

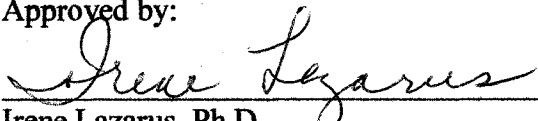
Sacred Healing:
The Transformative Effects of Integrating Yoga with Psychotherapy

by
Rosemary Taurasi


A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Masters of Transpersonal Psychology

Institute of Transpersonal Psychology
Palo Alto, California
June 24, 2005

Approved by:


Irene Lazarus, Ph.D.

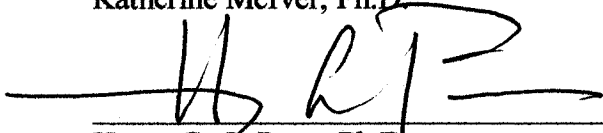
10/20/05
Date


Kartikeya Patel, Ph.D.

10/28/2005
Date

K S McDev
Katherine McIver, Ph.D.

10/26/05
Date


Henry G. C. Poon, Ph.D.
Chair, Global Programs

11.09.05
Date

UMI Number: 1429520

Copyright 2005 by
Taurasi, Rosemary

All rights reserved.

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform 1429520

Copyright 2006 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.

All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

**Copyright © Rosemary Taurasi, 2005
All Rights Reserved**

Butterfly takes Flight

Thousand petaled Lotus sings

Darkness turns to Light

Abstract

Sacred Healing: The Transformative Effects of Integrating Yoga with Psychotherapy

By

Rosemary Taurasi

This study was a preliminary exploration of the transformational effects of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy. It suggested that as an adjunct to psychotherapy, Yoga can deepen healing, enhance growth, and affect transformation in the practitioner, and that further research in this area is warranted. Four participants, or co-researchers, including the author, who underwent psychotherapy in conjunction with the practice of Yoga, shared their stories of healing, growth, and transformation.

A review of the literature focused on the following topics: (a) What is Yoga?, (b) psychotherapy, (c) Yoga and psychotherapy, (d) Yoga therapy: research and clinical applications, and (e) meditation. Organic inquiry, a qualitative transpersonal research approach, was utilized in this exploration.

Open-ended interviews were used to solicit co-researchers' stories of transformation as a result of having integrated Yoga with psychotherapy. These interviews are presented in narrative format as stories of transformation. The group story is presented as a synthesis, highlighting themes and metaphors of transformation that emerged out of the co-researchers' experiences.

Themes that arose as a result of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy included deepened healing; enhanced growth; integration; embodiment; transformation; synchronicities; change; altered state of consciousness; seeing the Sacred in all; finding the true Self; discovery of life purpose; healing of the mind, body, and spirit; enhanced awareness; love; and joy. Metaphors of

transformation that came to light included Lifting the Veils of Illusion or Discovery of the Sacred, From Caterpillar to Butterfly and From Darkness to Light.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my therapist, Tim, and my Guru, HariNam Baba Prem. You have both been instrumental in my healing, growth, and transformational journey and exemplify the truth and integrity I strive to live.

Acknowledgements

To my parents, whose love and support have made me the person I am today. The relentless will and perseverance you inspired in me has carried me through the most difficult of times and made completion of this work possible despite obstacles encountered along the way.

To my daughter, in some ways my greatest teacher. The brightest light shines forth from the darkest nights.

To my beloved faculty mentor and chairperson of my thesis committee, Dr. Irene Lazarus. You have walked beside me for the past 3 years, sharing your insights, wisdom, and expertise together with genuine heartfelt love and understanding. Words cannot describe what you have meant to me, but I am certain you know. I was blessed to have been brought together with you through my ITP experience.

To my co-researchers, Wings, Steve, and Frances. With courage and honesty, you shared your deeply personal experiences so that others may be transformed. Thank you.

To my early readers, for taking the time to read this work, offering essential feedback that was an important part of the organic inquiry process.

To my thesis committee, Dr. Kartikeya Patel and Dr. Katherine McIver, thank you for sharing your time, expertise, and insights, allowing me to bring this work to fulfillment.

To my fellow ITP global graduates and email pals, Keiko and Andrea. Although we live on opposite ends of the globe, you let me know that I was not alone in my sometimes isolated studies as we offered encouragement, inspiration, and community to each other along the way.

To the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (ITP), for creating a forum in which I could study and live my passion and fulfill my dreams. This Master's program has been truly transformational and a very special part of my journey that I shall never forget.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	1
Transformation	2
Sacred Healing	3
Purpose, Rationale, and Implications	4
Research Questions	7
Objectives	7
Definition of Terms	8
Delimitations of the Study	10
Limitations of the Study	10
Overview of Chapters to Follow	10
Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	12
Introduction.....	12
What is Yoga?	14
Schools of Yoga	17
Raja Yoga.....	18
The Eight Limbs of Raja Yoga	19
Kundalini Yoga	24
Psychotherapy	24
TranspersonalPsychotherapy.....	25
Yoga and Psychotherapy	28
Somatic Therapies and Self Regulatory Methods	31
Altered States of Consciousness.....	34

Healing of Childhood Wounds.....	35
Yoga Therapy: Research and Clinical Applications	36
Hatha Yoga and Meditation as Adjunct Therapies.....	39
Yoga Therapy for Psychosomatic Disorders.....	40
Yoga Therapy in the Treatment of Addictions.....	45
Meditation	47
Research on Meditation	48
Meditation, the Psychophysiological Principle, and Unstressing	51
Conclusion	53
Chapter Three: Research Method.....	55
Introduction and Overview of Research Design	55
Validity in Transpersonal Research and Organic Inquiry	58
Co-Researchers.....	60
Criteria for Co-Researcher Selection.....	60
Procedures.....	61
Instrumentation	64
Data Analysis	65
Co-Researcher Stories.....	65
Examination of the Data	66
Synthesis	66
Report of Transformative Change.....	67
Early Readers	67
Chapter Four: Findings.....	69

Introduction.....	69
Stories of Transformation	70
Discovery of the Sacred: My Story	70
From Caterpillar to Butterfly: The Story of Wings	81
Lifting the Veils of Illusion, A Journey of Discovery: Steve's Story	86
From Darkness to Light: The Story of Frances	94
Synthesis: The Group Story	103
Themes of Transformation.....	104
Metaphors of Transformation.....	105
The Essence of Transformation: Haiku Poetry	110
Chapter Five: Discussion: Summary, Conclusions, and Implications	112
Introduction.....	112
Organic Inquiry	113
Summary	114
Conclusions.....	114
Findings in Relation to the Research Questions.....	114
Findings in Light of the Existing Literature.....	116
Report of Transformative Change.....	117
Views and Definitions of Transformation	118
Transformation of the Co-Researchers.....	118
Discussion of Transformative Change in the Co-Researchers.....	120
Transformation of the Researcher	121
Early Reader Response to the Study.....	123

Implications and Applications	125
Suggestions for Future Research.....	125
Conclusion	127
References.....	128
Appendix A. Glossary of Sanskrit Terms.....	133
Appendix B. Introductory Letter to Solicit Volunteers	138
Appendix C. Introductory Letter to Potential Participants	140
Appendix D. Research Flyer.....	143
Appendix E. Formal Consent Form	144
Appendix F. Interview Questions	145
Appendix G. Follow-Up Interview Questions	147
Appendix H. Questionnaire for Early Readers of the Study	148

Chapter One: Introduction

It was 11 years ago, and I was at the lowest point of my life with very little hope to sustain me. According to Mijares (2003), “Difficult passages in life become occasions of transformation and healing, giving positive meaning to our emotional, mental, and situational disturbances” (p. 12). I entered therapy by accident, although looking back I realize that nothing ever really occurs by accident. I also began studying and practicing Yoga, which I had experimented with some years earlier while in college. Since then, my life has been unimaginably altered.

According to Mann (1998), psychotherapist and spiritual healer, crisis provides us with a valuable opportunity to change, to grow, and to evolve to higher levels. This has been my experience without a doubt. According to Mijares (2003):

Life crises often force us into new dimensions of learning and experience. A call to individuation urges us to set upon a path of living life more fully, a path on which our personal despair offers intimations of victory and transformation. The heroic journey begins: a door opens and we enter the dark terrain of the personal and collective unconscious. If we embark upon this journey we will discover non-ordinary states of consciousness and intimations of something more fulfilling than anything we have yet encountered in our ordinary egoic consciousness. A crisis of despair suddenly takes on a new meaning, and limiting self-narratives are reframed as the journey unfolds. The symptoms of distress become signposts along the journey. (p. 8)

Change and ultimately transformation require time for realization and integration of one's experience. In my experience, this realization, this awareness, and the integration of experience came about through my practice of Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy. According to Rama, Ballentine, and Ajaya (1998), “Yoga offers to modern psychology the possibility of integration” (p. 284).

Transformation

In *The Unfolding Self: Varieties of Transformative Experience*, Metzner (1998) described transformation as “. . . a radical restructuring of the entire psyche” (p. 1). This state has been described in various ways: as mystical experience, ecstasy, cosmic consciousness, oneness, transcendence, union with God, nirvana, liberation, and peak experience. Metzner wrote about self-actualization and intrinsic transformation as unfolding slowly and gradually from within, emerging from the depths of the psyche. He used two metaphors to represent this experience that I found profoundly fitting: the opening of a flower (compared to the opening of a *chakra*) and the growth of a tree or butterfly (compared to the psychic growth of a person).

Metzner (1998) also wrote about transformation in terms of consciousness:

Consciousness—defined as the context, or field, in which thoughts, feelings, perceptions, sensations, images, impulses, intentions, and the like exist and occur—is transformed when any of the following occur: changes in thinking, worldview, beliefs, feelings, motives, impulses, and values, as well as altered perceptions, such as heightened seeing (clairvoyance) and sensing (clairsentience). (p. 2)

According to Metzner (1998), self-transformation changes the way we feel about ourselves and the world. This has been my experience of transformation.

Another aspect of transformation that Metzner (1998) wrote about is discovery of the sacred. This sense of seeing, feeling, and knowing the sacred in all of life has been at the core of my experience of transformation through Yoga and psychotherapy. “When we awaken in a spiritual sense, we become aware of something, a central core being, that is always unchangingly present and fully pervasive throughout our psyche” (p. 33). This central core being is known as the *Self* in Yoga. In my life, discovery of the sacred evolved out of my experience of the Self through the practice of Yoga. The aforementioned depictions of transformation resonate strongly

and deeply with my experience resulting from the practice of Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy.

Mann (1998) talked about how the process of integrating Yoga into the psychotherapeutic context leads to transformation in the following passage:

The Yoga system is a scientific method for developing a personal relationship with God. One of the by-products of yogic meditation is an awareness of the transcendent, energetic reality of consciousness. Consciousness, in this context, refers to an awareness and concept that is greater than the “mind” alone. Unfortunately, the narrow and limited focus on the “mind,” without giving enough credence to the vast, universal reaches of consciousness, is yet another limitation of the current Western model of psychotherapy. In this state of transcendent awareness, the conscious experience of subtle energies, in various forms, opens new and profound opportunities for healing that are much more effective than traditional methods of psychotherapy alone, and can result in a deeper, fuller, more authentic integration of the self. (p. 5)

It has been my experience that when Yoga is integrated with psychotherapy, mind, body, and Spirit or Self are integrated and united, and transformation ensues.

Sacred Healing

Mann (1998) referred to the integrated approach of blending traditional methods of psychotherapy with the conscious experience of subtle energies and spiritual awareness as *sacred healing*. Through this process, one is awakened to a higher state of consciousness. “Sacred Healing is about a process of personal transformation and the awakening of consciousness to the Divine reality” (p. 12). Sacred healing seeks to explore and incorporate the deepest expanses of spiritual reality and to integrate this wisdom into the healing process and one’s life. According to Mann, “Sacred healing occurs when the power of the soul is accessed, which awakens tremendous latent healing forces” (p. 6). In sacred healing, consciousness is experienced as tangible energy that has profound healing properties and is an expression of our Divine nature. “The work of psychotherapy, in this sacred context, becomes the loving, compassionate, and patient process of clearing away all the aspects of delusion that separate one from one’s true

Self” (p. 17). It was Yoga that awakened me to this sense of separation and through which I was reunited with my true Self.

Purpose, Rationale, and Implications

The purpose of this study was to explore the healing, growth, and transformational effects of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy. It was my belief that as an adjunct to psychotherapy, and transpersonal psychotherapy in particular, Yoga could deepen healing, enhance growth, and affect transformation in the practitioner. This study was born of my own experience, having manifested this transformation in my life. Mann (1998) described the process of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy in the following passage:

Viewed from within the context of spirituality, life becomes a moment in eternity, in which the soul incarnates in a physical body to learn additional lessons and complete the cycle of birth and rebirth. The spiritually-conscious individual sees each life within a larger context and views individual problems as part of the soul’s evolution back into God-consciousness. Psychotherapy, when placed in this spiritual context, becomes a vehicle to help an individual understand, accept, and work with life’s challenges. In my experience, when yogic practices are also combined with this process, great healing can occur, in which Divine forces are activated that may ease karmic patterns and speed up the healing process tenfold. The illusion of time and space dissolves in deeper states of consciousness, and healing occurs when the truth of our Divine nature is activated and our natural state of wholeness reemerges from the hidden realm in which it patiently waits. (p. 16)

In *Yoga and the Quest for the True Self*, Cope (1999), a psychotherapist, author, and Yoga teacher talked about the “soul-estrangement” that many of us feel in our lives. This estrangement is characterized by a painful sense of separation: separation from the body; from the hidden depths of life; and from the source of our own inner guidance, wisdom, and compassion. Many of us are unable to maintain a sense of belonging and a sense of meaning and purpose in our lives. “Increasing numbers of people are hungry for perspectives that offer deeper meaning in life, for ways to live that reveal the soul” (Mijares, 2003, p. 1). According to Mann (1998), many of the physical and emotional problems we experience are the result of alienation

and separation from our True Self. Mann contended that we are suffering because of our lost connection to Spirit, our lost experience of unity, and our lost connection to the earth. Cope maintained, and I agree, that the psychology and practice of Yoga speak directly to the problems of self-estrangement that many of us feel. What Yoga and other Eastern traditions teach us is that our psychological issues and emotional distress must be considered within a greater context. According to Criswell and Patel (2003), “Our greatest suffering manifests as a result of spiritual alienation. We are asleep, unaware of our true Self” (p. 202). Yoga can address this alienation so that our fragmented being can be healed. Through Yoga, mind, body, and spirit are healed, united, and transformed.

The escalating violence in our society today may likely be a symptom of this self-estrangement, of society’s collective alienation from Spirit. Likewise, the hunger for deeper meaning in life is evidenced by the plethora of addictive behaviors affecting humanity today (Mijares, 2003). The ancient science and philosophy of Yoga provides an antidote to self-estrangement on an individual level and to our collective alienation from Spirit on a broader level. I believe that many who have practiced Yoga can attest to the love, peace, and joy it fosters within the practitioner. It is my belief that individual transformation can ultimately lead to transformation of society as a whole. “Yoga methodology approaches the transformation of the world through the transformation of the individual. This transformation begins with the unfolding of the true potential of the human psyche” (Anjali, 1994, p. 39).

Aside from the physical benefits of Yoga, which include cardiovascular and musculoskeletal strength and flexibility, increased energy and stamina, improved sleep and digestion, increased relaxation and decreased stress, and improved immune function, those who regularly practice Yoga describe a multitude of subtle transformations in their lives, including

sharp increases in mental focus and clarity, heightened perceptual and intuitive powers, emotional equanimity, a heightened feeling of connection to an inner Self, ecstatic states of bliss, profound well being, and even stories of miraculous physical, emotional, and spiritual healings (Cope, 1999). “Here is a language that, unlike our current psychological language, is deeply concerned with the relationship between the soul and the self, the body and the soul, the divine and the human” (p. xiii).

The current health care crisis in America, along with the managed care system, have forced health care professionals, including psychotherapists, to provide short term, symptom oriented relief. There is increasing pressure to “treat” psychological problems and concerns with drugs, thereby subduing symptoms while avoiding the underlying root causes. Psychiatrists readily and routinely prescribe psychotropic drugs. According to Mijares (2003), the roots of psychological problems are deeply embedded in the nervous system, and as such, cannot be resolved in some specified number of sessions as set by HMOs. It is my view that medications are greatly over prescribed, alienating us from the innate wisdom of our bodies and our own inner healers. I am not denying that there are conditions requiring treatment with medication or that medication can be helpful for those suffering from extreme states of anxiety or depression. I am suggesting, however, that even in such extreme cases, an integral approach combining medication with other alternatives can pave the way to deeper healing, growth, and integration. According to Mijares, “Because HMOs and managed health care systems prefer that doctors medicate patients and perform shortsighted quick fixes, opportunities for psychological insight and healing can be lost” (p. 7).

Mann (1998) contended, and I fully agree, that as a society we can truly benefit from preventative approaches that honor the integration of body, mind, and soul. Health care costs

could be significantly reduced and availability thereby expanded if more enlightened approaches that consider the spiritual basis and aspects of disease and healing, in addition to cognitive and pharmacological interventions, were employed. Yoga offers just this type of approach. Can we truly find healing and wholeness if we fail to recognize the Divinity within our very beings?

When we identify with our Divinity, we can open to the possibility for our consciousness to expand far beyond the limited conceptions of Western psychological thought. In truth, our human possibilities for love, healing, and creative manifestation are potentially unlimited. (Mann, 1998, p. 219)

According to Mann (1998), "The power in our consciousness, when united with the Divine, is unlimited" (p. 1). This is what Yoga, in conjunction with psychotherapy, has to offer.

Research Questions

The objective of this study was to explore the ways in which practicing Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy affect healing, growth, and transformation. (a) In what ways is healing deepened and growth enhanced through the practice of Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy?, (b) How is transformation experienced as a result of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy?, and (c) What are the physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental effects and benefits of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy?

Objectives

This study explored the growth and transformation of 4 co-researchers (i.e., participants), including the author, who experienced Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy. Volunteers were initially solicited based on suggestions from my local Yoga teacher and therapist. A flyer was then posted in a local bookstore where Yoga classes were held in an attempt to generate interest. My faculty mentor was also instrumental in referring co-researchers. A questionnaire was developed for use in open-ended interviews of the co-researchers.

The research method used in this study was organic inquiry. Throughout the process, as is characteristic of organic research, I remained open to my inner wisdom, allowing it to guide and direct me, as well as the natural unfolding of events and circumstances that in some cases propelled and other cases stalled this work.

The review of the literature focuses on the following areas: (a) What is Yoga?, (b) Psychotherapy, (c) Yoga and Psychotherapy, (d) Yoga Therapy: Research and Clinical applications, and (d) Meditation. It should be noted that the section on psychotherapy is focused primarily on transpersonal therapy, which was most relevant to the topic being explored. Furthermore, the transpersonal approach appeared to be a common thread among the co-researchers' experiences.

It is my hope that through sharing my story of growth and transformation through Yoga and psychotherapy and the stories of the co-researchers, others may be inspired to embark on their own journeys to transformation. Goals of organic research include transformation of the researcher, co-researchers, and readers of the study. It is also my hope that the results of this preliminary study will support others in studying more fully the healing potential and transformational benefits of practicing Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms were used:

- *Sacred Healing*: An integrated approach blending traditional methods of psychotherapy with the conscious experience of subtle energies and spiritual awareness, through which one is transformed and awakened to a higher state of consciousness and to the Divine reality (Mann, 1998). In this study, sacred healing involved an integrated approach combining Yoga with psychotherapy.

- *Transformation*: A radical restructuring of the entire psyche, which may include changes in thinking, worldview, beliefs, feelings, motives, impulses, and values, as well as altered perceptions, such as heightened seeing and sensing, which change the way we feel about ourselves and the world (Metzner, 1998). Effects of transformation may manifest as changes of self, increased connection to Spirit, or a desire to be of service to the world (Clements, 2002). *Transformation involving changes of mind*: Insights that have arisen from engaging with Spirit. *Transformation involving changes of heart*: One's view of who one is and how one operates in the world is changed.
- *Yoga*: There are many forms of Yoga, and this study was not limited to any one particular form. My own practice is a combination of Raja Yoga (Royal Yoga or eight-limbed Yoga) and Kundalini Yoga. Brief descriptions of the various schools of Yoga are provided in the Literature Review chapter along with a more comprehensive discussion of Raja Yoga.
- *Psychotherapy*: There are many different schools of therapy. This study is concerned primarily with transpersonal psychotherapy.
- *Transpersonal Psychotherapy*:
 Transpersonal psychotherapy is a healing endeavor that aims at the integration of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of well being. Its goals include the classic ones of normal healthy functioning. The healing potential of transpersonal experiences is affirmed, and the spiritual issues are explored from a psychological perspective. Some transpersonal therapists consider caring for the soul to be a major task of psychotherapy. (Vaughan, 1993, p 160)
- *Glossary*: A complete glossary of Sanskrit terms encountered in Yogic teachings is included Appendix A.

Delimitations of the Study

This study included a small group of co-researchers, 4 including the author, who underwent transpersonal psychotherapy for a minimum of 6 months and practiced Yoga for at least 1 year. Co-researchers were sought within close proximity to my local community so that face-to-face interviews could be conducted. It was believed that face-to-face interviews were important in light of the organic approach used in this study.

Limitations of the Study

Based on the organic inquiry approach, co-researchers' experiences are conveyed through their own personal stories. Growth and transformation are obviously subjective experiences, and each co-researcher's experience, as well as his or her perception of that experience, is unique. Furthermore, the way in which each individual articulates that experience also varies. Personally, I find these types of experiences difficult to put into words. Another limitation in my view is that Yoga acts on many subtle levels. The results of both Yoga and psychotherapy are cumulative, and to fully and accurately articulate one's experience, understanding and integration are critical.

Finally, the results of an organic inquiry, which are based in part on co-researchers' sharing of their personal stories, cannot be generalized to the entire population due to the somewhat subjective nature of this qualitative approach. According to Clements (2002), organic inquiry is an exploratory approach that offers discovery rather than proof.

Overview of Chapters to Follow

Throughout this study, I explored the growth and transformational effects of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy. Chapter two presents a review of the relevant literature. Chapter three describes the research method and procedures used in the study. Chapter four presents the findings and includes co-researchers' stories of transformation and the group story which is

presented as a synthesis, including themes and metaphors of transformation. Chapter five is the discussion, summary, conclusions, and implications. The report of transformative change is included in this chapter. The appendices include a glossary of Sanskrit terms, copies of letters to co-researchers, a flyer to solicit interest, consent forms, and interview questions.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this review is to explore the literature as it relates to the topic of this thesis, *Sacred Healing: The Transformative Effects of Integrating Yoga with Psychotherapy*. A preliminary search of the literature was performed through PsychINFO, using the keywords Yoga and psychotherapy. In the process of reviewing these books and articles, I was led to a number of additional relevant citations that have also been incorporated into this review.

People hold many different assumptions about the nature of Yoga. When the term Yoga is mentioned, most people think of the physical postures, or *asanas*, often used to relax the body. Yet this is only one small aspect of Yoga, which was designed primarily to facilitate the real practice of Yoga, “. . . the understanding and complete mastery over the mind” (Satchidananda, 1990, p. xi). Yoga involves the whole person, and its view of wholeness extends to the realm of the transpersonal (Anjali, 1994). According to Rama, Ballentine, and Ajaya (1998), the primary focus of Yoga is on the alteration of one’s self awareness and relationship to the world. “It is a complete system of therapy which includes work on developing awareness and control of the physical body, emotions, mind, and interpersonal relations” (p. 2). There are those who think of Yoga as an Eastern religion. While it is true that Yoga evolved out of India and its teachings are infused with many concepts from Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, Yoga is not a religion, nor must one believe in any particular religion to practice it (Feuerstein, 1999a). According to Feuerstein, “You need not believe in anything other than the possibility that you can transform yourself” (p. 1). At the heart of Yoga is the assumption that we have not yet tapped into our fullest potentials.

One of my goals in reviewing this body of literature was to arrive at a depiction of Yoga that embodies its true and complete essence. Another of my goals was to introduce the readers to the multitude of ways in which Yoga has been used in healing the mind, body, emotions, and spirit. A glossary of Sanskrit terms frequently encountered in Yogic philosophy and texts is included in Appendix A. A short section on psychotherapy, with a focus on transpersonal psychotherapy is also included.

Most of the research I encountered focuses on the physical practices, or *asanas*, of Hatha Yoga, and meditation, to the exclusion of other Yogic techniques, such as *pranayama* (control of the breath), the use of *mantras* (sound formulas used in meditation), chanting, and the study of Yogic texts, all of which are vital aspects of Yoga. A complete discussion of the eight limbs or steps of Yoga is included in the next section of this literature review. Much of the research on the therapeutic value of Yoga has focused on healing the physical body, overlooking the emotional, psychological, and spiritual rewards of practice, which I believe to be considerable. Finally, there is little in the literature to date on the process of combining Yoga and psychotherapy, which I believe offers unbounded healing, growth, and transformative potential. It is my hope that this thesis will elicit interest in these phenomena and open up avenues for further exploration.

LaPage (as cited in Anjali, 1995), suggested that in Yoga, as in much of mind-body medicine, the most accessible point of entry for the remediation of physical or mental disease is often the body. Mohan (as cited in Anjali, 1995), suggested that the rationale for this emphasis on healing physical illness with Yoga is that working with the body is often the easiest place to help students begin the reintegration process. I would agree with these contentions, based on my experience. It was Yoga that opened my awareness and brought me back into my body, which

had previously been numb. Yoga, in conjunction with psychotherapy, was integral to my healing and growth.

