

## Depth Psychology in Daily Life

A Community Conversation hosted via Depth Psychology Alliance  
featuring Founder, Dr. Bonnie Bright, and Director, Dr. James Newell

May 20, 2023

**Dr. James Newell:** Okay, well, great to see so many people arriving. Thank you. Welcome, everyone, to our Depth Psychology Alliance Community Conversation, and the topic today is on Depth Psychology in Daily Life. My name is Dr. James Newell. I'm the Director of the Depth Psychology Alliance.

And there would be no Depth Psychology Alliance, were it not from my esteemed colleague, the founder of the Depth Psychology Alliance, Bonnie Bright. And so, first of all, thanks for coming. Community conversation really isn't much of a conversation if no one shows up, so I'm glad so many of you have decided to take some time and share your day with us. I hope we can come up with some stimulating ideas about depth psychology and daily life.

And I hope you will be able to contribute some thoughts about that yourselves as we get going a little more. Just to begin with, let me talk about how we want to kind of organize our time together here. I'm going to say a few words to share my own thoughts on the topic of depth psychology and daily life. And then Bonnie will share some of her thoughts on the topic. And then we'll open it up for questions and contributions and comments and discussion.

And after I've begun with my portion of the program, some of you have seen we've already been putting locations where you are, and where you're from, and what you're doing. But I hope you'll just enter some more in the chat: why you came today, why you think it's a topic that you're interested in, especially any questions or comments—reflections that you may have on psychology and depth psychology and daily life. And so while I'm talking, Bonnie will be monitoring the chat.

02:00

She'll take some notes on the questions she thinks we can address once we get going and while she's speaking, I'll be monitoring it and taking some notes. And from there, we'll at least have a place to start if sometimes people are shy and don't want to just jump right in, but it's a lot easier to just put it in the chat if you want to do that. And if you put something in the chat and we and we don't get to it, just raise your hand and we'll do it that way as well. If you know how to raise your hand with a little buttons down there. And if you need to, go ahead and unmute just to ask a question.

It can get chaotic. So we don't prefer the hand if you can do that, but I think there's not that many of us that it will get too chaotic, and you know most of us now are very well acquainted with the Zoom protocols. Most everybody will remain muted while we're talking and then we'll unmute one at a time as we go.

But it's funny because when Bonnie and I were planning this, we were talking about and reflecting on just how much things have changed since Bonnie first started the Depth Psychology Alliance back in—it was around 2010 or so. But Bonnie was the first person that I ever heard of who used to Zoom. I'd never heard a Zoom. This was back in—I think the first time I used Zoom was with Bonnie on in 2011. So it was like 12 years ago, and this was at that time everyone was using Skype and it didn't work as smoothly, so it was a unique thing.

03:27

And now, of course, every other day, or every day—multiple times a day, everybody's doing discussions and classes and things on Zoom, so it's not quite as much of a novelty now as it was. But we are now pretty accustomed to that. So I'm glad that you came anyways. Even though you're...Not a lot of us say we're just kind of zoomed out and don't want to do any more zoom, so I'm glad you came.

So I want to jump right in. And I'll begin with some of my thoughts on depth psychology in daily life. And because we use the term *depth psychology*, for me, that's kind of a code word for Jungian psychology.

But technically, depth psychology—most of us may be aware of this—but it's mainly any psychology that takes the unconscious into consideration. Not every psychology does take the unconscious into consideration—but psychology does for me. And for many people, it's kind of a reference to Jungian psychology, but it also includes Freudian, and object relations, and on and on: Self psychology, Kohutian Self psychology (Heinz Kohut), and many, many other forms of psychology that allow for the unconscious and recognize the influence of the unconscious.

04:46

So as many of you know, we've been giving courses on Jungian psychology through the Depth Psychology Alliance for many, many years. And many of those courses are still available on our sister site, the Depth Psychology Academy. And these courses have mainly been geared towards professionals and towards people who want to add a Jungian component to the work that they're already doing.

But many people feel that depth psychology certainly—Bonnie kind of introduced me to this—Bonnie has really been an activist about this: about the idea that depth psychology is not and should not be simply for professionals. We both feel that depth psychology and Jungian psychology are just so valuable. And there's so many applications. It's nuanced. It's tricky. It's not hard, but it's complex.

There's a lot of different moving parts, especially if you get into the jargon. So we're trying with the Depth Psychology Alliance to move a little bit away from jargon and move just towards simple ideas that can sort of be a good way to help people to familiarize themselves with depth psychology without thinking that they have to be a specialist or that they have to study for years. So that has been—it's always been—the goal of the Depth Psychology Alliance to make depth psychology available to everyone.

And that's still our mission. And that's really what we want to do. So today, we want to start with just a few...I'm going to start with just a few basic ideas of depth psychology and why I think they would be useful in daily life and how they're applied in different areas of life. And obviously, this isn't going to be comprehensive in any way. And many of you, if you've—if you're familiar with Jung...I know that Bonnie said there's people here that she was at Pacifica with. Obviously, you're familiar with many of these terms.

06:46

But even if you, for example, if you're working with people, one of the skills we have to learn if you have some specialization is being able to speak in a language that is not off putting in and just confusing for people, being able to talk to them about what's going on with them in a language that they understand. So what are some of the practical depth psychology ideas?

Well, the first one pretty obviously that I want to address is this general idea of making the unconscious conscious and to me and to many of us that's a very obvious thing about depth psychology and obvious thing that we would want to do. But it's not surprisingly it's not obvious to everyone. A lot of people think, well, I remember my wife and I used to laugh at my mother in law who would say, well, I think some things are unconscious for a reason.

And of course, they are unconscious for a reason. But they can be made more conscious than we can benefit from that. Needless to say, my mother in law was not interested in making things conscious. But the idea of making the unconscious is because the unconscious can intrude in our daily lives in a number of different ways. So how does it intrude in our lives?

Well, one of the ways that this is not just Jungian, but an idea, I don't know if that was introduced by Freud. It may have been introduced by Janet or someone like that, but Freud certainly popularized the idea of projection and how we will mistake something that's actually going on inside us and unconsciously and assume that it's going on in the outer world rather than in the inner world to see someone that will say, "Oh, they're doing this and such," when, in fact, they're doing nothing of the kind.

We've projected our unconscious. And the idea is that whenever there's something unknown, whenever the world around us, or some aspect of the world, is completely unknown to us as creates a little anxiety and the

unconscious kind of immediately tries to identify it and then paste—like a post it note—paste something on there that explains that, and that tends to be the unconscious projection. It tends to be the things that we are not wanting to make conscious.

09:09

The things that are problematic for us is so one way or another have either through neglect or through repression. Have fallen into the unconscious. But one of the aspects of this Jung says, “Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate.” In other words, I feel fated that I'm doing this or I'm doing that, but the fate that's driving me is my own unconscious, and I can have more efficacy on my own life, if I'm able to identify those things and make choices.

Jung calls it this ethical obligation—when something becomes conscious, we have an ethical obligation to then reevaluate this unconscious content and figure out how and where and if we want to integrate it and have something to do with it in our lives. So why does this happen? Why does projection do that? Well, as I said, there's a little anxiety.

There's this kind of sense of naming things, but also it's because we have these autonomous networks of emotions and various feelings, and often unresolved things from the past. Jung called them complexes. We don't need to necessarily think of them that way. That's a technical term that people often think of it as a pejorative, but there's positive complexes. The ego is a complex. Everybody has a mother complex and the father complex, but it's only a negative complex if there's dysfunction going on in that network.

So the way I like to think about is just what are the ways? What are the things that block us, how are we blocked? How do we resist our own good, how do we tend to sabotage our own long-term good? Why do we become compulsive and obsessive about certain things—not other things—but some things for some reason when that comes up, we get a little anxiety. We become obsessive. Well, these networks, we have not made conscious yet, and when we can begin to do some work on those things—and doing the work to make these things conscious—then we have a better chance, a better opportunity to release.

11:35

See we not only...one of the things about Jung's theories is that at the core of these networks, the core of the complex, is what he calls an archetype, which is a deep structure of the unconscious, but they're charged with energy. Archetypes are charged with energy, and one of the things that he used to define an archetype was that it was *numinous*, which means that it simply....that it had a certain element of radiates with a certain sacrality, a certain sense of awe and mystery, and so all of these different religious and mythological forms of the past, which at one time were profoundly numinous for people, tend to have their roots in this archetypes of the collective unconscious.

