

## Where is Creativity Found in a Self-psychosynthesis Practice?

By Sam Pope

Roberto Assagioli, founder of Psychosynthesis, declared that ‘personal will’ is at the centre of choice, and the capacity for transformation starts when you move from unconscious to conscious behaviours<sup>1</sup>. Characteristics of our ‘personal will’ develop throughout childhood as semi-autonomous ‘sub-personalities’<sup>2</sup>. With survival in mind, but often in conflict, they create an emotional, inner drama. To overcome and transcend this inner turmoil, Assagioli encouraged a practice of self-awareness.

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<sup>1</sup> Assagioli, R. *Act of Will*, Viking Press, 1973

<sup>2</sup> Assagioli, R. *Life as a Game and Stage Performance: (role Playing)*, Psychosynthesis Research Foundation, 1973

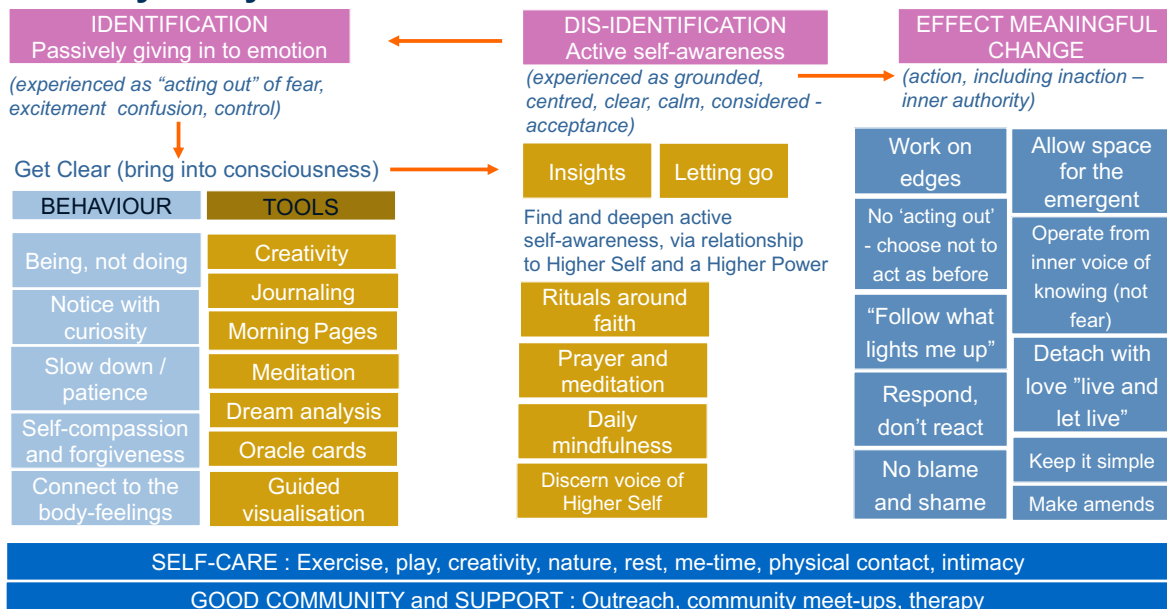
Through a practice of identifying with our emotions, and then disidentifying from them, the ego is no longer “continuously identified with the ‘contents’ of consciousness which come either from external stimuli or from unconscious drives...”, but now recognises itself as “a pure centre of self-awareness, free from any particular content”<sup>3</sup>. Into this space the will of our Higher Self, or soul, can drop in. In other words, a transformational aspect of psychosynthesis is the practice of synthesising ‘personal will’ with the will of the soul/spirit (psyche-synthesis) through cultivating a centre of self-awareness.

Assagioli described ‘identification’ as a passive state, an “invasion into the field of consciousness, including the ego, of energies, of functions that come from various parts of the unconscious... the ego passively giving in to this emotional colouring”<sup>3</sup>. By identifying - and then disidentifying - we move from an unconscious (passive) to a conscious state. In a meeting about applied psychosynthesis with doctors and psychologists, Assagioli described the benefits of this practice, “As long as the patient is identified with his complex he remains blind; the day the complex is emptied of its emotional charge, and the patient can objectify it, the symptom disappears. He has disidentified himself from the complex”<sup>3</sup>.

As a newly qualified psychosynthesis life coach, I am curious to investigate how I practice my own self-psychosynthesis in day-to-day life so that it may give me some insight into the support practices required for my clients’ personal transformations. In particular I am interested in investigating where creativity sits within the practice as I have been hosting workshops using techniques from Julia Cameron’s “The Artist’s Way – A Spiritual Way to Higher Creativity”<sup>4</sup> in order to bypass the conscious mind to reveal aspects of the unconscious.

**A self-psychosynthesis practice:**

**Self-Psychosynthesis Practice**



<sup>3</sup> Assagioli, R. *Meeting with Doctors*, Archivio Assagioli, 1963 (retrieved from: <https://kennethsorensen.dk/en/category/roberto-assagioli-interviews-en/>)

**Underpinning the ‘identification and disidentification practice’ is personal and physical self-care along with a good community and support network.** Included here is physical exercise, play, being in nature and being creative.