The body, mind, and emotions are intimately connected. According to Rama, Ballentine, and Ajaya (1998), our physical state is an embodiment of our mental state. We each have characteristic ways of responding to feelings and emotions by tightening particular parts of the body. Our posture reflects the way that we are feeling, and beyond this, posture and emotions can become fused so that one leads to the other. When body postures become habitual, beginning as a reaction to a certain mental state, these habitual patterns can actually sustain and perpetuate these states. It has been my experience that one can gain awareness into these patterns that hinder growth through the practice of Yoga. Psychotherapy can then be useful in helping one to explore the origin and meaning behind these patterns. Together, Yoga and psychotherapy can help one integrate and transform them.

This literature review focuses on the following topics: What is Yoga, Psychotherapy, Yoga and Psychotherapy, Yoga Therapy, Research and Clinical Applications, and Meditation. Although meditation is one of the eight limbs of Raja Yoga, it is often considered separately in the literature. Perhaps the rationale for this is that there are many different forms of meditation. It is for this reason that I include research on meditation under a separate heading. In reality, meditation is Yoga.

What is Yoga?

How do we awaken to the Divinity that lies within? The ancient system of Yoga illuminates the way. Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit *yuj*, meaning to yoke or to bind, and is generally translated to mean *union* (Satchidananda, 1990).

It signifies, in essence, the unification or reunification of the self with the Universal Self. (This unification seems necessary because we perceive ourselves to be separate from everything else.) It also denotes the reunification or integration of the person—mentally, physically, and emotionally. In its ultimate sense, Yoga refers to the reunification of humankind with the universe or cosmic consciousness or the Absolute. It is the discipline and training of the embodied human being so that it evolves toward what it is capable of becoming. (Criswell & Patel, 2003, p. 202)

Yoga is an ancient Indian philosophy imparted around 200 B.C., by the sage Patanjali (Gimbel, 1998; Rama, 1998; Satchidananda, 1990). Its origins are believed to date back much further to the *Samkhya* philosophical doctrines of India (Rama, 1998). *Samkhya*, founded around 600 B.C. by the sage Kapila, holds that there are two ultimate realities: *Purusha*, or cosmic consciousness, and *Prakriti*, or elemental matter. *Prakriti* is eternal, omnipresent and inert. Mind and body are thought to have evolved out of the transcendental energy source of *Prakriti* (Criswell & Patel, 2003). *Purusha* is omnipresent Consciousness (Sivananda, 2004). According to *Samkhya* doctrine, the universe evolved out of *Prakriti*, but is permeated by *Purusha*. Contact of the *Purusha* with *Prakriti* makes *Prakriti* evolve into its various effects. According to Sivananda, the *Purusha*, due to non-discrimination, feels that it is an individual due to its identification with *Prakriti* and its modifications. Raja Yoga has developed methods to free the *Purusha* from this bondage.

Patanjali did not create Yoga, but rather systematized and compiled already existing ideas and practices (Rama, 1998; Satchidananda, 1990). The doctrines were put forth in *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, considered the classic text or bible of Raja Yoga.

In Book One of the Yoga Sutras on concentration, Yoga is defined as follows:

Yoga is the concentration which restricts the fluctuations. Freed from them, the Self attains to self-expression. i. 1 Now, the exposition of Yoga [is to be made]. i. 2 Yoga is the restriction of the fluctuations of mind-stuff. i. 3 Then the Seer [that is the Self] abides in himself. i. 4 At other times it [the Self] takes the same form as the fluctuations [of mind stuff]. (Woods, 1998, p. xxx)

There are several schools of Yoga, and each has a slightly different approach. However, they all share the same goals: self-actualization, enlightenment, and union with the Divine, which, according to Yogic philosophy, resides within each of us. Herein lies Yoga's significance to transpersonal psychology. Yoga puts us in touch with our spiritual core, our innermost nature. According to Chaudhuri (1992), the ultimate and transpersonal goal of Yoga is the realization of and identification with the Self. These goals are achieved by stilling the mind and controlling the senses.

Its [Yoga's] ultimate aim is to bring about a thorough transformation of the individual who practices it sincerely. Its goal is nothing less than the total transformation of a seemingly limited physical, mental and emotional person into a fully illumined, thoroughly harmonized and perfected being—from an individual with likes and dislikes, pains and pleasures, successes and failures, to a sage of permanent peace, joy and selfless dedication to the entire creation. (Satchidananda, 1990, p. xiii)

Once one has reached this state of Self-Realization, one can dedicate himself or herself to the welfare of all beings (Criswell & Patel, 2003). "Yoga is meant for the good of all creatures, and a true Yogi is always desirous of benefiting as many men as possible" (Sinh, 2002, p. ii).

According to Yogic philosophy, the transcendental Self (referred to as *Atman*, *Purusha*, or Cosmic consciousness) is eternal and inherently blissful, and this is our true identity (Feuerstein, 1998a; Rama, 1998). The primary teaching of Yoga is that our innermost nature is divine, perfect, and infinite. Yet we are unaware of this because we falsely identify with our bodies, minds, and the objects of the external world. All misery is seen as a consequence of this false identification (Rama, 1998). Yogic philosophy is based on the assumption that pain and grief are caused by subjective human experience (Petzold, 1989). By developing the personality, Yoga offers a way to overcome this pain and grief. Yoga views human beings as intrinsically healthy and whole. It does not espouse a pathological model. Pathology manifests at the levels of the body and mind,

resulting from our human tendency to confuse Self and non-self. Yoga can restore health and well-being by expanding awareness or consciousness to the point of self-realization (Anjali, 1994). Growth and development are its aims. Unconscious processes are brought into consciousness, and awareness is transformed (Petzold, 1989). Yoga leads us to the direct experience of our inner Self, our true identity (Rama, 1998). “Yoga represents the union of the individual self, or *Atman*, with the supreme universal Self, or *Paramatman*” (p. 3). Goyeche (1979) described Yoga as a way of life, a prescribed technology, “. . . which has evolved as a system of liberation to allow man to discriminate between his ego-self and pure consciousness” (p. 373).

Schools of Yoga

There are several schools of Yoga, including Raja Yoga (considered the Royal Yoga), Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Mantra Yoga, Laya Yoga, Karma Yoga, Tantra Yoga, Hatha Yoga, and Kundalini Yoga (Chidananda, 2004; Feuerstein, 1999b; Gimbel, 1998; Prakash, 1999; Rama, 1998; Satchidananda, 1990). Space does not permit a detailed discussion of each of the schools in this review. Here I will briefly define the various schools of Yoga, limiting my discussion to Raja Yoga, from which all the other schools evolved, and Kundalini Yoga, as these make up my personal practice.

Bhakti Yoga is the devotional Yoga, and involves the practice of love and devotion toward God or the Divine. Jnana Yoga is the Yoga of wisdom, knowledge, and intellect. This path is oriented toward realizing the eternal in its transcendent aspect. Mantra Yoga is the Yoga of sound and vibration. Laya Yoga focuses on the power of the mind and will. Karma Yoga is based on right action and selfless service. In Karma Yoga, action is undertaken for its own sake, for the benefit of the greater good, and without attachment to outcome or personal gain. Tantra

Yoga aims at liberation through ritual, visualization, and subtle energy work. Hatha Yoga involves the control and purification of the physical body.

Raja Yoga

Raja Yoga, or eight-limbed Yoga, is considered the Royal Yoga and aims at discovering the self through concentration and meditation. Raja Yoga is also referred to as Ashtanga Yoga (Anjali, 1995; Rama, 1998; Satchidananda, 1990). Raja Yoga, or Royal Yoga, encompasses the teachings of all of these different paths (Rama, 1998). Raja Yoga is an integral approach that considers all aspects of the individual: the physical, mental, intellectual, social, and spiritual. Raja Yoga follows eight limbs or steps. These steps were laid down by Patanjali in *The Yoga Sutras* (Rama, 1998; Satchidananda, 1990). All schools of Yoga accept the eight limbs, but different schools focus on one or more of these aspects. The ultimate goal of Raja Yoga is the attainment of *Samadhi*, or the superconscious state.

According to Yogic teachings, we all have subconscious tendencies (*samskaras*) that shape our mental activity. The *samskaras* are the result of past actions and experiences from this as well as past lives. These subconscious tendencies continue to actualize themselves based on our thoughts and actions. Through Yogic practices including meditation it is possible to stop this activity from proliferating. In this way, we can free ourselves of the influences of the past. The goal of Yoga is the complete reformation of consciousness (Fadiman & Frager, 2002).

In the Yoga Sutras (II:3) Patanjali lists five afflictions or hindrances (*kleshas*) that are considered to be the causes of suffering. These hindrances include ignorance or undifferentiated consciousness (*avidya*), egoism and the feeling of personality, desire or passion, aversion, and fear or clinging to life (*abhinivesa*) (Fadiman & Frager, 2002; Satchidananda, 1990; Woods,

1998). These hindrances are gradually weakened through practice of the eight limbs of Raja Yoga.

The Eight Limbs of Raja Yoga

The eight limbs of Raja Yoga are as follows: *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi* (Goyeche, 1979; HariNam, 1996; Rama, 1998; Satchidananda, 1990). The first five limbs are considered the external limbs, and the last three limbs are considered the internal limbs. In traditional teachings, the first four limbs comprise the path of Hatha Yoga, although this is generally not the way that Hatha Yoga is taught in the West (Rama, 1998). Typically, only *asanas* and breathing exercises are taught. The *yamas* and *niyamas* are often avoided because of the discipline and lifestyle changes entailed in their practice. *Yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, and *pranayama* prepare the mind and body for meditation and ultimately *samadhi* and should be practiced prior to the last four stages of Raja Yoga.

Yama and *niyama* can be thought of as the ten commandments of Yoga. *Yama* means control, restraint, or abstinence. The *yamas* govern the laws of personal conduct. There are five *yamas*, or restraints, including *ahimsa* (nonviolence), *satya* (truthfulness), *asteya* (nonstealing), *brahmacharya* (continence, control of and freedom from sensual cravings), and *aparigraha* (non-possessiveness). *Niyama* means observance. The *niyamas* regulate one's habits and lead to control of one's behavior and actions. The *niyamas* include *shaucha* (purity, cleanliness), *santosha* (contentment), *tapas* (austerities, ascetic practices involving self discipline and the acceptance of pain, leading to purification and ultimately perfection of body, mind, and senses), *svadhyaya* (knowledge of the Self through study of the scriptures and one's own insights, intuitions, and internal states of consciousness), and *Ishvara-pranidhana*, or *Bhakti* (surrender and devotion to God) (Criswell & Patel, 2003; HariNam, 1996; Rama, 1998; Sinh, 2002;

Woods, 1998). Observing *niyama* develops the powers (*siddhas*) of the body/mind and leads to freedom from attachment, and ultimately, true happiness.

Asanas are physical postures or poses that are practiced as a part of Hatha Yoga. The goals of practicing *asanas* are to promote physical well-being and control over the body. “The *Asanas* are a means of gaining steadiness of position and help to gain success in contemplation, without any distraction of the mind” (Sinh, 2002, p. iv). There can be no peace of mind until the postures no longer cause pain, and this is achieved through regular practice. The term *Hatha* is derived from two Sanskrit terms, *ha*, meaning sun, and *tha*, meaning moon. Hatha Yoga represents the union of opposites (sun and moon, male and female) (Rama, Ballentine, & Ajaya, 1998).

Hatha Yoga includes physical postures (*asanas*), breathing techniques (*pranayama*), seals (*mudras*), locks (*bandhas*) and cleansing practices (*kriyas*) (Rama, 1998; Satchidananda, 1990). These practices are put forth in the classic text, *The Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (Sinh, 2002). Traditionally, *yama* and *niyama* are also considered aspects of Hatha Yoga. Hatha Yoga creates a state of physical and emotional balance in the system. *Asanas*, which number in the thousands, have evolved over the centuries to exercise every muscle, nerve, and gland in the body. *Asanas* reduce fatigue, calm the nervous system, and contribute to the training and discipline of the mind. Each pose can teach us something about ourselves, while strengthening the body and enhancing flexibility. “Asanas are the means by which the individual yokes the mind, body, and spirit” (Gimbel, 1998, p. 244).

Pranayama is the practice of controlling the vital life force, usually through control or restraint of the breath (Rama, 1998). When the respiration is disturbed, the mind becomes disturbed. “By restraining respiration, the Yogi gets steadiness of mind” (Sinh, 2003, p. 13). In

Sanskrit, *prana* means universal energy. *Prana* is brought into the body through deep breathing techniques and control of the breath. In Eastern traditions, there are those who have spent decades studying the breath. It has been said that many of the so-called miracles performed by Yogis are based on control of the breath. Accomplished Yogis claim that the key to self-mastery is *svarodaya*, or the science of the breath (Rama, Ballentine, & Hymes, 1998).

Regulation of the breath leads to regulation of the mind. *Pranayama* acts to balance, cleanse, and strengthen the mind, nervous system, and body. The breath is an extraordinarily powerful tool in achieving and maintaining physical, mental, and emotional balance, affecting the autonomic nervous system and the chemistry of the brain (Gimbel, 1998; Rama, 1998). According to Farhi (1996), slow deep breathing has been found to alter brain chemistry and relieve symptoms of depression. Because emotions are closely related to the breath, by altering our breathing patterns, we are able to shift emotional states (Rama, Ballentine, & Hymes, 1998).

According to Rama, Ballentine, and Hymes (1998), breathing is the only physiological process that can be either voluntary or involuntary. We can breathe consciously or, if we do not and we abandon control of the breath, some unconscious part of the mind takes over and begins breathing for us. In this case, breathing falls back under the control of the more primitive parts of the brain, an unconscious realm where the mind is ruled by emotions, thoughts and feelings of which we may have little awareness.

Evidence indicates that anxiety is more frequently associated with chest breathing as opposed to diaphragmatic breathing, the method used in Yogic *pranayama* (Rama, Ballentine, & Hymes, 1998). Many therapists, particularly those involved in various forms of bodywork and bioenergetics, place great emphasis on breathing. These therapists maintain that people may actually “freeze” or immobilize their diaphragms in an attempt to contain feelings of fear,

aggression, and other powerful emotions and keep them out of conscious awareness. I am certain that many of us have experienced this phenomenon. Psychoanalysts and Yogis who have studied the body's subtle energy system believe that emotions based on fear, sex, and aggression are associated with the lower parts of the body (or the first three *chakras* of the subtle energy field). Stiffening or freezing the diaphragm in effect serves to put these feelings out of awareness and store them in the lower body. Through the practice of *pranayama*, we are able to bring these patterns into awareness and release them. The breath, as such, can have a profound effect on our physical and psychological functioning. From a Yogic perspective, the breath is the link between the body and the mind. Working with the breath has tremendous potential as a psychological tool.

Pratyahara is the fifth limb of Raja Yoga, which relates to control or withdrawal of the senses from the external environment. In this process, the student learns to voluntarily draw the senses inward, eliminating the distractions of the outside world. This is a preliminary and necessary step to achieving tranquility of the mind, before moving on to the next limb of Raja Yoga, *dharana*, or concentration.

Dharana is attention or concentration and is a necessary precursor to meditation. In *dharana*, through voluntary attention, the dissipated powers of the mind are gathered together and directed toward the object of concentration. This type of voluntary attention requires a conscious effort of the will and perseverance. When the will is strengthened, the student is able to concentrate and focus the mind on the object of concentration. Patanjali warned, however, that the practice of concentration must be performed without attachment (Rama, 1998). The object of concentration may be an external object or a mental concept. Patanjali suggested that we can concentrate on anything that is elevating to us. We might concentrate on our subtle sense

perceptions or on the supreme ever blissful Light within (Satchidananda, 1990). Other means of turning inward are discussed further in the section entitled Meditation. Concentration makes the mind steady and one-pointed. Prolonged concentration leads or flows directly to *dhyana*, or a state of meditation.

Dhyana is the practice of meditation. "Meditation expands the one pointed mind to the superconscious state by piercing through its conscious and unconscious levels" (Rama, 1998, p. 13). Meditation is believed to support the physical and emotional work being done by the *asanas* and *pranayama*, bringing balance and clarity to one's life. Further, meditation unites the mind, body, and spirit, opening the door to self-realization and union with the Divine. The word meditate comes from the Sanskrit term, *medha*, meaning wisdom (Rozman, as cited in Gimbel, 1998). Meditation is said to open one up to inner wisdom, from which intuitive knowledge dawns. Rooted in ancient Yogic and Buddhist practices, there are a variety of meditative techniques. According to Rama, through meditation:

Man then becomes aware of his latent powers and is able to control his subtler energies, thus becoming more creative and dynamic. In such a man the so-called supernatural powers of telepathy, clairvoyance, and the like arise spontaneously. His limitations begin to drop away, and "miracles" are within his abilities. The prophets of all religions were, through their meditative prowess, able to perform many miracles, which were not really miracles at all but only the fulfilling of the natural potential within all human beings. (p. 14)

Rama (1998) cautioned, however, "A wise man regards such powers merely as by-products of Yogic discipline, indications of progress. His sole aim is union with the cosmic spirit, and he is not blinded by the powers" (p. 14). A detailed discussion on meditation is presented later in this review.

Samadhi is the state of super consciousness, and is the final goal of Raja Yoga.

He who has attained *Samadhi* is a blessing to society, for if humanity is to achieve a better civilization, it is possible only through the growth of the inner being. The entire life

of a person who is established in Samadhi is a spontaneous expression of the unhindered flow of supreme consciousness. (Rama, 1998, p. 15)

Prolonged and intense meditation leads to *Samadhi*. In this state, one transcends all imperfections and limitations and becomes one with the Divine. The word *samahitam* means the state where all one's questions are answered. According to Rama (1998), this conveys the experiential quality of *Samadhi*. According to Sinh (2002), "Perfect consciousness is gained through practice. Through practice, success is obtained; Through practice, one obtains liberation" (p. v).

Kundalini Yoga

Kundalini Yoga is a system of practices designed to purify, strengthen, and balance the body and mind (HariNam, 1996). It includes the uses of *asanas* (physical postures), *mantras* (sound formulas used in meditation), *yantras* (visual diagrams used to focus on during meditation and mantra practice), *mudras* (postures and hand gestures), and *pranayama* (breathing exercises to awaken and raise the latent *kundalini* or life force energy). *Kundalini* is the powerful energy that lies dormant at the base of the spine, until it is awakened, arising up to the head, to the crown *chakra*, activating the various energy centers (*chakras*) along the way. These *chakras* are assumed to contain abilities and potentialities of the human being, which are opened and awakened as the *kundalini* energy (*Shakti*) travels upward toward the crown *chakra* (Scotton & Hiatt, 1996).

Psychotherapy

There are many approaches to psychotherapy, including traditional psychoanalysis, gestalt therapy, analytic therapy, behaviorism, cognitive therapy, client-centered therapy, the humanistic perspective, and transpersonal psychotherapy (Fadiman & Frager, 2002). There are also those therapists who employ an eclectic approach, taking from the various disciplines the

tools they believe to be appropriate for the specific client or concern. It is not my intent in this review to delve into the various schools of psychotherapy. I would, however, like to review some of the major tenants of transpersonal psychotherapy, with which this study is primarily concerned.

Contemporary psychotherapy embraces many types of interventions (Strohl, 1998). Traditional therapeutic interventions focus on strengthening the ego, reducing pathology, and promoting adjustments to the norm. The existential level consists of contemplating the issues of existence, meaning, and one's purpose in life. Boorstein (2000), a respected author and psychiatrist, posited that traditional psychotherapy is basically pessimistic in its outlook. Boorstein himself is a traditionally trained psychoanalyst whose views have evolved toward a transpersonal orientation. There is a third level that Strohl referred to as the *soteriological* or mind level. It is at this level that one transcends ego identification, identifies with the transpersonal self, and experiences a sense of unity and interconnectedness with all of life.

Transpersonal Psychotherapy

Scotton (1996) defined transpersonal as follows:

Transpersonal, meaning beyond the personal, refers to development beyond conventional, personal, or individual levels. More specifically, transpersonal refers to development beyond the average, although such higher functioning turns out to be more common than previously was thought. Transpersonal development is part of a continuum of human functioning or consciousness, ranging from the prepersonal (before the formation of a separate ego), to the personal (with a functioning ego), to the transpersonal (in which the ego remains available but is superseded by more inclusive frames of reference). (pp. 3-4)

It should be noted that transpersonal therapy does not focus exclusively on transpersonal issues, but rather encompasses a broad range of techniques to meet the needs of the client (Strohl, 1998; Vaughan & Walsh, 1993). Clearly the ego must be strengthened as a prerequisite to transcendence (Strohl, 1998). Once adequate ego strength is established, the transpersonal

therapist may use traditional as well as nontraditional techniques to reduce the blocks within the limited ego to unleash the unlimited potential that lies within. The transpersonal view of human nature is all encompassing, and therefore its view of therapy is equally broad. According to Vaughan and Walsh (1993), most transpersonal therapists take the position that no one therapeutic technique addresses all psychological problems or dimensions, and different therapies and techniques are viewed as potentially complementary. Transpersonal therapists blend the best of mainstream psychotherapy with transpersonal techniques, drawing on each as appropriate to meet the needs of the particular client.

According to Vaughan (1993):

Transpersonal psychotherapy is a healing endeavor that aims at the integration of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of well being. Its goals include the classic ones of normal healthy functioning. The healing potential of transpersonal experiences is affirmed, and the spiritual issues are explored from a psychological perspective. Some transpersonal therapists consider caring for the soul to be a major task of psychotherapy. (p. 160)

“In transpersonal therapy, consciousness is both the instrument and the object of change” (Vaughan, 1993, p. 160). Transpersonal therapy seeks not only to change behavior and the contents of consciousness, but also to develop awareness of consciousness itself as the context of experience. “Ideally, a transpersonal approach aims at awakening from the consensus trance that perpetuates illusion” (p. 160).

According to Sutich (1996), “Transpersonally oriented therapy may therefore be described as therapy directly or indirectly concerned with the recognition, acceptance, and realization of ultimate states” (p. 10).

Transpersonal therapy is also concerned with the psychological processes related to the realization, or making real, of states such as “illumination,” “mystical union,” “transcendence,” and “cosmic unity”. It is also concerned with the psychological conditions or psychodynamic processes which directly or indirectly form barriers to these transpersonal realizations. (p. 11)

Sutich (1996) conceded that as human beings, we probably all have unfinished business in the psychodynamic realm with which we need to deal. Accordingly, transpersonal psychotherapy addresses the full range of pathologies as well as human potential. Supportive psychological work is done across the entire spectrum. Transpersonal psychotherapy allows a more inclusive vision of possibility in which we can let go of the past and live more fully in the present. In accordance with the perennial wisdom of spiritual teachings, it affirms the possibility of living in harmony with others and the environment. It is motivated by a sense of compassion and purpose as opposed to fear and greed (Vaughan, 1993). "As the client gradually shifts from being self-identified as a victim to taking a more responsible and creative stance that is based on a realization of personal freedom, the work may focus increasingly on transpersonal issues" (p. 161).

According to Vaughan and Walsh (1996):

The goals of transpersonal therapy include both traditional ones, such as symptom relief and behavior change, and, for appropriate clients, the introduction of a variety of methods aimed at the transpersonal level. The latter include the provision of an adequate conceptual framework for handling transpersonal experiences; information on psychological potential; realization of the importance of assuming responsibility, not only for one's behavior but for one's experience; discovery of the possibility of using all life experience as a part of learning; experiencing the existence and potentials of altered states; and understanding the usefulness, limits, and dangers of attachment to fixed models and expectations. In addition to working through psychodynamic processes, the therapist may also assist the client in beginning to disidentify from them. (pp. 21-22)

Transpersonal methods and interventions are typically less intellectual and more experiential than in mainstream psychotherapy, with the aim of promoting transcendence of the conscious mind, enabling it to explore the unconscious and reveal a deeper (transpersonal) level of being (Strohl, 1998). The therapist encourages the client to develop a variety of inner resources (Vaughan, 1993). The methods employed by the transpersonal therapist are aimed at

assisting the client in opening to his or her inner experience and to developing inner resources. Some of the methods commonly used within transpersonal psychotherapy include spiritual readings; meditation; Yoga; holotropic breath work; past life regression; hypnosis; visualization; psychodrama; contemplation; intuition; biofeedback; breath training; inward focusing; dream work; guided imagery; a holistic focus on all aspects of the person including diet, sleep, exercise, nutrition, rest, and leisure; bodywork; journal keeping; prayer; silence; solitude; awareness exercises; chanting; drumming; somatic therapies; mind body disciplines; emotional catharsis; cognitive reattribution; and alternative states of consciousness (Boorstein, 2000; Strohl, 1998; Vaughan, 1993). According to Vaughan and Walsh (1996), a distinguishing feature of these tools may be that their aim is not so much to change experience as to change one's relationship to experience by heightened, mindful awareness.

“Transpersonal psychotherapy is a process of awakening from a lesser to a greater identity” (Wittine, 1993, p. 169). “From a transpersonal perspective, wholeness implies a harmonious integration of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of well being as well as social responsibility” (Vaughan, 1993, p. 162).

Yoga and Psychotherapy

Until recently, and even today in some disciplines, the field of psychology has focused primarily on problems and pathological conditions, while ignoring the healing resources that lie within the spiritual dimension. According to Mijares (2003), psychology is a science that addresses mental, emotional, somatic and relational dynamics, whereas spirituality illuminates the inherent mystery of life itself. Mijares asserted that each approach provides a perspective that completes the other and if we pay attention to this shared conversation, new understandings to heal and to advance our psychological and spiritual development are revealed. “Wisdom

traditions teach methods for healing that awaken people to their inherent value and purpose as human beings” (p. 4).

Many professionals feel the spiritual element has been missing and that we will never be content until we know our inherent unity with the Divine Presence from which all life manifests. In our search for ways to help those who are suffering, we have neglected to include thousands of years of well-researched healing processes and knowledge gleaned from the world’s wisdom and spiritual traditions. Psychotherapists and religious practitioners need to work together to provide an integrative approach to enhance our psychological and spiritual development. (p. 1)

Many psychotherapy clients report that traditional “talk therapy” alone failed to help them (Mijares, 2003). Talk therapy on its own has limitations. There are those that are seeking something deeper, and they may respond well to experiential psychotherapies (Criswell & Patel, 2003). This has been corroborated through my own experience, as well as that of the co-researchers in this study. “Increasing numbers of people are choosing processes that expand and deepen consciousness because they offer a more direct, positive, and integrated psychospiritual experience” (Mijares, 2003, p. 11). According to Mijares, these processes facilitate healing and growth and enhance a person’s previously limited identity.