Well, why am I telling you this now and why am I saying that this is important? Because as we tease apart these blocks that we have, as we work with these blocks, we release this energy—this numinous energy. And we have then the phrase “my cup runneth over.” We then have more energy to apply to the creative work that we want to do in the world. And the more...one of the really....it's not really a cure in Jungian psychology. It's kind of an ongoing work that we do always, but the main one is creative activity.

If you're spiritually oriented, then it would be creative service, but...or creative devotional. But it can be anything creative :when you grow in your garden, or helping in your community, raising a family. All of these things, if the energy is blocked, we're not as efficient at raising our family or growing our garden or doing painting or other creative work that we're doing, whereas when we're working on those blocks, the things that keep us from our good, we release that energy, and we can release it in a creative way so we have this ongoing flow of energy because we're in dialogue with the unconscious.

And this is kind of a rough outline of some of the basics of what Jung called the individuation process. And again, that's the jargony word, but it just means becoming an individual.

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It means...One can think of it as and there's a couple of stages of individuation, but we can think of it as attaining some kind of autonomy—autonomy from our family, a sense of independence, a sense of being

able to stand on our own—the courage to be who we are, separate from the pressures of the social group, and separate from the pressures of the unconscious, these archetypal energies, which if we're not in dialogue with these archetypal energies, they tend to be driving these blocks that we have.

So when we are working on this process and this project becoming more and more autonomous, then we have an opportunity to be more creative, and to be using the energy, and using the work in a positive way. So I mentioned that because there's a lot about this projection, and there's blocks, and there's these negative things, but when we work on them, they can have a profoundly positive effect in terms of giving us more energy to move in creative and generative direction.

In other words, not just creative for ourselves, but creative and generative in the way that we can able...we're able to help the ones we love and the people in our community and that's the way we hope to improve the world a little bit by a little bit, person by person, Jung was asked about whether or not we're the human race would survive. And he said, only if enough people do inner work. So the question then arises, well, how do we do this? What's the practical approach to doing that kind of inner work?

And for that, we're going to turn to our esteemed colleague, Bonnie Bright.

**Bonnie:** That's it. Thank you, James. Really just such powerful ideas, and of course I'm assuming that most of you who are in attendance here probably have kind of a foundation in Jungian psychology, Jungian thought.

15:43

I will just start out by saying that and I do have a couple of questions here in the chat, which we can turn to in just a moment,—but maybe just as an introductory statement before we go to those—I will just say that my approach to this has been really from a very interdisciplinary perspective. That is, of course, what Jung also wanted to do with his psychology: he wanted to bring in all of the various traditions, mystical traditions, but also the sciences into his work.

He tried really hard to make depth psychology a science. But of course, at the same time, he was having all of these kinds of spiritual experiences that didn't quite fit the mold of what the science was. And so he spent most of his life actually holding those two paradoxes, I think, of really wanting with his whole heart and being to make this a science because he felt it would be more acceptable. Remember, he was a doctor, a medical doctor, a psychiatrist, and so he had that structure in his own life, and he had...but he also had the capacity to get those messages that were coming through from the unconscious all the time.

And I think the real value from him is that he was able to recognize what those messages were. So, most of you know that he went through a very dark period in his life in the 1910s, basically. And that is the time that he started writing what is known now as the *Liber Novus*, the *Red Book*. Most of you are familiar with that.

It's really a documentation of his experiences of confronting the unconscious. So he had this understanding that the unconscious is the vast part of us. It is what makes us who we are, but it is driving us as James said. From that unconscious, it is influencing our behaviors and even our thoughts and our values every single minute of every single day.

In other words, our unconscious is really what makes us who we are, and then sometimes we act out in conscious ways, but we...in there somewhere, we have to be open to be able to receive the messages that are coming from the unconscious so that we can then make a decision on how to proceed from there. It's almost as if our unconscious is the GPS that is guiding our lives; is making itself available to us all the time; is providing directions on where we need to be going from the soul's perspective.

And then to be able to decipher those messages. So a lot of my work right now is around really figuring out techniques and processes of ways that we can start to mine the unconscious, to start to make visible what is actually driving is. And in 2020, one of the reasons that I have been away—well, a couple of reasons. First of all, when I stepped away in early 2018, I actually went down a rabbit hole of doing my own work.

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I had a lot of stuff that I didn't realize that I was working on that I needed to be working on, and spent a good year or so really just doing my own inner work in a very, very intensive way. It wasn't something that I set out to do, but it was something that I think was guided by my soul's process.

So I will just say upfront that it may not be a stretch for some of you to imagine that we were some kind of consciousness before we showed up here on this planet in bodies, having all of these experiences with our senses and our emotions.

If that is the case, then perhaps it is possible also that we as that consciousness maybe chose to show up here in order to have the experiences that we're having so that we could learn and grow from the soul's perspective. And of course, I'm sure, James, you can probably talk a lot more to that. But Jung talked about how God can also evolve. God can also be undergoing that process of individuation.

And I like to think about that as...the metaphor I often use is the metaphor of the octopus, where the octopus has that core central brain, but actually in each of its tentacles, it has its own neurons and neuronal cells in each of the tentacles. So it's almost like each of the tentacles has its own little brain that can perceive and make decisions and interact with things independent of the central brain.

So if we look at it from that perspective, perhaps Soul, or God, or the unconscious, or whatever you choose to call it—the universe, the Great Spirit. I mean, there's so many different names in all of the mystical traditions from over the course of humanity. Whatever that is, perhaps there is a way in which we have chosen to come here to have the experiences that we're having strictly to have those experiences, and to really be conscious of what we're going through, and thereby to be able to beam back that information about our experiences about how we feel about things.

So that that central brain can actually learn and grow from that process. And it's not such a stretch, I think, to imagine this, even if you don't consider it literally to look at it symbolically, because the universe is always expanding. And so why would the God force—whatever that looks like for you—*not* be always expanding, always growing, always learning? And so if we look at it from that perspective, each of us can start to see ourselves as agents of that growth.

21:22

And so when the soul calls—and that is a big part of what I have been learning—when the soul calls, we respond, because if we don't respond—in shamanic societies, when a would-be shaman or potential shaman does not respond to the call, often it means death for them. And we can talk about that literally, there's a variety of ways that might come about.

But really, our work, as I see it, as individuals here in the individuation process is to be able to listen to when the soul is calling us; listen to the messages that are coming through; and be able to find a way to respond to that so that we can learn and grow, and as we learn and grow, then the collective learns and grows.

So this also puts into perspective, I think, James, what you said about how you know we each have to do our own individual inner work so that the society literally doesn't collapse—but not only doesn't collapse, but so that we can actually grow as a society, and become more kind to one another, to become more conscious of our actions. And also conscious of the possibilities.

I mean, the possibilities of how we could actually live into our lives are stunning and almost unimaginable until we start to put our foot on that path and begin to understand that there are actually messages that are being given to us every single day—practically every moment of the day—that can help us to begin to identify what is unconscious within us. So I have a lot more to say on that.

I want to...perhaps, though, bring that back to you, James, for just a moment, and then maybe I can come back to some other ideas that I have. But we did have a question in here that I thought was quite relevant and important, and maybe you would want to start by addressing that first.

And that question is coming from Craig, and he says, “How often are conflicts between our ego and unconsciousness related to our ability to see and integrate opposites?” So would you care to say something about that, James?

**James:** Sure. Well, that's a and thanks, Bonnie, for all that you had to say. That that's a big broad question. The general theme of Jung's final great work was called *Mysterium Coniunctionis*—or the mysterious conjunction of the mysterious coming together, and that it's a symbol from alchemy. And the alchemists were trying to bring together two things essentially to create a third thing, which was either going to be gold, or an elixir of life, and all that stuff.

24:01

But Jung read this symbolically, and the simplest way of understanding it was simply those opposites were the unconscious and consciousness. And when you can bring with the discriminating mind of consciousness, and the numinous energy of the unconscious, and bring those things together—along with things that have been repressed and all that. And when you can bring them together in a way that there's now a third thing—not either one of those two things, but a third thing—that, for Jung, is sort of metaphorical way of understanding the individuation process.

