through his head, and he was already thinking about what he would tell the family. He felt terrible for not looking after me.

In my dream, the one I didn't even remember at the time, my husband and I were walking through an old city, and I suddenly got lost. I looked for him for hours, terrified, wondering why he had both cell phones and I had neither. Suddenly, a mother and a child went by, and I asked her whether she had seen my husband. I woke up in horror, just before crossing the edge, just before I found my husband.

When I discovered that dream in my notebook, I worked on it and the real event with a therapist. I saw the connection between the mother that appeared in the dream and the first sentence I said to the book shopkeeper which was: "I lost my husband". I understood that what I really wanted to say was "I lost my mother". I realize that in my relationship with Yossi, I expected him to be the mother, the one that I had lost at such an early age. I expected him to take care of me and keep me from getting lost. This insight illuminated many of the difficulties in our relationship and consequently brought about a transformation in our life together.

In the dream world we can talk about energies instead of people. Mindell called the energy of someone who hurts us, victimizes us, the X energy. Another energy is the one that we identify with more, the energy of the person who suffers from victimization. It is the part that feels like a victim and wants something different, usually comfort, or love or freedom or any other pleasurable experience. This is the U energy. The U energy is the primary energy, the one we identify with, while the X energy is the secondary energy, the one we do not identify with, the one that disturbs us and causes suffering.

I often experienced the U energy as the energy of a little girl who wants to be happy and indulged, play, and misbehave with friends, while the X energy tells her: "You have to go to school, take care of your mother and be quiet." I experience this energy as something that's suffocating me, as something that I want to kill, and that connects, of course, to my guilt for having killed my mother. The energy of the smothering mother has a lot of power, and when I crossed this edge and experienced the energy of the smothering mother, I could also experience her power

in me. One "homeopathic drop" of it can help me find the strength inside myself, to stop being a spoiled little girl, and become a powerful adult woman.

Carl Jung called the X energy our "shadow." He said: "One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious."

When I discovered this energy inside myself, I woke up. I saw how I was suffocating Tammy, my employee, and doing the same with my daughter and my husband. Daring to look at our dark side transforms us. It develops our compassion for others and for ourselves. We understand that there is no blame. There are no bad people, only people who feel bad. There are no bad children, only children who feel bad. Our guilt feeling acts as a great hindrance to our development. If a person is ashamed and doesn't want to look freely and compassionately at his own "shadow" he has no chance to change. Only when I dared to share my dark side, did I feel free. I realized that my mother and I are one and the same. I realized that nothing is separate.

I am the result of so many things that came before me: my childhood, the history of my ancestors, the history of the Jewish people and the history of the world. Feeling guilty doesn't help; it just digs a deeper and deeper hole that's harder and harder to get out of. However, freely shining a light on my darkness helps me take responsibility and make a difference in the world.

A person can change when he takes responsibility without feeling guilty, when he knows that he is as imperfect as the world he lives in. We're not perfect but we are complete, a part of the infinite puzzle: and our role is to learn to do our small share the best way we can. We are here to learn through our mistakes. This is the nature of the world. In my imagination, I thought that most people were perfect -- like my father was in my mind -- which took away all my energy to ever change. I didn't believe it was possible. The idea that we are not perfect but we are complete can be found in the book. *I'm OK, You're OK*, by Dr. Thomas Anthony Harris. Maybe one day I'll write a book called: *I'm not OK, You're not OK, and That's OK*.

In his book, *Touching Peace* (1987), Thich Nhat Hanh uses the image of mud and a lotus. He says that the beautiful lotus flower grows only in swamps. If it weren't for the mud, there would be no flower. He stresses that we need painful experiences in order to develop. He also explains the interaction between waste and the flower: between what we call "bad" and what we call "good."

"If we look closely at a flower we'll notice that it's about to become waste, but if we look closely at waste we'll notice that it's about to become a flower, there is an interaction. They need each other. A good organic gardener does not discriminate the "bad" waste, because he knows how to transform it into daisies, roses and other flowers." The words of Thich Nhat Hanh mirror Jung's ideas, and their realization through Process Work.

If we become aware of the difficult parts of ourselves that we are not identified with, that are "secondary" to us, this awareness will allow us to take a homeopathic drop of them in a positive way, and make it a primary part of us. It will transform them into our strength. I was able to take my own strength, that which in the past enabled me to fight and "kill" my mother and transform it into a strength that has a positive effect on other people. My suffering as a child, my habit of doing everything by myself, developed my qualities of independence and leadership.

Essence Level

This level is part of the dimension of the absolute world. Unlike the relative world, this dimension has no right and wrong. There is no duality, no contrasts. Everything is a part of a huge puzzle that forms the whole. Every piece has a role and a purpose and is an essential part of the whole.

Mindell says about this level: "You are neither this nor that, but the awareness of all" (in: *The Shaman's Body* (1993)) Mindell says of this world that it is beyond Primary and Secondary. It's the ability to connect to both. In my experience, moving into this dimension is a kind of quantum leap. It is often an unexpected energetic leap. There are techniques that can take you across your edge, from your Primary process to your Secondary process, both of which are in the relative dimension. However, leaping into the ultimate dimension is a different thing. Mindel writes about this transition between dimensions: "final steps are beyond technique and deal with learning to follow the path of heart." (*Shaman's Body* 1993)

Other names for this dimension are: Nirvana (Buddhism), the one, God, Process Mind, enlightened mind, original mind, System Mind and Big You. I like to call this world a world of pure love. In this world, love is not experienced as an emotion, but as a state of mind.

When we allow the X energy which represents the "bad," the victimizer, to communicate with the U energy that represents the "good," the victim, something whole is created. In the Process Work technique, the two energies dance with each other and form the one. When we experience oneness, even for a second, we get a sense of flow, relief and freedom. Everything is fine.

In the Grimm Brothers' story of "The Princess and the Frog," the Princess (U energy) has to kiss the frog (X energy) in order to turn the frog into a prince. Through acceptance and love for our own "frog" sides, we can turn ourselves into a prince; likewise, by acceptance and love for other people's "frog" sides, we can turn them into princes. Finally, we come to understand that there is no frog and no prince. We awake from our dream and connect with oneness, without the prince and without the frog.

If, in the relative world, we feel that we are constantly chasing pleasure and trying to escape pain, when we are in touch with the absolute world, we have a sense of integration between the two, and we flow along with both. We learn that the X energy is the pain and the U energy is the pursuit of pleasure, and that it is the endless pursuit of pleasure that creates the vicious cycle of suffering. In Buddhism this is called Samsara. Letting the two energies live in peace with each other, respecting both, this is flowing with the Tao (traditional Chinese philosophical concept of the wisdom of Nature). When we allow this to happen, there is an experience of Nirvana (the end of the cycle of suffering). We understand that the path is wiser than the passenger and that in the words of Shakespeare "all the world is a stage." With our Process Mind, we can avoid attaching ourselves to the ego and the roles we identify with, and can see the show itself, in which we have one of the parts. However, reaching this level of detachment, which allows us to treat all of life as a game, a show, is not easy.

While the solution is quite simple, its execution is complicated for our conditioned minds, which are focused solely on survival and competition. It is very difficult for us to let go and to connect to our enlightened minds. With the aid of Process Work, meditation and other tools, we can glimpse the absolute every now and again. The more we touch the absolute, the more we can transform.

In Buddhism, a metaphor is used of the ocean and the waves. The waves are like the relative world, some are high and some are low, while the water is like the absolute

world. The waves are actually an illusion. There are no waves; there is only water. Therefore, an aware person, who knows how to live in both worlds, surfs the waves rather than fights them. Another metaphor is that of flour and cookies. The cookies bake in the oven. They don't compete with each other over which is more beautiful or perfect because they know they're all flour.

On this level, we can experience ourselves as one soul in the same body. Rabbi Laitman often uses the following image: a body is made of many parts, each one has a different role and function, and they work together in perfect harmony when the body is healthy. Each part does its best for the good of the entire body. With cancer, a few cells in the body decide not to do their part for the greater good, but to act differently and take care only of themselves. They slowly start to destroy the other cells, but finally, without those other cells; they are also destroyed because the whole body dies. That is how people are supposed to operate in the world. They're supposed to take care of each other, for the good of the entire system. If each part only takes care of itself, the system will gradually fall apart. Unfortunately, we can see this reflected in the world around us.

By practicing meditation, I often allow myself to stay with the bitter pill, not to spit it out and not to swallow it – just to leave it in my mouth and slowly let the bitterness disappear. This is analogous to the psychological concept of fight/flight response. I don't fight and I don't flee; I don't burst and I don't repress. This is the same as the Process Work technique of dancing with the disturbance until something else happens.

It is as though the relative world, the dual world, is like a magician, distracting us from one hand by calling attention to the other. That second hand, where the magic really happens, is like the absolute world: it is the real world, but we are disconnected from it. As is written in the book *The Little Prince*: "what is essential is invisible to the eye."

I spent my whole life fighting my mother for space. I didn't give her any space, but I wouldn't allow myself to take space either. My experience on the essence level is that there is room for both me and my mother. The term space is an illusion in the absolute dimension. The experience of time and space doesn't exist in this dimension. There is only this moment, which is perfect, and contains all of existence, all the moments before and after.

The enlightenment I experienced in 1982 introduced me to this world, intensively, without preparation and without understanding. When the feeling of heaven from this period of enlightenment faded, I knew that the purpose of my life was to learn about this world. Since then, I have experienced another kind of very powerful enlightenment, one which is made up of many small, momentary insights. Whenever I receive that grace and get to touch this world, I feel like a person with no more problems.

I know now that it is impossible to live in the absolute world 100% of the time. In our physical body, we must experience the pain of the relative world. But awareness of the absolute world and the ability to touch it every now and again grows right along with our development, and it enables us to experience life differently. I experienced a sudden wave of heaven back in 1982 that didn't last more than a few months; but now I know that I can live in this state of mind just by seeing things differently, and especially my pain and my X energy, both of which are unavoidable in this life. Making my pain, my X energy my allies means going towards heaven rather than hell.

Going back to the two circles I mentioned in the chapter on the Primary Process, if my life before age 31 had been lived in the circles of Doing and Having, meaning that everything I did back then was for my survival, for my successes, for my reputation, or because of feeling of guilt. When I touched the Essence Level, I found another circle, called Being. For the first time, I experienced the place where I didn't have to do anything in order to be someone. I just was. I was my pain; I was my mother's pain; I was also my mother's joy and my own. Of course, it's hard to describe this feeling. It doesn't mean that I didn't do things for myself, but I did them from the experience of being: that is, out of joy and will, and not out of necessity. That is a very big difference.