According to Criswell and Patel (2003), the use of Yoga in psychotherapy may happen in one of two ways. In the first, the client may come for Yoga-based psychotherapy with the intention of following that process. In the second, the desire to incorporate Yoga may emerge as one grows and develops through the psychotherapeutic process. Criswell and Patel asserted that the combination of psychotherapy and Yoga enhance each other. Kepner (as cited in Criswell & Patel, 2003) suggested several structures for this inclusion. In one such structure that Kepner referred to as the singular approach, the client would attend a Yoga class or individual session and then later in the week meet with her or his psychotherapist. In the alternating approach, the client would attend a Yoga class or session followed by a psychotherapy session. This approach

allows for the communication of insights gained during each experience. Yet another structure is the blended approach, in which Yoga and psychotherapy take place within the same session. In this approach, insights emerging from the Yoga session can be discussed as they arise. While the practitioner facilitates many of the client's insights, journaling of dreams and waking experiences allow the client's insights to be integrated.

According to Criswell and Patel (2003), the goal of mainstream psychotherapy may be personal adjustment, problem solving, or the relief of symptoms arising from psychological distress. Mainstream psychotherapy is particularly concerned with diagnosis based on the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-IV) and the formulation of a treatment plan reflective of clinical and experimental findings. Humanistic and transpersonal psychotherapies work from a different premise, moving to include relevant experiences that unfold during work with the client. Although some contemporary psychotherapists are beginning to recognize the value of Yoga within the context of their work, the humanistic or transpersonal psychotherapist is more likely to appreciate and incorporate Yoga as part of the psychotherapeutic process.

Humanistic psychology has as its goal the actualization of positive human potential. This is usually considered to be mind, body, and spirit. It looks at the human being from the position of being centered within the human experience. It considers the spiritual dimension to be the further reaches of human potential and as a natural part of human experience. In the humanistic psychology context, Yoga is seen as a tool for actualizing human potential. Transpersonal psychology, on the other hand, looks at the human being first from the transcendent perspective. Transpersonal psychology is psychology concerned with transcending the personal and frequently includes meditation, Yoga, and other liberating disciplines as practices toward transcending the personal toward the human's true nature. (p. 217)

Utilizing Yogic philosophy and techniques in psychotherapy offers the possibility of going beyond reformation of symptoms and habits to full transformation. Through the methods of Yoga and psychotherapy the individual can de-hypnotize himself, clear his body, know his emotions, and then release from his mind illusions and unconscious conditioning so that there is full access to all of the human potential. The yogi believes

that ultimately the potentiality of the Self is to connect with the entire cosmos. (Cope & Keane, 1996, p. 289)

According to Criswell and Patel (2003), some of the therapeutic outcomes arising out of incorporating Yoga with psychotherapy include an enhanced ability to deal with stress; healthier, more comfortable functioning in the world; increased self understanding, self acceptance and self esteem; somatic development; increased understanding of the psycho-spiritual process; decreased fear and distress; an increase in a sense of connection with one's life course; a new sense of purpose; a decrease in inhibition; and an increase in available capacities and energy. This is often accompanied by an increased sense of joy in being connected with one's potential, life direction, and reason for being. This sense of joy is one of the gifts that I have experienced as a result of this integrative process.

Somatic Therapies and Self Regulatory Methods

In his article entitled *Psychotherapy by Somatic Alteration*, Grim (1969) addressed the role of mind-body connections in psychotherapy and the importance of viewing these interactions as operating in two directions: the mind's effect on the body and the body's, or soma's, effect on thinking and feeling. Grim asserted that the body's contribution to emotional disorders has been largely ignored, as has the possibility that it might even be employed therapeutically, except in cases where drugs are used to alter body chemistry. He argued that somatic alteration as a sole or complimentary therapeutic technique is rarely considered. Grim defined somatic therapies as those methods that facilitate psychological insight or behavior change through reducing somatic reactivity or altering brain chemistry and activity.

Included in Grim's (1969) definition of somatic therapies are Yoga and meditation, in addition to autogenic training, relaxation procedures, and desensitization therapy. While the primary focus of Grim's article was on autogenic training, it should be noted that autogenic

training grew out of Yoga and hypnosis and their physiological effects share much in common (Ikemi, Nakagawa, Suematsu, & Luthe, 1975). Grim's article brings to light the interchanging influences of the mind-body paradigm and the notion that the body's effect on the mind and emotions has thus far been largely ignored. This omission gives rise to opportunities for further research in this area.

According to Ikemi, Ishikawa, Goyeche, and Sasaki (1978), as psychotherapists become increasingly aware of the limitations of conventional psychoanalysis and behavioral approaches, the use of self-regulatory methods such as Yoga are becoming more widespread. In their article on the biological wisdom of self-regulatory methods and psychotherapy, Ikemi et al. (1975) defined their view of psychotherapy. Their orientation is delineated as follows:

We assume that inner harmony can attain higher levels and provide a more favorable background for adaptational reactivity as the individual is given opportunity to develop in accordance with his genetically given potentialities.

Within the scope of our biologically oriented view of the interaction between the genetic constellation, the adaptational processes and the level of an individual's functional harmony, we consider that the inherent forces of self-regulatory homeostatic nature assume a key role in protecting and facilitating the developmental realization of the authentic self. (p. 100)

It is against this backdrop that they considered the value of self-regulatory methods, including Yoga, in the practice of psychotherapy. Among these approaches are a group of interventions that emphasize the use of mental or psychic functions to obtain higher levels of functional harmony and more favorable conditions for the realization of the authentic self (Ikemi et al., 1975). While the methods may be different, Ikemi et al. noted that they share certain commonalities. The most notable of these is the regular practice of a disciplined approach designed to promote self-regulation, which contributes to and facilitates reaching a state of functional harmony, of self-actualization, and the experience of great bliss, serenity, and

unbounded freedom. In Yoga, this state is referred to as *Samadhi*, or superconsciousness (Satchidananda, 1990).

According to Ikemi et al. (1975), Yoga contains a variety of elements that promote homeostasis and are psychotherapeutic in nature and should therefore be of scientific interest to psychotherapy. Through the Yogic practices of *yama* (abstinence) and *niyama* (observance), Yoga seeks to reduce or eliminate chaotic outside interferences and to promote a state of internal homeostasis and harmony. "Increased awareness, recognition, acceptance and realization of the authentic self are of central importance" (p. 102). As the Yoga practitioner advances through consistent and regular practice, physiological stabilization and psychodynamic growth ensue. These transformations are reflected in increased levels of relaxation, natural calm and serenity, deeper and more lucid experience of emotions, improved adaptational responses to outside stressors, increased creativity, and other developments regarded as manifestations of self-realization.

More concisely, one may perhaps say that self-regulatory enlightenment is the arousal of one's awareness to a point which permits effortless self-actualization through unhampered self-regulatory integration with the basic principle which governs cosmic existence in all its aspects. (pp. 103-104)

According to Ikemi et al. (1975), the quest toward this type of enlightenment is unobtainable, but is a desirable goal of psychotherapy. I would have to disagree with the first part of this statement, that of enlightenment being unobtainable. However, I am in complete agreement with the latter assertion, in that it is truly a worthwhile goal of psychotherapy as well as transpersonal discipline and practice to strive toward self-actualization and enlightenment. This is the path of Yoga.

Altered States of Consciousness

While the origin of Yoga was originally based on spiritual pursuits, it has become increasingly popular today in the West, largely due to its relaxation and stress reduction properties. Self-regulatory methods, Yoga included, have the ability to induce an altered state of consciousness in the practitioner. Ikemi et al. (1978) discussed aspects of the altered state of consciousness. According to Tebecis, Ohno, Matsubara, Sugano, Takeya, Ikemi, and Takasaki (as cited in Ikemi et al., 1978), "The underlying concept is that man has the innate regulatory mechanisms which, if given the chance, restore the brain and body processes to optimal homeostatic conditions" (p. 171). It appears that the altered state of consciousness allows the brain to rest, thereby restoring optimal homeostasis.

For centuries it has been postulated that the higher states of consciousness induced during transcendental meditation may relieve physical and mental stress (Seeman, Nidich, & Banta, 1972). Although it is known that transcendental meditation influences a variety of psychophysiological measures, little investigation has been done on attributes that are more psychological in nature.

Seeman et al. (1972) studied the influence of transcendental meditation on various indicators of self-actualization as measured by the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI). Research participants included 35 undergraduate students from the University of Cincinnati. The meditation group consisted of 8 males and 7 females; the control group was made up of 10 males and 10 females. The Personal Orientation Inventory was administered twice to both groups. It was administered initially 2 days prior to the beginning of the meditation period and subsequently 2 months later. After receiving the initial individual instruction, meditators meditated twice daily for periods of 15 to 20 minutes each. Results of the study indicated that the

practice of transcendental meditation for a 2-month period had a salutary influence on the subjects' psychological states as measured by the Personal Orientation Inventory. These findings appear to support the contention that transcendental meditation can positively influence measures of psychological growth and self-actualization. As research has been limited in this particular area, this would certainly be an area worthy of further investigation.

According to both Smith and Onda (as cited in Ikemi et al., 1978), there is also evidence that the altered state of consciousness can lead to higher order personality integration, such as increases in empathy and creativity. Yoga helps regulate and restore the entire brain-body complex. In the altered state induced by Yoga and meditation, different parts of the brain may release impulses, old memories, and emotions.

Ikemi et al. (1978) contended that Yoga is the least hazardous technique used to induce altered states of consciousness due to Yoga's profound philosophical base and the fact that practice is generally integrated into the individual's every day life. I agree with these contentions, and my own practice is based upon these principles. I am aware, however, that this is not typically the way Yoga is practiced among the general population in the West. I would caution that the guidance of a well-trained Yoga teacher is particularly important, as is the support of an experienced psychotherapist when dealing with intense emotional material. According to the authors, the most important contribution of Yoga to psychotherapy lies in Yoga's ability to broaden and deepen its horizon, and further, to attain the final goal of psychotherapy, the realization of one's true Self. Through Yoga, we are awakened to the truth.

Healing of Childhood Wounds

"The developmental and cultural influences of our childhood are deeply entrenched" (Mijares, 2003, p. 228). In the therapeutic process, in order for one to heal deep-seated wounds

and work through difficult emotions, one must first be aware of them. This process of awareness is greatly facilitated through Yoga. According to Rama, Ballentine, and Ajaya (1998), through the concentration, build-up and controlled release of latent energy, higher states of consciousness and integration can occur. Once these wounds and emotions are brought into conscious awareness, I believe that work with a psychotherapist can promote understanding and lead to deep healing and further integration. Confronting intense memories or emotions without adequate psychological preparation and therapeutic support can be overwhelming and can lead to depression, suicidal feelings, and destructive behavior, including aggression or over indulgence in drugs or alcohol. Psychotherapy becomes an important and powerful ally at this juncture.

Conversely, it is also true that many persons choose alternative therapies and seek religious experiences rather than acknowledge that they have psychological problems. Although supernatural presences and nonordinary experiences are acknowledged by a multitude of people, these experiential realms present a clinical problem when persons use them to avoid unresolved pain hidden in the recesses of the psyche. Defenses such as repression, denial, rationalization, and projection protect the fragile ego but limit the untapped inner and outer potential. (Mijares, 2003, pp. 3-4)

Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy can address these concerns, leading to deepened healing, enhanced growth and integration, and ultimately transformation.

Yoga Therapy: Research and Clinical Applications

According to LePage (1993), "Yoga Therapy is a holistic mind-body approach to health and healing which combines the ancient wisdom of Yoga with the latest advances in body/mind medicine" (p. 43). According to Feuerstein (1998b), Yoga Therapy is an emerging field that is still in the process of defining itself relative to the medical and psychological professions, as well as ancient Yogic traditions. In its current state, Yoga Therapy represents an initial attempt to integrate traditional Yogic concepts and techniques with Western medicine and psychology. While Yoga is traditionally concerned with personal transformation and self-actualization of the

“healthy” individual, the goal of Yoga Therapy is the holistic treatment of various psychological and somatic dysfunctions and distress. Both Yoga and Yoga Therapy share the common assumption that the human being is an integrated body-mind system which functions optimally when in a state of dynamic balance.

In the West, a variety of approaches have been used in Yoga Therapy; most have been centered upon the therapeutic potential of Hatha Yoga. The degree to which these different approaches are based on traditional Yogic teachings varies considerably. Throughout Yoga’s history, its teachings have traditionally been passed down orally from *guru* (teacher, dispeller of darkness) to student, while the *guru* initiated the student in various practices along the way. As Yoga has gained in popularity in the West, these elements of Yogic tradition have been left behind in the majority of cases, exposing Yoga to reductionism. According to Feuerstein (1998b), internationally respected Yoga researcher, author, and President and Chairman of the Yoga Research and Education Center:

Specifically, to the extent that Yoga Therapy understands itself as little more than physical therapy or breath therapy, it will have failed in preserving the holistic paradigm of original Yoga. The challenge confronting Yoga therapists is to remain true to the holistic (psychosomatic and spiritual) content of traditional Yoga while simultaneously serving clients who are suffering from physical and emotional dysfunctions and who may not be prepared to hear that their problems have a spiritual component. To express it differently, Yoga therapists will have to become highly skillful in navigating the potentially hazardous waters between therapy and religion--a challenge they share, for instance, with some psychotherapists. (p. 6)

LePage (1993) described Yoga Therapy in this way: “Yoga Therapy facilitates health and healing at the level of the body, balance at the level of the mind and emotions, and awakens us to the spiritual dimension of living” (p. 43). This is accomplished through a process of awareness, acceptance, and adjustment. First, the client develops an awareness of his or her mind, body, and spirit. Then, one develops a gentle and loving acceptance of all that one is. Finally, in the

unfolding of the healing process, the Yoga Therapy client moves toward greater clarity and balance.

In Yoga, health involves the integration of body, mind, and spirit and a knowing that we are One with all of life. This experience is one of balance, love, and joy. Health is a process of moving toward Unity and the unobstructed flow of *prana*, or the basic life force energy. Dis-ease occurs when we perceive ourselves as separate and the flow of *prana* is blocked. When the physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects of ourselves are in harmony, health is our natural state of being (LePage, 1993).

Integrative Yoga Therapy incorporates the traditional elements of Yoga as its basis, including postures (*asanas*), breath (*pranayama*), deep relaxation (*Yoga nidra*), and the Yoga psychology of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Additional tools and techniques are used, all of which are aimed at facilitating the rediscovery of Unity and wholeness. These techniques include the body scan, which brings our awareness to the body, guided imagery (*bhavana*), meditation (*dhyana*), sound (*mantra*), and the drawing of mandala (*yantra*) (LePage, 1993).

Tension, muscle constriction, and imbalances in the body often exist within the mind as stress, inner conflict and unexpressed emotions. Through postures, breath, dialogue techniques, and guided imagery stress is released and the expression of feelings and emotions is facilitated. Clarity and expanded awareness result. Integrative Yoga Therapy creates a sanctuary and opens the door in which the client can explore the body, mind, and emotions on the journey to Wholeness and Unity. “We create an opening to our highest potential: unconditional love, the joy of living, acceptance of all the dimensions of being human, and insight into our true nature” (LePage, 1993, p. 45).

Hatha Yoga and Meditation as Adjunct Therapies

In her article entitled *Yoga, Meditation, and Imagery: Clinical Applications*, Gimbel (1998), a holistic nurse, focused on the roles of Hatha Yoga and meditation as adjunct therapies in promoting and maintaining overall health and wellness. According to Gimbel, “Yoga is truly a holistic exercise. It honors, supports, and utilizes the mind-body connection like no other form of physical exercise” (p. 244). Gimbel contended that the beneficial applications of Yoga are based on the mind-body connection and the role that stress plays in illness and in our lives.

Any type of stress, whether positive or negative, elicits physiological responses in the body, including increased heart rate, respiration, and blood pressure; muscle tension; and the release of adrenaline and other stress-related hormones. Chronic stress results in decreased immune system function. Through the practice of Yoga, the body is relaxed, and the system is restored to a state of balance, or homeostasis. Moods and emotions are also affected.

Gimbel (1998) discussed numerous examples in case studies from her private practice of clinical applications in which Yoga has been used successfully. According to Gimbel, increased circulation and oxygen intake resulting from Yogic *asanas* and *pranayama* contribute to healing and regeneration on all levels. Increased flexibility and oxygen consumption have been shown to enhance athletic performance. Yoga has been found to decrease the debilitating effects of arthritis. Yogic *pranayama* has been shown to alleviate migraine headaches, chronic pain conditions, hypertension, epilepsy, asthma, panic attacks and coronary heart disease (Farhi, 1996). Meditation has been shown to lower stress related hormones (Watson, as cited in Gimbel, 1998). According to Gimbel, “Yoga and the breath are the bridges that enable people to experience the mind-body connection that is so invaluable in achieving and maintaining

wellness” (p. 251). I believe these findings just merely touch the surface of the infinite potential of Yoga in healing and transforming the mind, body, emotions, and spirit.

Yoga Therapy for Psychosomatic Disorders

According to McCall (2003), Yoga Therapy for psychosomatic disorders has been practiced in India for centuries; however, the practice of Yoga as a therapeutic model has been largely undiscovered in other parts of the world. Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana (SVYASA), a research institute in India, uses a system called Integrated Approach of Yoga Therapy (McCall, 2003). This program includes *asanas*, chanting, *kriyas* (cleansing techniques), meditation, *pranayama*, and lectures on Yogic philosophy. Studies conducted at the research foundation have shown this system to benefit people with asthma (Nagendra & Nagarathna, 1986), mental retardation (Uma, Nagendra, Nagarathna, & Vaidehi, 1989), and rheumatoid arthritis (Haslock, Manro, Nagarathna, Nagendra, & Raghuram, 1994). It has also been shown to improve visual perception (Raghuraj & Telles, 1997), manual dexterity (Raghuraj & Telles, 1997), and memory (Naveen, Nagarathna, Nagendra, & Telles, 1997).

According to Nespor (1985), a psychiatrist, Yoga Therapy is often combined with other treatment methods in India, such as herbal remedies and even psychiatry. Yoga is found to be helpful in the prevention of stress-related disorders and beneficial in the treatment of certain neuroses and psychosomatic disorders, including asthma. Nespor asserted that Yoga is a useful adjunct to psychotherapy due to its somatopsychic approach, and that better integration between Yoga and psychotherapeutic techniques is called for.

Recently, psychosomatic departments in two leading Japanese universities at Kyushu and Tokyo have begun utilizing Yoga as an integral component of their treatment programs (Goyeche, 1979). Based on a review of clinical evidence, Goyeche found that Yoga practice is

indeed effective in treating a wide range of psychosomatic and psychiatric disorders. Goyeche discussed the implications of Yoga in the prevention and treatment of psychosomatic disorders.

According to Goyeche (1979), the medical benefits of Yoga can be partially understood in terms of neurophysiological theory. He postulated that the physiological benefits of Yoga are achieved by a de-conditioning of irrelevant muscle activity, accompanied by an increase in oxygen consumption, resulting in an optimal condition of hypothalamic tuning and homeostasis of both the central and autonomic nervous systems.

Goyeche (1979) conceded that psychoanalysis and other verbally-oriented therapies have proven ineffective in treating psychosomatic disorders, and he attested that in light of the all-inclusive holistic somatopsychic approach of Yoga, its potential in treating psychosomatic disorders is difficult to ignore. In fact, clinical observations of psychosomatic patients have shown that when posture is improved, muscles relaxed, and breathing corrected, subjective psychological and social/behavioral change occurs as well.

Goyeche (1979) contended that psychological conflicts and defenses are structured or stored in the body as tension. Yoga relaxes and releases this tension through what Goyeche referred to as a *somatopsychic* discharge. This may present itself as muscle spasms, tremor, or occasional vocal discharges like laughing, crying, or sounds. I am intimately familiar with these forms of release, as well as the arousal of spontaneous emotions, as a result of my own Yoga practice. Shafi (as cited in Nespor, 1985) posited that during meditation traumas of early childhood are re-experienced and mastered. In my view, having a trained teacher as well as a psychotherapist who both understand the nature of this process and are available to help the student comprehend what is taking place and work through emotional releases, if and when they become overwhelming, is of enormous benefit. In cases during which trauma is re-experienced,

having the support of a well-trained teacher and psychotherapist is particularly important. In my own experience, the combined support of my Yoga teacher and my therapist were essential to my understanding of what was taking place in my body, facing the fear I encountered during the process, coming to terms with the pain elicited from old memories, and integrating these experiences. Yoga, in conjunction with psychotherapy allowed me to achieve levels of growth and transformation that I would have been unable to attain by either alone.

Those who have participated in Yoga programs have reported unaccustomed feelings of well-being and a release of physical tension (Shaffer, LaSalvia, & Stein, 1997). Through the practice of Yoga, tension is released not only in the body, but also in the heart, the mind, and in feeling states. This release of tension can “put one back in touch with oneself on a very deep level” (Moyers, as cited in Shaffer, LaSalvia, & Stein, 1997, p. 59). Therapists have reported that Yoga practitioners develop increased levels of self-awareness. In some cases, these experiences have been processed in individual therapy sessions, resulting in new and previously unavailable emotional insights (Shaffer, LaSalvia, & Stein, 1997). This has been my experience as well.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the clinical effectiveness of Yoga with nearly all psychosomatic syndromes and a number of psychiatric disorders (Kurulkar & Mehta; Kuvalayananda; Yogendra, as cited in Goyeche, 1979). Improvements in symptoms of anxiety have been demonstrated after patients practiced Hatha Yoga once weekly for a 1-year period (Ishikawa, Kikuchi, & Morita, as cited in Goyeche, 1979). Significant improvement has been shown in patients experiencing anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, phobic conditions, and hypochondria following the practice of Raja Yoga, which included *asanas* (postures), *pranayama* (control of the breath), chanting of *mantras*, and meditation (Ishikawa et al., as cited in Goyeche, 1979).

To circumvent the limitations of traditional psychiatric treatment for neuroses and psychosomatic disorders, Vahia, Doongaji, Jeste, Ravindranath, Kapoor, and Ardhapurkar (1973) proposed a new approach to the treatment of these disorders. They referred to their approach as *psychophysiologic therapy*, and it based it on the principles of Raja Yoga as expounded by Patanjali. The aim of this therapy is to minimize preoccupation with external (environmental) gratifications (seen as the root cause of much mental illness), increase self-awareness and personality integration, and actualize one's full creative potential.

Psychophysiologic therapy involves five of the eight steps of Raja Yoga: *asana* (physical postures), *pranayama* (control of the breath), *pratyahara* (withdrawal of the senses from the external environment), *dharana* (concentration), and *dhyana* (meditation).

Vahia et al. (1973) completed a study over a 9-year period investigating the effects of psychophysiologic therapy. Two hundred and fifty research participants were selected from patients who attended the outpatient services of the medical and psychiatric departments of the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital in Bombay, India. Criteria for inclusion in the study were as follows: (a) a diagnosis of psychoneurosis or psychosomatic disorder, (b) ages between 15 to 50, and (c) absence of response to conventional treatments. One hour treatment sessions were held 6 days per week for a 6-week period under the supervision of a trained physiotherapist.

The study was divided into three phases. During phase one, an attempt was made to observe the therapeutic response to the five-step treatment protocol. Patients who received the therapy were assessed for clinical improvement at the end of 3 weeks and at the end of the 6-week treatment. Indications of improvement were based on target symptom relief, increased work efficiency, and objective global improvement as reported by the patient's friends, spouses, other relatives, and colleagues. During phase two of the study, the psychophysiologic treatment

protocol was compared with a treatment procedure received by a control group involving postures and breathing practices that superficially resembled the treatment (pseudo-psychophysiologic therapy). Patients were randomly assigned to either of the two groups. During the final phase of the study, a group receiving psychophysiologic therapy was compared to a control group receiving anxiolytic and antidepressant drugs. The initial, intermediate, and final evaluations included Taylor's Anxiety Rating Scale, Hamilton's Depression Rating Scale, and Bell's Social Adjustment Scale.

Results of the study were as follows (Vahia et al., 1973): During phase one, 70% of the 165 patients who received the psychophysiologic therapy showed improvement in all four diagnostic categories monitored including anxiety, depression, hysteria, and bronchial asthma. Those patients who received 35 or more sessions showed significantly greater improvement than those who had fewer sessions. It was also found that the total treatment protocol involving all five steps (*asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, and *dhyana*) was associated with significantly greater improvement than treatment involving only three steps (*asana*, *pranayama*, and *pratyahara*). Results for phase two of the study indicated that of the 37 patients who were treated with the psychophysiologic therapy, improvement was found to be superior to the control group receiving pseudo-psychophysiologic therapy. In stage three, 21 patients who received the psychophysiologic therapy were compared to 18 patients who were treated with anxiolytic drugs, antidepressants, or both. Both treatments were found to be equally effective in treating symptoms of depression, and the psychophysiologic therapy produced significantly greater reductions in anxiety. The scores on the social adjustment scale were believed to be unreliable in measuring change due to the short interval (3 weeks) between successive evaluations. This study demonstrated that psychophysiologic therapy was clearly beneficial in the treatment of

psychoneuroses and psychosomatic disorders. The researchers suggested that further research in different cultural settings was warranted, and I would agree.

Yoga Therapy in the Treatment of Addictions

Yoga Therapy has played a critical role in the rehabilitation of many people suffering from addictions. LePage (1993) posited that *asanas* may offer an alternative to addiction and create a space in which the emotional patterns underlying addiction can be recognized, experienced, and released. As the body and mind come into a state of balance, LePage contended that clients discover a sense of joy and realize that all they need is already within them. Studies in the United States, Europe, and India have demonstrated that when people with addictions practice therapies considered unconventional by traditional Western medicine, including Yoga, they experience reduced anxiety and depression, lowered levels of stress hormones, and decreases in alcohol and drug use (McCall, 2003; Nespor, 1985; Shaffer et al., 1997).