So yes, every movement of...every *transformational* movement of consciousness, for Jung, could be seen as this ability or inability to hold the tension of the opposites in our minds at the same time.

Now that sounds like a very pretty concept, but Jung likened it to the crucifixion. It's not a pleasant experience to be able to hold it depending on the construct that you're talking about in you. If it's life and death issues in your family, or whatever, it's very difficult to hold both of those things, you know. There can be simple things, and in a couple of days, we have a dream and we integrate it.

But yeah, the difficulty of holding opposites experientially: we can do it cognitively, but then we're not...the unconscious isn't really involved if we're doing a cognitively. We're just...it's all up in the consciousness. But if we're doing it in a way in which there's some dynamic energy that's represented by one opposite, and another dynamic energy represented by the other opposite, it seems like they're absolutely irreconcilable and to bring them together seems impossible.

25:54

But the holding together of those opposites in the context of whatever situation you're talking about—I mean, the way you present the question is kind of abstract—but in an individual life, yeah, that's the whole...really the whole individuation process when, at some point, those opposites come to represent this conscious and unconscious dynamic.

**Bonnie:** Absolutely. That transcendent function, as you can call it, is...yeah, it's that capacity to be able to hold those two seemingly opposite things long enough for that third thing to emerge—whatever that is. It's not going to be one; it's not going to be the other. That third thing—which is transcendent, which is the new—this is the thing that we are learning and realizing, and it's really important. However, to be able to hold that tension, a lot of times when we are feeling that stress or distress from a situation where we just either can't decide and we feel super stuck, or when we actually have a choice to make between those two things and it's really not obvious what that choice is, the capacity to be able to hold that tension is super powerful.

And of course, Craig says here—probably an answer to your own question, Craig, and I really appreciate that question; and your answer also, James, I think you're kind of also answering your own question. You say the goal is integration and synthesis. Yes, absolutely. Because what happens when we can hold that tension of those two opposites is that integration process. But we have to be able to be willing to hold that long enough without jumping into our own patterns that are usually unconscious that we have developed over the course of our lives and able to be able to survive our lives, essentially.

So I like to refer to these as *coping mechanisms*. Obviously a lot of psychologists use that term/ terminology. When I think about coping mechanisms, I think about the things that we had to learn in order to help ourselves to save ourselves when we were little children and something was coming at us that we just had

no idea what to do with—that our little psyches were just so overwhelmed. You know, as kids, we don't have the benefit of having a rational brain by which we can think about things.

28:13

We just are in the face of whatever is coming at us. And presumably, we probably have much more access to our sensations and our feelings about things instead of...because we don't have access to the rational brain. And so when something's coming at us, that is just overwhelming, someone is yelling at us or we're being told, no, or we feel like we're rejected or that we've done something bad or that we're wrong or that we don't belong in a group or any number of things, I'm sure each of you can think about something that happened in your own life, that probably was just very difficult for you to take in—very overwhelming.

And so we developed these coping mechanisms that can help us to navigate our environment. Whatever our environment was throwing at us, perhaps the thing that we chose—if you want to buy into my philosophy—that we chose to work on here.

It's almost like you know going to college and picking a major. What did you want to work on when you came here? And how were you going to get the best environment in which you could actually work on those things?

Again, I'm not sure that Jung went into this so much, but I do believe that his sense of spirituality was all about the fact that we are here to learn and grow and that we have the conscious capacity to engage in that transformation process if we are willing to engage. It's really kind of simple when you think about it because it's about being willing to face what it is that we have been through, to honor ourselves for what we have been through.

And then to be able to start identifying those patterns that are at work in our lives, which we probably chose at a very unconscious level, and now we live out our daily lives using those patterns and most of the time we're not even conscious of that of what we are doing.

30:14

So you might know somebody in your life that is a people pleaser, you know? That term doesn't really give people a lot of credit, but honestly, if you're a little kid and you did not feel accepted or loved or seen for who you really felt yourself to be as a little kid, perhaps a coping mechanism would be to try to make yourself useful to one of the adults in your life that you wanted to be accepted by. Or try to help people or try to give them comfort in some way because that might be a way that you would be seen and accepted.

And if you tried that and it seemed to work for you at the time, let's say you're 5 years old and your mom is super depressed or something, and you can offer yourself to her to bring her things that she might need, or maybe you start to develop a sense of humor because you can see that she will laugh sometimes when you do something silly or you make a joke.

That gets reinforced, and then of course we start to do that again the next time, and then we do it again, and then before you know it that becomes a part of that little person's personality and then they grow up and they're still using that as a coping mechanism to help themselves fit in, or to help themselves feel like they belong, or to help to reduce the self-doubt or the sense of not feeling worthwhile in life, and you can see that with any number of different patterns that might come along.

For example some people will minimize their needs when they're in the face of an experience that is very difficult or painful for them. In other words, if they're hungry and they go to mom and they say, "Mom, I'm hungry," and she says, "I can't help you right now."

You know, even if your mom was like the best mom ever, and she says very kindly to you, "I'm sorry. I can't help you right now, sweetheart, because my hands are covered with flour and I'm making dinner." Then, you know, that kid is still going to take that as a rejection because the kid is feeling the hunger pains and they don't understand because they don't have the rational capacity to think about why they can't have dinner right now, or can't have a snack right now.

32:18

They might just decide that, “OK, nobody's going to help me. I don't have the power to help myself. So I'm just going to try to make myself not hungry; try to make myself repress that feeling of hunger; try to make myself repress my needs—by the way, that translates into love also, right? If we don't feel accepted or we don't feel loved, we try to minimize that need for human connection; for human love. We can retreat into ourselves.

Sometimes that might result in us being an introvert. Sometimes it might be just learning how to kind of be a recluse, or to be not as engaged with other people ,or sometimes it might appear to make us aloof, but really, in reality, what that child is doing is trying to protect themselves from being hurt—from being rejected when there's something that they really do need and they just don't have a way to get it. Some kids might turn to making a scene—you know, throwing a temper tantrum—trying to assert power. If their parents let them get away with it and it seems to work, then they're going to do it again, right?—Path of least resistance.

And so really a huge, enormous part of us learning how to individuate; how to overcome these challenges that we have; how to overcome the blocks that...like James was talking about, is to start to identify the patterns that we are living out, the unconscious patterns that we're living out, how do you do that?

Well, anytime you are uncomfortable in a situation where you feel angry, or you feel scared, or you feel shame, or you feel like you're not getting something that you want, these are huge signals that say, “OK. Where am I right now in my own personality? in my own process? in my own coping mechanisms?

34:06

If you find that you're somebody that retreats all the time and tries to minimize your needs, maybe if you can get a little bit of white space in there and catch yourself before you do it, or if you jump and help somebody else before you help yourself—if you can see that pattern in yourself, it gives you an opportunity to make a different choice. But the most important thing is to be able to start to identify what are those patterns that are driving you, what are those unconscious mechanisms that have been embedded in your little psyche very, very early on and that are now making you show up in the world the way that you are, and/or often blocking you.

So I'll just give you one more story. And then we can move into something else. I have a lot more to offer, but I think it will come up as we go into the conversation. I'm sure James is the same. So, and that is just that if you....I don't know. How many of you have ever skydived?—show of hands. Has anybody ever jumped out of an airplane with a parachute? Hopefully, with a parachute. Okay. Not too many. Calvin, I saw you. A lot of people don't have your cameras on, so you can also type it in the chat if you would like to. I'd be very interested to know.

I don't know. I got this...I had a friend when I was in my 30s who just couldn't stop talking about it, how she had gone skydiving and it was so great and amazing and everything. I decided it was something I had to do. I would never do it now. Trust me. But at the time, young and fearless, I decided that that was something I wanted to do—the most terrifying thing in my entire life I have ever done. I did it. I can't say I did it well, but I did it. I survived it.

There was something that was driving me to make that decision—and that's kind of beside the point—but I just want to bring that up because you know some of you who have not done it probably have your reasons for not doing it. The reason that I did it...I probably had reasons for doing it. It was to make a connection with someone, or to be seen in a certain way, or to challenge myself to see if I really could overcome the fear, maybe, that was underlying whatever it was. If you start to look at patterns—reasons that you do things—you can begin to understand how you can start to make changes.