*"What did you do as a child that made the hours pass like minutes? Herein lies the key to your earthly pursuits."--Carl Jung*

Possibly what Jung was referring to here is what we would now define as being ‘in flow’. Resting in the ‘being’ without applied thinking (being creatively ‘in flow’) is a way to recuperate and replenish. Rest is necessary after periods of spiritual work, allowing a period of ‘psychic gestation’<sup>3</sup>. A lack of physical contact makes intimacy important during pandemic times. N.B. ‘Numbing out’ (for example scrolling through social media) is not self-care but a starting point for a disidentification.

***Identification (being identified with an emotion) is experienced as: ‘acting out’ of fear, excitement, confusion, control.*** It is possible to be in an identified place for hours, days, months and even years because the sub-personality strategies were developed for survival. Therefore, hold things lightly, with curiosity and a “spirit of adventure”<sup>3</sup> to prevent resistance or a fear of failure.

Get clear (bring into consciousness):

- Behaviour : Notice, with curiosity. Become aware of body-felt sensations. Discover ‘what is’ using mindfulness meditation. Cultivate self-compassion and forgiveness. Patience allows time for things to land and ‘a-ha!’ moments to come. The practice of being (and not doing) requires faith in the Higher Self and a Higher Power, otherwise the tendency to take action from fear in order to ‘survive’ becomes too strong, particularly during times of uncertainty.
- Tools : Use free-flow writing exercises such as Morning Pages (from Julia Cameron’s ‘The Artist’s Way’<sup>4</sup>) or journaling. Notice what emerges from a creative exercise. Pull a card from an oracle deck, analyse dreams, do a guided visualisation.

### ***Disidentification: pure self-awareness***

The practice of ‘getting clear’ allows for insights to drop in and an experience of letting go. Making conscious that which was previously unconscious is a state of disidentification. It is experienced as a grounded, centred, calm place where the inner voice of knowing is found and can only be experienced after a period of identification.

### **Find and deepen the connection to Higher Self (the inner, calm voice of knowing) and a Higher Power.**

- Create rituals around faith, practice mindfulness. Use meditation and prayer to start to discern and invite in the voice of the Higher Self. This process naturally raises consciousness to include an experience of our true nature, that we are part of a greater whole and a sense of a Higher Power greater than ourselves.

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<sup>4</sup> Cameron, Julia. *The artist's way: A spiritual path to higher creativity*. Penguin, 2016.

- Note: It is easy to repress the voice of Higher Self if it asking for a change that seems impossible/difficult and we can get stuck in an identification under the illusion that it will keep us safe ('Repression of the Sublime')<sup>5</sup>.

### **Effect meaningful change through action (including inaction) :**

- Develop an inner authority
- Actively work on self-limiting beliefs, making choices to facilitate growth in these areas. Keep it simple. Notice the indulgent places of ego then actively choose not to 'act out' from these places. "Follow what lights me up". With practice, the inner voice of knowing becomes louder and clearer and choices are made more in alignment with Higher Self and not from fear.
- Energetically, move away from fear (attempting to control) and towards love (having faith and letting go) to create a space for the emergent to 'drop in' as intuition and guidance. This is supported by the psychological 'Law of Attraction'<sup>1</sup> and the external reality becomes a reflection of the internal.
- In relationships, practice 'detaching with love', not with control, and without blame and shame. Make amends – personally and to others (if safe to do so).

Regarding faith - the very process of connecting to a Higher Self makes *faith an explicit part of psychosynthesis*. Not to be confused with the dogma of a religion, the concept of faith is personal and can mean anything, including the power of change. A client who wishes to engage in a process of psychosynthesis must develop a faith (and spiritual practice) of their own. It's likely this is what Julia Cameron was implying with the tagline to her book, "*a Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*". Connecting to your own creativity can be a spiritual journey with a faith in your Creative Self as connected not only to the past (in the lower unconscious), but also to the higher unconscious, the Divine or creative source energy.

On a personal note, the opportunities to effect meaningful change in my life have increased the more I have practiced self-psychosynthesis. At first, my personal will was stuck in toxic relationships. The practice first supported me to un-enmesh from my sub-personalities enough to be able to effect positive change in my relationships and support network. This is a crucial point to remember when working with clients. Each individual will be unique with their own story and self-care routine and some will need more groundwork than others. Some may be familiar with a mindfulness practice that makes the identification/disidentification process easier to bring into daily life, whereas others may not. Some may have a natural talent for art or music, others may consider themselves totally uncreative. The practice builds up a resistance to the invasion of the field of consciousness, "...before demolishing this defence system you need to have something to replace it with... a new form, a new healthy personality, or at least a healthier one, to gradually replace the neurotic one"<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Haronian, F., *The Repression of the Sublime*, 1967, (retrieved from : <http://www.synthesiscenter.org/articles/0130.pdf>)



As creative beings, a creative practice keeps us connected to our inner world, increases our self-awareness and strengthens the connection to our Higher Self. It is both a way to develop insights and a place to rest 'in flow'. Given that the practice of identification and disidentification is a practice of identity, and that as individuals we all have the capacity to create something unique and individual, I would say that creativity is a very useful tool within this process. When we cultivate self-awareness through the practice of disidentification we court the sacred in pursuit of meaning by getting to know our Higher Self and the gateway it opens to our true nature and a sense of wholeness. We gain the choice of transcending ego and aligning with Universal Will. Therefore psychosynthesis is not an 'end goal', but a daily dance with the many possible individual outcomes as we engage our personal will, align it more consciously and create new ways of being in the world.

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