In Buddhism, the term for this concept is non attachment. On that path, when you do things without attachment you're relaxed, and you're prepared internally for the possibility that things won't necessarily turn out as you might expect. I've had the experience that life is a play, and nothing is really important. That doesn't mean that I can stay in that place indefinitely, but the knowledge has stayed with me ever since; and I sometimes touch it during meditation or during sessions of Inner Work.

During the first years after my experience of enlightenment, I turned my mother's energy, which I experienced as a secondary process, to part of my primary process. I did this by allowing my mother's energy to come out, even if it was negative. There was no more hiding my anger and then have it erupt uncontrollably on my child or husband. Instead, I chose consciously to express it in public, at work and at home. I switched from an automatic flight response to a conscious fight response. Those years, when I let myself consciously express my emotions, the aggressive energy and anger were necessary for my development. I was like a pendulum that was stuck on the flight response until my enlightenment – and then it changed sides.

Gradually, using the tools of inner work, the pendulum settled in the middle. There I could connect to the essence level. At this level I needed neither the fight nor the flight response. There I could just stay with things without responding: there I felt that everything was alright. Pain was alright. Pleasure was alright. I felt that I had exhausted my expressions of anger, and had great compassion for myself and others. I was the one who created the great wall inside, the edge, and when I stopped fighting or fleeing, it became more and more tangible to me that there is no wall. There's no one to fight and there's nothing to flee from. This was an imaginary wall, like a child's dream that perceives the flapping curtain in the night as a witch.

I'm reminded of a story I once heard about a wise king, who wanted to build a maze that no one could get out of. He searched all over the kingdom for a very long time until he found a clever engineer who could fulfill his wish. When the engineer finished building the maze, the king sent the engineer inside.

How did the engineer manage to find his way out?

The answer is, of course, that there is no maze. The maze was an illusion. Another answer is that he levitated above it and found his way out. Essentially, they are the same answer. To solve a problem you have to go to the Essence Level where you can see that there actually is no problem. In Process Work, you climb up in your imagination, above the clouds, to a place with no time or space; and there, in an altered state, you dance the two energies, the X and the U, until you know that there is no problem. Things are perfect as they are. You wake up from your dream, your nightmare.

Mindell writes about it in his book *The Shaman's Body* (1993): "The average person never leaves the domain of consensus reality but dwells within the walls of the

ordinary world; he never touches the perimeter of the unconscious, secondary awareness, or the unknown."

In the story of Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll, Alice leaves the boring consensus reality (CR) and moves to Dreamland, where she experiences fear. When she wakes up from these two worlds and crosses over to the absolute world at the end of the story, she says: "Why am I afraid of you, you're just a stack of cards."

In a similar vein, a Buddhist story tells about a man walking in the woods and seeing a snake. He panics, but then suddenly discovers that it's not a snake but a rope. He's calmed down, but then more people walk through and panic when they see the snake. The man tries to reassure them that it's a rope and not a snake, but they don't believe him. At first he's very angry at them for their ignorance, but then he remembers that he was just as ignorant at one time, and feels more compassion for them. With this compassion, he is more likely to convince them that it's a rope and not a snake, and to wait patiently until they see the truth.

This story represents what I had begun to feel. Most of the snakes in my life turned to ropes. When my boss made me nervous about schedules at work, I would pick up the snake in my mind, shake it and see that it's a rope. My boss saw every project as a large, ominous snake and I began to see them as ropes. This way of seeing things helped me not to panic and to have compassion and love for my boss, even when he was putting pressure on me.

Noticing more and more synchronicity in my life, this story reminds me of something similar that happened to me in real life. When I was on a trip to Thailand with my family, I bought my two-year-old grandson a toy stuffed snake. One morning, when I came back from my early morning walk, I saw five Thai people gathered in the garden of our B&B and looking at something. When I got closer, I saw them pointing at the toy snake I had bought for my grandson looking scared. I picked it and waved at them and they burst out laughing. It was a quantum leap, an energetic jump from hell to heaven. They realized that there was no snake at that moment.

Mindell writes in *The Shaman's Body* that if you think that they (people) didn't understand, then you are the one who hasn't understood, and you need to do more work.

"So first you go backward in your attempt to live your full self. You return to rediscover the world and begin by thinking you have to enlighten others. This is a lonely moment, in which you find yourself sitting with old friends whom you no longer know. The problem is that the others are attached to things that you have partially dropped. And so you find yourself laughing quietly and alone at things that others are not interested in.

But this loneliness is a sign that you have more work to do, for abrupt changes take years to digest. Integrating the ally means living the double all the time." (The Shaman's Body 1993)

Jung also describes the pain and loneliness of this period: "There was a diamond in me, and in the end its presence proved decisive. It overpowered me, and if I was at times ruthless it was because I was in the grip of the diamond. I could never stop at anything once attained. I had to hasten on, to catch up with my vision. Since my contemporaries, understandably, could not perceive my vision, they saw only a fool rushing ahead."

I find that my way of coping with this loneliness is to be thankful and pray. Every day I thank the universe for these insights, and every day I pray for more help. I try to connect to the energy of the universe and to hear what my next step should be. I noticed that the moments when I'm able to connect with the energy of the universe, are when I know for a fact that I'm "innocent," I'm fine just as I am. And I know not in my head, but in my heart and in my gut.

I don't mean to suggest that I spend most of my time in this wonderful place although I wish I did, and I can't reach this experience intentionally either. But I do remember it, and I practice it. The main difference in my behavior is that when I fall, I know that I'm falling, and that getting up doesn't take me as long as it used to.

Here a wonderful poem from Sogyal Rinpoche's book *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* (1993). The poem is called "Autobiography In Five Chapters."

1) I walk down the street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I fall in.

I am lost... I am hopeless.

It isn't my fault.

It takes forever to find a way out.

2) I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I pretend I don't see it.

I fall in again.

I can't believe I'm in the same place.

But it isn't my fault.

It still takes a long time to get out.

3) I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I see it is there.

I still fall in... it's a habit.

My eyes are open.

I know where I am.

It is my fault.

I get out immediately.

4) I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I walk around it.

5) I walk down another street.

Chapter 3 –Inner Landmarks Through Therapeutic Process Work

In this chapter I describe a number of sessions that were meaningful and life altering for me. Some of the therapists I mention were certified process work therapists, some were students in my class and some were sessions where I worked with myself (Inner Work). All of them are based on what we learned during our Process Work studies.

My Boss

I tell the therapist about the tremendous difficulty I'm having with my boss. I want him to allow me to take half a day off a week at my own expense, so I can keep studying Process Work. He makes it very hard for me, and asks me to show him a detailed plan of our class schedule. His mechanical sounding voice annoys me and I feel contempt for him, I think he doesn't understand anything, I don't know how to get that detailed schedule; all I asked for was a few hours a week at my own expense. I know it won't affect my productivity at work. He knows me and he knows I'm a good worker; how can he not trust the fact that working a few hours less one day a week won't affect my productivity?

He also knows that I can make up that time if necessary. How can he not trust me? I have a lump in my throat just thinking of him. He makes me feel helpless, as though he's much stronger and he doesn't care about me enough. I miss my father who spoiled me, gave me whatever I wanted. I'm angry at my boss and I hate him; I feel like he's suffocating me and causing me to suffer.

The therapist asks me to describe both energies: X and U.

X Energy - my boss:

Cuts across you, straight as an arrow, boring, has no feelings, doesn't blink when he says: "No", a liar, has no fear of anything, task oriented like a machine, horribly square, manipulative, false, has a fake smile, well-spoken and articulate, forceful.

U energy - Me:

Free, messy, likes fun, interesting, needs air and space, breathes deeply, full of feelings.

We do a role-playing

Me as U: I'm afraid of you.

Therapist as X: (in a mocking voice) What are you going to do about it?

Me as U: (without hesitation, with a look of a murderer in my eyes) I'll kill you. (pull out an imaginary gun).

(The therapist observes that this is Zen energy. Swift and sharp).

We switch roles.

Me as X: Do what I tell you, or everyone will be able to see that you killed your mother.

Therapist as U: Don't you dare say that to me ever again!! If you do, I'll kill you.

I'm crying. I've crossed an edge, I'm connecting to my pain and my inability to kill this voice inside me.

We switch roles again.

Therapist as X: Do what I tell you, otherwise something bad will happen to you. They'll catch you.

Me as U: (I look him in the eye, I'm not afraid, I don't answer, I'm in another dimension).

Insights:

The primary process says: I'm not free. The secondary process knows that I am.

An edge figure constantly hovers around me, threatening that if I don't do what I need to do, others will accuse me of all sorts of things and I won't be able to prove that I was right. This is my mother's voice, the voice of an angry client I encountered, and in this case, my boss' voice when he says that "there is a price for

not listening to me and having your own way.” This is why I often escape to be on my own. People's demands cause me stress.

I need a homeopathic drop of that mechanical voice: “Do what you have to do, what the job requires, without emotions”. Taking a homeopathic dose of a certain characteristic of someone means to take on a tiny bit of a behavior that seems negative to us, and therefore is marginalized and becomes secondary. This trait becomes very pronounced to us in others, because we deny its existence in us. Taking on and expressing this trait more consciously may contribute to our lives.

I reached the essence level: there was no fear.

Being as straight as an arrow or as free as a butterfly, both these things are an illusion. I didn't attack this voice. I just looked it straight in the eye, and woke up. True freedom is to integrate both voices. True freedom isn't doing whatever I want (being spoiled, like I could be with my father), but to be free of this desire to control, to determine everything. I'm happy, even when I do what needs to be done at work according to the instructions. It's only the instructions; it's not an imaginary voice threatening to kill me. That imaginary voice was inside of me, and I have already killed it.

My Daughter

I'm having a bad day. I feel the depression creeping in. I have no energy, I don't love myself and I want to sleep most of the time. I feel a lump in my throat, like someone's strangling me. I'm having a difficult time breathing. This all started after a conversation with my 36-year-old daughter, Keren, who criticized me. She's in therapy, working on her relationship with me. She complains that I am too busy and don't see her enough, that even as a child I didn't spend enough time with her. She says I don't make enough room for her -- I take up so much space myself.

I feel that her point about not making enough space for her brings up a deep pain in me. I know I felt the same feelings with my mother. She was always busy, surrounded by friends who loved her; and in addition she had to deal with a serious illness. What little energy she had she spent on her friends and not on me. She had no patience for me. I rebelled against her and ignored her, but always envied the attention she got from everybody. I decide to work on this with my therapist.

Therapist: Let's play both roles, the one that takes up all the space and the one who has no space.

(I choose to play the one that takes up all the space.)

Me: (I move around the room flailing my hands all over the place, even over the therapist, to invade his space).

Therapist: (holds up his hands also, trying to take some space for himself).

Me: Why are you trying to take up space? Your role is not to take up space.

Therapist: That's what I felt when you started taking up all the space, I wanted space for myself too.

(I'm asking to switch roles. I don't think the therapist is playing his role as he should. We switch roles).