36:18

But the reason I'm telling you that story is because when you jump out of an airplane, you have to have the parachute in order to survive. Otherwise, you're not going to survive that fall, obviously. But if...once you land on your feet—hopefully—once you land, if you do not remove the parachute, obviously, that parachute is going to start causing you all kinds of trouble in your life.



You can't go to the grocery store without dragging that parachute. It's going to get caught on every one of the end caps, and as you're trying to go through the register, it's going to pick up people's feet and get tangled in all the carts. You get my meaning.

The point is, is some of these mechanisms that we have developed to save our lives just to allow us to live and to be okay with ourselves—as okay as we could be—all of a sudden become problematic for us when we fast forward a few decades and we're adults, but we're still acting from that same place that we did when we were six (years old).

So you can understand how this idea of coming to consciousness is so, so, so important. We have to start doing that inner work of looking toward ourselves and beginning to understand: How can I catch myself in these unconscious patterns? And how do we know where to go or what to do next? So I will kind of leave you with this cliffhanger maybe for the time being.

And then we're going to start moving into some...unless James, you might have some other remarks? But I would just offer that there are many, many, many ways that our soul—or the unconscious, however you want to look at it—is communicating to us all the time. There are three core ways that I have identified that I feel can be most useful to look at to begin this process.

38:08

And in fact, in 2020, I started an institute to certify people through training, coach training to become a soul-centered coach, what I call a soul-centered coach, is technically has a lot of basis to it. Of course, it does because that is my training and my love. Also includes archetypal psychology, not surprisingly includes transpersonal psychology.

All of these things that allow us to really explore and mine the unconscious, that those three ways of really understanding what messages you're unconscious is sending to you so that you can begin to transcend and pull yourself out of these patterns. One is to work *somatically*. So most of you, I'm sure, are familiar with that word, but somatic means having to do with the physical body. Physical existence.

And what we understand now from neuroscience, increasingly so, is that our bodies record every single experience that we have ever had in our lives. We may not remember it with our brain, or our rational brain that has the capacity for language and for rational thinking, but our bodies remember all of the experiences that we have had. So there is a way in which if you want to learn what your soul self—as I like to call it—is talking to you about or telling you that you can work somatically.

That means turning your attention inward, allowing yourself to locate places in your body that might be holding some kind of energy for you; might be holding a complex, as James mentioned. A complex is really like a kind of a tangled knot of energy that...something happened—had happened—to us earlier in life, and we didn't know what to do with it. And it just got all messed up in there—and tangled up. And that means that we try to protect that. We try to hide that or cover that up so that other people don't see that we're dysfunctional, or other people don't see that we don't have the capacity to deal with that.

40:03

But the truth is, every time you get yourself in a situation where somebody pushes a button that is related to that to how you felt in that moment—if you felt dismissed, or if you felt rejected, or if you felt judged—any time that that comes back to you now in your adult life; somebody pushes that button, we find ourselves just reacting in a way that is completely inappropriate for the situation because we get triggered, right? That's a word that we use often: *triggered*.

And so the idea really is that we can work somatically where we can through either meditation or a contemplative process, or working with somebody who has some training in that, to be able to start to identify unconscious parts of ourselves that have something to say to us about the experience. Remember the psyche—the soul—is not always going to communicate through language, or spoken language, or the language that you know, and Jung said, “The soul speaks in images,” so when we work somatically, there's a way that we can begin to understand or to elicit an image that's coming out of that.

41:10

And then once that image comes out—it's outside of ourselves—we can see it, we can think about it logically, we can talk about it. We can research it. We can amplify it, as Jung said. And then we can start to develop a relationship with that part of ourselves that was formerly unconscious and start making it conscious.

And then, again, we start to have processes by which we can make choices. Do I really like myself when I react that way? No, I really don't like it. So what can I do about it? Oh, well, let me *drop in*, as I call it, and see what is in there. See if I can get an image that comes out of that. And then I can work with that image.

How can I work with that image? I can dialogue with it. That's one of Jung's huge contributions to society. That idea of what he called *active imagination*, which is to be able to engage with the unconscious in an imaginal way—a symbolic way—a way in which we can see images or have an experience of being in a story or something like that—of engaging with a character.

Understanding that each of these things is a part of our unconscious that we formerly could not see. We couldn't differentiate it. So much a part of us is so hidden in there that we just didn't know it even existed. Until we began to try to elicit, and then we can learn what that part of our unconscious is holding for us and then we can start to make some changes.

So the first way of those three is somatic, the second way then is *symbolic*, and that kind of includes everything because Jung's idea about how image is the language of the soul does give us that opportunity to really look at everything as a symbol. Everything is a metaphor in our lives. I've had clients in my own personal coaching practice that perhaps have had issues with pipes in their house, like just one thing after another, one thing after another one thing after another, nothing was flowing.

43:05

Everything was broken, broken. There were breaks everywhere. There was nothing contained, and as you start to look at this from a metaphorical standpoint, you can see how there were blockages in the psyche that needed to be addressed. There was a...there needed to be a container that allowed that person to actually have the capacity to look at what was going on in a safe way and to be able to really start to address it. So metaphor is huge.

Jung said—maybe many of you have heard this quote: It's one of my favorite quotes from him. He says, we're badly in need of *the symbolic life*. That's what he called it. He recommended “living the symbolic life,” meaning that we consciously hold the idea that the world is speaking to us all the time; that the world is reflecting back to us something that we need to know; that the unconscious is written large in front of us all the time, right in front of our eyes.

And so there's this opportunity for us to look at everything metaphorically. This morning, I was sitting in my living room and a giant butterfly came flying into the room. I don't know. What does a butterfly mean, right? I mean, for most of you, you probably will understand—or have already that understanding—that a butterfly is coming from a little caterpillar.

Imagine that caterpillar was...just had this 2D experience, inching along the ground; goes into this cocoon where it becomes completely dissolved into liquid goo; and then it's reconstituted and comes back out in a completely new form. That's what happens with shamans too, by the way, in traditional societies. And I believe that we all have our own inner shaman in us.

So the third way that I really look at the way that our psyche are unconscious speaks to us is *shamanic*, and because we all have our own inner shaman, it gives us the capacity to create environments for ourselves—to create experiences for ourselves—where we can kind of take off the blinders that our ego keeps on us because it wants to be safe and it wants us to be seen.

45:17

And so it goes through those processes of keeping us locked into our coping mechanisms, hoping that we will be safe and seen, which shamanic practices allow us to kind of bring those blinders down and start to see the magic that is afoot in the world. Start to connect with beings, or spirits, helpers, or animal helpers, or guides

that can actually allow us to retrieve those lost parts of our soul that we have lost over the course of our lives because we could not hang onto them in any given situation.

Parts of our soul were lost. This is a very shamanic idea. And if you haven't studied this a lot or if this is new to you, I highly recommend that you start looking into it. It's a very, very, very powerful idea. In psychology, of course, we would say that those parts of ourselves are the parts that we had to kind of split off and leave behind because we just couldn't do anything with the trauma or with whatever experiences were coming at us.

But soul retrieval, then, is the idea that we can come back and look at our lives, and work with the unconscious, work symbolically, work somatically, and find those parts of ourselves that we have lost and be able to reintegrate them into the whole so that we can be whole, so that we can have that individuation process going on that James was talking about and that Jung really advocated. So Jung said, "We're badly in need of the symbolic life. Only the symbol symbolic life can fulfill the daily needs of the soul."

We have to be in conversation in dialogue with that soul part of ourselves all the time. And I'll just close with this and say that I think it was (James) Hillman that said—but maybe he took this from Nietzsche, originally—the philosopher, Nietzsche. He said, "I don't know if the soul is in me, or if I am in the soul". And I just love that because that means that whatever I look outside and see outside my window, that is a part of my soul.

47:19

And it is carrying something for me that could be really, really, really helpful and interesting if I only take the time to engage and try to elicit the meaning that that is holding for me. So that's why we always want to be on the lookout for symbols, for synchronicities—to watch our dreams. All of these are direct messages that are coming to us all the time from the soul. So I'm going to leave it there.