Vedamurthachar (as cited in McCall, 2003) recently completed a study demonstrating that a form of Yoga that utilizes a rapid breathing technique, called *Sudarshan Kriya Yoga*, helped facilitate recovery from alcoholism, which is a growing problem in India. Research in this area is ongoing throughout India. Nespor, a psychiatrist, has used Yoga in treating inpatients addicted to drugs and alcohol and noted the risks of using medications, so prevalent in psychiatry, to treat patients with addictions. Nespor also considered Yogic meditation to be effective in the prevention of drug addiction in many people. Many substance abuse treatment advocates propose a comprehensive and integrated approach to treatment that focuses on the whole person, as opposed to the mere eradication of specific symptoms (Shaffer et al., 1997).

According to Shaffer et al. (1997), many patients undergoing treatment for addictions report histories of early trauma. Significant biochemical and neurophysiologic alterations occur

in an organism in response to trauma. These alterations are stored in the body, creating blocks. One of the many benefits of Yoga is its ability to pierce through these blocks and reintegrate the mind and body. It is believed that Yoga restores the nervous system's memory of balance, exchanging cells' abnormal receptors for more normal patterns (Chopra, 1991). Yoga provides an alternative to substance abuse in the addict's attempt to self-medicate pain associated with trauma.

Shaffer et al. (1997) conducted a study comparing Hatha Yoga with group psychotherapy for enhancing methadone maintenance treatment in patients addicted to opium. The study sought to determine whether Yoga is more effective than traditional group therapy as an adjunct to methadone treatment. Two groups were compared. The CMT group received weekly psychodynamic group therapy in conjunction with methadone treatment and individual psychotherapy, while the AMT group participated in weekly group Hatha Yoga classes along with methadone treatment and individual psychotherapy.

After a 1-month intake and orientation phase, a 5-month treatment period ensued. Participants were randomly assigned to either the CMT or AMT group. Three measures were employed at both the outset of the study and at its conclusion to evaluate outcomes. The 90-item revised Symptom Check List provided the primary psychological measures in conjunction with the Global Severity Index. The Addiction Severity Index measured addictive behaviors (Shaffer et al., 1997).

Results showed no significant differences between the group receiving psychodynamic group therapy (CMT) and those who participated in Hatha Yoga (AMT) (Shaffer et al., 1997). Both treatments were found to significantly reduce drug use and criminal activities. A number of participants reported that Yoga had been pivotal in their recovery.

According to the researchers (Shaffer et al., 1997), unexpected issues among the staff complicated the integration of Yoga in this study. Some of the counseling staff did not accept Yoga, despite their original commitment to integrating this treatment. This bias manifested in a number of ways: through support of participant transfers from the Yoga group to the psychodynamic group but not vice versa, through more intense patient follow-up for those not responding in the psychodynamic group, and through more passive acceptance of non-attendance in the Yoga group. Another limitation, in my view, is that those in the Yoga group were required to participate in class at all times, whereas those in the psychodynamic group were not required to speak or participate. This seems to contradict one of the primary tenants of Yoga, which is to participate at one's own pace, according to one's own inner teacher.

Despite these limitations, this preliminary study found Hatha Yoga to be an equally effective complement to psychotherapy as traditional group psychodynamic therapy within the context of a methadone maintenance program (Shaffer et al., 1997). Thus far, there has been a lack of research investigating the effectiveness of alternative treatment modalities for opiate addiction. More research integrating Yoga with traditional treatment modalities in the prevention and treatment of addictions is warranted.

Meditation

Goleman (1971), a Clinical Psychologist, discussed his view of meditation as a meta-therapy. According to Goleman:

I conceptualize meditation as a meta-therapy: a procedure that accomplishes the major goals of conventional therapy and yet has as its end-state a change far beyond the scope of therapies, therapists, and most personality theorists—an altered state of consciousness. Just as behavior therapy and psychoanalysis proved to embody the visions of the first and second forces in psychology, and as the encounter group is the main vehicle for the third force, so may meditation be the main route for the newly emergent fourth force. (p. 4)

The fourth force which Goleman (1971) referred to is, of course, transpersonal psychology. Also of interest to transpersonal psychology is the view that mystical experiences associated with meditation are thought to be therapeutic.

The science of meditation, referred to as *dhyana* in Sanskrit, was born in ancient India during the Upanishadic period and later elaborated on by the seer Patanjali (Rama, 1998). Over the centuries, meditation has evolved into a systematic science for expanding consciousness.

In meditation, through withdrawal of the senses from the external world (*pratyahara*) and concentration (*dharana*), the conscious mind is voluntarily stilled and turned inward. When the mind is turned inward, the meditator becomes acutely aware of the random chaos characteristic of thoughts in the waking state. There are a variety of methods to accomplish this turning inward. One may concentrate on a *mantra* or sound, focus attention on a *yantra* (geometric pattern) or other object (*trataka*), focus attention on a particular *chakra* (center of consciousness in the subtle body, energy center), or meditate on one's innermost Self (Rama, 1998). According to Goleman (1971), "In meditation, relaxation is deep, the hierarchy of thoughts is innately experience-encompassing, self-observation conditions are such that inner feedback for behavior change is optimal" (p. 6). Rama asserted: "Through meditation an aspirant's cognition, emotion, and volition become unified, and his latent powers are awakened" (p. 96). This makes sense, in that when one's emotions, thought processes, and will are balanced and act in unison, one can then operate from his or her highest potential.

Research on Meditation

Most of the research conducted on meditation to date has focused on Transcendental Meditation (TM), which is the most well-known form of meditation in the West. Although there are differences among various meditation systems, these differences have been unexplored as of

yet. Transcendental meditation traces its roots back to Raja Yoga, to the practice of *japa* (Goleman, 1971; Rama, Ballentine, & Ajaya, 1998). *Japa* is the act of continually repeating a *mantra* (Rama, 1998; Satchidananda, 1990). Through the practice of *japa*, the student is spontaneously led to meditation upon its meaning, and ultimately, to the realization and manifestation of the truth it contains (Rama, 1998). The *mantra* also works on the level of the unconscious mind and is useful in controlling moods and overcoming blocks and undesirable emotional states. According to Rama, Ballentine, and Ajaya, because Transcendental Meditation is not a unique method, the results of research should generalize to the practice of Yogic *mantra* meditation (*japa*). Transcendental Meditation involves the repetition of a *mantra*, a key word taken from the Sanskrit language, which is generally given to the student by a trained teacher. Through repetition of the *mantra*, the attention is turned inward toward the more subtle levels of thought until the mind transcends the level of conscious thought altogether (Goleman, 1971).

Smith (1975) conducted a review of the literature on meditation as a form of psychotherapy. According to Smith, at least 100 books and journal articles have maintained that meditation has psychotherapeutic potential. According to Smith, research on meditation as psychotherapy has led to the following general findings: (a) Experienced meditators who willingly participate in meditation research without pay typically praise meditation and appear happier and healthier than beginning meditators, college students, or the every day person on the street. (b) After practicing meditation for 4 to 10 weeks, beginning meditators show more improvement on a variety of tests than non-meditators tested at the same time; and (c) Persons who are randomly assigned to learn and practice meditation show more improvement over 4 to 10 weeks than control groups assigned to alternate treatment conditions.

In a study of 400 transcendental meditators by Wallace and Benson (as cited in Smith, 1975), questionnaire results indicated that 84% of participants judged their mental health to have improved significantly since learning meditation. Transcendental meditators who were willing to be tested in a laboratory setting appeared healthier than non-meditators on the Freiburger Personality Inventory (Fehr, Nerstheimer, & Torber, 1973), The Personal Orientation Inventory (Hjelle, 1973), and tests of autonomic stability (Orme-Johnson, as cited in Smith, 1975). Smith noted, however, that the results of these studies might not demonstrate conclusive evidence of the therapeutic value of meditation because those who volunteered to participate in the research might not be representative of the entire population of those who had learned to meditate.

Smith (1975) cited other studies that compared meditators to control groups of non-meditators on a variety of measures, all of which showed significant improvement, including the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Ballou, 1973; Ferguson & Gowan, 1973), The Personal Orientation Inventory (Nidich, Seeman, & Dreskin, 1973; Seeman, Nidich, & Banta, 1972), The IPAT Anxiety Scale Questionnaire, and the Northridge Depression, Neuroticism, and Self-Actualization scales (Ferguson & Gowan, 1973). In a study of drug abusers by Brautigam (as cited in Smith, 1975), meditators displayed significant reductions in drug abuse, pathological behaviors, and anxiety, as well as significant increases in adjustment. Overall, the studies reviewed by Smith show that regular meditation practice over a period ranging from 4 to 10 weeks is associated with decreases in psychopathology and anxiety in particular. I believe these studies demonstrate the considerable potential of meditation in the psychotherapeutic process.

Meditation has been shown to decrease anxiety and reverse the “fight or flight” reaction experienced under acute stress (Rama, Ballentine, & Ajaya, 1998). Persons practicing *mantra* meditation have reported improvement and increased integration in all aspects of their lives.

Winqvist (as cited in Rama, Ballentine, & Ajaya) reported that 83% of a large group of drug users practicing *mantra* meditation gave up the use of drugs. Another study (Schwartz, as cited in Rama, Ballentine, & Ajaya) in which 138 experienced meditators were compared to 59 new meditators and 39 non-meditators, reported that besides showing significantly less usage of all drugs, including alcohol, cigarettes, and even coffee, meditators reported reductions in stress and general increases in positive mood states. According to Rama, Ballentine, & Ajaya, research on meditation demonstrates that even among relatively inexperienced meditators, meditation produces a state of calmness reflected by decreased arousal, the appearance of alpha waves, and a tendency toward personal growth.

Meditation, the Psychophysiological Principle, and Unstressing

Goleman (1971) discussed the psychophysiological principle as it relates to the process of “un-stressing” that takes place during transcendental meditation. Green, Green, and Walters (as cited in Goleman), described the psychophysiological principle as follows:

Every change in the physiological state is accompanied by an appropriate change in the mental-emotional state, and conversely, every change in the mental-emotional state, conscious or unconscious, is accompanied by an appropriate change in the physiological state. (p. 10)

During meditation, as the meditator reaches a level of profound relaxation and pure awareness, a wide range of kinesthetic sensations, vague feelings, or psychic events are seemingly triggered at random. This un-stressing may take the form of spontaneous and involuntary muscular-skeletal movements, sensations, twitches, spasms, gasps, tingling, ticks, jerking, swaying, pains, shaking, aches, internal pressures, headaches, weeping, or laughter (Goleman, 1971). This is analogous to the somatopsychic discharge that Goyeche (1979) referred to earlier. The fundamental principles behind the concepts of the psychophysiological principle and un-stressing are that the organism is shaped by the experiences of a lifetime and the nervous

system is the repository of all emotional experiences, both positive and negative. During meditation, through the process of un-stressing, the nervous system is gradually liberated from past stresses without effort or intention. This obviously allows deep healing and reintegration to occur. According to Goleman, “In undergoing the process of deep relaxation, un-stressing, and consequent purification of the nervous system, he [the meditator] would undergo on a profound nonverbal level those major changes that psychotherapies aim for” (p. 20).

Shang (2001) talked about emerging paradigms in mind-body medicine and how the integration of Yogic meditation with conventional therapy has enriched psychotherapy. According to Shang, meditation has been successfully incorporated into psychotherapy. He asserted that there are parallels between the two techniques. Improved concentration, relaxation, and mindfulness, in addition to active transformation of emotional states, are all consistent with the goals of modern psychology. In psychiatry, mindfulness meditation has been integrated with cognitive-behavioral therapy in the treatment of difficult disorders such as borderline personality. Randomized controlled trials have demonstrated superior results over conventional therapy using this integrated approach (Linehan, Tutek, Heard, & Armstrong, as cited in Shang).

According to the World Health Organization (as cited in Shang, 2001), “Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (p. 84). Observations in meditative traditions such as Yoga illuminate a series of indicators of health, beyond the absence of disease, resulting in complete physical and mental well-being (Murphy, as cited in Shang). Some of these indicators include an increase in attention span and temperature tolerance and a decrease in habituation, food intake, sleep, respiratory rate, and heart rate. All of these objective physical signs are indicative of stress reduction and improved health.

Shang (2001) asserted that the advanced health indicators observed through the practice of Yoga and meditation have broad implications for health promotion and self care. Clearly, more rigorous research is warranted in this area. It is my belief that Yoga and meditation hold vast potential for improving and ultimately transforming physical, social, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Conclusion

Growth is always based on the attainment of some degree of disentanglement from attachments, which allows one to observe something about himself and his world to which he was previously blind. This is the expansion of awareness. As awareness grows, one inevitably discovers within his new definition of himself a new ability to control. What he was previously blind to and controlled by is now within his power to regulate. Increased capacity for observation leads to increased capacity to control.

As parts of oneself which were previously operating outside awareness are brought under conscious control, they gradually come to be more coordinated. When they are controlled from the point of view of a consistent, unitary consciousness, then they lose their tendency to work in opposition to each other. What previously gave rise to conflict is now brought together in a harmonious whole. The ability to control results in a new degree of synthesis. This process of increased observation leading to increased control and increased synthesis is what makes up each step in the long journey of evolution. With each repetition it carries one to a new level of awareness and a new way of being in the world which before was beyond his imagination. (Rama, Ballentine, & Ajaya, 1998, pp. 281-282)

In conclusion, research has only just begun to touch the surface with regard to the transformational effects of Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy. While the current research on Yoga and Yoga Therapy is clearly promising; thus far, the majority of work has been limited to the roles of Hatha Yoga and meditation in healing the physical body. Research is lacking on the full array of Yogic techniques, including *pranayama*, *mantras*, chanting, and the study of Yogic texts, as well as the transformational effects of Yoga on the mind, emotions, and spirit.

A central tenant of Yoga is to trust one's own inner experience, or direct perception. Yoga does not impose unquestioning faith. According to Rama (1998), "By following the path

prescribed, we can verify for ourselves its central hypothesis—that our true nature is divine” (p. ix). This has undoubtedly been my experience. Yoga is a way of life, and in this context, its transformational effects can be fully realized. This should be of particular interest to transpersonal psychology, and it is my hope that this thesis will awaken interest in these phenomena and pave the way to further research in this area.

Once we experience spiritual realization, we are never the same again. Life problems are forever after viewed in a different context, and we no longer identify ourselves in limiting terms. We know experientially that we are more than the problems that have plagued our lives, and daily life takes on greater meaning. (Mijares, 2003, p. 229)

Chapter Three: Research Method

Introduction and Overview of Research Design

This chapter describes organic inquiry, the research method used in this study. It describes the co-researchers, the procedures used, and the means by which the data was analyzed. Due to the organic nature of the research process, the procedures evolved as this study progressed. As Clements (2002) suggested, this method of inquiry often resists being frozen, instead evolving over the course of the study.

By choosing this approach, the researcher commits to an archetype of transformation that must be actively facilitated, but may not be controlled. Sacred intent and active participation seem to be reliable keys to successful, if unpredictable, results. (p. 17)

Clements, Ettling, Jenett, and Shields (1998) sought to develop a research method “. . . that uses the personal experience of the researcher and co-researchers to create a sacred work that offers transformation and healing to all who engage in it, researchers and readers alike” (p. 114). It was from this seed that the organic inquiry approach to research was born.

In this study, I chose to use an organic inquiry approach. According to Clements, Ettling, Jenett, and Shields (1999), “An organic study originates with the personal experience and interest of the researcher” (p. 109).

Organic inquiry is a qualitative methodology which acknowledges that every research study has an inherent and expanding nature which may be realized through subjective and intuitive methods. Rather than aiming at generalized and replicable results, organic inquiry seeks to present the data and analysis in such a way that the individual reader may interact with it and be personally transformed. The methodology views the researcher’s own experience and story as the instrument of the study. (p. 1)

According to Clements et al. (1999), organic inquiry is a creative process, and the researcher is called to pay attention to the inner voice of the research itself, which speaks by way of dreams, coincidences, and intuition, and to adjust the research process and method accordingly. This creative, intuitive aspect of organic research is congruent with my own

thinking and writing style and process, which is one of the reasons I chose to employ this method.

Organic methodology does not offer the researcher a linear recipe for developing a method for her or his individual study. By its very nature, organic inquiry requires a method which is shaped by the researcher's relationship to the muse of the research topic, as well as by her or his personal story and circumstances. The researcher's own creativity is an essential part of this process. (p. 108)

Clements et al. (1999) defined five characteristics of organic research, and they used the metaphor of growing a tree to describe these five characteristics.

1. Sacred: Preparing the soil
2. Personal: Planting the seed
3. Chthonic: The roots emerge
4. Relational: Growing the tree
5. Transformative: Harvesting the fruit

To produce a healthy and productive tree, a gardener must be willing to work with care. She or he must first prepare the ground by loosening and fertilizing the soil. The seed may then be planted and watered. Underground, the seed sprouts, takes in nourishment and develops the beginnings of a complex root system. It sends up a shoot which ultimately becomes a trunk with branches and leaves. Finally, the tree bears fruit which contains seeds for tomorrow's trees. (p. 12)

The two characteristics of organic research that attracted me most to this process were its sacred quality and the chthonic aspects of the work. It was the sacred aspect of organic research that drew me most to this process, and I believe it was and still is particularly appropriate for the topic of this study. To participate in the organic process, as either researcher or reader, one must approach the work with an expanded consciousness, in which old ways of thinking are "dug out" to allow the sacred to emerge on all levels (Clements et al., 1998).

This approach is grounded in responsibility, reverence, and awe for the earth and all her inhabitants as well as for the mysteries of creativity. Doing this work requires honoring ourselves, our collaborators, our readers, and the context in

which we work, as well as consciously keeping ourselves open to the gifts of the unconscious and the divine. (p. 117)

The personal characteristic of organic inquiry, likened to planting the seed, arises out of the researcher's own experience. The seed is the original concept of the study that is birthed from the researcher's profound personal experience (Clements et al., 1998). In this way, this study evolved out of my own experience of transformation as a result of having integrated Yoga with psychotherapy.

The chthonic aspect of organic research, symbolized by the roots emerging, describes the underground life and nature of organic research. This characteristic of organic inquiry also drew me to this process.

Similarly, organic research has a chthonic, underground life of its own. Although the research begins with a responsible intent, the methodology often evolves and changes during the research because of synchronicities, dreams, intuition, or other manifestations of inner knowing. The researcher is urged to pay attention to expressions of the unconscious throughout the research process. Like roots, this realm cannot be controlled and is one that offers much richness to the evolution of the research. (Clements et al., 1998, p. 119)

In the relational aspect of organic research, likened to growing a tree, the personal stories of the co-researchers are the branches that connect to the main trunk, or the core story of the researcher (Clements et al., 1998). Face-to-face interviews between researcher and co-researchers allow the stories to emerge and unfold.

Finally, organic research is transformative. "The goal of organic inquiry is to offer transformative change, which includes not only information, but also transformation, calling these two elements changes of mind and changes of heart" (Clements, 2002, p. 15).

The fruits of organic research include transformation of the researcher, the co-researchers, and the readers, so far as each is willing to engage in both the conscious and unconscious aspects of the work and so far as each is willing to be changed through their involvement. (Clements et al., 1998, p. 120)

In a nutshell, organic inquiry is a qualitative research approach for the study of topics relating to psycho-spiritual growth, in which one's psyche becomes the subjective instrument of the research, working in partnership with liminal and spiritual sources as well as with participants who have had related experiences. Analysis, which involves the cognitive integration of liminal encounters, results in transformative changes to the researcher's understanding and experience of the topic. These are changes of mind and changes of heart, which both inform and transform. In presenting the results, the researcher uses stories to invite the individual reader to a parallel, yet unique, transformative experience. (Clements, 2002, p. 14)

Validity in Transpersonal Research and Organic Inquiry

The validity of qualitative research rests on its trustworthiness, which encompasses credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirm-ability. Transpersonal research would broaden that list to include the influence of additional modalities including the body, emotions, aesthetics and intuition (Clements, 2002).

In organic inquiry, one looks for consensus and coherence as viewed from the perspective of the group story or synthesis (Clements, 2002). Another goal of the organic approach is to encourage transformation in the future reader of the study. I would stress that consensus is not expected or likely in this area as each reader is unique, carrying and holding his or her own experiences and perceptions. What is valid and transformative for one may not be for another. In this sense, validity in an organic study should not be considered generalizable or replicable, as would be the case in traditional research.

Validity in the co-researchers' stories is increased when the narratives are constructed using the co-researchers own words (Clements, 2002), which was how I chose to present the stories in this study. Original interview transcripts and edited stories were sent to the co-researchers for their review and approval and their own words were used to preserve the authenticity of their unique experiences.

Braud (1998) suggested that analyzing the material from a variety of perspectives offers a balance that invites validity. In this study, results were viewed from three perspectives to achieve this goal: the co-researcher stories, the group story or synthesis, and report of transformative change.

I began this research process by immersing myself in the teachings and practices of Raja and Kundalini Yogas. I already had a collection of books, tapes, and manuals that I had accumulated over time, many from classes and workshops I had attended. As I embarked upon my literature review, I discovered many additional books and readings. I attended Yoga classes whenever possible at the beginning of the study, but at that time much of my practice was done at home. Here I am referring to the *asanas*, or physical aspects of the practice. As discussed previously, Yoga is a way of life, and its teachings extend far beyond the physical aspects of practice. At the outset, I put together a *sadhana* that I practiced on a daily basis, varying some aspects of my routine based on how I was feeling and what I sensed I needed on any particular day. As the study progressed, I typically attended two Yoga classes per week.

One aspect of my practice that remained consistent over the initial 120 days was the practice of *japa*, or repetition of a *mantra*. I repeated my chosen *mantra* for 108 repetitions per day. According to HariNam (1997), “*Mantra* has been used for thousands of years by Yogis to gain insight into themselves, convey information about abstract principles, and elevate and transform the physical being” (p. 2). Traditionally, the *mantra* is chosen for the student by the teacher; however, I chose my *mantra* based on my own inner guidance. As the *mantra* is considered sacred and generally kept secret, I do not reveal it within the pages of this text. It was selected, however, to open the path to prosperity, as I was also in the process of embarking on a long awaited career change at the time. An unexpected gift came forth, however, as it related to

this project. Prosperity unfolded and revealed itself through an abundance of insights, inspirations, and writing that I found emerging forth with seemingly little effort or conscious thought.

As in nature, this research process has waxed and waned, along with unexpected changes in my life circumstances along the way. Although I became discouraged and anxious about my lack of progress during a time that felt like an eternity, when I found it necessary to lay my work aside due to unforeseen personal circumstances, I found that when the time was right for me to resume my work, everything within my life seemed to miraculously fall into place and come together to support my endeavor. This was one of many synchronicities I encountered throughout this process. I am reminded of what my therapist told me so many times in the past: “Trust the process.”

Co-Researchers

In the spirit of organic inquiry, co-researchers in this study shared their stories of growth and transformation along side that of the researcher. Three co-researchers were selected in addition to the researcher who had undergone psychotherapy in conjunction with practicing Yoga. Two of the co-researchers were female, and one was male. Although not a criteria for selection, all were in their 40s. Pseudonyms were chosen to maintain confidentiality and protect their anonymity.

Criteria for Co-Researcher Selection

The criteria for the selection of final co-researchers was that co-researchers must have practiced some form of Yoga for at least 1 year, while participating in some form of psychotherapy for a minimum of 6 months. While it was my preference at the outset that co-researchers practiced Yoga while simultaneously participating in psychotherapy, lack of

available candidates did not allow for this. While 2 of the co-researchers along with the researcher had practiced Yoga while participating in psychotherapy concurrently, 1 of co-researchers came to Yoga after having undergone psychotherapy. While I did not specify a specific therapeutic orientation as criteria for inclusion in the study out of concern for limiting the potential pool of candidates, as it turned out, a transpersonal perspective, or characteristics of a transpersonal approach, appeared as an underlying commonality among all of the co-researchers' psychotherapeutic experiences.

Procedures

Initially, I attempted to solicit volunteers for the study based on referrals from my local Yoga teacher and my therapist. Due to the deeply personal nature of the topic, I did not feel that a mass advertising type approach to soliciting co-researchers was appropriate. A letter describing the study was provided to my Yoga teacher and my therapist. A copy of this letter is included in Appendix B. A letter of invitation to potential co-researchers was also included, a copy of which is included in Appendix C.

Interested individuals were instructed to contact the researcher, following which a brief telephone interview was conducted to determine suitability and address any questions. Due to the qualitative approach and transpersonal nature of the topic this study was based on, co-researchers were sought who were able to articulate their experiences in response to open-ended interview questions. Although there was some expectation that participation in the study would lead to a deepening of co-researchers' insight, understanding, and integration of experience, it was expected that they would already have reached some level of insight into their experience in order to be able to articulate its essence.

When this initial attempt to solicit candidates failed to yield any volunteers that were appropriate for participation in the study, a mailing of the introductory letter to solicit volunteers along with copies of the introductory letter to potential co-researchers was sent to the owners of three local Yoga studios in the area. In addition, a flyer was created in an attempt to generate interest. A copy of this flyer is included in Appendix D. Again, not wanting to succumb to a mass advertising approach to soliciting volunteers, the flyer was displayed at the Spiral Circle Bookstore, a local “new age” shop that is home to a multitude of classes, including the Yoga class I attend. Interested candidates were instructed to contact the researcher, at which time the introductory letter to co-researchers was provided. Preliminary telephone interviews were conducted with interested respondents to determine suitability for participation. While this was not my preferred approach to soliciting co-researchers, one candidate was chosen who met the criteria for inclusion. No response was received from the owners/operators of two of the Yoga studios, and a reply was received from one of the studios indicating they were unable to provide referrals due to confidentiality.