Therapist: (he moves around the room, flailing his hands all over the place, even over me, to invade my space).

"This whole place is mine." (he says).

Me: (I'm speechless, can't move, I let the therapist have all the space, and after a few seconds of being frozen, I begin to cry).

I sit down and sob. It takes a few minutes. This is the cry of a little girl that has no space for herself, whose mother took over every inch of space, and the girl couldn't do anything about it. The sobbing calms me down. When I was a child, I never cried, certainly not in front of my mother. I pretended to be strong, trying to show that it didn't even matter to me.

After a few minutes I tell the therapist: "And do you know how the story ended? My mother died and I had all the space to myself. I even started sleeping in my parents' bed and took her place there."

Insights:

I understand both energies inside me. One wants to take up space, and the other is afraid to do that, because it could kill her mother. I've passed on both these energies to my daughter Keren. She always had to fight for her space. The lesson for both of

us is to learn how to take up the space that we deserve and that this can be done gently: there's no need to fight for it. When Keren criticizes me, I lose my space, I feel choked for space: I don't know how to protect myself, just as I didn't know how to protect myself from my mother. Keren also feels like she has no space in my life. She thinks she has to criticize me and make me sad to get it.

I realize that when she criticizes me, she is being the little girl who just wants attention, who wants to be the most important thing in her mother's life. Just like the little girl that came up in me during the session. There is a little girl whose mother takes up all the space so that she can't breathe, can't move, can't express herself and then she becomes depressed. The crying released me. When Keren criticized me, I felt as if all my space was taken again. I couldn't defend myself and I got depressed. My mother and I competed over space, and now my daughter and I compete over space all over again. Crying allowed me to connect to that pain and feel released.

Mine and my daughter's primary process: We're afraid to take up space. We feel like we don't deserve it.

Mine and my daughter's secondary process: We take up a lot of space.

My Edge: The fear that my mother or others would die if I take up space.

My daughter's Edge: The fear that her mother would suffer. My daughter knows that her Mom is a single parent and therefore tries not to take up too much space or make her Mom suffer more than necessary.

Another aspect of our primary processes is that we are not good enough, because by wanting to express ourselves and take up space, we both behave egoistically.

Our secondary processes is that we're amazing. We both have a lot to give to the world, and therefore need to learn to take up space in order to express those gifts.

Mine and my daughter's Edge: There is no space for both of us to be good. It has to be one or the other.

I understand that both energies are an illusion. On the essence level, there is no such thing as space. Or alternatively, there is space for both me and her. We both

have to learn to take our space consciously, through our own choice, freely and without any struggle. Just as I heard Mindell say:

"Take your power consciously."

We both have to recognize our own power and our ability to express it, or we get depressed and feel suffocated. Indeed, we both suffer from the same symptoms of suffocation and difficulty of breathing and Keren suffers from mild asthma, as did my mother. We both have to learn to take our place consciously, without guilt or anger. I used to think that I don't express myself out of modesty. I was wrong. The Course of Miracles calls it "false modesty." It says that it is our duty to give back to the universe our gifts and capabilities.

Am I Great?

I was in a Process Work workshop in the north of Israel. I went to A., the organizer who was in charge of the rooms and asked for the key to my room. She said she was busy and to wait a bit. I asked her a second time later, and again she said she was busy, that I had to wait another five minutes. I didn't like her tone of voice: assertive and hard and cold. After the five minutes, I asked her again about the rooms. She answered, in an arrogant and dismissive tone (at least that's how I experienced it) and asked: "Has it been five minutes?" At that moment I lost control. I felt humiliated and offended. Since I was in an altered state, I don't really remember what I said or how I said it, but apparently I spoke with great anger. She answered in that same condescending tone: "You will not shout at me." I left in anger. I felt hell inside of me. I felt like I was no good, not worthy; I was supposed to give a lecture at the workshop, and didn't know how I could do that in the state of mind I was in.

Depressive thoughts flooded my mind, "I am not good enough, I'm nothing, I'm not a good lecturer, not a good therapist, not a good friend, not a good mother, not a good wife, not a good employee". I lost my energy, I felt great despair and I was afraid to go back to everyday life at the end of the workshop. The feeling was that I was unworthy and belonged in the garbage. When I told this to another friend at the workshop, she defended A. and said that she must have been very busy and I had to understand that. I felt helpless, not understood by my friend either and I got angry

with her too. I was alone with this great pain and humiliation. No one could see my feelings.

That evening, at the Sabbath ceremony, I had a moment of relief and love when someone came up to me and hugged me without knowing what was happening to me. This hug gave me strength. I went to my friend who didn't understand me and I hugged her. Immediately after that I went to A. and I hugged her too. She was very moved and told me: "You are great, I'm not at your level yet that I could come and hug you, but you should know that whatever you do, you can't stop me from loving you." I was very moved by her response, I felt relieved but the pain was still there. I knew the pain had nothing to do with A. It was about something deep inside me. I asked for an urgent session with one of the therapists.

As I write this now, I realize again how disproportionate my emotions were to what really happened, but I know that these things happen to me sometimes. I usually calm down after about a day, but still, I'm always surprised how much these difficult feelings overwhelm me.

The course of the session:

Me: What A. did wasn't fair. She's known me for a long time and this is no way to behave.

The therapist: (noticing my intonation, facial expressions and body language).

You're talking like a very young girl, who is very angry at her mother.

(He suggests we role play the mother and child.)

Therapist as Rachel: Mother, tell me that I'm great.

Me as my mother: I'm silent. I can't talk.

We switch roles.

Me as Rachel: Mother, tell me that I'm great.

Therapist as my mother: You're great, you're amazing, you'll get very far. You are amazing.

(At that moment I remember one of my aunts telling me that my mother had once told her that she trusted me to get very far. I had never heard it from her).

(Is it a coincidence that just before this session A. told me I was great)

Me as Rachel: (I don't talk, I can't believe what my mother said, it seems unreal to me).

We switch roles again.

Therapist as Rachel: Mother, tell me that I'm great.

Me as my mother: You're great, you're amazing, you'll get very far.

(I was the one saying it, but I didn't feel connected to it. I am still on the edge.)

Insights:

I wasn't able to cross the edge in that session but at least I saw it very clearly.

Can I be my own internal or spiritual mother, and give strength to myself? Can I be the ultimate mother to that little girl inside of me who needs her mother to love and support her? Whenever I'm conflicted with anyone, I'm immediately flooded with the feeling that my mother wouldn't protect me. Not only wouldn't she protect me, but she could side with the other person. I'm alone and I can't prove that I am not to blame, and that what the other person is doing to me isn't fair.

Primary process: I am small.

Secondary process: I am great (but I couldn't cross the edge and experience it, even though A. told me that I was).

As I write this paper I'm reminded of a short exercise I did during one of the workshops. We were asked to connect to a difficult feeling that we experience on occasion, amplify it and see what comes up. I thought of the feeling of helplessness, the unwillingness to meet or talk to people, sluggishness and a lack of joy. I looked at what was happening in my body, and it felt like something was lodged in my chest, as though I wanted to vomit that thing that was lodged in my chest. I closed my eyes and tried to amplify this difficult feeling in my body. To my surprise, an

image of my mother and me came up. My mother passed by me very fast and said: "You're no good."

Now, as I think back on this experience, I'm not sure my mother ever said anything like that to me, but it is clear to me that that was how I experienced it in my childhood. This image that unexpectedly came up was not an explicit memory. My memories are of an angry mother, throwing and breaking things -- of being afraid of her power (and of my own power as well). There was always a voice inside me that said: Mother is a worthwhile human being and you're not. This voice was lodged in my chest, suffocating me. It's what I wanted to throw up. I know that during the experience of enlightenment that I had in 1982, I did throw up that voice inside of me, without even being aware of it. That was why I felt then the flow in my body and the sense of release, and the immediate connection with a lot of love for my mother and for myself.

Little You and Big You

This is a dream I had: I'm out in nature, on a hike. I go into an improvised bathroom. When I come out, before I have a chance to wash my hands, I see Danny in front of me. He comes up to me and wants to hug me, and I'm worried because I haven't washed my hands yet. I wake up.

Therapist: Who is Danny to you?

I: Danny is a member of the Thich Nhat Hanh Sangha. I see him once a week. He's a tall, beautiful, very spiritual, noble man. He reminds me a bit of my father: a kind of a perfect human being.

The therapist asks me to close my eyes and imagine that I come out of the bathroom, and that Danny comes over to me. I close my eyes and re-experience the situation. I feel the fear inside me. The fear that noble Danny will know who I really am -- that I'm dirty, that I didn't wash my hands.

The therapist asks me then to close my eyes and be Danny who sees Rachel coming out of the bathroom. I stand up, close my eyes and become Danny. I feel a lot of love and inclusion, I want to hug little Rachel, give her strength and tell her how much I love her. I recognize her fear, but I know that she has nothing to fear. I'm in a different dimension. Everything is love and inclusion. Everything is alright. I stand

in this state for a very long time. I feel that time doesn't exist. I could stand like this forever. I don't move and I don't get tired. I'm made of love, and I'm sending it to Rachel. I say in a voice that isn't mine: "You have nothing to fear, I love you just as you are, even when you haven't washed your hands after going to the bathroom".

When I open my eyes I feel calm, peaceful and happy.

Insights:

I crossed an edge during this session. I connected straight to the essence level. I connected with big self, encountering little self and giving it a sense of love and peace.

PP - I come out of the bathroom dirty. I'm not good enough for Danny. This is my low social level. I'm Rachel Oliver, the orphan from Jaffa. I come out of the bathroom and I didn't wash my hands.

SC: Danny represents the perfect human being. He has a higher rank than me, on the social, psychological and spiritual levels. He is scary.

Edge: I'm afraid of perfection. I'm afraid of the best.

Edge figures: My father who I felt was perfect and my mother who criticized me all the time.

X Energy: Represented by Danny. I'm perfect. I'm better than you. This is the little self who is pleased with itself. The part that often looks down on people.

U Energy: In the dream, it's me. I don't want to meet Danny. I want to go away, to be free and not let you see how wrong I am. This is the little me that's ashamed of itself and does not accept its faults.

I tried to be Danny, but then unexpectedly jumped immediately to the essence level. I experienced the big self looking at little self and transforming it.

The cross over into the big self mediates between the little self that's ashamed of itself (U energy) and the big self that's pleased with itself (X energy). They are both an illusion. There is no place for shame and there is no place for pride. There is a place for earthy, material things - the bathroom, desires, shortcomings, and there is a place for spirituality, virtues and beauty. There is no need to feel shame for the

former or pride about the latter. It is about simply being. My lesson is: accept your negative parts and don't be ashamed of them. On the other hand, don't be too proud of your positive parts and do not try to show them off. I think this is true happiness. Be whoever you are, without shame or pride.