James, I don't know if you've been watching; if there are questions, or if you want to just go ahead and introduce the conversation part at this point.

**James:** Sorry. I was muted. Yeah, that was lovely. Thank you. There's lots of...yeah, the main thread is that we're looking at ways in daily life that all of that can be applied. And there's...it's going to mean different things for different people because it's individual.

And there were many questions, but also people have been answering them in the process. So I think there's one raised hand here. I don't know if that's...Bonnie. So you're the one with the... yeah. But does anybody else have a question they want to either speak out or put in the chat now so that I don't get caught up in something that's already been dealt with? Yeah.

48:44

**Bonnie:** I'm also just noticing one here, James, since you're giving me an opening:

"I'm curious about what kinds of things conditions are prerequisites are necessary to be able to contain, or tolerate the tension of those opposites. And she says, I'm thinking about socioeconomic, cultural health, mental health, energy, in addition to being willing. And I think by that, you mean probably Aaron being willing to actually look at it to engage to hold that tension of the opposites long enough for those to come about.

So I think I began maybe moving in that direction when I was talking about working symbolically working somatically. It gives us the opportunity to engage with that information, but I would say for me, the one thing that I might add to that in answer to your question is that when we jump into our coping mechanisms and consciously, we don't have any choices.

If we can prevent ourselves from jumping in unconsciously and you don't even know you're doing it, that's the problem with all of us, right? We don't even know what is unconscious in us. How can you know what is unconscious in us until you begin to make conscious what was formerly unconscious and the way you can do that is any number of those ways that I was just talking about.

And so I think that idea of holding the tension of the opposites is when you get under distress in some way, when you get overwhelmed by what's going on out there in the world by all of those issues that you're talking about, when we feel terrified or overwhelmed or depressed, instead of going into our usual coping mechanisms, the idea is to just not go into those coping mechanisms for a little bit longer.

50:31

And if we can just hold that a little bit longer, it will give us that spaciousness for some new way to come in. It's hard to do it. It's something that you have to practice at. I remember I started practicing this, and it was like I was very conscious of it. And I remember a specific situation where I was like, it was super uncomfortable. And I just had to stay in and I was really willing myself to stay in it and not jump out of it but my normal thing would have been to retreat and leave the room in a situation like the one that I was in.

And I just said, I'm just going to stay here. I'm going to stay here. It's super uncomfortable, but I'm going to stay here and sure enough, I stayed there in like three minutes later, something that I never would have imagined would have happened. And it allowed me to engage with somebody on a new level that I had never been able to. It allowed an opening for something else to happen in that room other than the traditional like I do this and you do that. And then I do this, and then you do that. And then there we are right back in that same pattern. And this is not this is not necessarily with a partner.

It can be with a child. It can be with a parent, it can be with a friend, any kind of interpersonal relationships, if we can hold that tension, it can really change the relationship. And same thing with ourselves, if we can hold before, say, going into an addiction, if your tendency is to grab a glass of wine every time you start to feel a little bit stressed, maybe just wait an hour, maybe go visit your altar, because presumably you have one, and just offer a little bit of that wine to what is before you jump in and start drinking that wine.

52:06

Not saying don't do it. I'm just saying, use consciousness around it because it gives you the white space that you need to be able to then allow a different choice to be made. Does that make sense? Good.

**James:** Yeah. And another... I like to think of these things in classical Jungian terms and when talking about individuation. von Franz called that the *psychological maturation*, the process of maturing psychologically.

And so there's two phases of the individuation process. And the first phase is to develop a strong ego structure, and most of the work that people do in psychotherapy is about just developing the skills to cope in the world to get the maturity that they perhaps didn't get in their family life.

And the stronger... To try and go into deep unconscious things and try to wrestle with the tension of opposites of things that are truly overwhelming is premature if we don't have a grounding in a strong sense of self; a strong ego structure; a strong community of at least a few close friends who we can talk about this with, and hopefully a competent therapist—maybe a group therapy—but having a grounded sense of the personality structure, because when we're talking about making the unconscious conscious, we're talking about...there necessarily consciousness has to have a break in it in order to let in the unconscious content.

And if my consciousness is already somewhat fragmented, then bringing in more things is just going to fragment me more. So there has to be a really strong sense of that first phase of the individuation process; of having a strong personality structure; a strong sense of myself; a strong sense of efficacy that I can I don't want to start worrying about the tension of the opposites of something overwhelming when I have to be at work to pay the rent; to get the food to feed the baby; to do all these responsible things—that's the first phase.

54:19

So you're still in the individuation process if you're holding that stuff back and again and strengthening it and going through the steps, whatever they mean or may be in an individual case, we're still doing that, but the deep work of the deep unconscious, and that stuff is more appropriate once we have a real strong sense of grounding in whatever our life situation is.

**Bonnie:** Yeah. Beautiful. Thank you, James. And I think a couple of people have made comments that kind of echo that or at least provide some additional insight into that. If I can just read these: one is from Chuck who says, “Kalsched..”—and Donald Kalsched is a Jungian analyst who wrote a lot about trauma, and also our *inner defender* or *inner protector* who is trying to protect us from experiencing more pain. Sometimes that can show up in ways that can be quite traumatic to us, including in nightmares...

**James:** re-traumatizing.

**Bonnie:** Re- traumatizing. Yeah, thank you. So Chuck says, “Kalsched’s ‘cure’ frame: As long as we continue to rely on our dissociative defenses—that is removing us from the situation—we will be locked out of our original wound. He suggests that what is needed is we must ‘cure the cure’ in order to begin to directly experience split-off image affect scenes.”

So just to bring that into a more conversational way to say it, maybe is that the cure that we initially come up with is those coping mechanisms.

55:52

We don't do it on purpose. It's something that develops out of what our little child psyche was able to...

**James:** I call that the *survivor child*. He calls it the *archetypal defense system*, but I think it's a lot easier to comprehend what we call the survivor child. And we used.. in group therapy, it's often... a survivor child will be embodied. And then the survivor child is always trying to keep the wounded child from maturing.

And that's the re-traumatization, because the first you have to calm down the survivor child, and take care of the survivor child, and then you can let the wounded child open up a little bit. But then you still have these opposites, which have to be put together. And when we're talking about severe trauma, then you really need to there needs to be a very safe environment. It has to be very competent people. And there has to be a containment that is ongoing.

If you fool around with severe trauma, without necessary containment and a mature counselor or therapist working on it, it can, again, constellate the survivor child, which is going to do more traumatization.

**Bonnie:** It's a beautiful concept. And I love that term *survivor child*. I mean, you're right. It's something that is very easy for each of us to understand. And that, again, comes back to those coping mechanisms. It's what we developed in order to have to survive.

57:21

But like the parachute, the “cure the cure” thing is...First, we have to identify what is it that we're doing that we constantly do that is maybe not serving us anymore. So we have to cure the cure. So that's a great term. I really like that too. I really appreciate that.

And then Velva Lee says, “Once the defense structure softens in relationship to the help of the ego, to your point, James, often a dream will appear signaling time to pay attention.” Absolutely. Love that. You can work dreams the same way you work symbols.

In fact, that is the work. Symbols might also appear in your outer world as kind of a waking dream too.

**James:** So it amounts to this ongoing—what Edinger and Neumann both called the *ego-self-axis*—which is just this ongoing gradient of energy where there's a dialogue with the unconscious, and you don't lose... that you need the strong ego structure so you don't lose this grounded sense that you are dealing with it and that you can make an ethical choice about what's coming up for you don't just accept anything that comes up from the unconscious because there can be the unconscious comes up and tells me I should shoot my

neighbor probably I need to you know look at the ethical consequences of that before integrate that into consciousness.

It's like you say it's symbolic, it's not that we shouldn't take everything that comes out literally, but that ongoing process is that's the cure. And the way we can keep it going is, as I was saying before, creative activity of some kind. Totally. Yeah. Thank you. I'm just catching up also on the comments here. Joy, thank you for clarifying what I was saying about got evolving. Yes, Jung was essentially suggesting that God is evolving. It's essentially saying that the God image is evolving.