After some time, I became discouraged as the process of soliciting volunteers failed to yield suitable candidates. Until this time, I had sought out candidates from my local community, as I felt it important that face-to-face interviews be conducted as part of the organic research process. I mentioned my discouragement to my faculty mentor, and as synchronicity would have it (or as she referred to it, “the goddess at work on my thesis”), she knew of two prospective candidates who were to be traveling to the area where I reside within the upcoming month. These potential candidates were contacted by phone, preliminary interviews were conducted, and both were interested and deemed appropriate for participation. The introductory co-researcher letters

were e-mailed to the co-researchers, along with a copy of the interview questions for their review.

Face-to-face interviews were scheduled and, prior to the interviews, a copy of the open-ended interview questions was provided to each co-researcher, thereby allowing the co-researcher time to mull over his or her experience, or as Clements (2002) put it, “to seed the topic in the unconscious mind of the participants, encouraging them to begin to consider the topic on liminal as well as conscious levels before the interview” (p. 156). A copy of the open-ended interview questions is included in Appendix F. Prior to the interviews the co-researchers were asked to sign the informed consent form, a copy of which is included in Appendix E.

Face-to face-interviews were conducted at mutually agreed upon locations. Initially, it was assumed that this would be in the home of either the co-researcher or the researcher. However, due to personal concerns of one of the co-researchers, along with circumstances that arose during the course of the study rendering my home unavailable for this purpose, this did not turn out to be the case. Once again, however, synchronicity ensued and the perfect locations presented themselves in perfect timing. The initial interview was conducted on a beautiful spring day at lovely Lake Eola Park. As it turned out, the first interview was conducted on my birthday, which I felt very fitting as I was finally giving birth to this long awaited endeavor that had been so important to me and has held such tremendous meaning. The remaining two interviews were conducted outside of the San Pedro Retreat Center, where one of the co-researchers had been attending Yoga teacher training. Both locations provided ideal settings for our face-to-face meetings.

Face-to-face interviews lasted approximately 1 hour to 1 ½ hours. I remained flexible in scheduling the interviews in order to allow co-researchers’ stories and experiences to unfold at a

comfortable pace. Interviews were tape recorded and subsequently transcribed by the researcher. This allowed me to remain present, focusing my full attention on the co-researcher and his or her process, as opposed to diligently trying to document all the details. This was also important to me as my processing style is highly visual and proprioceptive. This, along with the relational aspect of organic research, is why I initially sought volunteers from my local community, so that face-to-face contact and interviews could be carried out.

Instrumentation

After beginning to write my own story, I reviewed my research questions and began considering what type of questions I might ask the co-researchers in order to elicit and bring to light the full depth and breadth of their experiences. It was from this process that I developed the list of open-ended interview questions. The interview was pilot tested through a face-to-face interview with a volunteer I had recruited from the flyer I posted. Only a slight modification was made to the questions, relating to the type of therapy engaged in. The interview questions were used to provide the interviews with a starting point and lend a degree of structure. They were not intended to be utilized verbatim. Questions were modified by the researcher as needed during the course of the interviews depending on the openness of the individual co-researchers and the type and amount of information that came forth, all the while with the goal of bringing forth as complete a picture as possible of each experience. As is characteristic of organic research, flexibility and spontaneity were an important part of the interview process.

In preparation for the interviews, I spent as much time as possible alone in meditation to clear away any clutter that might prevent me from being fully present during the interview process. My goal was to enter each interview with an open mind and heart, while maintaining full awareness. Before initiating the interviews, I spent some time engaging with the co-

researchers, as up until this time we had never actually met face-to-face. This was followed by a few moments of silence, after which time I led a *mantra* that we chanted together.

The *mantra* that I selected for this purpose was the *Adi Mantra*, “*Ong Namo Guru Dev Namo*.” This is translated as follows: “I bow to the creative energy of the Infinite, I bow to the Divine channel of wisdom” (Khalsa & O’Keeffe, 2002, p. 122). The meaning of the *mantra* was explained to the co-researchers, and they were asked if this was something that they were comfortable participating in. All agreed. The *Adi mantra* is chanted to “tune in” in the practice of Kundalini Yoga, to enlist pure inner guidance, and to open the link of Divinity and protection between the student and the Divine teacher (Kaur Khalsa, 1996; Khalsa & O’Keeffe, 2002). The *mantra* was repeated several times until it felt complete. These preparatory steps were engaged in to allow the co-researcher and researcher to center and to set a sacred tone for our time together and the work to follow.

Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed from the audiotapes by the researcher and provided to co-researchers for their review to ensure that their experiences were depicted accurately. Based on co-researchers’ review of the transcripts, there were no revisions needed. Consistent with organic inquiry, the analysis consisted of three parts: co-researcher stories, the group story (in this case is presented as a synthesis), and a report of transformative change (Clements, 2002).

Co-Researcher Stories

In the first part of the analysis, co-researcher stories are presented. My goal in this section is to capture as near as possible the authentic essence of the experience as the co-researcher encountered it and to transmit this experience to the reader. Stories are presented in narrative form using the co-researchers’ own words as much as possible to preserve the

authenticity of the experiences. Narratives were created by the researcher based on the interview transcripts and sent to each co-researcher for review and approval. Care has been taken to protect the identity of the co-researchers and others mentioned in the stories. Co-researchers chose the pseudonyms used in the study and on all written materials.

Examination of the Data

Following the interviews, I examined the data for later use in the section on transformative change. Transcribed interviews and narratives were reviewed a number of times, six at minimum, in order to identify themes and extrapolate the meaning and essence of the material on four levels: thinking, feeling, intuition, and sensing. This process was stimulated and inspired by spending time in nature, solitude, and in Yoga and meditation. During the examination process, I noted my responses to the data for later use in the section on transformative change. These responses took the form of feelings, sensations, insights, intuitions, symbols, images, and thoughts.

Synthesis

This section presents a synthesis of the combined data, bringing to the forefront common themes and meanings. I began this process by once again pouring through the data and reviewing the interview transcripts and narratives. Throughout the process I remained open on all levels to any common or overriding themes or meanings that emerged. In reviewing the narratives, symbols and metaphors of transformation emerged and remained at the forefront of my consciousness. Words, phrases, symbols and themes spontaneously came together in the form of Haiku poetry. It was as though there was something working within me and through me, and I knew I must allow the process to unfold. Time alone, in quiet contemplation, was vital to the natural unfolding of this process.

The extrapolation of meaning and themes is obviously subjective and is in no way intended to represent an interpretation of the data. Individual co-researchers and readers are likely to experience the stories quite differently and find their own meaning based on their personal histories and perceptions.

Report of Transformative Change

Clements (2002) talked about two types of transformative change: changes of mind and changes of heart. Changes of mind include insights that have come about from engaging with Spirit, while changes of heart alter one's vision of who one is and how one operates in the world. Clements also talked about three ways in which transformative change can be assessed: changes in self, increased connection to Spirit, and the desire to be of service in the world.

These types and elements of transformative change are portrayed in this section: first as they relate to the co-researchers, then as they relate to the researcher, and finally as they relate to the potential reader as a result of engaging with the research. Follow-up contact was made with the co-researchers via e-mail on two occasions: first after reviewing the interview transcripts and then following review of the completed narratives. The purpose of this contact was to solicit the co-researchers thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of the overall effect of the research process, including any insights gained. On initial contact, a copy of the follow-up interview questions was e-mailed to co-researchers as a guide to assessing transformative change. A copy of these questions can be found in Appendix G. This additional information was distilled and used in the section on transformative change.

Early Readers

To assess transformation of the potential reader, three "early readers" were selected. They were volunteers known to me who were willing to read the nearly completed work. A report of

transformative change in the potential reader of the study was inferred based on early readers' responses to a brief questionnaire (Appendix H) and their thoughts and feelings as a result of having read the study. Again, pseudonyms were used to protect anonymity.

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

The analysis of an organic inquiry is adapted to fit the particular topic of exploration as well as the individual researcher (Clements, 2002). The data or findings are presented in the form of researcher and co-researcher stories, the group story or synthesis, and a report of transformative change. The findings are viewed from these different perspectives in order to reveal the full depth, breadth, and essence of the topic being explored. In this chapter you will find the researcher and co-researcher stories and the group story or synthesis. The report of transformative change is included in the Discussion chapter.

In the next section of this chapter, individual stories of the researcher and co-researchers are presented. While edited for clarity, co-researchers' stories are presented in their own words to maintain the integrity of each individual's personal experience. Researcher comments are in italics and enclosed in brackets. While perusing this section, I invite you, the reader, to take in the experiences imparted by the co-researchers and allow them to permeate your entire being. Listen to what the stories have to tell you. What do you hear? Feel the texture, the essence, the impact of the experiences on your psyche. What do you sense? What do you feel? What images appear? What do you see? What insights and revelations are revealed? What new understandings does this material bring forth? Perhaps you might have a remembering as it relates to a particular feeling or experience. Absorb the stories and allow yourself to be absorbed by them.

In the section that follows, the group story is presented as a synthesis. First, commonalities among co-researcher experiences as a result of having integrated Yoga with psychotherapy are extrapolated from the stories and noted. Next, metaphors representing

common themes within the co-researcher experiences of transformation as a result of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy are identified and portrayed as metaphors of transformation. Lastly, symbols and metaphors of transformation that emerged from the co-researcher's stories are further elucidated in the form of Haiku poetry.

Due to the highly personal nature of an organic inquiry, including the subjectivity of individual perceptions and experiences, the analysis set forth is merely a model for viewing the results. The themes are subjective and based on the researcher's interpretation of the data. Another researcher or you, as the reader, might arrive at a different list of themes or derive a different meaning based on your own experience of the topic and the stories (Clements, 2002).

Now, I invite you, the reader to walk beside us along this sacred path. I invite you to be transformed.

Stories of Transformation

Discovery of the Sacred: My Story

One of the first truths I encountered at the outset of this journey is that healing, like life, is a process and not an event. Experiences have a way of repeating themselves and appearing in different forms until we master the lessons we are here to learn. It was nearly 11 years ago when I entered psychotherapy, and I began practicing Yoga shortly thereafter. Up until that point in my life, I was merely a survivor. I had lived my life by numbing myself to the world within and around me.

From the time I was a child, I was enveloped in a lingering depression that I can only describe as a deep, dark heaviness that consumed me. From as early as the age of 6, I recall telling my parents that I wanted to die. As I read these words today, I am saddened, somewhat horrified, at such thoughts. Yet I had lived with them for so many years, they permeated my life.

For years I went through the day, and then went to sleep at night, praying, though not sure to who, "Please, don't let me be depressed, I only want to be happy. I just want to be happy."

I grew up in an alcoholic home and later married, and subsequently left, an abusive alcoholic husband. When my daughter was born, I finally felt like I had something to live for. Even if I was unhappy, my daughter needed me and that was my reason for living. My daughter and I have always shared a very close relationship, she being an only child and I, a single mother.

After my divorce, I raised my daughter on my own, while managing to be successful in my work. I had risen up the ranks of a major Wall Street investment firm to Senior Divisional Analyst responsible for management of the Southeastern United States and Puerto Rico. It was never the work I had intended to do; it was challenging, but it held no meaning for me. I felt empty, like there was a hole inside of me. I needed a way to fill it. I had put aside my dream of pursuing graduate school in psychology to raise my daughter and focus on my career. At that time, I did what I felt I needed to do, what I should do. I lost myself in my work and devoted the rest of my life to my daughter. During that time, I deprived my body of food and exercised to the point of exhaustion, at times passing out on weight machines in the gym in an effort to gain some semblance of control over my body and my life. I thought I was disciplined.

My daughter grew up fast, and by the time she was 13 it quickly became obvious to me that something was wrong. A very familiar cycle was repeating itself, and now I was facing the possibility of losing my only daughter to the ravages of drugs and alcohol. For several years, my life was shrouded in pain, fear, and uncertainty.

It was in my desperate attempts to get my daughter the help that she needed that I was blessed to encounter my therapist. Looking back, this was when the synchronicities began

presenting themselves in my life, or, more likely, when I began paying attention and noticing. My daughter started missing therapy appointments as she disappeared for days. It was December, around the holidays, and I had taken 2 weeks off from work. I decided I would take the appointment my daughter missed one day. This was a huge step for me, as trust was one quality that I was lacking, particularly as it related to men, which this therapist happened to be.

After that session, I decided I would use my 2-week vacation to see this therapist, and during this time, I would work out all of my life's issues. I initially approached therapy like a business project with the goals (whatever they were, to be happy and have a normal life) to be completed within 2 weeks, at which time I could get back to work. Fortunately, I was blessed with a very patient therapist. When he suggested to me that "life is a process," I had no idea what he was talking about. Several years later, still seeing this therapist, I had come to understand what he meant.

In addition to exploring family of origin issues and family systems dynamics, 12-step work and focus on a spiritual perspective was for some time a large part of my therapeutic process. Faith and trust were major issues in my life for quite some time. My therapist works from a holistic perspective, utilizing a variety of techniques, with a focus on not only healing but personal growth. Many of these ideas and techniques would be characteristic of a humanistic or transpersonal perspective, particularly as related to my personal journey of healing, growth, and transformation.

Clearly, in the beginning, I had a great deal of healing to do. My therapist helped me understand where I had come from and why I felt the way I did, always validating me. From there, he helped me learn how to acknowledge and accept things, deal with them, and move on. My process started with healing, moved on to growth, and has evolved into transformation. In

addition to talk therapy, my therapist introduced me to a multitude of practices and techniques including body scans, guided imagery, affirmations, journaling, and experiential therapy. He recommended books and spiritual readings. I participated in experiential group workshops involving psychodrama which I found highly beneficial.

I found that for me, intellectual understanding alone was not sufficient to affect healing and wholeness. In the beginning, I talked about deeply painful experiences without any kind of affect or emotion. This went on for quite some time in therapy. I had completely numbed myself to my experience. As time went on, through the extraordinarily patient support of my therapist, I came to recognize that I had perfected every possible mechanism to avoid feeling of any kind. I had spent a lifetime numbing myself to the world within and around me through isolation, imagination, experimentation with drugs and alcohol when I was younger, not eating, over exercising, over working, over eating, shopping, and staying constantly busy, doing, doing, doing. I did whatever I could do to “fill the hole.” My therapist used the phrase “human doing” as opposed to human being. I didn’t know how to just be.

At one point, I attended a 5-day experiential equine therapy workshop which proved to be very enlightening. I returned home with broken ribs from that experience, yet I found that the entire experience and my reaction to it served as a mirror, a profound reflection of how I communicate and participate in the various relationships and dimensions of my life. I have to experience things for them to be real. Reading about them or hearing about them helps me understand intellectually, but it doesn’t become part of my being, my psyche, until I have experienced it.

A little less than a year into therapy, I was talking to my therapist about things I used to enjoy. He urged me to begin exploring pursuits that I felt drawn to, that brought me joy. It took

me some time to come up with anything as my life was my daughter and my work, and joy was a feeling with which I had little experience. Over time, however, I recalled many things I enjoyed. I enjoyed anything that allowed me to engage my creativity; I loved writing and enjoyed various modes of creative expression such as art and photography. Anything that brought me into nature I found peaceful and deeply healing: waking, hiking, swimming, gardening, and mountain climbing . . . and then I remembered Yoga.

During my first couple of years in college, I had practiced Yoga and meditation after taking a class on Hatha Yoga. I also recalled being drawn to Eastern religions and philosophy and had done a bit of reading in these areas. After that, I got busy with life, raising my daughter, working, and abandoned my practice which I had never really gone into that deeply. I remembered the sense of peace that had come over me when engaged in Yoga and meditation and how I had always been drawn to its philosophical teachings. Having been raised Catholic, this was a far cry from what I had been brought up to believe, yet, it had always resonated deeply within me. At my therapist's urging to further explore what I was feeling drawn toward, I checked out a local Yoga class.

My first class was a half-day Yoga workshop focusing on balance, something that was completely foreign to me and lacking in my life. It was also something we had begun paying attention to in my therapy sessions. Immediately upon entering the workshop, I was overcome by a feeling of having "returned home." I experienced this very same feeling upon entering and participating in the opening seminar at ITP just 3 years ago. On both occasions, I had no doubt I was in the right place. I have since come to know this as my intuition speaking to me, and I try to pay close attention to its messages.

Upon entering the workshop, my teacher HariNam sitting at the front of the room, I experienced another feeling: I felt as though I had known him my entire life. I felt a very familiar feeling. While listening to HariNam, his words seemed to speak directly to what I had felt inside for most of my life. His teachings resonated deeply with my own inner knowing and experience. He discussed philosophical views that I had always felt but pushed aside, as they were different from what I had been raised to believe, and for that matter, from the views of mainstream Western society.

In the past, I had felt ridiculed for being different, unconventional, non-conformist. Now, I was garnering the courage to be true to myself. This I attribute to the support of my therapist. He continually validated me until I came to realize myself, after quite some time, and a lot of work, that "I deserve to be here, and I have a purpose in life." I wondered, "How could a discipline that fostered so much love, peace, and equanimity be bad?" Clearly, it could not, and I delved deeper. I have no doubt that my therapist saved my life. Now, Yoga, in conjunction with psychotherapy, was giving my life back to me, putting me in touch with my true Self. The combined support and expertise of both my therapist and my Yoga teacher were integral to the healing and growth I was able to achieve.

In my Yoga and meditation practice, I have come upon a sense of peace, quiet, stillness, and feelings of inner harmony, love, joy, a feeling of Oneness with All. My intuition has been enhanced. There is far less wanting and a greater acceptance of what life presents. I feel a sense of contentment and wholeness. Love, Sacred Union, bliss . . . are feelings that come to mind. Life has become sacred to me, and I feel deeply blessed. There is no going back to the way it used to be.

I participated in weekly Yoga classes and workshops on various aspects of Yoga and meditation. Through my Yoga practice, I gained awareness of my body and my uncanny ability to leave it. It did not take long for me to realize I was not living in my body. My initial encounters with meditation were beyond peaceful. Initially, I felt “high,” and this feeling was quickly followed by a sense of “separating from my body.” I described these sensations to my Yoga teacher and my therapist and came to realize that I was disassociating, and in fact, had been disassociating from my body throughout my life. Even after short periods of mediation, I found it difficult to come back from the altered state I entered. I had lived in that state from the time I was a child. It was comfortable. It was safe.

Throughout my life I had experienced nightmares in which I was running and then flying away from men chasing me, trying to kill me. Clearly, I had much healing to do, and the road was long and painful. I was becoming aware that I had some deep seated issues I needed to work on, and I was committed to becoming fully conscious of them and healing. While I feared this process, I trusted my therapist when he told me, “The only way through it is through it.” Today, these nightmares have dissipated.

While highly supportive of my practice, my therapist cautioned me against using meditation as an escape, as a means of avoiding my feelings of pain and anger. He warned me against “spiritualizing” my feelings away in meditation, suggesting that I needed to recognize and acknowledge the feelings, feel them, and then I could release them. My Yoga teacher was able to see that I entered an altered state of consciousness quickly and easily, and my desire to remain there. He cautioned me that the goal we were striving for was not to “hang out in the bliss and stay there.” He reminded me I needed to come back to earth. Both my therapist and my Yoga teacher were instrumental in supporting me in the process of healing my body, mind, and

spirit. Left to my own devices, I would have quickly and easily used meditation as another of my escapes.

It was at this time that I also began participating in individual private sessions with my Yoga teacher. As my awareness increased through my practice of Yoga, I realized I had deeper work to do. Through these sessions in conjunction with my therapy sessions, I came to understand what was happening in my body, how to recognize the triggers, how to feel and release the emotions, and ultimately, how to return to and learn to live in my body.

I am convinced that memories, emotions, and experiences live and are stored in our bodies. As an example, I used to have an experience in which both of my legs would suddenly jump or jerk in a kicking motion, repeatedly. I initially became aware of this reaction while lying in *savasana*, or corpse pose in Yoga class. As my awareness increased, I noticed it also happened while I was lying down, trying to go to sleep, and oftentimes even while sitting down. Then I realized this reaction was usually precipitated by a feeling of fear, particularly if I were lying down. In working with my therapist I came to understand the origin of fear and ultimately this response.

Unfortunately, intellectual understanding alone was not enough to stop this reaction. However, through ongoing Yoga and meditation practice, along with *pranayama* or breath-work, I no longer experience this reaction today. This is one of many experiences I had in coming to recognize, experience, and release old memories and emotions that had previously been stored in my body. Yoga and psychotherapy combined have helped me understand and integrate the many experiences I have encountered and lessons learned. Together, they have transformed my entire being.

Initially, Yoga supported my healing by bringing me back into my body and opening my awareness. Much of my early work involved exercises to help ground me. The form of Yoga that I practice is Raj Kundalini Yoga, a combination of Raja and Kundalini Yogas. In Kundalini Yoga, we did extensive work with my *chakras* or subtle energy centers. I spent time every day doing visualizations involving the *muladhara*, or root chakra to help ground me, despite the fact that I much preferred working with my fifth and sixth *chakras*, where my energy naturally arose. I practiced this consistently, visualizations with my root *chakra*, as I struggled to stay in my body. I would stand up like a tree and feel my feet sinking into the earth, feel the feet sinking into the earth, feel myself become a part of it. I learned awareness. I practice awareness constantly. I became aware of my body and began to live in it.

In Kundalini Yoga, there is a great deal of emphasis on the breath. This has been crucially important to me in that as a result of paying attention to my breath, I immediately realized that as a precursor to dissociating from or leaving my body, I would first stop breathing. This was something I was never aware of until I began practicing Yoga. The Yogic *pranayama* has deepened my awareness and has been instrumental in my healing and integration. By paying attention to my breath, I am able to stay grounded in my body.

The most important breath that I practice every day, all day, is the complete breath. It took me quite some time to make this a habit, but it is a critical tool that is with me at all times, particularly in times of stress and distress. Another important breath has been the releasing breath, which is used to release uncomfortable feelings and emotions as they arise during *asana* practice or any other time. To practice the releasing breath, when difficult emotions or feelings arise, one inhales through the nose, holds the breath for one second, then opens the mouth wide, exhaling through the mouth while visualizing or imagining the feelings pouring off the body and

down into the earth. I have to admit this was a more difficult breath for me to incorporate, not because it is difficult to do, for it is simple, but rather because I was always used to internalizing my emotions as opposed to letting them out. I am working with this breath more regularly now, and I feel much lighter, much clearer and cleaner as a result.

I have studied the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* and other spiritual readings which I have found uplifting. I took an introductory course in Sanskrit which was helpful when practicing *japa*, or repetition of *mantras*, and participated in a multitude of workshops involving the *chakras* and *chakra* balancing, *mantras*, the use of sound in meditation, and various aspects of Yogic philosophy. All of this has deeply enriched my life. The darkness has given way to light.

Through years of long hard work with both my Yoga practice and my therapy, my awareness is enhanced and I have learned to live in my body. Often times it was very dizzying, the leaving and coming back to my body so quickly. It was a long and painful process, but I feel healed, integrated, and whole as a result. Still, it is a process and not an event, and I believe I will always have work to do as long as I am here.

It has been 11 years since I hit that deepest juncture, the darkest crater in the journey of my life. Although I do not see my therapist regularly today, I do see him as needed, perhaps if I am feeling overwhelmed, just as sort of a check in. I have learned that I have a purpose in this life, and that if I trust and follow my intuition, my inner guidance, that I am being led. It is when I stop and think about it, or question it, or fail to follow it, that obstacles and difficulties arise. I have learned to be true to myself and what I believe.

I continue to practice Yoga, which I see as a large part of my path in life. For me, it is a way of being, a way of life. Not only has it brought me back into my body, it has brought me home, home to the Divinity that lies within me. Along with this has come a sense of peace,

contentment, and joy that I had never before known. Today, I love my life. Each day is a blessing, a gift . . . and I want to be here.

I find joy in simple things each moment of every day: nature, the birds, flowers, a rainbow, sunsets, my cats, my grandchildren, friends, family, and much more. Recently, one morning, I was sitting on my bed, drinking my coffee, my cat Mystic curled up on my lap. She crawled up onto my chest, and then suddenly I felt this rush of warm energy, an opening, like waves opening to the sea, and my heart just opened up. I had a feeling of weightlessness, pure love and peace. I felt lighter. It was like the entire area from my chest to my face just opened up. This feeling remained with me for about 3 days. Now each morning, as I drink my coffee, Mystic lies spread out across my heart center, purring. One of the many synchronicities, this one deeply touching, that I encountered along this path was that I first found Mystic as a kitten less than 5 weeks old outside my Yoga class the day I had spread the ashes and planted a garden in memory of my first cat Sheba, who had been a part of my life for 17 years.

Do I still get sad at times, mildly depressed? Absolutely. However what has changed is that today I know there is a deep and abiding Force within me that is pure Love . . . that is and always will be a part of me. I need nothing more. I am complete. This is the Divinity within that I discovered through Yoga. No matter what happens, it will always be there, within me. And no matter what happens, I can never return to the way it used to be. My life has been unimaginably altered. To me, this is transformation.

Three years ago, I enrolled in a graduate program at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology. Although it has taken me longer than originally intended, and 24 years later than my initial plan, I am finally realizing my dream. My experience at ITP has been beyond anything I could ever have imagined. It has taken my growth and awareness to a whole new level, and the

transformation I had realized continues to unfold. Like the blossoms of the lotus as they open, like the caterpillar evolving into a butterfly, each day, my life continues to be transformed.

I am filled with reverence and gratitude to those who have guided me and walked beside me on this path. Now, it is my dream to share this inspiration, this love, peace, contentment and joy with others, so that they might experience the transformation I have been blessed to know.

From Caterpillar to Butterfly: The Story of Wings

[The setting is Lake Eola Park, where Wings and I sit on a park bench, overlooking a small pond covered by two bridges, a single black swan swimming about. To our side is Lake Eola. It is an amazingly beautiful spring day on March 6, 2004. My birthday, it seems particularly appropriate that my first interview should fall on this day. Rebirth comes to mind. The wind is blowing and the sun shining. We sit under the large oak trees, birds above and all around us.