Gary Reiss, the director of the Process Work program in Israel writes in his book *Leap into Living* (2004),

"Every time we think that we cannot do, think, feel or express a certain thing, and then we risk doing it anyway, we risk the death of the little you for the big you. The big you encompasses all parts of a person, including not only the fixed identity, but also the growing parts of the self."

I'm in Love with God

I worked with a therapist on a dream that was very meaningful and very unclear to me.

The dream: I'm in my parents' house in Tel Aviv, the one I lived in from age 10 to 23. Tammy (my employee) comes in late at night, after a night out. I'm asleep in bed, hear her come in but pretend to go on sleeping. I sleep in the bed my mother slept in until she died when I was 14. I sleep on her side, but the bed is flipped, like a mirror image.

Tammy comes in quietly, enters through the living room and goes to the balcony. (In reality it was very big, and you could reach it through the living room as well the bedroom). She uses the living room to get to the balcony, and then walks over to the bedroom part, and thus I can see her. She stands on a chair in the first floor balcony and waves to someone downstairs. I see her from the bed and continue to pretend to be asleep. Tammy steps off the chair and comes over to the bed and wakes me. I look at her, pretending to be waking up, and see that she's wearing a lot of makeup, and looks very beautiful. I remember that today is Purim, a holiday when everyone dresses in costume. Tammy is looking at me and is about to tell me something. I know exactly what she's going to tell me. And she says: "I'm getting married." (This is when I woke up).

The session: I had no idea what that dream meant. I had the dream during a Vipassana workshop, at a time when I felt much centered and after having another

strong experience of enlightenment, which I will describe later. During this time, I felt that the guilt that had accompanied me all my life had disappeared completely.

Therapist: Who is Tammy to you?

I: Tammy is my employee; we have many conflicts. Her work is very weak, she's insecure and she gets very angry with me when I give her feedback. She's a nice, beautiful girl, but very anxious and aggressive when she feels hurt. She is often aggressive towards me, and says I remind her of her father who was a very strong man.

As I'm telling the therapist about Tammy, I see the parts in myself that remind me of her.

The therapist suggests that I play Tammy, stand up on a chair and wave goodbye to the guy downstairs. I do it but don't feel anything meaningful. The therapist then suggests that he play Tammy, and I'll be the boyfriend downstairs.

The therapist walks away, climbs a chair and waves at me. I look up and see him waving to me. I burst into tears as a strong memory comes up. I remember the day my father committed suicide when he was 84. The therapist standing on the chair recreates the exact height and angle I saw my father through the shutters, hanging.

There was a beam in the balcony's ceiling and he hung himself from it. His wife found him, called and asked me to get there as fast as I could. I arrived with my partner at the time, while my sister and her husband were already there.

I wanted to see him hanging there but they wouldn't let me. I tricked them, and went downstairs. I knew I could see into parts of the balcony from the street, and I thought maybe I could see him through the half opened shutters. From downstairs I looked up, and saw my father suspended from the beam. Of course, the image was not quite clear through the shutters, but I could still recognize the striped shirt he was wearing. I remember myself standing on the sidewalk late at night, watching my dead father and sobbing bitterly. I lost my father whom I loved and admired so much.

I'm standing with the therapist, crying on his shoulder. An healing, freeing cry. I tell him: "I said goodbye to my father, I'm in love with the true God. I'm marrying the

true God. God is nature, life. I'm saying goodbye to the illusion that my father was God. My father was a great man but he was not as perfect like nature or like God."

Insights:

The different parts of the dream:

The dream ego lies in bed and worries about Tammy and also feels ashamed and guilty for pretending to be asleep.

Tammy represents the insecure part that is released and acknowledges its greatness.

Tammy's boyfriend is the part which is released from the fantasy of the perfect father and finally says goodbye. This part accepts the father's imperfections – the fact that at the age of 84, he broke down and committed suicide. This part is even angry at my father for leaving his daughter and not letting her take care of him at the end of his life.

My edge was to challenge my fantasy that my father was perfect, and I would never be able to reach his level. A lot of my inner criticism was there.

My edge figure was my mother, reinforcing this illusion and saying that I was "wrong". Crossing this edge meant finding out that my father wasn't perfect and saying goodbye to him. It also meant saying goodbye to the image I had of him and the image of myself I aspired to. That of being perfect. This image was, however, threatening and frightening because I terrified of failure.

Essence level: When Tammy goes to her mother, she tells her that this is it, she said goodbye to her father. She no longer wants to compete with her mother over the attentions of her father. She is going to marry God, nature, life. Purim is a sacred holiday in Judaism. According to Kabbalah, It's the most sacred holiday. This is my enlightenment: the enlightenment that allows me to live my life without guilt, without competition, without a desire to prove myself -- to just be.

To conclude, this dream is about transformation. In the dream I am Tammy's mother, waiting for her to return after a night out, lying awake but in fact hiding it from Tammy. Tammy and her boyfriend, to whom she says goodbye, represent my SP, and those two figures experience transformation. The boyfriend experiences the transformation when he (that is me, when I see the therapist on the chair) separates

from the ideal father. Tammy experiences the transformation through her costume and through her intention to marry God, which means connecting to loving myself and others.

Am I Right or Am I Guilty?

I tell the therapist about a conflict between me and a friend of mine that left me in a deep depression. My friend Ruth is a responsible, serious woman who is afraid of conflict.

I was traveling with her and two other friends abroad. I was happy and loved traveling with them. The two other friends took off on their own one day, and we planned to all meet for lunch. We waited for about an hour in the rain, but they didn't come. My friend was very angry, so I suggested she go for a walk, go shopping, and I would keep waiting for them. She took me up on my offer, and so I waited in the rain alone. We kept texting them, but they didn't respond. I thought that their behavior was irresponsible and inconsiderate, but I didn't let it bother me, and I felt that I could still enjoy myself.

In contrast, my friend Ruth was really, really angry. After touring the shops for a while she came back, still annoyed, and we decided to get lunch on our own. After lunch, which was tense, Ruth kept looking for ways to try to find the other two. I felt that compared to Ruth, I was pretty calm and could enjoy the day, but she just kept getting more and more annoyed. We went back to the shopping mall. Ruth waited at the entrance and I quickly looked around to try to find them, and I did find them there eventually.

When I met them they began to explain how miserable they were, how hungry they were, and that they were so late to meet us because they got held up buying a pair of shoes. I put them in one of the restaurants and went to get Ruth. We sat there, the four of us; they ate, and Ruth and I kept them company. No one mentioned what had happened and I felt that it was wrong not to talk about it. Even though I was in a good mood, I thought we shouldn't just ignore what had happened without talking about it, both because I saw Ruth's suffering that day, and because I believed it was wrong not share our feelings of frustration and our experience of their "disappearance."

I started the conversation and said that it was not easy for us, waiting for them and not knowing where they were, and I said that it wasn't responsible of them to forget themselves like that. As soon as I used the plural - it wasn't easy for us, Ruth snapped at me and said that I shouldn't speak for her. She said that as soon as she saw them, how miserable they were, all her anger dissipated and she was fine now. I couldn't believe my ears and I could feel the anger rising in me now, thinking about how manipulative she was, and I responded very aggressively. We were both shouting at each other, using bad language. After a few minutes of mutual yelling, there was silence. I burst into tears. I felt insulted. I was deeply depressed. All my joy was gone. The happiness and serenity I had felt earlier was gone.

(As I'm writing about it now I can see more clearly my own self-righteousness in that situation, the same self-righteousness that I show whenever I intellectually comment on my daughter and my husband's behavior, on the principle of "not avoiding or suppressing anything".)

I felt that the whole trip was destroyed for me. I was no longer happy and free. In the evening, the four of us tried to talk about it and my friend Ruth again said that I was being selfish on this trip, that I was thinking too much about myself and not enough about the others. I hated Ruth that day and the next. I felt helpless because of the injustice she caused me. Her accusing me of being selfish was a complete contradiction to how I felt, which was that I was taking care of everyone, in control of my own emotions, and helping to resolve many conflicts that came up between us and other people on that trip.

During the session I couldn't cross the edge and could not accept the fact that I'm not perfect. This edge kept me stuck in anger towards Ruti.

Insights:

My great sensitivity to what Ruth had said brought on a deep depression and led to my hating her, and, of course, hating myself as well. This conflict brought up my anger against my manipulative mother, who was always angry and discontented, lost control and hit us at home, while in public she was always beloved, friendly and funny. Confronting her made me feel wrong and that I had no chance to ever be right. Loving my mother, agreeing with her and forgiving her, was like admitting that I killed her by being a "bad girl".

I was trying so strongly to prove that I was right and good, that I could not see the other side, represented by Ruth I could not love her. I was at war with my Mom, (whom Ruth represents), and there were only two options. Either I was right (and Mom was wrong), or I was guilty of mistreating her and that means I was wrong and bad. The later was very scary as that means that she died because of me (a blame I heard many times).

It was difficult to cross the edge and find another possibility – that we are both OK.

PP - Am I right or am I guilty?

SP- I'm neither right nor guilty. I can forgive myself and the other.

I was stuck between being right and being guilty, which made me feel depressed.

Crossing the edge would be to understand Ruth, see her side and forgive her and the other two friends. It would mean understanding me, loving myself and accepting my feelings. If I could cross that edge then, I would be released from my depression and my hatred for Ruth and myself.

Edge figures: my mother, telling me that I'm selfish, inconsiderate, naughty, and that I will be the death of her. Also my neighbors, my family and my sister who agree that I'm too naughty and selfish.

There is a great fear of crossing the edge, which would mean being able to live even when others are accusing me. I can't admit that I'm not perfect, because that would mean admitting that I'm guilty and wrong. I can't admit that I'm not perfect, because that would mean admitting that I killed my mother. Crossing the edge would mean seeing the other side as well, seeing that I could forgive my mother and those around her who were concerned for her wellbeing. It would mean that I can forgive myself for being a playful, free little girl and feeling very lonely and miserable whenever they criticized me. It would mean that I can talk about my own feelings without being self-righteous and proving to other people that they are wrong. It would enable me to accept that I have a part of me that is selfish, and that it is OK. This part helped me to survive. It helped me to live and be happy, not only when everyone agreed with me, but also when they were hurt by me and resented me.

I crossed that edge a few days after the session. I called Ruth and I told her how much I love her. It was like telling my mother I love her.

Kissing the Frog

I tell my therapist about my anger towards Ronnie, whom I work with. He has a very high position in the company, and he determines people's fates. I think he is taking advantage of a friend of mine at work. She's in love with him and they occasionally have sex together. He doesn't want a relationship with her, but he likes her and shows her preferential treatment at work. I'm the only one at work who knows about their secret relationship. I resent Ronnie, his audacity to have a sexual relationship with an employee, his preferential treatment of her, the fact that he promotes her at the expense of others, including me. Sometimes I feel a strong need to blow the whistle, to inform his superiors about his sexual relations with my friend, but then I also feel bad for her; she's in love with him, which sometimes causes her a lot of suffering, although she also gets many benefits from their relationship. My anger towards him is interfering with my work.