59:07

Yeah. Thank you. Yeah. I think we should open this up to more vocal input from you guys that I love. I'm loving what I'm reading in here. Please keep the comments coming. I think everybody has that. I see a couple, we've got three well, one is your hand, Bonnie, but there's other two other hands. I can figure it out. Here we go. Yeah. Do you want to pick one?

**Bonnie:** Why don't you?

**James:** Okay. Well, the first one I see. I don't know what it is, but the first one I see is Craig. What's on your mind, Craig?

**Participant:** Yes, thank you. And I put this question in the chat as well. Thinking about: What are the roots of our cultural dysfunction? What are the roots of the darkness that Jung speaks of?

**James:** The roots of what? What are the roots of our collective unconsciousness? What are the roots of our darkness as Jung talks about? Sure. Well, generally, the roots are what Bonnie was saying is dissociation. What happens is the...

**Participant:** No, may I finish?

**James:** Oh, yeah. Sorry, I thought you were finished. Yeah, go ahead.

**Participant:** No, I'm not finished. Yeah, yeah. I believe that there's two important routes. And there's more than that. But I think that there's two critically important routes that rarely get discussed. And the first one is the fact that words have no meaning.

01:00:35

When Christianity can speak about love and act in judgment, hate, and genocide. Everywhere, the fundamental aspects of words and meaning gets disconnected and fundamentally fundamental ways. And that disconnection perpetuates itself.

Another key, another key that I think is original sin. Look at all the sexual dysfunction everywhere, and I believe that is a direct connection to original sin as opposed to Matthew Fox's *original blessing*. And the last example that I will give is, Why is it that those religions that view heaven in the clouds seem to trash the planet with the impunity, while those religions that see God, Gaia, and nature as one wouldn't dream of trashing the planet. All relative. How is that all relative to the roots of our dysfunction? Your comments?

**James:** Yeah, my comment is...Thank you. Yeah, I'm certainly on board with all of your complaints there. But the roots of it are dissociation. And then by dissociation, I mean, is that we develop evolutionarily—and this is Jung's key and core argument—is that as we developed evolutionarily and particularly developed since the

so called enlightenment period, where we learned to... I mean, even from the previous...you know, starting with the cavemen making tools. Then we have the neolithic age when people had crops, and all these different devices of technologies were products of the brain. And the more we did that, we had to develop some way.

01:02:39

This was dissociating us from the deep roots of the deep collective unconscious. So the way that we maintained a connection to the deep unconscious in those periods was we created gods and systems of gods because we projected this—what Jung calls the archetype of the Self—onto these deities. Now, we're in a period where not even the deities will carry the archetype of the Self because science...We've gotten so smart that we don't think we need soul, and we don't think that we need the world of myth.

And so we're in a land where there's no...what I mean culturally...We're in an era when there is no culturally—broadly—there is no ego-Self axis. There's no gradient along which this energy is flowing. Previously, it flowed to some deity, some mythological thing. Now all we have are ideologies and each ideology is warring with another ideology.

And the ones—as Jung says—the ones who are doing this kind of work that we're talking about, and the ones who are maintaining their own connection with soul; with the ego-Self-axis; with the archetype of the Self; with these numinous energies are people who are trying to do what you were saying: That the guy or religion, the sense of oneness and wholeness rather than the warring factions of this ideology, is carrying my energy and this ideology is not, so I'm going to fight them all the time.

And each one of them is self-contained because and they're vital to each group. Each group is like a tribal entity, and they feel that their survival is there because they projected unconsciously themselves into these other arenas. So it's the core thing is the dissociation from the deep unconscious—what you would call, and what someone else could just call Soul; or we could call Gaia; we can call spirit and all those different things. But it's the sense of connectedness to our roots.

01:04:45

And because these different ideologies, whether... I don't want to name anything because I'll annoy someone. But we all know the different ideologies that are functioning in the world today. And they are...each one is carrying that archetypal energy for these separate things, but they're all discrete, and so they're warring with each other.

And there's a lot more to it than that, but that's the basic classical Jungian understanding of that. That's what that's why Jung was so interested in trying to heal Christianity; why he was so interested in bringing alchemical ideas; and trying to convince people of what Bonnie was saying earlier, that the unconscious is active.

The unconscious...just because I become alienated from those energies, it doesn't mean the unconscious becomes inactive. This energy—these numinous archetypal energies—are always steaming and moving, and I'm either alienated from them and so I project them out onto someone else, and I think that this satanic energy is going to kill me or something. Or, I become inflated and I think that I'm the great one. I'm going to cure everybody. I'm going to help everybody. So there's either alienation or inflation.

And the cure for that, you would say, is to stop projecting and get in touch with that energy within me—recognize it's not outside of me, it's within me. And when I'm in dialogue with it—which is all these different things that Bonnie was talking about, the different methods—when we dialogue with that energy, we cease the need to blame other people for keeping it from us. And then hopefully with the...As we balance ourselves from doing that, we then have this excess “cup runneth over” energy that we can use creatively and generatively to what we're trying to do—Bonnie and I and the Depth Psychology Alliance—all of us together, as we work together, are trying to help people to understand these things. Hopefully others will do that too.

01:06:34

**Bonnie:** Yeah. Yeah. Thank you, James. I mean, this is such a great question, Craig. I really appreciate you bringing it in because it is at the core of everything here. And by the way, I just want to say you know, this is a community conversation. I think James and I probably have easy access to kind of jump in and just go for it and we're both passionate about it as you can tell, so, please do feel free to answer each other's questions in the chat. I think a lot of you have been doing that, but definitely follow along. There are a lot of great comments in there as well. And we will bring more of your voices in as we go.

But maybe I will just say in this moment—just to amplify a little bit or add to what James said—I think that whole thing about the fall from the Garden of Eden...You know, it is a symbolic representation of how we have separated ourselves out from that God spirit, or that soul.

And I think it's also the human journey. I mean, nobody can live in that state of absolute unity and bliss all the time. Otherwise, we wouldn't be able to make a living, or find a place to live, or take care of our children, or do the things that we need to do. We need the ego. Anybody that tells you to kill the ego...I have a real hard time with that, because the ego definitely doesn't want to be killed.

01:07:55

In fact, it can be super helpful for us in living our lives on this planet the way that we need to. What we want to do is to co-opt the ego into service of the soul. So that the ego is working on our behalf—is willing to face the things that are difficult; willing to look at the shadow stuff; willing to be able to try to create that white space so that that third thing can emerge.

And you know the Fall, it's a little bit like that... the tentacles on the octopus, like I was mentioning earlier. You know, as long as the tentacles are reporting back to the central brain, then everything is in unity, but as we begin to live our human lives and we forget that connection—that inherent connection that we were born with—as we face traumas and challenges and rejections and sorrows, we begin to build up almost like this patina, you know, like a pearl. When there's a grain of sand that's in a clamshell, it puts out this material that builds up over it so that it won't be as intrusive or as painful to that clam—or oyster, I guess, in this case, then we kind of do that same thing, you know?

That's how we split off all these parts of ourselves. And we start to just live to survive by cutting ourselves off. But if we can retain that process, that practice of being conscious and bringing our conscious understandings back home to ourselves, that helps us to stay in that dialogue with the soul all the time.

01:09:30

That is how we learn to walk with a foot in both worlds: how we learn to navigate our daily lives from the perspective of the ego, but also to be able to constantly have that influx of understanding about what we're really doing here. Again, I think...it's just my philosophy: You can take it or leave it—but I think that that is the point of being here as being humans. It's to be separated so that we can find a way to come back into that unity.

And all the mystical traditions talk about that unity, all of them. That is what we're seeking. We're seeking that unity where we are not separate, but human beings with our ego structure, that is exactly what starts to happen from the moment we're born. And so that is something that if we can look at it from that perspective, I think it gets a lot easier to understand why the world is the way that it is, and also to understand that, as Jung said and as James reminded us earlier, we have to do our own individual inner work to reconnect ourselves with that sense of soul so that the world can change.

Imagine that's why all the religions, when they started, they probably all started from that numinous experience of feeling connected to Soul. But of course, you know, over time, the dogma starts kicking in, and then they become rules and it has to be only this way or you can't be connected to soul. Or there's a medium, you know, somebody in the middle of...The priest has to be in the middle in order to talk to God for us. We can't have our own connection with God.