We begin by chanting a mantra, the Adi Mantra. "Ong Namoh Guru Dev Namoh." We chant this mantra to open the link of Divinity and protection between the student and the Divine teacher. It means "I bow to the creative energy of the Infinite; I bow to the Divine channel of wisdom." Ong Namoh Guru Dev Namoh. We repeat this mantra six times until it feels complete. Wings then shares her story.]

I began psychotherapy about 8 or 9 years ago. Actually, I started going to Alanon, then I began therapy. I went to Alanon on and off for about 3 years. I even did a big seminar, and I told my story. It scared the heck out of me. I was so honored, privileged that they asked me to tell my story to see how far I had come. I also underwent therapy for about 3 years. When I was going to Alanon, I was with the alcoholic, and then quite a few years after that I was in another relationship, and he was pretty insistent that I had a problem with anger. That's when I searched

out therapy. They said it was, of course, incest induced, and in the beginning I was “No, no, no, I’ve dealt with that. I’ve dealt with that,” but bottom line was that was what it was all about.

In psychotherapy, I worked with a therapist who specialized in incest and abuse. We had individual sessions, and sometimes she would bring in different people that she thought I could relate with, and then we would have two or three of us, and we would get together with her as a group. I did journaling, affirmations, read inspirational books, sometimes we watched different movies. My therapist did a type of hypnosis, taking me back into a dream kind of state, scenario. I’m not sure what you would call it. I used to have this dream all the time. There was this big bad monster, and it would take me, take me, it just wore me out all the time, but it never caught me. She wanted to take me back to this dream, and of course, it was my abuser. Another time she took me back to my “6-year-old child” to comfort her and let her know it wasn’t her fault. She suggested that I join an incest survivors group, not only for myself but maybe to help others. I went for quite a while, but I got to the point where the pain that I saw on all those girls was reflecting back on me. Instead of helping me, I thought it was harming me, so I stepped aside from that.

I participated in a lot of self-help groups, read lots of books, and then I began practicing Yoga and meditation. For me, Yoga and meditation came after I had begun working in psychotherapy. I feel that Yoga and meditation are forms of therapy also. Psychotherapy helped to take away the blame and the guilt, not completely, but it definitely helped. What therapy did for me was to help me put the focus back on myself. Instead of being the victim, I took back control of myself and changed how I reacted to the world and people around me.

[Wings explains that she is not currently participating in psychotherapy or Yoga classes; however, she has been experiencing a yearning to return to Yoga class.] About Yoga, I was

going to go Tuesday; but I was too lazy to get out of bed. I had a late night at work on Monday. I promised myself I would go this week. My motivation right now is not there, it is just stagnant.

I practiced Yoga for 3 to 4 years, off and on. When I began practicing Yoga, it was really a process to get there, a progression. I think that if I had tried Yoga at the same time I had been going to therapy in the very beginning, I might not have been as open to it. It was like a progression that I got to meditation and Yoga because there was no way I could have quieted my mind when I was going to therapy. In therapy, my therapist was always asking me what I thought about this or that. Once I got my mind on the right track then I could move on to the next step; I could move forward. Yoga to me was like a moving forward. It was the next step for me.

I attended Yoga class on a consistent basis every Thursday night for about 8 months. There was also a morning class at the gym, but it is not the same at the gym. It's just not the same. They just focus on the stretching of the body. I feel like I need the whole. The type of Yoga I practiced was Hatha Yoga. I have practiced Yoga in a class with a lot of meditation and breathing and candles, and I have done it in the gym. I also practiced at home, and I still do, just to keep everything stretched out, keep everything limber in my older age! At home, it is mostly just stretching the different parts of my body. I practice at home to wake up my body, to stretch the inner core, inside of me, and to be centered within myself.

What centered means to me is to be focused, to be aware of my inner peace, my surroundings, how they affect me, and how I react to the things around me. For every action, there is a reaction, unfortunately! *[Wings laughs.]* Centered is . . . to be at peace. To me it is mostly for my mind to be at peace, to a place that I am not worried or my mind is not rambling on and on about what could be. To be centered is to be peaceful.

I have worked with different Yoga teachers. There was the one class I went to every Thursday night. Then there was a class downtown here with the heat. That was really rough. Having a teacher . . . I think a teacher helped me just for the simple fact of motivation and of course technique. I would rather work with a teacher.

What was my life like before I began practicing Yoga? Well, before I came to Yoga, which was after I started therapy, I felt like I knew what all my issues were. I knew there were solutions, but I had yet to find them all. The biggest obstacle for me has been my mind, which continuously goes on and on and on. Also, as far as the body goes, I'm getting older, and I wanted to make sure it would be flexible and pliable.

I basically turned to Yoga to learn how to be in the present moment. I needed to learn how not to think about anything other than what was happening in this moment, and I didn't know how to do that. I thought if I could be taught how to do that through Yoga, then I would be better for it. And I am totally better for it. But it's a challenge for me; it has been a difficult challenge.

I can say the same thing about therapy. It is so much easier not to think so hard about all of this. It is easier to go with whatever happens, rather than stopping to pay attention to my reactions. It is a struggle, it's a daily struggle, and I think that where it all evolved for me is through psychotherapy and through Yoga.

I think it's a great idea to combine Yoga, meditation, and psychotherapy. Yoga opened my awareness, my consciousness. As far as the combination of the two, I think in retrospect if I had to look back, I think the therapist should have recommended it. It's almost a contradiction to what I said earlier because I didn't think I could do the other at the time, but who knows. I just

don't think I would have been as accepting to Yoga at the time I initially began therapy. I definitely think it should have been suggested to me though, as another form of healing.

That is what Yoga was and it still is for me. It is healing. I miss it right now. *[I feel Wings' yearning.]* I know that it is good for me. The quiet mind is healing. With all the rambling that goes on in my mind, I definitely know that it is good for me. It helps me stay focused, and it gives me a feeling of inner peace. It just makes me feel good. When I feel good about myself, I feel good. I feel good physically. I also feel good emotionally and spiritually. I think it's a combination of all of this: the physical, the emotional, and the spiritual.

Sometimes in class I get into a deep meditation, and I feel like I am in touch with a Higher Power or Spirit. I don't know the word I want to use. I am more grounded to the earth, and I feel like I am a part of the earth, a part of the whole, a part of the big picture, not standing alone, but intertwined with the energy. There have been times at the end of Yoga class when we lie down and the teacher instructs us to bring in all the love and energy and Spirit and warmth and it is . . . Bliss. The energy that is shared with the universe and with myself, I wish I could be there all the time. It's just that, like we talked about earlier, finding that energy, tapping into it, recharging, or maybe even letting go, sometimes it is receiving, sometimes it is letting go. The physical part is cool too, but what I get most from Yoga is the connection of energy, of feeling connected with the whole universe.

I think that my healing has been deepened through the combination of Yoga and psychotherapy in that together they helped me to better understand and maybe embody my experience . . . Like warm fuzzies, yes, yes. I think it goes with my last statement. I totally get it. I totally feel the energy that is available to all of us.

What does transformation mean to me? Transformation . . . means butterfly . . . from the caterpillar to the cocoon to the butterfly. I have this thing about butterflies. I think that it is also like a symbol of how I am evolving in my life. I was a caterpillar, finding my way, making my way, and then I was in a cocoon for a very long time, and now I am emerging. And I'm going to spread my wings and fly. I'm not quite there yet, but that's where I'm heading is transformation. And all the books that drop off the shelf into my lap are all about transformation.

Transformation. My life today . . . it has been a transformation. All I can say is, "You've come a long way baby!" From who I was . . . I was very angry, very bitter. I was very hurt, full of rage, hate, resentment, physically, emotionally, mentally. I was sick. I was scarred and hurt, and I wanted to hurt everyone else around me. Today I am just constantly trying to find ways to make a better day, each and every day, and not that it's not a struggle, but it is so much easier than how it used to be because there was no center, no energy, no spirit. My spirit was broken; it was taken away from me. And I found it again. That is the bottom line.

I think that we all need tools and . . . I think we have messed up terribly. I think if we were taught from the beginning when we were in school about what is important to our human psyche, I think that between psychotherapy and Yoga, that these are my tools and my stepping stones to make me a better, more enriched person, to bring me to other places. It brought me to you. I totally believe it has given me the steps to move forward. It has brought me to a place where I am a part of the Whole.

Lifting the Veils of Illusion, A Journey of Discovery: Steve's Story

[The setting is the San Pedro Retreat Center where Steve and I sit outside the main entrance at a table and chairs, enjoying a lovely spring afternoon in this secluded, wooded area. It is March 15, 2005. Birds surround us and their various calls can be heard in the distance.]

Steve has traveled to the center to participate in a week long Yoga teacher training session. We introduce ourselves, as this is our first face-to-face meeting.

We begin by reciting the Adi Mantra, which I explain is designed to open the link to Divinity and protection between the student and the Divine teacher. Ong Namo, Guru Dev, Namo. We repeat this mantra nine times, until it feels complete. Steve sighs, telling me, "That feels very good, thank you." I sense a feeling of peace in Steve. Then Steve shares his story.]

The first time I entered therapy was about 22 years ago, and at that time, I made the mistake of going to a Catholic priest through Catholic Social Services. Of course, that was for marriage therapy for my first marriage, and it did not help at all. The advice I got was to stick with it rather than deal with the issues.

I returned to therapy in May of 2001, and I continued through October of 2002. That time it was with a marriage and family therapist, and I went to deal with my past. I had gone because I was having . . . Frances and I were having some difficulties in our marriage, and I was having a hard time communicating, so I wanted to find out how I could fix her *[Steve laughs]*, but it turned around and put the focus on fixing me, which was very good because that really was where the focus needed to be, and the emphasis was really on dealing with my childhood and with things that had happened in my past.

I had hit what I would consider rock bottom at the time. My son . . . Frances and I have raised our kids . . . we've never spanked them or touched them in any way . . . because I was physically abused as a child, and that was something that I never wanted to do. Then once my son and I were having a fight, an argument, and he said, "You are turning into your dad." That was the worst thing he could have said to me, and I said to myself, "Okay, its time for me to go

get some help.” So that was the focus, to work on my communication with Frances and my son, to get to know myself better and why I was reacting to things the way I was reacting to them.

After that I took a year to just work on my Yoga practice and use that as therapy. I returned to psychotherapy again in October of 2003 and I have been going every week since then.

Before I entered psychotherapy my life was flat, one dimensional. It was very much about staying within a very tight band with what was acceptable. As long as I had my routine and I went to work and I did my thing and everything stayed within that routine, everything was cool and everything was calm and peaceful. But inside I always had a feeling of frustration, unhappiness, bitterness. I felt very . . . just displeased with life in general. I was just in a rut, constantly wondering, “What’s the use?” But I just kept on doing it; I just kept on doing it.

Therapy has helped, absolutely. The reality is that the therapist that I went to before Isabelle helped me to a certain degree. I realize that she was the right therapist for me at that point in time. She had a lot of issues that she had not worked through, and there was a lot of what I felt was kind of bouncing back to me, being projected back to me, and they were her. What I learned was that the only therapy is for one to work on oneself.

I was also very active in my Yoga practice at the time, and I learned that by going to the mat, taking my feelings, my issues, using *pranayama* and the breathing exercises, and doing a daily practice together with participating in psychotherapy helped me to see that it was all about me and how I approached life. I realized that I can either approach it negatively or approach it with an attitude that “every day is a new beginning.” So how do I want to do it? I can go through the next 50-60 years doing it that way, or I can do it this way, so it helped me a lot by focusing on me.

Then, when I began psychotherapy with Isabelle, and this is really key . . . she has taken it to a really incredible level, we have gone into dealing with childhood things that I didn't even know that I had going on. She has used techniques like EMDR and other things, other therapies we are doing. Now we are doing chanting and *chakra* therapy. It is a pretty different process, very similar to EMDR. The focus is on working with the *chakras*, and it is a non-direct way to go, so it is very serene and allows you to open up quickly and get to the root of issues very quickly. The beauty of Isabelle is that since she knows about Yoga, knows about breath work, knows about meditation, we can incorporate a lot of the work I am doing with Yoga into the process, and that is what she is doing.

I started practicing Yoga about 10 years ago, and I have practiced on and off over the years. In the beginning, I really did it as a physical practice, stretching. For the last 3 to 3 ½ years, I have been doing more of a daily practice. My practice has taken more of a spiritual path involving the philosophy of Yoga more than just doing the *asanas*. I have really gotten into trying to understand myself better.

Daily practice is so important, it is incredible. Like everyone, we get busy, and there are days when you are not doing it, and you get to a point where your Soul . . . not your body . . . your Soul just craves it . . . craves that time on the mat to kind of reconnect and let go of the day. Making that extra, even if it is 20 minutes that I can spare, just giving those 20 minutes to myself is like giving myself a gift of recharging the batteries. It is very, very good. *[Again, I sense a feeling of peace in Steve.]*

Right now I'm participating in Yoga teacher training. I practice Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga, where I study and try to gain self knowledge. I practice Bhakti Yoga; I try to constantly show

love, I try to practice Bhakti Yoga. I practice Karma Yoga, and I try to be as selfless as I can in my deeds, and I am working toward Jyana Yoga, that is still a grasp for me.

When I started practicing Yoga, my teacher was really my wife Frances. We started practicing Yoga together at home, just the two of us. She had gone to Yoga teacher training a couple of years before. She was very disciplined at doing Yoga at home. I saw how happy and peaceful she was all the time and I thought, "I want a piece of that." Then after spending months complaining about how she was happy and I wasn't, how I got the raw end of the deal, I realized that it is right there for me to grab too. She keeps on showing me the way. She never said a word; she just kept on showing me the way.

Then we both decided, almost together, that we needed to seek outside teachers. I have studied with different teachers. We found a couple of studios, and we started bouncing around. When I traveled on business I would find a studio to try. Some of the teachers I liked, some I didn't connect with. Then we started attending seminars and different things.

At first, I went to class reluctantly. I didn't feel that I was capable; I felt like I was not good enough. That has been a tape that has kept playing in my life, and it is one of the things I am working through with Isabelle, but that was something that kept me from wanting to be out in public practicing Yoga. I was overweight at the time, and I felt very self conscious of my body, and Frances helped me overcome those feelings. She told me nobody cares about that. And I went, and there were all types of people there. Oh yeah, there were these hard bodies trying to do the perfect pose. But then I remembered what I was there for and that was for myself. Now I do most of my Yoga with my eyes closed, except when it is a balance pose and I have to stay focused on something, but I try to just stay inward and do it that way.

Over the last 2 years we have really gone into looking for different styles of Yoga to practice. Right now we are heavy into Anusara Yoga which we really like, but then again it is really just a derivative of Hatha Yoga. I attend Yoga classes twice a week and try to do a home practice at least three times a week, but I would like to get it to five times a week. My home practice varies depending on how I feel. If I'm feeling low energy, I will do it very simple, *asanas*, restorative poses, relaxation. If I am feeling high energy and really want to work out, I will do something more energetic. It all depends on how I am feeling.

The teacher that I feel the closest to is my wife Frances. The knowledge that she has . . . and she doesn't realize it . . . and she has a knowledge that is incredible. We talk about it every day. We are always talking about Yoga--something that we read, something that we experienced--and we bring it back into our daily lives, to the point that family sometimes thinks that is all we talk about, not our kids but extended family. I am getting very fond of Eleanor as a teacher. I'm not big into a *guru* because, and that is one of the things I respect about Eleanor, she is all about helping you discover that the knowledge is already within you. Just how do you gain access to that knowledge is what she is about. She is not about making herself indispensable and that you have to have her as the path.

What brought me to Yoga initially was that I was tired of not being happy, I was just tired of waking up every day and saying, pardon my English, "This sucks." Complaining about traffic, complaining about having to get up to go to work, complaining about bills, I just got tired of it. That is really what brought me to Yoga; I was just fed up with all that. What also really kicked it into high gear for me was a need for me to find a way to quiet my mind. We were going through a tough time, and I really needed a way to calm myself. I had a friend who started to

help me with meditation and breathing techniques. Life before Yoga was . . . blah. Life was just blah is all.

What Yoga is to me is joy, peace, tranquility, exhilaration. I mean, I practice for the sheer love of it. I really love the way that I feel, not only physically, but the way I feel spiritually, how connected I feel with my inner truth, with who I am, and how connected I feel to the world, to nature, to others. Its effects on me have been transformative.

During a 4-month period of practicing Yoga daily, I lost 70 pounds. I went from a size 42 waist to a 34. Over a 6-month period, I went from having my cholesterol at the good number of 258 and bad of 190 to a good of 170 and bad of 105, which is well within safe range. From a health standpoint, it has been an incredible transformation. My body shape, my strength has changed, without a bulging body, but I have gotten more muscular. It has really calmed me down, brought me into a more neutral, constantly happy, peaceful place. Just overall, it has been transformative.

Practicing Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy has absolutely deepened my healing and enhanced my growth. Isabelle and I have talked about this. I have had experiences on the mat, and then I have come in and talked to her, and then we would do an EMDR session, and it just brings me further into whatever the past trauma has been, and I really believe Yoga has put me through the doorway. Practicing Yoga, I have found it a lot easier to meditate, to get into a deeper state of consciousness, and when you are participating in psychotherapy, especially the type of work that Isabelle does, it is about accessing a deeper state of consciousness so you can deal with past issues. I think it is very highly correlated, Yoga and psychotherapy together. Participating in psychotherapy together with practicing Yoga has helped integrate my experience.

I'll give you a good example. Three weeks ago I was having a real tough time. I had been doing some work with Isabelle with my "3-year-old child," and I found that I was not breathing. Then I came to a weekend Yoga session where Eleanor just focused on the exhalation of the breath, and I got the worst migraine headache, and I felt nauseous. That had never happened to me before. The whole process came about because of the Yoga, and as soon as I returned to therapy and shared that with Isabelle she said that we had not closed on the issue with the 3-year-old and she thought that was probably why it came up. It was left out in the open, and we needed to close it. And I integrated it, and it was fine. And since then my breathing has gotten better and better, so it has been good.

Today, my life is a new adventure every day. At the beginning of the year, I made a decision to retire from AT&T. Now I'm starting two businesses: a development company and a Yoga studio. And life is a new discovery every day. *[Steve lights up like a child as if he has just come alive.]* I'm spending incredible quality and quantity time with my kids. My son and I are closer than ever. My daughter and I are closer than ever. My wife and I are closer than ever because we share this. I'm a pretty happy camper. *[He smiles.]*

To me, transformation means to change through the process of gaining knowledge. That's what transformation means. I would attribute the transformation I have experienced to . . . I don't know how to put into words . . . a state of inner peace and bliss that I have gotten through accessing deeper parts of myself through Yoga and meditation and just through doing different types of *pranayama* and quickly connecting to my Inner Self, and knowing that It exists . . . and that has just been transformative to me.

I've always wondered where God was. I was raised Catholic and taught that God was up there *[Steve looks toward the sky]*, and now I've discovered that God is in me and in her

[pointing to Frances] and in that tree . . . and you see that and you feel it inside you . . . and you know it's true. For awhile, I was a very devout Catholic, but I found that in the process of discovering myself that I can go to that well any time I want to by turning inward. You have to experience it for yourself, and it is transformative, it really is. It just changes your whole perspective. This came predominantly from my Yoga practice . . . and I will give Isabelle, my therapist, some credit too!

From Darkness to Light: The Story of Frances

[The setting is the San Pedro Retreat Center, where Frances and I sit outside the main entrance at a table and chairs. It is a spring afternoon, March 16, 2005. We find ourselves caught in the rain, but are able to take cover under the umbrella above our table. Toward the end of the interview, my voice recorder malfunctions. Despite these minor obstacles, we continue the interview and the story of Frances unfolds. Frances is here at the retreat center with her husband Steve, who is attending a week long Yoga teacher training session. Frances exudes a sense of inner peace, ease and joy.

We begin by chanting the Adi Mantra, a mantra with which Frances is familiar. Ong Namo Guru Dev Namo. We chant this mantra three times, until it feels complete. Then Frances shares her story.]

I initially entered psychotherapy in 1989, and it was for an eating disorder. I shutter to think of what my life would have been without it. I was definitely on a downward spiral. I was pregnant with my daughter and didn't realize it. I was bulimic and had been for 5 or 6 years. I wasn't active when I was pregnant and nursing my son. I was very good about taking care of myself when it was for somebody else. I just couldn't take care of myself when it was for me.

There was a time when I didn't really learn to deal with what was motivating me to that self-destructive behavior. As soon as my son was weaned, I went back to bingeing and purging. Then I had a really terrible Saturday . . . I was bleeding, and it turned out that I had ruptured something in my esophagus. Steve was out playing golf for the day, and my little boy was comforting me . . . and he could barely talk . . . and he was saying, "It's okay mommy. I'll take care of you," and I thought, "I'm not passing this on to him."

I didn't realize I was pregnant. Steve was working for AT&T, and I used their employee assistance program to hook up with somebody. "Okay, I'm desperate," I thought. I think I might have even called the help line in the yellow pages, and she suggested I find a therapist. I said, "Yes, I'm going to find a therapist. I'm not going to live like this any more and pass it on to someone so vulnerable." I might have attended just one session, and they referred me to someone who specialized in eating disorders, and that was Jennifer.

I thought some of the things Jennifer did were a little kooky, but I liked it. [*Frances giggles.*] I have always been very open, and I like the idea that the answers are inside me. She really emphasized that. She was more of a guide; she was not going to tell me how to fix my life, but she was going to be there and help guide me through it.

Jennifer was very interested in integrating body work, breath work, talk therapy, and even art therapy. This is really how I was introduced to Yoga, through the *pranayama*. I didn't know what it was called then. Jennifer had studied under Stan Groff using holotropic breath work, so this is how I was exposed to what I later found out was *pranayama* . . . and she was using it as a doorway in . . . and so we would have breath work sessions that would lead to an altered state of breathing, and I would go into this altered state of consciousness, sometimes for 3 hours, and I

would come out and draw a *mandala*, discuss what I drew, the colors I used, what it meant to me, and do journaling. I loved it. It was fantastic.

I went to Jennifer for 3 years, and then she moved away to California. I think I was ready at that point. It was like, "Okay, I'm ready to get on living my life." Now she is out in Maui. In January 2000, I reconnected with Jennifer. I went out to Maui for 9 days, participating in a fast, spiritual retreat kind of thing. And that really helped me put some closure to her leaving. Maybe we brought completion to some things that were left undone, that needed the period at the end of the sentence, and I was able to move on, so that really helped.

I really embraced therapy. What I was doing before wasn't working. I said to myself, "Okay, let's look for something that does work." And from there I really felt like a butterfly. I felt like I was just born for the first time, coming out of that. And life was beautiful. Life was beautiful. It was really dramatic, from darkness into light.

I entered therapy again in 2000, and that was when we came back from Italy. That was when I began seeing Isabelle, and I probably saw her for under a year. I didn't see her for the eating disorder, which to me seemed like a thing of the past. It was more for acclimating, moving back. We had lived overseas for 3 years, and when we came back of course things were different. My friends had moved on, my life was different, my kids were growing up, and there was a lot of that knowing I needed to let go, but not having anything to fill that space, and so that's what I went to Isabelle for. It was the next step along the way . . . more for adjusting back to a new life here, transitioning.

I had started going to the University of South Florida, and Steve and I were having some marital problems. I kind of came to a crisis point. Maybe it was a midlife crisis kind of thing. I was 38, and through Isabelle's help, I began to see a pattern. My grandmother had left her family

in her late 30s. My mom had left her family in her late 30s. And I was thinking, “Oh my gosh, I am getting this feeling inside like run, run like hell, leave it all and run. But why? I love my husband. I love my kids. What am I running to? It’s someone else’s baggage.” I was like, “No. I’m staying present, and I’m going to find a therapist.” I started school, which filled that need to have something. The kids were growing up. There was still that feeling inside of “Run. Run. Run.” And I was like, “No. I’m going to stay present.” And I went out and found Isabelle.

Isabelle used dream analysis, talk therapy, EMDR, which is wonderful, and some of the . . . I don’t know what it is called, but when you go inward . . . she’s got like a healing circle. Oh, and I did one session of Phoenix Rising Yoga Therapy. I am so open to different things. I’m not currently participating in therapy on a regular basis. Periodically if I feel like I need to talk to somebody, I book an appointment with Isabelle. I guess you would call it “maintenance mode.” Going back to Isabelle is like having a human journal, rather than writing it down you have a person. Bringing it out, talking it out, letting go of it.

I was introduced to Yoga by my first therapist Jennifer. She gave me a book and really encouraged me to do Yoga, and I’m thinking, “Okay lady, you don’t have children. You can’t imagine what it is like to have this newborn and a 3-year-old.” I didn’t have time to practice Yoga, but I continued with the breath work for another 2 years and kept the book. I didn’t use the book until my daughter started school. She started kindergarten, and I started doing the postures. I found that I could “get in” as if I were doing a breath work session; it was like this was another gateway into, inside me and beyond. It was like this doorway, and I thought of it like the body was a doorway, and oh, you can go through the postures, you can go through the breath, you can go through all these different ways, and I was delighted . . . like, “Okay, I don’t need my

therapist. I can be my own therapist.” And that was it. It was 1994, and I started with that book and guiding myself.