The therapist asks me to describe Ronnie's energy and my own, and to make the two energies dance.

X is Ronnie's demanding energy. He is someone who uses women and then discards them. A cold person, who acts out of self-interest, without any emotion, like a disciplined soldier.

U is my energy, which only wants mutual love, hugs, freedom, and emotional openness and clarity.

The therapist guides me in a meditation where I breathe in and out and slowly begin to see myself floating in the sky, above the clouds. I feel like there is no gravity, no time or space. I enter an altered state of consciousness. Again, I'm asked to dance with both energies and gradually find a common dance that suits them both. I find myself embracing the disciplined soldier in me. I sing him a lullaby – a Bulgarian lullaby that my father used to sing to me.

When the meditative state ends and I open my eyes, the therapist stands vis a vis and says in a harsh voice: "I am a man who throws women away, a strong man who uses women and I'll use you too." I look him straight in the eye, and suddenly I have a lot of compassion for him, I see how he needs love. I'm not sure who is using whom: is he using my friend or is she using him? He seems fragile and I embrace

him. It's as if I'm embracing the disciplined soldier in me, the soldier who is so afraid that cannot have any emotions and can only rely on his self-control. I often act in the same way, I ignore my emotions so that I can survive. Can I embrace that part of myself, forgive it? Can I kiss the frog in myself? Maybe if I kiss the frog it will turn into a prince. I want to kiss them all, lonely Ronnie, my friend who's in love with him, as well as myself, jealous of her unfair promotions. I can see how we are all afraid and we all need love. We're all frogs who need to be kissed.

I have crossed the edge. With the love I feel inside me I'll know what to do. I'm not concerned.

I Give Birth to Myself – Inner Work

Here I will describe a meaningful session of inner work that I did in the presence of our student group and Process Work teacher.

I sit on the floor and feel a lump in my throat. I am very familiar with it. I've noticed that I'm in the proprioceptive channel and I allow myself to fully experience my feelings. Something is suffocating me and I notice that I'm in a very narrow and crowded passage (visual channel). I need to go through something, but there's no space. I'm afraid to go through. It's this fear that suffocates me. I don't want to move. I can't move. Suddenly I get a very strong feeling that I'm about to come out of my mother's womb and I don't want to. I'm afraid. I'm afraid of the outside world. (The world channel is very strong and I feel I'm fighting the whole world. I know this experience of fighting against the world from my everyday life).

But I must come out, my mother isn't feeling well; if I stay in too long I might kill her. They are trying to force me out. Who is it? They are physically pushing me (I recall at that moment that I was told that my mother was induced). I start to move, switching to the movement channel. I start to move because I have to, but I don't want to. I'm still suffocating. I move and then stop. Am I on an edge? I can't move. "Mother," I say, "I don't want to come out, stop pushing me." This is in the auditory channel. I see a narrow, dark passage now (visual channel), a scary passage. I'm stuck, I can't move.

I move to the meta-communicator position and tell myself: "Maybe you can be your own mother, become a mother". Fine, I will be a mother. Maybe that will allow me to move on. I become a mother; I try to give birth to Rachel. Suddenly I have a lot of love and energy, very present in the movement channel again. I'm lying on the floor with my legs in the birthing position and I sigh, breath, push. It feels almost like having an orgasm during sex. I get lost in my own sensations. I'm really giving birth, another minute and she's out. I'm alive, pushing, fighting, and loving: a lot of life and energy. And that's it, I did it. The baby's out. I lie down, completely relaxed; it is stronger than having an orgasm. I am completely loose – crying -- I'm happy.

Insights:

Following this experience, I felt like I was floating all day. It was a feeling of heaven. I was very peaceful inside; I had great patience and love. I was the therapist for some of the group members that day and felt that I was channeling God in those sessions. I experienced being my own mother, and it gave me a sense of release.

PP: I am stuck and suffocating

SP: I'm a mother, happy to give birth to her daughter and experiencing flow and clear passage.

My Edge was to become the mother that I thought I didn't love nor appreciate. Agreeing to become a mother is to say that she was right and I was wrong. I was opposing Mom all my life, and agreeing to take her role and become her was beyond a great edge for me.

I crossed the edge when I agreed to become a mother. Once I took on my mother's energy, I gave birth to myself. I gave birth to a new Rachel.

Sometimes the processes happening are not clear enough and they feel like miracles. The sense of serenity, happiness and completion that I felt that day was like a great miracle. I think I understand it, but maybe I don't, maybe I don't need to understand everything. What is clear to me is that the experience was very real, and that leaves me with the deep understanding that all suffering is in our minds -- it is created within us. When something changes inside us, the suffering is gone. Our external reality doesn't need to change for us to stop experiencing suffering.

All I can do after an experience like this is to say thank you: Thank you to the universe, thank you to the group, thank you to the therapist, thank you to my mother, thank you to me, thank you to the world.

The Eighth Step

In this session I worked with the therapist on something that happened to me one morning. It was so strange that it seemed like a dream.

Early one morning I took my daily walk to the beach. After about half an hour of walking, I saw a beautiful and very unique bird lying wounded on the asphalt on a side street. I don't remember having ever seen a bird like that in Israel before. I really wanted to do something to help the bird, but I didn't know what. I'm very bad at taking care of animals, and a little afraid of them, even though I really like them.

I tried to ask people on the street for their help with the bird, but no one had time. I called the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, but they also said they couldn't help in this case. Out of options, I abandoned the bird and walked on to the beach, telling myself that I would keep an eye out for it on my way back. But on my way home I must have forgotten all about it. As I got home and walked up the stairs, I was astonished to see the same bird lying there, in the same position, on one of the steps that lead up to my house. I was shocked. How could the wounded bird get all the way to my house? What was its message?

I knew it was the same bird because it was so unique, or maybe it was the other bird's mate. After all, my house is half an hour's walk away from where I first saw the bird. None of the people I spoke to knew me or where I live. How could this wounded bird get to my house? I knew this had to be one of those strange dreams that happen to us in life, and that there was probably a message there for me.

To me, this wasn't a real bird, but some entity that had come to tell me something. While it sounds completely implausible, I had no other explanation for this strange phenomenon. I immediately called one of my neighbors known for helping animals. The neighbor took the bird into his house. He fed it and cared for it, and every day I

would stop by his place, asking after it, hoping that it had recovered and flown away. Three days later, he told me that the bird had died and he buried it. He also said that he knows every type of bird in the country, and that he'd never seen one like that before. I wasn't surprised. I knew it was a bird from another world.

The therapist asked me which part of this surprising event was the most interesting for me. I said that it was climbing the stairs to my house and finding the same bird I had seen before just lying there, how stunned I was. He asked me to go back to the event, and imagine myself climbing up the stairs. Because he noticed that I was in a movement channel, he asked to enact it.

I closed my eyes and started to climb the stairs in my mind. As I was climbing, I started counting the stairs, and on the eighth step, I saw the bird. While I was in that experience, the therapist asked me: "What does the number eight mean to you?" I immediately remembered that in every spiritual book that I read, chapter eight always speaks to me in a special and meaningful way, as though the eighth chapter is particularly spiritually resonating for me. Because I read many books and like to mark my favorite sections, I had noticed this interesting phenomenon. For me, the eighth chapter is like ascending to a higher spiritual level. The therapist asked me to imagine that I was on this spiritual eighth step, and to see what would happen.

I start to feel like I'm floating and went into an altered state. I felt as if I'm floating in the sky, looking down on earth, seeing many people I know: my friends, my family and also myself. I see Rachel suffering just like everybody else down there. I try to talk to them, to reassure them, to tell them that everything is alright, that they have nothing to fear, but they won't listen. They can't hear me. I understand that and decide to stop talking to them but I caress them instead.

I caress myself, everyone around me, and other people far away that I don't even know. They can't feel me caressing them, but I notice that something in their faces relaxes, their breathing slows down and they seem less in a hurry. Suddenly they notice the other people around them and try to communicate with them. They have more time, more patience and are curious about what happens around them and experience more love. I begin to cry and come out of the altered state. I'm back to the room and feel relaxed, calm and full of love.

Is the bird the essence? The bird has no physical limitations, it can go from one place to the other in no time, it is a bird with no concept of space and time. That's why it can be here one moment and there the next. Did it come to give me a message? Did it come to tell me that there is nothing to fear? To emphasize that only love is really important? I completely agree with it, it's just that sometimes I forget. Thank you again for reminding me. I often need to be reminded of this.

I Talk about Love

During one of our Process Work classes, the teacher guided us in meditation to connect with nature, before bringing in any particular topic.

I feel very relaxed, and suddenly find myself in the desert. There are a lot of people in the desert around me and I remember the Exodus - the Israelites escaping from Egypt. I am swept with longing for this place and my eyes fill with tears. When the meditation is over the teacher asks us to work in pairs and share our experiences. I feel that my experience was very strong. My partner sees that I'm very excited, and suggests that I go first. She'll be the therapist.

She asks me to go back to the experience of being in the desert with all those people. As I go back I once again feel very excited. I hear them asking me to speak, but I can't. I try to say something, but I stutter.

The therapist asks me to talk, because everyone's waiting to hear what I have to say, and suddenly I get scared again. I feel that I have something important to say, but I'm scared. I ask the therapist if she's sure that people want to hear me, and she says yes, everyone's waiting, all the people in the desert. I start yelling, screaming. My screams come from a different place, a different state of consciousness. I throw up a little into a bucket that the therapist brings me, and continue to scream. Someone is screaming from inside of me, it's not even tiring. The screaming lasts a long time and at some point I experience the people beginning to stone me, and at another point, the image of Moses comes up. There is no way for me to cross that edge and speak. My fear and terror are too great. Finally, I calm down, come back to reality and feel a great sense of relief. The therapist hugs me and says softly: "I wanted to hear you speak very much". I start to cry.

Insights:

I don't have enough experience with re-incarnation therapy to know if this was an episode from my own past. I know that the feeling that I have new things to say which are ahead of my time comes up in me often. This fear is very familiar to me. The sense of suffocating that I often experience may possibly come from things that want to come out, but don't. I may have experienced an old trauma of being stoned by the masses after speaking out about unacceptable things. Who knows?

This experience explains the sense of serenity that I often feel after giving a Dharma talk to a group, or privately to individuals. I feel that my destiny is to talk about love. And I also know that fear of being misunderstood, the fear of being "stoned" in the town square. I know the doubt that comes up in me, the contempt that I get from my edge figures. This time I crossed an edge when I screamed and connected with a deep pain, but couldn't yet cross the edge of overcoming the fear and speaking.