So these evolved. And then, yeah, they get destructive because somebody's come up with all these rules that can't possibly include everybody, and can't possibly help us to unify with that soul self that we are, because we're too busy trying to follow the rules.



01:11:08

So again, this might just my perspective, but you can see how dangerous that can be when we allow that rigidity to start taking the place of that connection and flow.

**James:** Yeah, thank you, Bonnie. We've got a couple more questions. If you want to go ahead and... Chuck?

**Participant:** Yeah, I'm excited to be here. I've been aware of your group for a while. This is my first event that I've been to. I've been working on this stuff a long time. My little blog/resource subtitle is "Engaging the unconscious in everyday life." But the...So, a story about the way in: I remember back in the 80s, a psychoanalytic mentor presented a conference, actually early 90s. He made the observation from self psychology that healing only occurs in the blur. Healing only occurs in the blur.

And it's like, "What's that about?", right? And then he just...he made the simple connection, which is...it's being in a state where something has gotten hooked and is now blurring the current experience, right? What's happening here and now is being infused with something else, right? And as he described from sort of Freud's side, complexes—mother complex, father complex, self-other stuff—as being actually operating at the level of active dynamic willing entities, I thought, "Oh, Jung's complexes!"

01:12:45

And so a lot of what I've been working on is looking at the shared part about the Freudian line, the Jungian line, which is...and that it starts—that somehow—we want to be careful not to be so conscious that we not get into these states, because really, we have to be able to experience a level of activation that will be uncomfortable.

And so a lot of what I've been tracking is just, you know, triggers as the way in.

**James:** Exactly. It's like the call to adventure of Joseph Campbell.

**Participant:** The call to adventure. And it's kind of the idea with Kalsched, too, that no matter how many decades we get, the more work we're able to do—the stronger and the more grounded we are—then the more psyche is, like, looking to surface a remaining split-off piece that is driving some sort of a repetition compulsion, right?

And so it's really about getting past, you know, becoming...Well, it's about, you know, appreciating the opportunity to be in a blur state while I think bringing enough consciousness to it to notice, "What is it asking of me? What's coming in here?"

And I guess just one last thing: There is a John Weir Perry quote that is sort of at the center of my symbol system, which is that complexes keep getting triggered because they're creating the new situation to give you one more chance to heal that deeper level of trauma. And to be healed in some happy moment. So anyway, I'm happy to be here, and I think it's been really...

01:14:47

**James:** And I think if you look at it comparing Freudian and Jungian complexes, have you ever heard of a book by...Do you know who Erel Shalit is?

**Participant:** I don't.

**James:** He's a Jungian analyst from Tel Aviv, he passed away recently, but he's got a wonderful book from Inner City Books called...basically, *The Complex*. There's a subtitle, but *The Complex* by Erel Shalit. Superb treatment of the complex, yeah.

**Participant:** Great. Thank you.

**James:** I agree with all that. And the thing about the blur is that what we tend to do is try to get out of the blur, and try to get clarity in...which represses those things. Then you move on until it intrudes again. And the Jungian thing is to treat it like a call to adventure. Treat it... Jung said, "If I'm going to fall, if my destiny is to fall into a deep dark hole, I will at least have a rope and a flashlight with them when I go down there." So you face the blur consciously instead of trying to push it aside all the time.

**Bonnie:** Thank you. Charlene, did you comment or question?

**Participant:** I want to thank you for the invitation. I'm very happy to be here. And as a metaphor, when I'm looking at on the screen as all these boxes of zooms, and I'm thinking of the metaphor that you presented of the octopus with everything out there and we're coming together, you know, as a whole in my work with...Professionally, I use it in couples. I work with one plus one equals three. And so that's my math.

01:16:47

And what I'm looking at personally is dealing with death, and trying to make some light out of the process of death and dying, and to open that area up for discussion. And to learn more about why we sort of put death onto the back burner and not deal with it, even when it faces us every single day. In my work...in my personal life, I faced death many times fairly recently.

And in my professional work, so many people are dying, and people who are my age are dying. And yet we don't have a conversation about death and dying, and I am hungry for that.

And two nights ago, I had a dream, and that dream was one person—I guess me—talking to everybody in my group or family, like I'm doing now with you. Gathering together and saying something— someone—is going to die. And I want to talk to you about that so you're not so afraid."

And so we have, in my dream, a discussion. And then the next day was this invitation to come into this group. And I wanted to bring that thought into the group about death and dying, and hopefully at some point to have a conversation about that, because to me, it has always been about a transformative state.

So after death, there's a rebirth. But what happened a week ago was a butterfly came to...I moved to a new home after the death of my husband. I moved to a new home. There's a doormat in front of my front door, and a butterfly came and stayed all day. And I was just so taken by that. The experiences of transformation are occurring for me.

01:18:55

And I wanted to share that with you, and at some point, hope to have a conversation about death and dying. And I write a little newsletter monthly from my patients, and this is will be the topic of that discussion. So I wanted to share that with the octopus—tentacles of all of you on Zoom.

**James:** Thank you. Yeah, thanks. Well, yeah, we could also say not just death, which is big enough topic. But trauma, people don't want to talk about trauma—I mean, real trauma. People don't want to talk about trauma. People who've been traumatized try to talk to friends or whatever, and people don't usually want to hear about it. And when someone has died, usually people—they have their set things to say. But after a week or two, they expect that you're over it.

And I know this. I lost my wife a little... about 14 months ago now. So, yeah. I mean, I'm right with you about the difficulties of that. And also the culture that we're in wants you to hurry up, get that grieving done so you can go out there and have fun, you know—which is not really healthy.

So yeah, there's people who have not recently experienced death tend to not want to think about it because either they... There's a saying in—my wife used to work in hospice—and there's a saying among the hospice people that every death, every loss, brings up every other loss. It brings up every other death.

So and particularly if you're in a culture where people don't deal with death anyways, then you've got all these other deaths that you didn't deal with. And then someone else dies and say, “Oh, jeez. Now I've got to deal with that one.”

01:20:43

And now all the other ones I didn't deal with are coming up. So yeah, it's part of the culture. It's part of the same thing that Craig was talking about. It's the same thing. It's dissociation. We hear about death, and we dissociate. We try to keep that part of the blur that we're trying to not deal with.

**Participant:** I was going to say for me, as an indication of the desire to have to have the soul come back in. And we connect with aspects of the soul that maybe—not my childhood, not my girlhood. I don't mean that—but to a new sense of maturity. And a new life, so.

**Bonnie:** Yeah. It's a beautiful perspective and you're absolutely right. We need to have more conversation about it. You know, people have such a tremendous fear of death. We don't talk about what's going to happen because we're afraid to talk about it to James' point. So I think it's a really, really valuable contribution.

01:21:43

**James:** I really appreciate you bringing that in. Yeah, there's a wonderful therapist named Hellinger, Bert Hellinger, who talks about how we...and he finds this in... It's not the same as psychodrama. He does family constellations. But in those, he finds that people—and this is largely because people haven't dealt with death in the family system—but he finds that people follow others into death when there's been a death that's not been dealt with.

It's related to attachment theory because we become bonded. We become attached to someone and just because they're gone—they're dead—doesn't mean we're not attached to them anymore. And so my wife is dead, but if she's in the Land of the Dead, well, I want to go there. That's where she is. I'm attached to her. I want to go. So there has to be...He had these sentences he asked people say. “Well, after a little while. I'm going to stay here a little while longer and then I'll come and be with you.” Because it's the energized, the wounded part, the child part that is attached and that wants to go with them.

But he finds over and over and over again that because the culture and the family system don't deal with death, that people obviously unconsciously want to follow the other person into death. And they end up sabotaging themselves doing behaviors that don't move them into life. And that's why culturally for the earliest archeological finds we have of any kind of religious activity is of funerary rights.

People have always recognized that they had to do something to honor that whole process. And we, as we've lost myth in our culture, we also lost the rituals related to death. I mean, we have these kind of formal things, but then, you know, “Hey, you had your week of paid vacation. Now you've got to get back!” You know, that kind of thing.