I continued journaling. After I would practice *asanas*, I would do the same thing I had done when I had a breath work session with Jennifer. I would draw a *mandala*, and I would journal. I never even went back and read it, it didn’t matter, and I had this integration. Things would come up. I would experience the emotions or the thoughts and not get attached to them, and somehow I could let go of things and get beyond them, and it was marvelous. And when we came back from Italy, it helped me through all the different AT&T moves. This is like a great tool! *[I can see the excitement in Frances’s eyes as she speaks and I feel her passion, as though it permeates her entire being.]*

At that time, I practiced Yoga on my own at home. I did not go to class. I didn’t have a teacher. It was self-exploration. When we went to Italy, I got a Yoga videotape and the emphasis shifted a little bit from the emotional towards the physical aspects of practice. It didn’t seem as though I had as great a need for therapy then. The eating disorder had passed, I had balance and harmony, and it was wonderful. And my muscles were getting toned, and I was getting a great butt! The emotional balance was a given now. And now I could do all these fun poses! *[Frances emanates a childlike sense of delight.]*

After that, it was like I had this feeling: “There’s something that’s pushing me.” And I felt a strong desire to teach Yoga to women that might need it, but couldn’t afford it. It was like I was on a mission to get certified, and I’m going to go to the women’s shelter, and I’m going to teach Yoga. I found Eleanor, and the following week I was down here in Florida doing a weeklong Yoga teacher training. I found her online; I got on to Yoga Alliance searching for different programs. I didn’t want to leave my family for 28 days, and I had school, and then we

found Eleanor's program in Orlando. We have family here in Orlando. I called Eleanor, and there was one space open, and I came down.

The program I participated in to become certified was personally transformative. I thought, "If I never teach, I am grateful to have done the training." It was the first time I had ever practiced Yoga with anyone other than Steve, and to open up to a community that was interested in finding out more about themselves and why this world is the way it is was wonderful. I want to know. I want to know. I had this hunger to know. Then I came down and got certified and started going to classes twice a week, which has been great.

I have a lot of friends that are into Yoga. I taught for a few years, although I am not teaching now. I found a women's shelter. It is like a treatment center where they are recovering from drug addiction and things like that. They are pregnant, and when they go, they can stay a year and get off drugs. And they finally have opened up and are interested in learning Yoga, so we are going to go out there when we get back home.

I practice Yoga daily. When I go to class it is an hour and a half. Then there are times I practice 3 hours and times I practice 20 minutes in my home practice. It varies, but it is consistent, and it is something I look forward to.

In the classes, we do Anusara Yoga, and I really like that. It is alignment oriented, so the instructor is driving you through physical postures, and I have found my physical practice has improved. *[I comment on Frances's perfect posture, which she feels must have something to do with her Anusara practice.]* When you have eyes outside of you that can tell you, "Move that leg that way," and all of a sudden I am using muscles I didn't know I had, and it strengthens and balances, it is amazing. It is amazing. But there is an aspect of being in a class that you don't really get in a home practice. I find I need both.

I still use my home practice as therapy, to get in and do personal work, and you can't really do that in a class. They are telling you this is what we are going to do next. But sometimes I just want to be here, and then I start to feel things. Feelings come up. You can't do that in a class.

I have two teachers that I work with, and I like them both. They are each different. Every teacher has been different. When we travel, we hook up with teachers. We get out the phone book and find places to go. We have gone to Yoga classes in Texas and Chicago. Everywhere we go, we try to find a studio and sample it. Different studios feel different and the same in a way. When we used to travel when I was a kid, we would go to church on Sundays, and that was what I liked was the continuity of a spiritual practice. It didn't matter if you were in a school gym or in a cathedral. We said all the same prayers. I liked that. And so there are similarities, especially if you follow a particular style, like if it is Anusara you are going to start with the same chant and talk about the same principles of alignment and all of that kind of stuff.

Before Yoga, it was almost like I had exhausted any other options. I think desperation brought me to Yoga. I had searched for . . . and this is the thing I liked when I grew up Catholic . . . I would sit in church and think, "There is a truth here, and I am getting it," and I would look around and think, "No one seems to get it," and I would go home, and my dad would beat my brothers, and there was a lot of dysfunction, and I would think, "Wait, you were with me, and we were hearing the same thing" . . . and so I got a little disillusioned with the world, and as a kid I went inward. "I believe in the spiritual aspect, and I feel it inside me, and I don't see it out there, and I'm just going to hide in here. It's all safe and good in here." I might have been living in a little bit of a fantasy world, but it was safe.

Then growing up, you can't hide anymore. And you have kids, and all of a sudden there are things that are pulling you into this outside world, and you must interact, and so I started abusing my body. It was like a safety valve, and the pressure would build up, and it was like if I have this release than I can maybe pamper myself or cradle myself in the process, odd as it is, and then I'm alright for a little while, and I can make it. And I think that's what brought me to therapy and at the same time Yoga, was that it wasn't working anymore. It just wasn't working. And I have these kids, and I'm not passing on any of my crap.

I'm lucky that going to therapy brought me to Yoga. Yoga gave me the tools to continue. *[We discuss self-discipline, which Frances seems to have a great deal of. To Frances, it is not self-discipline that keeps her going.]* "It is almost not even like it's a choice," she tells me. Some of the homework for Yoga teacher training is to write, and one of the things is on Bhakti Yoga, and it is not even self-discipline. It's like it doesn't go away; it just draws you in. That same hammering that I had when I would binge and purge, it was Yoga that was calling me now: "Here's your release." And it is going to be life enhancing, and I said, "Alright, the answer is yes. I will get to the mat, and I will get to the breath work." I think Rumi writes a lot about it, Union with the Beloved, and that is what I get from Yoga. How can you turn away from that? It's not even self-discipline. It is like running with your arms open to someone you love. Yoga literally means union, and I think that pretty much encapsulates it. *[I feel enveloped in the love that Frances emanates.]*

As far as the effects of Yoga practice, just on a physical level, I know I am taking better care of my self. I look at the health history on both sides of my family, alcoholism and diabetes, things my siblings are experiencing, and all the health complications that go with them, and here I am at 40, and I feel like I am 10-years-old, and it is neat. It's just neat. My eating has changed.

I've gone vegetarian, and I don't think about bingeing and purging. Before, I would still binge sometimes. Now I don't even want so much of that cake. Physically I feel great.

Mentally and emotionally, before I would have spikes of "life is exhilarating," and then I would have downward spirals. Now I have peaks that go up and stay up. It feels like every day is your birthday. It has given me acceptance. Mentally, I am really content. There is a lack of wanting, a feeling of equanimity I guess you would call it. There is not a feeling of lack; there is not a hole there.

Spiritually, I see it everywhere. I used to need the outside support or validation of someone. Now it's okay if you can't see it. That doesn't negate my experience. I do not feel that sense of wanting to push other people. I feel really contented.

I feel that practicing Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy has deepened my healing and enhanced my growth. If I had been limited to talk therapy, I wouldn't have been able to express myself. Some things just can't be expressed in words. Postures, breath, chants helped me to feel it and get it out, and then I could bring it to my therapist. You just move forward. It puts a whole other dimension into it. My experience has been integrated more due to my ability to access feelings, symbols, the way the body feels. It is like a dialog between the mind and the body. I really think that emotions and memories can be stored in the body.

Today, my life is great. Some people see life as if they are living in a prison. Life can be like that, or it can be a classroom. It is just like heaven and hell. It is right here, heaven. I don't have to go anywhere else to find it. It's like the whole world is my church, and I am the altar. The whole world is holy.

Transformation to me is a change. I think of it in a positive affirmative way, like from darkness to light. Any change, movement toward finding the Self would be transformative. Even

my eating disorder was transformative. It brought me to where I am today, and for that I can see the goodness in it. My experience of transformation has been a gradual process with flashes of dynamic change. It has been both immediate and gradual. With regular practice, it has been more gradual. But then there are flashes. I would attribute this to the work I have done with the breath.

[It is my hope that you, the reader have been touched by these heartfelt stories of transformation resulting from the integration of Yoga with psychotherapy. Perhaps you may be inspired to begin or rekindle your own Yoga practice and psychotherapeutic process. If you trust and allow . . . you are certain to be transformed.]

Synthesis: The Group Story

In this section, common themes that emerged among the co-researchers' experiences of healing, growth, and transformation as a result of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy are chronicled. First, common experiences and themes are simply noted, then symbols and metaphors representing these experiences are portrayed as "metaphors of transformation," and lastly, they are further elucidated in Haiku poetry.

As I listened to and reviewed, typed, and re-reviewed the data, including interview transcripts, co-researcher stories created from the transcripts, and my own story, several "metaphors of transformation" came to the forefront of my consciousness, and they continued to permeate my awareness. Images of symbols came to mind and words and phrases surfaced and spontaneously came together in the form of Haiku poetry.

According to Metzner (1980):

The unconscious speaks to the conscious in symbols and analogies; the collective unconscious, the ancient storehouse of the accumulated wisdom of the human race, speaks to the personal consciousness in stories and parables; the Higher Self speaks to the ego-personality self in the language of myth and metaphor. (p. 49)

These symbols, metaphors, and poetry are presented in this synthesis as a representation of the group story.

Themes of Transformation

Here co-researchers' experiences are identified and sorted as attributed to the practice of Yoga, psychotherapy, or a combination of the two.

Experiences, feelings, and effects reported among the co-researchers in this study as a result of practicing Yoga include the following: quiet mind; centered; inner peace; tranquility; calm; increased awareness; consciousness; healing; focus; grounded; connection with Inner Self; Higher Power, or the Divine within; Union with the Beloved; a sense of Oneness with All; including with others, nature, and the world; bliss; integration; spiritual path or practice; self understanding; the Soul's craving for Yoga; the breath; darkness to light; love; happiness; turning inward; joy; exhilaration; connection with inner truth; access to deeper state of consciousness; discovery of the Sacred; gateway, doorway within and beyond; emotions stored in the body; balance; harmony; Yoga as a form of therapy; Union; acceptance; contentment; lack of wanting; equanimity; and returning home.

Experiences, feelings, and effects reported among the co-researchers as a result of participating in psychotherapy include the following: focus on one's self; removal of blame and guilt; self understanding; validation; a feeling of having been born for the first time; life is beautiful; darkness to light; synchronicities; increased awareness; healing; growth; mirror reflection; happiness; acceptance; resolution of trauma; and identifying and transforming multigenerational patterns.

Experiences, feelings, and effects reported among the co-researchers as a result of practicing Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy include the following: wholeness; deepened

healing; enhanced growth; integration; embodiment; transformation; synchronicities; recognition of another way to view and approach life; “each day is a new beginning;” “life is a new adventure;” change; desire to serve; altered state of awareness and consciousness; recognition of, access to, and release of emotions and memories stored in the body; mind/body dialog; “life is a classroom;” “heaven is here;” seeing the Sacred in All; darkness to light; finding the true Self; increased intuition; discovery of life purpose; healing the mind, body, and spirit; increased/enhanced awareness; love; and joy.

Metaphors of Transformation

According to Metzner (1998), the process of evolutionary growth in humans has been described in similar terms in all major cultures and sacred traditions throughout the world. Symbols, metaphors, analogies, parables, myths, and allegories play a central role in most all traditional systems of human transformation. Symbols and metaphors have been used in the religious and mystical literature and traditions of the East and West to convey essential information to those who have found themselves emerged in a transformative crisis. These symbols and metaphors offer guidance and insight and often evoke a kind of echo or resonance within. According to Metzner, when these underlying metaphoric structures are expressed as symbols, we find a common language in which all of humanity can relate.

Mystics, hermits, monks, yogis, saints, sages, magicians, shamans, physicians, wizards, teachers, warriors, scholars, artists, poets, philosophers, scientists, psychologists—all of those who have functioned as way showers on the evolutionary path—have found these metaphors and symbols indispensable for describing their experience, for awakening intuition, and for catalyzing transformation. (p. 9)

Metaphors of transformation prevailing throughout the co-researchers’ experiences as relayed through their stories include Lifting the Veils of Illusion or Discovery of the Sacred, From Caterpillar to Butterfly, and From Darkness to Light.

Lifting the Veils of Illusion, Discovery of the Sacred. This metaphor is perhaps one of the most multifaceted in terms of its overlap with aspects of other metaphors of transformation and the variety of symbolisms and meanings it embodies. In its various forms, this metaphor underlies all of the co-researcher experiences of transformation as a result of having integrated Yoga with psychotherapy.

According to Metzner (1998), this aspect of transformation is related to:

... the idea and experience of discovery, which is an “uncovering”; to disillusionment, which is abandoning of illusions; to revelation, which is, from the Latin *revelare*, “pulling back the veil” or “unveiling”; and of course, to awakening from a dream. It is also related to the experience of insight, as “inner sight”, or seeing that sees beneath the surface appearance; and to enlightenment, as an experience of more light, produced by the removal of obscuring veils or coverings. And it is, finally, related to the transformation of the personality, because there are coverings, masks, or sheaths enveloping the central self—which, as they are removed or dissolved, provide an experience appropriately described as “self-disclosure” or “unmasking the self.” (p. 37)

According to Metzner (1998), it is an age old belief that the world we perceive through our ordinary consciousness is a shadow play of illusory and evanescent images. Transformation of consciousness involves transcending or dissolving this web of illusions. Our ordinary consciousness is obstructed, blinded, or unconscious by what Eastern teachings refer to as *maya*, or illusion.

If ordinary, unawakened consciousness is clouded or obstructed, then transformed consciousness is comparable to seeing in the clear, unobstructed light of the sun. Everything we look at in such states seems illuminated with a kind of pristine, luminous beauty, comparable to the light of a new day dawning. (p. 38)

The feeling of the Self being uncovered is extremely common in deeper transformative experiences, according to Metzner (1998). The individual becomes aware of the Inner Self,

“... so when we see the phenomenal world as the play of appearances it is, we can realize our true nature, we can attain self-realization” (p. 39). These veils of illusion obstruct our perception of ourselves, including our true nature or identity, and when lifted, our true Self

comes to light. Each of the co-researchers talked about the experience of coming into contact with the Inner Self as a significant aspect of their experience of transformation.

In talking about the transformative experience he attributed to his Yoga practice, Steve revealed:

I really love the way that I feel, not only physically, but the way I feel spiritually, how connected I feel with my inner truth, with who I am, and how connected I feel to the world, to nature, to others. Its effects on me have been transformative.

Wings talked about her return to Spirit in the following passage:

Today I am just constantly trying to find ways to make a better day, each and every day, and not that it's not a struggle, but it is so much easier than how it used to be because there was no center, no energy, no spirit. My spirit was broken, it was taken away from me and I found it again.

"Insight, true perception, and spiritual awareness are experienced as unveiling, revealing, dis-covering, dis-illusionment" (Metzner, 1998, p. 52). Examples of this metaphor are sprinkled abundantly amidst the co-researcher stories. Wings talked about how Yoga opened her awareness and her consciousness. Increased awareness, insight, and integration leading to transformation as a result of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy were common themes among the stories of Steve, Frances, and myself.

Steve's comments illustrate how lifting the veils of illusion can lead to a new outlook on life. "Before I entered psychotherapy my life was flat, one dimensional. It was very much about staying within a very tight band with what was acceptable." He further relayed, "I realized that I can either approach it negatively or approach it with an attitude that every day is a new beginning."

Another significant aspect of this metaphor is revealed in the concept of discovery of the sacred.

This kind of experience of a sacred quality of the world, of all life, and of our life in particular is often a significant element in the transformative experience of modern individuals, even those of an atheistic or agnostic orientation. (Metzner, 1998, p. 11)

Discovery of the Sacred has been at the heart of my experience of transformation: "Love, Sacred Union, bliss . . . are feelings that come to mind. Life has become sacred to me and I feel deeply blessed. There is no going back to the way it used to be." "I know that there is a deep and abiding Force within me that is pure Love, that is and always will be a part of me. I need nothing more. I am complete."

Steve's experience further illuminates the discovery of the sacred:

I've always wondered where God was. I was raised Catholic and taught that God was up there, and now I've discovered that God is in me and in her and in that tree . . . and you see that and you feel it inside you . . . and you know its true.

The essence of this metaphor, that of Lifting the Veils of Illusion or Discovery of the Sacred, permeated the co-researchers' experiences of transformation. As Metzner (1998) suggested, the journey to the Self is experienced as an uncovering or a removal of veils. "As the eye is unveiled, the I is transformed" (p. 53).

From Caterpillar to Butterfly. The butterfly, and the metaphor of the caterpillar's metamorphosis into the butterfly, was also a prominent theme in the co-researchers' experiences of transformation resulting from the integration of Yoga with psychotherapy. In my own story, I alluded to the evolution of the caterpillar to a butterfly as a symbolic representation of my experience of transformation. Wings strongly identified with the butterfly, thus her chosen pseudonym, which she felt was a symbol for the process of how she has been evolving in her life: "I was a caterpillar, finding my way, making my way, and then I was in a cocoon for a very long time, and now . . . I am emerging." Frances talked about how she embraced therapy: "And

from there, I really felt like a butterfly. I felt like I was just born for the first time, coming out of that, and life was beautiful . . . life was beautiful.”

The metaphor of the caterpillar’s metamorphosis into a butterfly has been one of the most enduring symbols of human transformation (Metzner, 1980; 1998). It is one of the favorite allegories of the ancient poets and philosophers depicting human transformation (Metzner, 1980). Metzner (1998) suggested this metaphor implies that human beings are in a larval-like stage and that change is possible that would render us as different from the way we are now as butterflies are from caterpillars. Yet another way of viewing this metaphor would be like the Jungians:

We could, with the Jungians, go through the stages of metamorphosis applying them to the human level: the seed/ovum corresponds to the original state of womb-like unconscious oneness; the larva to the stage of separation, the skin-bounded ego-consciousness; the chrysalis to an intermediate stage of incubation and growth; and the *imago* to the fully unfolded being that is able to fly, i.e., move in other dimensions. (Metzner, 1980, p. 49)

From Darkness to Light. Another significant theme that appears in the co-researchers’ stories of transformation as a result of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy is the metaphor of *From Darkness to Light*. In speaking about views of enlightenment among the mystics and visionaries of Eastern and Western spiritual traditions, Metzner (1998) stated the following:

For them, light is not an abstract symbol but an experience that is lived and felt in the mind, the heart, the body, and the inner recesses of the psyche. Enlightenment, then, is not merely a metaphor but rather an experience of one’s own inner essence, the Self, as a Being of Light. (pp. 159-160)

The process involves seeing more clearly, both internally and externally, so that there is more lucid awareness, a feeling of the light and warmth of love in the heart—ultimately a complete immersion in the ocean of light called God, Being, or Spirit. This aspect of consciousness transformation is actually a process of moving from darkness to more and more pervasive light and clarity. (p. 160)

My experience of rising from the depths of depression to my current state of being clearly mirrors the process of moving from darkness to light. Frances talked about her experience of therapy, stating, “It was really dramatic, from darkness to light.” She spoke of her view of transformation in a positive affirmative way: “. . . like from darkness to light.”

The experience of my heart center opening was portrayed in another depiction of this metaphor: “. . . and then suddenly, I felt this rush of cool energy, an opening, like waves opening to the sea, and my heart just opened up. I had a feeling of weightlessness, pure love and peace. I felt lighter.”

“The light or energy is felt as suffusing the interior of the body, bringing deep feelings of love and tremendous well being” (Metzner, 1998, pp. 163-164). According to Metzner, shock, elation, gratitude, and joy accompany this type of illumination. I shared this sentiment in my story in the following passages: “Each day is a blessing, a gift.” “I am filled with reverence and gratitude to those who have guided me and walked beside me on this path.”

Other parallels to this metaphor are perhaps more subtle within the co-researcher stories, yet nevertheless present. For Frances, “It is like heaven and hell. It’s right here . . . heaven. I don’t have to go anywhere else to find it.” This resonates deeply with my sentiments as well.

The Essence of Transformation: Haiku Poetry

In reviewing the data, words and phrases containing various symbols of transformation spontaneously arose within my consciousness. Here, I present these simple poems, in the form of Haiku, as an added dimension by which to perceive the felt sense of transformation lived within the experiences of the researcher and co-researchers.

Butterfly Union

Divine Consciousness is Bliss

Transformation Lives

Growth is Unfolding

Darkness gives way to the Light

Transformation Shines

Sacred is Within

The World as Holy Temple

Self and Nature One

Grounded in my Truth

Butterfly Awakening

Wings unfold Delight

Chapter Five: Discussion: Summary, Conclusions, and Implications

Introduction

In this chapter, we return to the purpose and objectives of this study and review the findings in light of the research questions and review of the literature. We revisit organic inquiry as a qualitative research approach and consider how its use impacted this study. Findings are assessed in light of the research questions and review of the literature. In the report of transformative change, we consider how transformation occurred in the co-researchers, the researcher, and three early readers of the study as a result of having participated in this process. Finally, the implications and applications of this study are considered, along with suggestions for future research.

The purpose of this study was to explore the healing, growth, and transformational effects of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy. The study was born of my own transformational experience as a result of this integration. The objective of this study was to explore the growth and transformation of four co-researchers, including myself, who had experienced Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy.

I sought to answer the following questions in this inquiry: (a) In what ways is healing deepened and growth enhanced through the practice of Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy?, (b) How is transformation experienced as a result of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy?, and (c) What are the physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental effects and benefits of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy?

The literature review focused on the following topics: What is Yoga, Psychotherapy, Yoga and Psychotherapy, Yoga Therapy: Research and Clinical Applications, and Meditation.

Organic Inquiry

Organic inquiry was the method I chose to use in this study. According to Clements et al. (1999), organic inquiry is a creative process, and the researcher is called to pay attention to the inner voice of the research itself, which speaks by way of dreams, coincidences, and intuition, and to adjust the research process and method accordingly. The creative, intuitive, and chthonic qualities of organic research are congruent with my own thinking and writing styles, and along with its sacred quality, drew me to this approach. Furthermore, topics ideally suited to this approach include those of a psycho-spiritual or transformational nature that have been born out of the researcher's personal experience, making this approach particularly appropriate in this study. Finally, the goals of organic inquiry are to impart transformative change in the researcher, the co-researchers, and the future readers of the study.

I cannot imagine attempting to explore the sacred dimensions of this topic in its richness and fullness within the confines of conventional research. The transformational effects of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy . . . organic inquiry honors the vast array of human experience, including exceptional experiences which cannot always be explained, analyzed, or categorized within the limits of traditional research methods. Furthermore, the personal, relational aspects of this approach, which in this study included face-to-face interviews with co-researchers as they shared their stories, invited an atmosphere of acceptance and trust allowing co-researchers to share their innermost feelings and the full depth and breadth of their experiences.

Summary

The results are viewed from two perspectives: results in light of the research questions and results in relation to the existing literature. While the vast majority of experiences reported by the co-researchers were attributed to the practice of Yoga, it is this researcher's opinion that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to isolate the effects of Yoga and psychotherapy when combined. Three of the co-researchers were participating in Yoga and psychotherapy simultaneously, and in my view, it is likely that the results manifested in the co-researchers were cumulative in response to both of these processes, rather than separate and distinct. Furthermore, three of the co-researchers were either introduced to Yoga or returned to Yoga as a result of having participated in psychotherapy, further connecting these disciplines.

While it is probably not possible to isolate the effects and experiences in terms of a single determinant, whether it be Yoga or psychotherapy, and while in my view it is likely that the effects were resultant of a combination of the two, what is clear is that the effects and experiences impact all levels of being: the physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental aspects of ourselves. These effects are indeed indicative of transformative experience.

Conclusions

Findings in Relation to the Research Questions

In reviewing the results, I found that some of the responses to the research questions overlapped, answering more than one question. Here, I include these results where they seem to fit most appropriately.

In what ways is healing deepened and growth enhanced as a result of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy? All of the co-researchers reported healing on the levels of the mind, body, and spirit. In addition, each of the co-researchers reported deepened integration or embodiment

as a result of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy. There are those experiences that go beyond intellectual understanding and according to co-researcher reports talk therapy on its own was not sufficient to fully heal and integrate their experiences. Through the integration of Yoga with psychotherapy, Frances reported healing from her eating disorder, Steve healed the emotional scars of physical abuse, and the researcher healed from the overwhelming distress of depression and post traumatic stress disorder. Wings reported healing from the effects of living in an alcoholic home, as did I. Furthermore, I found not only healing, but came to a sense of wholeness through the integration of Yoga with psychotherapy.

How is transformation experienced as a result of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy?

A dominant theme in my transformational experience was the discovery of the sacred within myself and all of life. Discovery of the sacred was also echoed in the stories of Frances, Steve, and Wings. We each spoke about the experience of finding the true Self. Frances and I both viewed our experiences in terms of the process of moving from darkness to light. Heaven is here.

Each of the co-researchers reported change, including change in the way we view life. Steve saw each day as a new adventure. For Frances, "It's like every day is your birthday." Frances viewed life as a classroom. Discovery of life purpose was a manifestation of transformation shared by Frances, Steve, and myself. We all shared a desire to serve in the world.

We all spoke of an altered/increased state of awareness and consciousness as a result of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy. Heightened intuition was manifested in my experience, and both Frances and I spoke of the presence of synchronicities in our lives.

What are the physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental effects of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy? Frances and I both spoke of transformations in relationship to our bodies and our eating habits as a result of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy. Co-researchers reported increased, enhanced awareness and clarity as well as feelings of love and joy as a result of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy. Finally, co-researchers reported finding the true Self, the Divine within, and reported seeing the Sacred in all.

Findings in Light of the Existing Literature

To date, little has been written on the integration of Yoga with psychotherapy. This is definitely an area which warrants further attention. While research in this area is limited, the findings in this study were consistent with the writings of Mijares (2003) and Criswell and Patel (2003).

Mijares (2003) suggested that many psychotherapy clients report that traditional talk therapy alone failed to help them, which is consistent with co-researcher reports. Criswell and Patel (2003) suggested that there are those who are seeking something deeper than traditional talk therapy, and that these people may respond well to experiential therapies. This has clearly been my experience, as well as the experiences reported by Frances and Steve. Mijares posited that, "Increasing numbers of people are choosing processes that expand and deepen consciousness because they offer a more direct, positive, and integrated psychospiritual experience" (p. 11). Mijares suggested that these processes facilitate healing and growth, as I believe has been demonstrated in this study.