This reminds me that during many sessions of group process, I would suddenly begin talking about love. The teacher would point out to me to that I was double signaling: talking about love and at the same time moving my hands violently and my voice sounding harsh and angry. My understanding of the secondary process is this: my anger about not being believed, my fear of being looked down upon are expressed through my tone and my hands (auditory and movement channels).

The edge figure is the same one which threatens me whenever I talk about love, which doesn't believe me and looks down on me and tells me that I'm not good enough to talk about love. When I embrace this figure, when I recognize it in my mother and in myself, when I accept it and even begin to identify with it, I can talk about love quietly and calmly. In those moments I accept the negative parts of me embrace them and talk about love together with them.

The essence of what I learned from these experiences

I can see very clearly how the tools of Process Work enable me to follow a continuous theme through my life. This theme starts in deep sleep with a lot of suffering and no meaning, and continues with the understanding of suffering and then I move on to freeing myself. When I re-read the descriptions of the different

sessions, I recognize that in every one of them I go through all three processes: suffering, understanding the suffering, and release.

About suffering:

I notice that my suffering includes the feeling of being a victim, that I am misunderstood, that everybody but me is stupid, that everybody but me is wise, that I am bad, my mother is bad, I'll never be as good as my Dad, I'm right and people do not notice, I'm to blame and fear being caught, I'm not worthy and don't deserve anything.

At this point I believe my suffering.

Understanding my suffering:

To do that, I play the role of the victimizers, I shape shift into their parts.

I realize I am exactly like them.

I am exactly like my mother, my daughter, my difficult friends, my boss.

I am my own biggest critic.

Releasing my suffering:

This tends to happen spontaneously in most sessions. I get in touch with the sentient level, go into an altered state. I then experience compassion and self-love, as well as compassion and love for others. In this state I have a lot of energy and am powerful. These are the signs that I have crossed the edge. These are the signals of the quantum leap from hell to heaven.

Chapter 4: The renderings of Heaven and Hell by spiritual teachers

The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden

Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden for eating from the Tree of Knowledge.

Genesis 2 8-14:

"Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

Genesis 17-15:

"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die".

Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden, an eternal world without any problems or worries and without the sense that time is running out. They were permitted to eat from the Tree of Life, which guaranteed them eternal life, and took away their sense of urgency and pressure. Once they ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, that knowledge which has a spiritual side as well as a survival aspect, they developed the human qualities of competition, jealousy, shame, disappointment, greed and so on. They actually wanted to leave this paradise and didn't believe in it anymore, thinking that there was something better than what they knew. They brought on the experience of a dual world of good and evil. One could argue that in heaven they had experienced the eternal world (the essence) but then, eating from the tree of knowledge, they fell into the dual world (CR and the dreaming level).

God expelled them from paradise, and in doing so, gave them the right to choose. God understood that it is impossible to just hand things over to man, even if that thing is a life in paradise, because it has to be man's own choice. He threw them into

"Hell," into the dual world that is full of suffering because he wanted them to be able to learn, develop and come to choose paradise on their own. To me, the meaning of life is to develop and grow so that we can choose paradise ourselves. We must make the entire journey in order to get back to where we came from, but this time, by choice.

A Course in Miracles

The Course in Miracles was channeled from Jesus by a medium, a psychologist named Helen Schucman. I practiced the course for many years, and felt the sensation of heaven deepening inside me over time.

The Course in Miracles defines heaven as love and hell as fear. We must choose between fear and love.

In the introduction to the course it is said: "Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God". A similar concept in Process Work: the two energies - X (the disturbing energy) and U (the energy that fears disturbance and wants something else) are both just an illusion. Neither exists. The dance between them illustrates this, and takes us back to heaven: to the feeling of pure love

For me, the similarity between Process Work and "A course in miracles" lies in the level of Process Mind. When you can be in touch with it, you are in fact in a place where both X and U become meaningless and seem like illusions. In this level we are in Unity and no duality of parts or forces is experienced.

According to the course, love is real, it is timeless, and nothing can destroy it. Anything that isn't made of love is an illusion. Anything that isn't made of love is a sickness. Love is unity. The following quote from the course seems to have been taken from a Process Work lesson:

"Unity and sickness can't coexist. The teachers of God choose to look at dreams for a while. It is a choice of awareness. Because they have learned that all choices are made in awareness, with complete understanding of the results. Dreams speak of different things, but who would put their trust in dreams when they know that they are dreams? Awareness of dreams is the true role of the teachers of God. They

observe the dream figures as they come and go, change their places and change themselves, in suffering and in death. But they are not misled by what they see. They understand that perceiving of a dream figure as sick and separated is no more real than perceiving it as well and beautiful. Only unity alone does not belong in the world of dreams. The teachers of God see that which is behind the dream, beyond all appearances, and yet it belongs to them entirely." (The Teachers' Guide, Chapter 12, 6).

This quote stresses that only the merging between the disturbance and the disturbed parts can bring on transformation and development, and in this sense has a similar message as Process Work.

This dream world that is mentioned in the course is parallel to the relative world that has good and bad, and includes both the primary and the secondary processes. According to the course, those who believe that this world is real choose hell, while those who know that it is an illusion choose heaven. Another name for heaven in the course is the peace of God.

In the practical part of the course, one of the lines that is repeated is "peace of God is my will." Here is an explanation for this line, according to the course:

"Wanting the peace of God is to give up all your dreams. Because anyone who wants illusions does not truly mean these words, and therefore is looking for the means to bring about their illusions. They looked on them and found that they are impaired. Now they want to go beyond them, because they understand that another dream will not offer anything more than all the other dreams have in the past. To them, all dreams are one, and they learned that the only difference between them is in their form, because any one of them would bring the same despair and misery as the others" (lesson 185).

This quote explains that although working with dreams is important, it doesn't lead to total freedom. Dreams are part of our SP, however, in order to become truly free we must reach what is beyond them (the essence level). Mindell stresses this idea by developing the second training and by bringing in the work with X and U energies in order to find our way to connecting with Process Mind and experiencing the essence.

The course also mentions the guilt that we all feel and believe in, which causes us to suffer.

"The decline into hell comes, step by step on an inevitable course, once the decision has been made that guilt is real. Now, sickness and death and distress proudly march along across the earth in endless waves, sometimes together and sometimes as dark foam. But all these things, as real as they seem, are illusions. Who could believe in them once they understand that? Healing is therapy or correction... healing the sick is but to bring them to this understanding..." (From the booklet of Psychotherapy, Purpose and Practice, which is an extension of the Course in Miracles and was also channeled by Helen Schucman).

Making the transition from fear to love, from hell to heaven, is in itself a miracle.

The course in miracles doesn't attempt to fix things on the material dimension, but goes after the source of our real problem, which is always at the level of our consciousness. Once we consciously choose love, this will influence our material reality in a manner which we might experience as a miracle. Things will begin to change for the better without any logical reasons. The love in our consciousness creates the love in our lives, and this is the meaning of heaven. Fear in our consciousness creates the fear in our lives, and this is the meaning of hell.

Buddhism: The Four Noble Truths

One of the basic principles of Buddhism is impermanence. Things change all the time, especially emotions, which dependent on changing situations. Love is not an emotion, but a state of mind. Pure love is a state of mind that is not contingent on anything external. It has a deep understanding of the absolute world: a deep understanding that we are all one, that we all suffer and that we all want to be free from suffering. This is reflected perfectly in the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism:

The first truth:

There is suffering in the world (hell).

The second truth:

Suffering is in our mind, in our perception of reality.

The third truth:

It is possible to be free of suffering: to leap from hell to heaven.

The fourth truth:

The way to do that is to choose pure love. This is done through the Noble Eightfold Path, which details how to practice pure love, how to practice so that we can overcome the fear that is created by our ego, and choose love. Here, too, the importance of choice is emphasized. We must choose heaven.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Thich Nhat Hanh is a Vietnamese Zen Master, a poet and peace activist. He had a very difficult life in his homeland of Vietnam, and was forced to flee because of his peace activism during the war in Vietnam. In 1967, Martin Luther King Jr. nominated him as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Tich Nhat Thanh is my Zen Master and I have received the lamp of transmission from him to be a Dharma teacher.

To me, he is one of the great teachers of happiness. His teachings emphasize mindfulness as a practice of happiness. Being here and now, in the present moment, that is truly heaven. Drowning in a sea of our own thoughts racing through our minds, that is truly hell.

I remember my first meeting with him and his group of teachers. Something in me knew that I wanted to be a Dharma teacher too. I asked the teachers "how does one become a Dharma teacher? what should I do to become one?" The answer was that according to Thich Nhat Hanh a Dharma teacher is a person who's learned how to be happy. Twelve years later, just a few minutes before I received transmission to be a Dharma teacher in Thich Nhat Hanh's practice center, Plum Village, one of the senior teachers came up to me and asked me: "Are you happy?" Her question was not about the joy of receiving this honor, but almost a prerequisite for it.

Thich Nhat Hanh says that heaven is not in the Hereafter but rather here, in this world. Walking on this earth is a miracle. We don't need to witness the parting of the Red Sea in order to experience a miracle. We can experience a miracle in every moment, if we are fully present and aware. He says: "When we live in awareness, it is easy to see miracles."

This does not mean that we experience positive emotions at any given moment. Our emotional state is constantly changing. One cannot avoid pain in life. But if we have a deep understanding of the nature of the world and we practice in order to experience the state of pure love, even our most difficult moments will have the potential to allow us to experience happiness as a state of mind.

Thich Nhat Hanh makes the distinction between pain and suffering. Pain is inevitable, but suffering is optional. Resisting pain and thinking that you can avoid it is what causes us suffering. When we have a deep understanding of the essence of life, we surf on the waves of joy as well as the waves of pain. This flow is heaven. We understand that it's possible to grow and learn from every moment, especially the difficult ones. This understanding enables us to experience inner peace even when there is great chaos around us. "Every moment is a new moment. Every moment is a wonderful moment." (Thich Nhat Hanh).

One of the most important practices of Buddhism, which is part of the Noble Eightfold Path, addresses true happiness. Thich Nhat Hanh interprets this practice in the following way: "I realize that true happiness is not possible without understanding and compassion and that pursuing wealth, fame, power and sensual pleasures can bring much suffering and despair. I will practice being awareness that happiness depends on my mental attitude and not on external conditions, and that I can live happily in the present moment simply by remembering that I already have more than enough to be happy."

I love the way Thich Nhat Hanh speaks about happiness so directly. Many teachers speak about peace and serenity, but don't mention the word "happiness." He also often talks about pain. It is important not to suppress our pain, but to understand that it too is part of our happiness. You can't experience happiness without it.

The Dalai Lama

The 14th Dalai Lama is the exiled spiritual leader of the Tibetan people. When he was asked to define Buddhism in one sentence, his answer was: Buddhism means being happy.