01:23:38

**Bonnie:** Yeah. I just want to point out that some people are offering some lovely suggestions in the chat, Charlene, so—and for everybody—maybe I won't take the time to read those, but just take a look. There's several books that are being recommended.

**James:** And some people know of Francis Weller—some wonderful, wonderful books. Wonderful man who does a lot of work around death. And this is a wonderful topic, but we're going to have to close before too long. I don't want to leave Doug in the dust.

**Bonnie:** We had a couple of other questions in the chat, too, so let's see how we go.

**James:** Doug?

**Participant:** Hi. Thanks very much. I'm just going to give you just some personal stuff because we were talking about how we can live this in our own personal life. Number one, just a great saying by a close friend of mine who introduced me to Jung about—close to 20 years ago. He said the trick is to make your ego strong enough that it will be able to let go of itself. And I always wanted to be a good one because sooner or later it has to let go.

Your earlier reference to the symbol of the crucifixion: I grew up Roman Catholic. I underwent some of those things that the Catholic Church is known for. So I don't have rose-colored glasses when it comes to the whole thing, and yet still came out of it with a deep love for the Holy Spirit and also Christ himself as a revolutionary outlaw—not so much someone I'm supposed to imitate, but one I'm supposed to perhaps maybe model my life after.

01:25:09

So when I think of the crucifixion, I don't bow down and say, “Oh, I need to be like you.” I go through—I hope, I hope—I hope I go through my own personal crucifixion and, for example, the way it's really been working for me is integrating shadow.

I love Marie Louise von Franz's idea that, you know, you know you're on the path of seeing your shadow and somebody else, you know, you projected it on somebody when it's an entirely unappetizing feeling. You get that shudder because you've seen that cast-out part of yourself out in the world, and then it becomes one's task—at least this is my interpretation—it becomes one's task at that point, to now integrate my shadow, and that's where I've experienced the tension of opposites, i.e., in the crucifixion aspect, that it's real tough for my ego to accept the fact that that which I projecting out on the world is essentially a part of myself that I've not wanted to live with. And that's where I engage the symbol of the crucifixion and the tension of the opposites. I just got to...It is tough, man. You've got to hold on long enough that you're realizing that out there, that evil, that's me. I put it out there. And that's not an easy breakfast, man. That is not.

**James:** And Jung's definition of the shadow: he says it's always a moral challenge to the ego.

**Participant:** Yeah. Yeah. I think it's probably Jung again as well, but you know every time we gain allowance to receive a cut-off aspect of our self, or we see shadow, it's a death to the ego.

01:27:01

And again, I think that's the beautiful...the beautiful image of the crucifixion. It's not that we have to imitate Christ. We just walk our own path, you know? And we do our best to model that which we feel is authentic and accurate. And I don't know why, but for me, gardening is one of the big places...

**James:** Yeah. Death and rebirth. That's the whole culture that's the first most powerful technology introduced by women of the human race.

**Participant:** Yeah, and I found for whatever reason, it works so well for me in the garden because I just let...I live alone. I got 11 acres, 20 raised beds. And I'm out there, and I usually...That's where I rant and rave: "If I had a partner..." and then all of a sudden I hear my voice. I would have bounced back, you know. In the woods, it comes back and I'm like, "Oh my God, you're the biggest a-hole there ever was."

**James:** But the plants don't judge you. The plants don't judge you, do they?

**Participant:** It's all good. But here's the real trick, you guys. This is so sweet, and I don't know: This is what I've come up with, for what it's worth. You know, the Buddhists are always laughing. They tend to laugh. Because my experience has been when I finally meet my shadow and I'm eating it, you know, that horrible eating crow, and you digest it. And then next thing you know, there's all this space. The internal world becomes spacious and the areas where I used to project on Mr. Global, or the church, or those bastards, or whatever.

Now all of a sudden there's this great space. And all I can do is giggle at my stupidity. I spent all that time trying to prove...

**James:** But also that energy that you had been sending out that way now is available for creative work and for gardening and all that stuff. That energy was lost. I wish I remembered the great quote from the Buddha where he says that when you're angry at someone else, it's like when you take a revenge on someone else, it's like doing it to yourself. He has a much more... It's like swallowing iron in order to punish someone else, something like that.

01:29:09

**Participant:** Yeah. Yeah, what is it? Resentment is taking poison waiting for somebody else to die. Yeah, yeah, exactly, yeah. I like that. So just in closing, I just want to say thank you so very, very much you guys, Bonnie, James, for doing this. I just went through a major stroke. In *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, there's essentially you know like five little boxes you have to check before you leave. I checked four of those. And I'm in this...

**James:** Well, you need to get an eraser, Doug.

**Participant:** It's all good. It's all good. Anyway, all I wanted to say is I really, really appreciate your work. I love your guys' videos. Bonnie, years ago, when I was studying carpentry—I'm a journeyman Carpenter—I realized that Joseph Campbell donated all his books to Pacifica, and then I looked it up, and it was like, "Oh my God: Pacifica. Where is it? It's in *Carpenteria*."

And then you guys launched this, right? And I love your work. Like I listened to it every night. And I'm like falling asleep, blah, blah, blah blah. I love Jung. It all makes sense to me.

Guess what? Today's my birthday. So here's another thing: Thank you so much for pursuing it, Bonnie, because I desperately tried to get into Pacifica to study, but they wouldn't let me in because they didn't have a BA, and I even—man, I got all kinds of info together, you know, from people...I used to live back in Banff, Alberta.

Anyway, point being is, I was so overwhelmed to see that you're doing this. Thank you. I'm wondering if it's possible at some point—my eyesight's not so good because of the stroke, but if I could talk to either you or

James on the phone about doing a certification, because I really feel that's my next step. I used to work with young offenders and ex-cons. I was an Outward Bound instructor, so I have counseling in my background. And I ended up becoming a friend of Marion Woodman, and we used to exchange letters back and forth. So I'm steeped in this, and I want to continue it. So I really am grateful for what you've done.

01:31:18

**James:** Well, thanks, Doug. I know you sent me an email before, and I've just gotten swamped and stuff. Send me an email and we'll get together.

**Participant:** All good. All right, thank you. Thank you. It's a great work you're doing. Cheers.

**James:** Thank you.

**Participant:** Bye everybody.

**Bonnie:** Let's do it. And thank you guys all for being here because you know this is just the beginning. I think of a conversation that can go in any number of directions. Maybe you guys will take some of this with yourselves and go off with your tentacles and teach your people—talk to your people—about it and just spread the love because this is really amazing.

Before we go, I just want to acknowledge three people that are here that are in the program that I started: Shannon, you can see there. Lisa was on. And Maeve is here. Actually, Barbara is here too. So four of you guys. If there's anybody else. Let me know.

But just to know that...You guys, there are plenty of opportunities to share this work, whether you're doing it formally or informally—just to have these kinds of conversations with people. Start these conversations wherever you can go. Listen. Deeply listen when people have things to say. Share what you're seeing/ Share what you're seeing in the “symbolic life” because that is going to make a huge, huge difference. People will notice that. And if you can just help them to have that same kind of curiosity and joy, that will definitely affect their lives as well. So thank you guys so much for everybody who's been here today.

**James:** And thank you, Bonnie, for coming out of retirement...

**Bonnie:** ...more of this. It's true. I've been away for a while, but you know this is such, such important work. And you guys really have brought that home. I'm sorry we didn't get to all the questions in the chat. I know there were a couple of people that I really was hoping we would get to. And it didn't happen today, but don't give up on us, you know. We'll do it again. And there will be more opportunities. And please feel free to reach out. Each of you.

01:33:00

And by the way, if anybody's looking for somebody to work with in this work— again, those people that are in the program, the certification program I started—several of them are looking for clients. Some of them are just building out their practices. You might be able to find some rates that are affordable, at least initially. So please don't hesitate to reach out if you're interested in that.

**James:** Great. And I've got the Depth Psychology Academy that has two seminars coming up: one on Work as a Spiritual path: Individuation and Right Livelihood. And another one on the Archetype of Money. And they're very inexpensive—just \$49 for four weeks of short classes.

So thank you all for coming. I hope you got as much out of it as I did. Thank you, Bonnie. And I hope to see you all again soon.

**Bonnie:** Thank you, James. Thanks, everybody. Take care.

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