I was very lucky to be one of a group of Dharma teachers from Israel who were invited to a meeting with him. Despite his own suffering and the suffering of the

Tibetan people over the last sixty years, he radiates inner happiness. He laughed for most of the meeting, showed a great sense of humor and a lot of good will. His laughter was sincere, unapologetic; starting with a low and deep resonance, rising effortlessly to higher octaves and concluding on a high note of pleasure. In response to many of the questions he was asked, he chose to stay silent for a few minutes, think, and then after a while to say "I don't know the answer to that," shrugging and laughing heartily. He told us that in order to sustain his experience of happiness, he must meditate for several hours every day. He said that true happiness could be a permanent state, which is not affected by the highs and lows of life and the normal fluctuations of our moods, but instead be a fundamental part of our existence.

The Dalai Lama speaks about three principles that we must understand:

- A. I am a person.
- B. I want to be happy and I don't want to suffer.
- C. Other people, just like me, want to be happy and don't want to suffer.

Therefore, we must build new habits when it comes to communicating with the world, based on our similarities rather than our differences. In order to build those new habits that will bring us and others happiness, we need: determination, perseverance and time.

These words of the Dalai Lama remind me of a transformative experience I had in 2006. This experience was as strong as my first experience of heaven, back in 1982, when I felt I was actually being reborn. This experience came about unexpectedly, following several days in which I suffered greatly from being hurt at work. Suddenly, that evening, standing in front of the bathroom mirror, suddenly I felt an inexplicable energy inside and saw myself looking at little Rachel and telling her: "You won't suffer any more." A great surge of indescribable peace and joy arose in me. I saw how Rachel's suffering was insane and irrational. On that day, my life took a very meaningful leap in the happiness dimension. It seemed that I was determined not to suffer any more. At times when I felt that I was about to experience suffering, I remembered that decision and the deep insight that accompanied it, that there is no reason to experience suffering. I'm the one who creates my own suffering, and I can choose not to create it.

Jiddu Krishnamurti

Krishnamurti was one of the greatest educators and thinkers of the twentieth century. He would give talks, which he called "a meditative journey with listeners." When he was asked once about secret to happiness, he answered: "My secret of happiness is adopting an attitude of 'I do not care about what happens', that is, to live without preferences. He said that hell is created as a result of the conflict between what we have and what we think we should have. If we practice pure reflection upon what is, we can touch heaven.

When people asked him what to do in order to be happy, he would say: "There's nothing to do but recognize that fact that when men seek comfort and security, they will inevitably be subjected to suffering. This recognition has its own mechanism. When a person is aware of the fact that he is a prisoner, he doesn't ask what he should be doing, but begins to act, or ceases any action. Out of the recognizing itself comes the action." (Ethics of Observation, Conversations with Krishnamurti, 1960).

He added: "When we recognize that our own thinking is conditional -- something we cannot do as long as we keep pursuing convenience or look for easy solutions -- then all the movement of thinking comes to an end. We are completely still, devoid of any ambition, any coercion, any motives: Only then, there is freedom. Pure love has no motive, while all other actions do." (Ethics of Observation, Conversations with Krishnamurti, 1960).

Unfortunately, I never got to meet Krishnamurti, but reading his books is a meditation for me. When I understand deeply, from my heart and not my mind, that there is nothing to do but just to be, the most effective action grows out of me effortlessly. This is heaven for me, an inexplicable experience, even though I try. I stay with that feeling, as well as the experience of not being able to express it. Abiding with it without any wish to change it is in itself a sense of heaven.

Byron Katie

Byron Katie is a teacher who achieved enlightenment after ten years of depression. One morning, from the depths of despair, she experienced an enlightenment that was life changing. Katie realized that when she believed that something should be different from what it is, she suffered and experienced hell; but when she did not

believe these thoughts, she felt peaceful and experienced heaven. She realized that our attempts to find happiness in fact carry us in the opposite direction. We try in vain to change the world and force it into a shape that goes with our idea of how things "should" be. But if we doubt these thoughts and are open to reality as it is, we can experience unimaginable joy.

"As long as you think that someone or something else is responsible for your suffering - the situation is hopeless. That means being caught up in the role of the victim, and you're suffering in heaven..." (Thousand Names for Joy, 2007)

"A person can be in extreme pain and not experience any suffering whatsoever. How do you know that you're supposed to feel pain? Because that's what you feel. Living life without a miserable life story and loving what is, even when feeling pain - that is heaven. Feeling pain and believing that it is wrong to feel pain - that is hell. In fact, pain is a friend. If I can't get rid of it, then I don't want to. It's a nice guest, and it's allowed to stay for as long as it wants to" (Ibid, 2007).

Katie developed a simple method of inquiry that examines our thoughts. The basis of this method is the principle that if we think exactly the opposite of what we think right now, we'd be equally right. Because thoughts are only thoughts and they're not reality itself. This method is called the work and it is designed to help us to experience the absurdity of believing our own thoughts, as well as help us to experience being free from any thoughts about reality. It also helps us to open us up to allow us to experience everything that is there. Katie asks her clients to pinpoint the thing that would be most painful or scary for them, and say: "I'm willing to allow this to happen," or "I want this to happen," or "I expect this to happen."

Most people cannot find a connection or even say these things, but it forces them to confront, in the deepest way, the suffering in their lives. The purpose of this exercise of saying, "I am willing for the thing that scares me the most to happen" is to allow us to live our lives free of any fear, a life in which we are completely open to reality as it is.

I was fortunate to meet Byron Katie a few times and for me these were encounters with enlightenment. I met her after I had experienced the things that she talks about. It happened in 2006, when I decided that I wouldn't suffer any more, and fully understood that I cannot solve anything by thinking about it. The little Rachel, who tried to solve her problems by endlessly thinking about them, suffered greatly.

When, in a moment of Grace, I was able to be present in the moment and could look deeply and reflect compassionately about my suffering, I was released. I was released, if only for a moment, from the idea of a "separate self" called Rachel, and I was experiencing oneness, reality as it is. The following quote by Katie expresses this experience: "The difference between pleasure and joy is like the distance from here to the moon. Pleasure is an attempt to fill you. Joy is who you are." (About Love, Sex and Relationships, 2006).

To me, this quote from Byron Katie perfectly reflects the experience of the Essence that Arnold Mindell talks about.

Arnold Mindell

In his 1993 book "The Shaman's Body" Arnold Mindell, the father of Process-oriented Psychology, says that hell is when people live their ordinary everyday life without touching the absolute dimension - the Essence.

"After all, being an ordinary person is no fun. You take everything so seriously and personally. You always search for something meaningful to guide yourself with, hoping for enlightening dreams or experiences. As an ordinary person you suffer, are afraid of and expect the worst, and are oblivious to the power of the unknown. You are always defending your identity and your personal history. As a phantom, you constantly worry about others judging you or what the future will bring. You neglect the impact of inexplicable forces, living life as if it were all up to you."

In this quote Mindell stresses that the normal everyday experience and aspirations people have, often bring them suffering. Only by learning to be in touch with greater powers, using our second training and the connection to Process Mind, we can experience true happiness which is heavenly happiness.

Until the age of 31, before my rebirth experience, I lived and suffered through an ordinary everyday life. I thought I was the only one who suffered. I didn't know that it is just ordinary everyday human suffering. The experience of touching heaven, if only for a minute, allowed me to see that there are other worlds worth living for. To me, ordinary everyday life is Sisyphean. Like Sisyphus, we climb up the mountain with great effort, and then fall (only to climb up again). Understanding the illusion of the ordinary is the connection to heaven for me.

Amy Mindell

Amy Mindell, who is a senior teacher and therapist at the Process Work Institute in Portland, and a co-founder of Process-oriented psychology, writes in her 1995 book *Metaskills* about a Japanese Zen master that she and her husband Arny met, whom she felt embodied happiness.

"When the Zen master came in to greet us, his entire body was laughing, his mouth grinned, his eyes smiled and his whole being was enveloped in one huge belly laugh. What a joy to actually find the archetypal buoyant Zen master! Where did this happiness come from? What was the belief behind his metaskill? When we asked him, he said, "Every day is a fine day!" The Zen master greeted every experience as if it were the right one for him to be having. He would say something quite serious and a moment later burst into laughter. The belief that "every day is a fine day" reminds us to trust that even the absurd, the difficult; the painful and mysterious are meaningful, if we are also able to ride the waves of our experiences. If we are sick, if the weather is rainy, it may still be a fine day if we are able to climb inside these perceptions and creatively help them unfold."

In my experience, when it comes to healing individuals and groups, Process Work does bring us closer to touching true, unconditioned happiness.

Rabbi Michael Laitman

Rabbi Laitman is a well-known Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism) teacher in Israel. He calls the higher force "the power of connection." He explains that if we, as people, would only connect to one another and understand the connection inherent in us, our lives would be full of miracles. He argues that if every person on the planet read just one chapter of a spiritual book every day, there would be no more wars. This reminds me of C.G. Jung, who said that the Second World War could have been prevented if he and others would have meditated more.

Rabbi Laitman talks about acknowledging the negative parts of ourselves. He says that once we've acknowledged it and faced it, we shall be healed. Like many other teachings, this is parallel to the Process Work concept of acknowledging our X energy, which is the disturbing energy inside or outside of us.

Rabbi Laitman says that we shouldn't try to change ourselves, because that's impossible, rather acknowledge these parts and let God change us. To him, God is the forces of nature.

Therefore, he who knows the negative parts in himself and can connect to others despite theirs and even thank the universe for what is, will experience miracles in his life. Here again, I find a parallel between this idea and the Process Work method of identifying the process and connecting to all the different parts of it, without focusing on a particular goal. We also have to get in touch with the parts that we're not identified with, the secondary parts, cross the edges and touch the disturbing parts within us (the X energy), and consequently, discover our miracles, such as transient symptoms, improving relationships and letting things falling into place.

Rabbi Laitman often uses the line from Proverbs 10:12: "...love covers all transgressions." This means that we must rise above our own shortcomings and those of others, and avoid pressuring or blaming others for those unpleasant inclinations and properties, that we have as well. We all "sin," but gradually, with love, we can rise above it, stop emphasizing the negative, and then, an unexpected change can sometimes occur. Loving and embracing our difficult qualities as well as other people's enables us to transform. He names this process "the hand of God," and he calls God love.

I often listen to television programs dedicated to Rabbi Laitman's lectures. I've noticed that after I listen to his lectures, something inside me softens; I become more accepting of myself and others, and I discover a sense of miraculous love that can change my internal and external reality in the blink of an eye.

Rabbi Laitman stresses that Hell and Heaven exist here and now, not in the after-life. Heaven is when we treat all parts within us with deep democracy, without marginalizing or worshipping any of them. This enables us to treat others similarly. The experience of accepting all our and other people's parts is the experience of touching Heaven.

Chapter 5: Why I chose to call my dissertation “A Quantum Leap from Hell to Heaven”

Long before I'd started studying Process Work or knew much about Quantum Theory, I'd thought about writing a book and the name, A Quantum Leap from Hell to Heaven resonated with me.

Quantum Leap seemed to capture the personal experience of leaping from Hell to Heaven. As I mentioned before, the initial experience happened at the age of 31. Back then I experienced a flash-like leap from Hell to Heaven. What happened then remains to this day partially a mystery, however, my mind did experience a flash-like understanding that made me happy beyond words. Even though I was relatively ignorant about psychology, philosophy and spiritual teachings, I knew in that moment that this sense of peace and love I felt was very real and independent of external reality. I decided then and there to dedicate my life to understanding this experience. These feelings meant more to me than work, family, career-making or children. And even as the experience itself dissipated with time I knew that I had made an energetic leap, which would be the most meaningful aspect of my life.

Since then, my life has been devoted to voraciously reading any spiritual literature I could get my hands on, following spiritual teachers and my own spiritual practice, receiving transmission from Thich Nhat Hahn to be a dharma teacher, and now completing my studies in process oriented psychology.

I still continue to experience quantum leaps, but now through a conscious changing of state of mind. By switching my perception of reality, happiness often just appears.

Sometimes it feels like I have fallen asleep, “Wake up, wake up,” I can tell myself; and in the blink of an eye, happiness is there once again.

Ramana Maharishi, an Indian spiritual teacher who died in 1950, explained it this way: In response to a student's question: “How do I get to myself?” the Maharishi's answer was: “There is no getting to the self. If you could “get to yourself,” that would mean that the self is not here and now, but has to be acquired. What can be acquired can also be lost, it is impermanent. What is impermanent is not worth our

effort. So I say, there is no getting to the self and there is no acquiring the self. You are yourself right now. The fact is that you are ignorant of your own absolute happiness. Your ignorance rules you, encompasses and covers your pure self, which is absolute light. All our efforts should be directed at removing this veil of ignorance, which is made of misinformation. This misinformation is our identification with the body, with the cumulative recognition and so on. This false identification must be discontinued, and then there is only the self. Therefore, realization is for everybody. Realization does not discriminate between those who seek it. Your very doubt about your ability to become realized and the thought 'I have not realized yet,' are in themselves obstacles." (Maharshi's Gospel: Who am I? 1998)

Hugh Everett, a quantum physics expert in the twentieth century, said that both reality and the self are continuously changing and influencing each other. This theory is different from the seventeenth century Newtonian theory that saw reality and the self as fixed. It is also different from Einstein's twentieth century relativity theory that saw reality as fixed but the self as changing.

Everett claims that the smallest unit is not the atom; it is not solid. It is an energetic unit that consists of particles that constantly appear and disappear. He argues that the act of observing these units changes them, that is to say that when we look at reality, it changes. There is interdependency between us and reality. When we look into these sub-atomic units, it is as if we can hear them saying: "You are not separate from us and we are not separate from you." Rabbi Laitman, who is a physicist, explains this theory by saying that in fact there is no reality. Reality is not outside us, but within us. I love this explanation, which captures my experience that the perception of heaven and hell is completely internal. It is my own perception of reality, and therefore it can change in an instant.

In his book, *Quantum Mind* (2000), Arnold Mindell speaks about the relationship between Quantum physics and psychology. He calls the external reality consensus reality (CR), and our internal reality, which is further away from our awareness, non-consensus reality (NCR). He argues that people tend to marginalize the NCR. He tells the story of Raymond and Melusine, who was a little mermaid. Raymond looked for his true love for years, and one day he saw Melusine coming out of the water. He fell in love with her and asked her to marry him. She accepted on one condition, that they spend every day of the week together except Saturdays. On Saturday, he couldn't look at her. Raymond agreed, but eventually broke his promise. Curiosity got

the better of him and one Saturday, he looked at her. He then discovered that she had a tail. From that day on, Melusine disappeared from his life completely.

This is an excerpt from the book that explains the meaning of the story, and the quantum leap between the two worlds:

"This story speaks about the part of everyone that lives partially in the water – an imaginary part, a soul part, something eternal, "wavelike" and fluid symbolized by Melusine. Our story says that if you view this part with a disbelieving attitude, symbolized by Raymond's doubt, you doubt this part of yourself and this doubt chases it away. The disappearance of Melusine speaks about the doubt and uncertainty that arise from the lack of a relationship to the imaginary NCR aspect of life. It speaks about loss of the wavelike essence of life, the river spirit and process.... When Raymond tries to track Melusine, he loses track of her. Likewise, the physicist who tries to track subatomic particles, loses them as well. These results can be summed up as follows in what physicists call the uncertainty principle: We cannot track a subatomic particle by any method whatsoever (in consensual reality.) The statement within the parentheses is mine. It is not usually included with the rest of the statement in physics."

In this excerpt, Mindell talks about the other reality that exists, but isn't accessible enough to most of us. The leap between these two realities is a quantum (energetic) leap; but we tend to doubt that it is even possible, and so it escapes us.

The following Zen story illustrates the energetic leap between the two states of consciousness, hell and heaven. A Samurai turned to a spiritual Zen master to explain to him the difference between hell and heaven. The Zen master told the Samurai that he was too stupid and would never be able to understand the difference. The man was furious. He immediately drew his sword with every intention to kill the teacher. The teacher stopped him in time, and told him: this experience that you're in right now is hell. The Samurai, who suddenly had a realization, smiled and his face lit up. "The experience that you're in right now is heaven," said the teacher.

In his book, *A Leap into Living* (2004), Gary Reiss mentions our transformative ability to change our lives, in a way that is explained by the theory of quantum physics. He writes that we have something other than solid matter in our bodies, which is

energetic, and that in addition to traditional medicine, we can heal ourselves through our energetic capacities.

“However, if we take the perspective of quantum physics into account, we need to consider the implications of subtler, dreamlike experiences, where time and space themselves are only relative concepts of limited use... modern medicine has not yet moved in the direction suggested by quantum physics... it is time for transformation to a model that includes both body and soul, both physical and spiritual medicine. If we adopt this new perspective, the body, illness and death are no longer solely terrifying, but provide potential for meaningful transformation.”

Reiss talks about disease and the knowledge of death as a transformative tool. I add suffering as another such tool. It was the very hell that I lived in until the age of 31 that perhaps enabled my quantum leap to heaven.

Conclusion

"There is no way to happiness, happiness is the way," says Thich Nhat Hanh.

Another anonymous quote I love, which describes my feelings at this point in my life is: "Happiness is so hard to find, we should learn to be happy without it."

I believe that people can be happy. They just need a different way of relating to life. It's so simple on the one hand, and on the other, its simplicity is what makes it complicated. You can catch it in a moment, and sometimes you have to go through agony to do so. What I know for certain is that happiness has to do with our perception, our recognition, and doesn't really depend on our external circumstances.

I often wonder why some people can suddenly grasp this concept, while others chase some peace of mind (they do not even dare to call it happiness) for years, and never experience it. I have no answer to this question. Some of my best friends resist this idea of happiness. They think that I'm just deluding myself, while they continue to rant and judge and be terrified of disease, old age and death. I don't give up on them, I love them and accept them, but I'm sad that they're suffering through life. I suppose we don't really have a choice about when we wake up. It happened to me quite randomly. Before that experience of waking up, I resisted all psychological or any other professional help from anybody. I believed that my life's path was a difficult one, and there was nothing to be done about it. As I previously wrote, I was ashamed of who I was, I played a persona and I didn't really know who I was.

I love what Mindell says, that all people have the same potential for enlightenment. "I will argue that we are all equally "bright" despite the concept that says some of us are faster or slower than others are. I will argue that non-consensual perceptions such as sentient awareness and lucidity are the same for all sentient beings. In other words, the constancy of the speed of light may be a more universal truth than even Einstein realized." Arnold Mindell – Quantum Mind (2000):

Waking up to the truth does not prevent me from experiencing suffering or pain, but I am determined to practice the path I believe in, so I can touch the truth as often as I can. To me, this truth is reality itself. Being spiritual is being realistic and seeing reality for all its layers. Throughout the years, I have definitely seen a continuous increase in my happiness. The path is full of obstacles, there are many ups and downs, but the direction is clear to me.

This does not contradict what Thich Nhat Hanh says, that there is no way to happiness because he is talking about living without agendas; but it is still important to have a sense of direction, to know where you are headed, and to practice enjoying the path without being attached to a goal.

If my paper has opened the path for even one person, I am satisfied. I'm willing to reveal every detail of my personal life to those who are seeking a way to end their suffering.

If we do touch that wonderful world of pure love (in our essence), no matter how it happens, we have to believe that it's real and that it's always there, even when we can't touch it. We have to find the best way to keep practicing so we can get in touch with this world.

I think the secret is to live in both worlds at the same time. To experience life on earth with all that it has to offer: aspirations, livelihood, everyday experiences, while at the same time never losing sight of the existence of the world beyond. The world in which everything is alright and we are always exactly where we need to be. This means that we shouldn't identify with the earthly world, but observe it from another, more enlightened level. (Once again I'm feeling powerless trying to adequately describe it).

Thich Nhat Hanh describes it quite clearly in his book *The Heart of the Buddha's Teachings* (1998):

"We have to live in the historical and ultimate dimensions of reality at the same time. We have to live deeply our life as a wave so we can touch the substance of water in us. We walk, look, breathe and eat in a way that we touch the absolute dimension of reality. We transcend birth and death and the fears of being and non-being, one and many."

Maybe, what I really want to say is that there is no need to change anything. We are all wonderful and beloved.

Epilog

Writing the dissertation made me realize what a special tool Process Work is for understanding suffering, happiness and for personal as well as collective transformation.

And for the Buddhist students among us, I hope you can better see how Buddhist psychology is part of Process-oriented Psychology.

If we learn and practice compassions for all our parts, as well as others', the "beautiful" and the "ugly", the perpetrators and the victims (X and U), if we learn to accept them, abide with them in awareness, shine a light on them and even amplify for the sake of understanding, they will naturally all come to be One. On such occasions we are able to experience that both the Primary process and the Secondary process are an illusions and in a moment of grace touch the "One" which is the "Essence".

I think I have here contributed some by demonstrating its practicality. 2,500 years ago the Buddha taught about transforming suffering into happiness, and now Process Psychology shows us how to do it. This is far beyond a theoretical tool, it is a life altering one.

Re-reading my dissertation I realized how I showed again and again through my personal story how Process Work concepts and tools powerfully changed my life. Writing made this realization even sharper. I am thankful for the opportunity I was given to deepen my research, to share my findings and to be able to contribute thereby.

At this moment I feel great gratitude for the opportunity to write this paper.

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