When Criswell and Patel (2003) discussed the different ways in which Yoga might be combined with psychotherapy, they reported that in using a blended approach, in which Yoga and psychotherapy take place within the same session, insights emerging from the Yoga session

can be discussed as they arise. Both Steve and I reported experiences that arose during our Yoga sessions that we later brought back to our psychotherapy sessions and came to understand and integrate. In both of our cases, we participated in separate Yoga and psychotherapy sessions; however, the results were the same: increased understanding and integration. Frances spoke of using her Yoga as therapy and found integration combining Yoga, psychotherapy, and other tools, such as journaling and creating *mandalas*.

Criswell and Patel (2003) reported on the therapeutic outcomes arising out of incorporating Yoga with psychotherapy, which include an enhanced ability to deal with stress; healthier, more comfortable functioning in the world; increased self understanding; self acceptance and self esteem; somatic development; increased understanding of the psycho-spiritual process; decreased fear and distress; an increase in a sense of connection with one's life purpose; a decrease in inhibition; and an increase in available capacities and energy, often accompanied by an increased sense of joy in being connected with one's potential, life direction, and reason for being. The findings of this study are highly consistent with these therapeutic outcomes as suggested by Criswell and Patel, which manifested in each of the co-researchers in various forms.

Report of Transformative Change

The report of transformative change views transformation from three perspectives: transformation of the co-researchers, transformation of the researcher, and transformation of the potential reader as assessed by early readers of the study. While contemplating the co-researchers' stories and reports of transformative change, it might be helpful to keep the following views and definitions of transformation in mind.

Views and Definitions of Transformation

Transformation: A radical restructuring of the entire psyche, which may include changes in thinking, worldview, beliefs, feelings, motives, impulses, and values, as well as altered perceptions, such as heightened seeing and sensing, which change the way we feel about ourselves and the world (Metzner, 1998, pp. 1-3).

Effects of transformation may manifest as changes of self, increased connection to Spirit, or a desire to be of service to the world (Clements, 2002).

Transformation involving *changes of mind*: Insights that have arisen from engaging with Spirit (Clements, 2002).

Transformation involving *changes of heart*: One's view of who one is and how one operates in the world is changed (Clements, 2002).

Transformation of the Co-Researchers

According to Clements (2002), transformative change in the co-researchers can be identified on various levels. To elicit examples of transformative change within the co-researchers as a result of having participated in the study, I reviewed notes I had taken immediately following the interviews for any mention of possible effects the co-researcher may have experienced as a result of participating in the study. Additionally, co-researcher self reports of transformation as a result of having participated in the study were solicited based on their responses to the Follow-Up Interview Questions (Appendix G).

Consistent with the method suggested by Clements (2002), transformative change is assessed as changes to self, changes in one's relationship to Spirit, and changes in desire to be of service in the world. It should be noted that as of the writing of Clement's *Organic Inquiry, Research in Partnership with Spirit*, the analysis of transformative change through the lenses of

changes to self, spirit, and service were relatively new concepts and as yet had not been a part of any completed organic studies. As such, in this endeavor, the researcher traveled an unpaved path.

Changes to self. Themes that came to light as a result of the co-researchers' participation in this study included the following: (a) validating experience of growth and transformation, (b) an increase in certainty as to one's path and the significance of Yoga and psychotherapy as a part of that path, and (c) the ability to see past difficulties as blessings and opportunities for growth.

Validating experience of growth and transformation. During the process of telling his story, Steve said in surprise, "I listen to this and it is me, my experience I'm talking about." In reflecting on her experience, Wings uttered in excitement, "You've come a long way baby!"

Increase in certainty as to one's path and the significance of Yoga and psychotherapy as a part of that path. In his follow up interview, Steve reported that he felt more certain of his path and how both Yoga and psychotherapy were relevant in his life. He further reported that he felt this work was very pertinent and would lead to better/faster integration by combining Yoga with psychotherapy. Frances also reported feeling more certain of her path.

Seeing past difficulties as blessings and opportunities for further growth. In her follow up interview, Frances reported, "The interview process reconfirmed a previous insight that all experiences offer the potential for growth. I looked back on my therapy and the reasons I wound up in therapy, and I bless those experiences." I echoed Frances's response: "The brightest light shines forth after the darkest night."

Changes in connection with Spirit. Wings talked about how the process of this research brought the two of us together during a time when her motivation and inspiration were lacking and she was experiencing a yearning to return to Yoga. This was one of many synchronicities

that arose throughout the process of carrying out this research, and it is a reflection of a deeper connection with Spirit. Frances reported: “During the interview and after, I felt a sense of contentment and awareness that we are all interconnected.” I shared this sentiment with Frances and felt a deep heart connection both while talking with her and following the interview.

Change as a desire to be of service in the world. Frances reported that she was recommitted to sharing Yoga with those who are interested in it. She found a women’s shelter, where pregnant women were recovering from drug addiction. Following our interviews and Steve’s Yoga teacher training, she and Steve intended to go there and teach Yoga to those who were interested, but unable to afford it.

Discussion of Transformative Change in the Co-Researchers

In assessing transformative change as a result of having participated in the study, the concept of viewing change in terms of changes to self, spirit, and service was a fairly new concept and had yet to be a part of any completed organic inquiry at the time of the writing of Clement’s (2002) manuscript detailing the organic research process. In this respect, the researcher traveled a somewhat unpaved path.

To solicit evidence of transformative change in the co-researchers, the researcher utilized brief questionnaires defining transformation to guide this process. It is possible that the use of these questionnaires had the effect of narrowing or limiting co-researcher views of transformation, ultimately affecting their reports of change as a result of participating in the study.

Furthermore, transformation of the co-researchers was based on participant self reports alone, as I felt strongly against placing my personal interpretation on unique individual

experiences. Throughout this endeavor, I sought to honor each individual's perceptions and unique process.

One of the co-researchers could not be reached for follow-up interview, which presented a limitation in viewing that co-researcher's transformative change.

Finally, it is this researcher's opinion that two of the co-researchers may have already manifested transformation to the extent that they were perhaps not as affected by the process of participating in the study as other co-researchers may have been. Prior to participating in this study, they were already engaged in a long term useful process incorporating both Yoga and psychotherapy. This is merely speculation on my part, however. Transformation is a unique experience and may happen gradually or at once.

Transformation of the Researcher

The process of carrying out this research affected me on many levels. All aspects of my being, mind, body, and spirit were engaged, present, and alive throughout this endeavor. In many ways, I experienced this process as one of giving birth to something very special, very sacred, very meaningful, and close to my heart. From seed to flowering tree, new life emerged. Obviously, the subject matter of this work, the integration of Yoga with psychotherapy, has held deep significance to me, as it has clearly been the catalyst for deep healing, growth, and transformation in my life. In a sense, it was difficult for me to separate the effects of transformation I experienced as a result of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy from that as a result of having carried out this research. These seem to be one and the same, as this research was a further extension of my process, another step along my spiritual path.

Changes to self of the researcher. I came to this study with a strong sense of awareness and understanding of myself due to the psychotherapy I underwent in conjunction with my Yoga

practice. When I encountered feelings of uncertainty and despair about finding the time and resources, including co-researchers, to complete this project, my return to therapy along with re-immersion in my Yoga practice inspired the hope and strength I needed to carry on.

While carrying out this research, I felt deeply honored when the co-researchers' shared their personal stories. Listening to their stories further validated my own experience. I related deeply to the co-researchers' stories of their experiences on a variety of levels: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It felt as if I were present, a part of the co-researchers, as I felt their feelings and experiences reverberate within and throughout me. This occurred both during and following the interviews, while listening to co-researcher tapes and writing and reviewing co-researcher transcripts and stories. I felt Wing's yearning. I felt Steve's Soul craving. I felt Frances's call from and union with the Beloved. I felt the passion, the exhilaration, the peace, the calm, and the contentment that the co-researchers described. In essence, I felt the Oneness that connects us all. Finally, as a result of carrying out this study, my passion for Yoga and desire to pursue it in greater depth was reignited.

Changes in connection to Spirit of the researcher. Ultimately the most significant change that I experienced manifested in an increased, deepened connection to Spirit. The process of carrying out this research reaffirmed for me the importance of trusting the process and following my intuition and inner guidance, even when I do not know where it is leading me. This was something I came to understand in psychotherapy and as a result of my Yoga practice; however, the process of carrying out this research, observing and remaining mindful of the symbols and synchronicities along the way, really solidified the importance of this trust in my life. I came to view these symbols and synchronicities as Spirit working through and along side me. When the time was right, everything came together in perfect harmony to support my completion of this

work. The process of carrying out this research and my entire ITP experience, which led me to this, have clearly been an extension of my spiritual path and ongoing transformation.

Changes in desire to be of service in the world in the researcher. At the time I undertook this research, I had just embarked upon a long awaited career change in a desire to serve and make a difference in the lives of others. Through the process of carrying out this research, I experienced a desire to delve yet deeper into the spiritual teachings of Yoga by participating in Yoga teacher training. I expect this may be another way in which I will find myself of service in the future.

Dragonfly Illumes

Inner Essence now Revealed

Omnipresent One

Grounded in my Truth

Butterfly Awakening

Wings unfold Delight

Early Reader Response to the Study

Three volunteers, known to the researcher, read the nearly completed work and rendered their responses. Each reported evidence of transformation as a result of reading the material.

Dominique's response. Dominique is in her early 20s and participated in psychotherapy in the past. She is familiar with Yoga, but has never practiced. Prior to reading the study, she often commented about Yoga as follows: "I could never do that, I could never just sit still like that. I couldn't do it." After reading the co-researcher stories, Dominique reported that she was

able to relate to the issues that brought the co-researchers to psychotherapy and Yoga. She further relayed the following:

This was really interesting. I see that it helped these other people. I would like to try Yoga to help relieve stress in my life. I think it would be helpful to return to therapy and try Yoga. I know it would help. I would like to experience what they did. I would like to pursue this further by trying it for myself.

Dominique reported being touched by the stories and inspired to return to therapy and pursue Yoga, which suggests she experienced some degree of change of self.

Sarasvati's response. Sarasvati is in her 50s and has had experience with psychotherapy. She currently participates in a weekly Yoga class. Sarasvati reported being both touched and inspired by the co-researchers' stories. "Very inspiring for me to strengthen my Yoga practice," she relayed. At the outset of the study, upon reading the literature review, she reported:

As I read, there have been some transformational effects. I have attended a weekly Yoga class. The research has helped clarify to me, cognitively, some of the posture's effects I have been experiencing. My intention to increase the frequency of my Yoga practice has strengthened.

As she continued reading the co-researcher's stories, Sarasvati further commented:

This is very inspiring material. I continue to be inspired to deepen my Yoga practice and access therapeutic support whenever I feel the need. I love my current Yoga practice and see even more deeply how beneficial and transformative it will be for me to strengthen this practice.

Sarasvati also reported an increased connection to spirit from reading the manuscript. Finally, she reported, "I feel my understanding of the transformational process had been enhanced through your presentation of Metzner's (1998) work in light of the specific co-researcher examples."

Katherine's response. Katherine is in her 60s and has practiced Yoga and participated in psychotherapy in the past. Katherine's response to the material appears to have manifested in an increased connection to Spirit as evidenced by the synchronicities she reported:

Synchronicities and perfect timing . . . as it is inspiring me to again try to find how/where I can incorporate Yoga into my daily life. I am really drawn to Kundalini Yoga, but have had trouble finding a place that offers good consistent classes that is close by. . . I even looked into Kundalini Yoga Training a few months ago, but the class was in the middle and they are not offering it again I think until October, but I am again inspired to get in.

Katherine also reported being touched by the material, which may be viewed as a change to self, perhaps by reaffirming aspects of her own personal experience:

The whole piece around embodiment is so important. I feel very touched by your journey and the others. The process of becoming “embodied” has been my journey as well. Your story of locked breath and frozen feelings and escaping the body are very familiar. I have taken the path of clay and expressive arts, but would love to incorporate this into my practice and classes and had had thoughts about that before reading your thesis, so it comes as a great confirmation.

Early reader responses to the nearly completed study appear to suggest they were each transformed in some way as a result of reading this work. It is my hope that you, the reader, may also be transformed.

Implications and Applications

Based on the existing research and the findings of this study, I believe the combination of Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy offers broad implications and application as an integrative approach to healing all types and varieties of ailments, including anxiety and stress related disorders which are highly prevalent in our fast paced society, depression, physical and sexual abuse, post traumatic stress disorder, and eating disorders. I also believe the integration of Yoga and psychotherapy offers immense potential in the recovery from alcoholism and addictions of all kinds.

Suggestions for Future Research

As an organic inquiry aspires to achieve saturation with regard to the given topic, a sufficiently wide range of experience would encourage this, making it more likely that the reader will find a point of view to match one’s own (Clements, 2002). I would suggest that future

research in this area utilize a larger group of participants or co-researchers, covering a broader spectrum of demographics in terms of age, gender, and locality.

As mentioned previously, there has been little to date in the literature on the combined effects of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy, and I believe the combination of these two disciplines offers tremendous transformative potential, warranting further investigation.

While I did not use age or gender as criteria for participation in this study, the limited group of co-researchers turned out to include 3 females and only 1 male, all in our 40s. While I chose to delimit this study by choosing co-researchers in my local area, this was merely due to the limitations brought on by logistics, as I believed (and still do) that face-to-face interviews with the participants were preferable. I believe it would be beneficial to study candidates from various regions and, in fact, felt quite limited in finding interested and appropriate candidates in the area in which I reside.

I also believe there may be greater evidence of transformation in co-researchers practicing Yoga while simultaneously participating in psychotherapy, and this should be considered in future research as well. While it was my original intent to include a larger group of co-researchers in this study and to study those participating in Yoga and psychotherapy simultaneously, this did not come to fruition, and in my view, may be considered a limitation.

It would also be interesting to look at co-researchers practicing Yoga alone, without psychotherapy, to see if their experience of transformation differs from that which we have seen. Conversely, it would be interesting to look at co-researchers participating in transpersonal psychotherapy alone.

In future research it might also be useful to consider specific schools of Yoga or psychotherapy, as again this study was not delimited in this respect. I would assume based on its

very nature that a transpersonal approach to psychotherapy would result in greater manifestation of transformation. It is interesting to note that while I did not directly solicit co-researchers in transpersonal psychotherapy, the co-researchers that were drawn to this study were engaged in transpersonal therapy. I also would assume that the path of Raja Yoga, involving all eight limbs, would yield greater transformation than other schools of Yoga, which are all essentially derivatives of this unified approach. It would be interesting to consider this in future research.

Finally, future research might look at the integration of Yoga and psychotherapy in relation to the healing of specific ailments and disorders such as depression, post traumatic stress disorder, or eating disorders to name a few.

Conclusion

I believe this exploratory study suggests that through the integration of Yoga with transpersonal psychotherapy, one may experience deepened healing, enhanced growth, and ultimately, transformation. This has broad implications for transpersonal psychology, and further research in this area is clearly warranted. It is my deepest hope that this study offers both inspiration and transformation to all who encounter it, and that your journey be blessed and enriched as a result of having walked beside us along this path. *Namaste.*

When our sense of who we are, our self-concept, changes, we speak of personal, or self-transformation. This kind of experience changes the way we feel about the world—our emotional attitude of basic trust or mistrust, faith or doubt, acceptance or rejection—and the way we feel about ourselves, our self-acceptance, self-esteem, self-love. (Metzner, 1998, p. 3)

References

- Anjali, P. (1995). Yoga as psychotherapy: A distillation of the essential principles of Patanjali Yoga theory into a counseling and psychotherapy model. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 56 (1-A), 0090. (UMI No. 9514694)
- Boorstein, S. (2000). Transpersonal psychotherapy. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 54(3), 408-423.
- Braud, W. (1998). An expanded view of validity. In W. Braud & R. Anderson (Eds.), *Transpersonal research methods for the social sciences: Honoring human experience* (pp. 213-237). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Chaudhuri, H. (1992). Yoga psychology. In C. Tart, (Ed.), *Transpersonal psychologies: Perspectives on the mind from seven great spiritual traditions* (pp. 231-280). New York: Harper Collins.
- Chidananda, S. (2004). *Yoga: What it is and what it is not*. Retrieved February 16, 2005, from <http://sivanandadlshq.org/messages/whatisYoga.htm>
- Chopra, D. (1991). *Perfect health*. New York: Harmony.
- Clements, J. (2002). *Organic inquiry: Research in partnership with spirit*. Manuscript in preparation.
- Clements, J., Ettling, D., Jenett, D., & Shields, L. (1998). Organic research: Feminine spirituality meets transpersonal research. In W. Braud & R. Anderson, (Eds.), *Transpersonal research methods for the social sciences: Honoring human experience* (pp. 114-127). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Clements, J., Ettling, D., Jenett, D., & Shields, L. (1999). *Organic inquiry: If research were sacred*. Manuscript in preparation.
- Cope, S. (1999). *Yoga and the quest for the true self*. New York: Bantam.
- Cope, S., & Keane, M. (1996). When the therapist is a yogi: Integrating Yoga and psychotherapy. In S. Boorstein, (Ed.), *Transpersonal psychotherapy* (2nd ed., pp. 279-292). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Criswell, E., & Patel, K. (2003). The Yoga path: Awakening from the dream. In S. Mijares, (Ed.), *Modern psychology and ancient wisdom: Psychological healing practices from the world's religious traditions* (pp.201-225). Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Integrative Healing Press.

- Fadiman, J., & Frager, R. (2002). Yoga and the Hindu tradition. In Fadiman & Frager (Eds.), *Personality and Personal Growth* (5th ed., pp. 466-497). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Farhi, D. (1996). *The breathing book*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Feuerstein, G. (1998a). *What is Yoga?* Retrieved January 9, 2003, from Yoga Research and Education Center, http://www.yrec.org/what_is_Yoga.html
- Feuerstein, G. (1998b). *Yoga and Yoga therapy*. Retrieved January 9, 2003, from International Association of Yoga Therapists, <http://www.iayt.org/Yogatherapy.html>
- Feuerstein, G. (1999a). *Is Yoga a religion?* Retrieved January 9, 2003, from Yoga Research and Education Center, <http://www.yrec.org/Yogarelig.html>
- Feuerstein, G. (1999b). *Ten fundamental principles of Yoga*. Retrieved January 9, 2003, from Yoga Research and Education Center, <http://www.yrec.org/10principles.html>
- Gimbel, M. (1998). Yoga, meditation, and imagery: Clinical applications. *Nurse Practitioner Forum*, 9(4), 243-255.
- Goleman, D. (1971). Meditation as meta therapy: Hypotheses toward a fifth state of consciousness. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 3(1), 1-25.
- Goyeche, J. (1979). Yoga as therapy in psychosomatic medicine. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 31(1-4), 373-381.
- Grim, P. (1969). Psychotherapy by somatic alteration. *Mental hygiene*, 53(3), 451-458.
- HariNam (Tom Beal) (1996). *Universal Yoga: A path to enlightenment*. Longwood, FL: Universal Yoga.
- HariNam (Tom Beal) (1997). *Mantras: Inner transformation through the power of sound*. Longwood, FL: Universal Yoga.
- Haslock, I., Manro, R., Nagarathna, R., Nagendra, H., & Raghuram, N. (1994). Measuring the effects of Yoga in rheumatoid arthritis. *British Journal of Rheumatology*, 33(8), 788.
- Ikemi, Y., Ishikawa, H., Goyeche, J., & Sasaki, Y. (1978). Positive and negative aspects of the 'altered states of consciousness' induced by autogenic training, zen, and Yoga. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 30(3-4), 170-178.
- Ikemi, Y., Nakagawa, T., Suematsu, H., & Luthe, W. (1975). The biologic wisdom of self-regulatory mechanism of normalization in autogenic and oriental approaches in psychotherapy. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 25(1-6), 99-108.

- Kaur Khalsa, S. (1996). *Kundalini Yoga: The flow of eternal power*. Los Angeles: The Berkley Publishing Group.
- Khalsa, D., & O'Keeffe, D. (2002). *The kundalini Yoga experience: Bringing body, mind and spirit together*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- LePage, J. (1993). An integrative approach to Yoga therapy: Facilitating the rediscovery of unity in body, mind, and spirit. *The Journal of the International Association of Yoga Therapists*, 4(1), 43-47.
- Mann, R. (1998). *Sacred healing: Integrating spirituality with psychotherapy*. Nevada City, CA: Blue Dolphin.
- McCall, T. (2003). Western science versus eastern wisdom. *Yoga Journal*, (172), 88-173.
- Metzner, R. (1980). Ten classical metaphors of self transformation. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 12(1), 47-62.
- Metzner, R. (1998). *The unfolding self: Varieties of transformative experience*. Novato, CA: Origin Press.
- Mijares, S. (Ed.). (2003). *Modern psychology and ancient wisdom: Psychological healing practices from the world's ancient religious traditions*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Integrative Healing Press.
- Nagendra, H., & Nagarathna, R. (1986). An integrated approach of Yoga therapy for bronchial asthma: A controlled study. *British Medical Journal*, 291, 1077-1079.
- Naveen, K., Nagarathna, R., Nagendra, H., & Telles, S. (1997). Yoga training increases memory scores without lateralized effects. *Psychological Reports*, 81, 556-561.
- Nespor, K. (1985). The combination of psychiatric treatment and Yoga. *International Journal of Psychosomatics*, 32(2), 24-27.
- Petzold, M. (1989). The heritage of India: Yoga psychology in the east and west. *Psychologia*, 32, 275-280.
- Prakash, P. (1999). *The branches of Yoga*. Retrieved January 9, 2003, from Yoga Research and Education Center, <http://www.yrec.org/branches.html>
- Raghuraj, P., & Telles, S. (1997). Muscle power, dexterity skill and visual perception in community home girls trained in Yoga or sports and in regular school girls. *Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology*, 41(4), 409-415.
- Rama, S. (1998). *The royal path: Practical lessons on Yoga*. Honesdale, PA: Himalayan Institute Press.

- Rama, S., Ballentine, R., & Ajaya, S. (1998). *Yoga and psychotherapy: The evolution of consciousness*. Honesdale, PA: Himalayan Institute Press.
- Rama, S., Ballentine, R., & Hymes, A. (1998). *Science of breath*. Honesdale, PA: Himalayan Institute Press.
- Satchidananda, S. (1990). *The Yoga sutras of Patanjali*. Buckingham, VA: Integral Yoga Publications.
- Scotton, B. (1996). Introduction and definition of transpersonal psychiatry. In B. Scotton, A. Chinen, & J. Battista (Eds.), *Textbook of Transpersonal Psychiatry and Psychology* (pp. 3-8). New York: Basic Books.
- Scotton, B. & Hiatt, J. (1996). The contribution of Hinduism and Yoga to transpersonal psychiatry. In B. Scotton, A. Chinen, & J. Battista (Eds.), *Textbook of Transpersonal Psychiatry and Psychology* (pp.104-113). New York: Basic Books.
- Seeman, W., Nidich, S., & Banta, T. (1972). Influence of transcendental meditation on a measure of self-actualization. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 19, 184-187.
- Shaffer, H., LaSalvia, T., & Stein, J. (1997). Comparing hatha Yoga with dynamic group psychotherapy for enhancing methadone maintenance treatment: A randomized clinical trial. *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*, 3(4), 57-66.
- Shang, C. (2001). Emerging paradigms in mind-body medicine. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 7(1), 83-91.
- Sinh, P. (2002) (Trans.). *The Hatha Yoga Pradipika*. New Delhi, India: Munshiram Manoharlal.
- Sivananda, S. (2004). *Raja Yoga*. Retrieved February 16, 2005, from <http://www.dlshq.org/teachings/rajaYoga.htm>
- Smith, J. (1975). Meditation as psychotherapy: A review of the literature. *Psychological Bulletin*, 82(4), 558-564.
- Strohl, J. (1998). Transpersonalism: Ego meets soul. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 76(4), 397-403.
- Sutich, A. (1996). Transpersonal psychotherapy, history and definition. In S. Boorstein (Ed.), *Transpersonal Psychotherapy* (pp. 9-13). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Uma, K., Nagendra, H., Nagarathna, R., & Vaidehi, S. (1989). The integrated approach of Yoga: A therapeutic tool for mentally handicapped children: A one year controlled study. *Journal of Mental Deficiency Research*, 33, 415-421.

- Vahia, N., Doongaji, D., Jeste, D., Ravindranath, S., Kapoor, S., & Ardhapurkar, I. (1973). Psychophysiologic therapy based on the concepts of Patanjali: A new approach to the treatment of neurotic and psychosomatic disorders. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 27(4), 557-565.
- Vaughan, F. (1993). Healing and wholeness: Transpersonal psychotherapy. In R. Walsh & F. Vaughan (Eds.), *Paths beyond Ego: The Transpersonal Vision* (pp. 160-165). New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam.
- Vaughan, F. & Walsh, R. (Eds.). (1993). *Paths beyond ego: The transpersonal vision*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam.
- Vaughan, F. & Walsh, R. (1996). Comparative models of the person and psychotherapy. In S. Boorstein (Ed.), *Transpersonal psychotherapy* (2nd ed., pp. 13-30). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Wittine, B. (1993). Assumptions of transpersonal psychotherapy. In R. Walsh & F. Vaughan (Eds.), *Paths beyond Ego: The Transpersonal Vision* (pp. 165-171). New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam.
- Woods, J. (1998). *The Yoga: System of Patanjali*. Delhi, India. Motilal Banarsidass.

Appendix A. Glossary of Sanskrit Terms

- *Ahimsa*: One of the five *yamas* of Raja Yoga; non-injury, non-violence
- *Aparigraha*: One of the five *yamas* of Raja Yoga; non-possessiveness, non-greed
- *Asanas*: Physical postures, poses of Yoga, third limb of Raja Yoga
- *Asteya*: One of the five *yamas* of Raja Yoga; nonstealing
- *Atman*: Atman is the individual Self which, according to Vedanta philosophy, is identical to the cosmic Self, the absolute reality, or *Brahman*. This is similar to *Purusha*, or pure Spirit, of Samkhya and Yoga philosophies.
- *Avidya*: Ignorance of the real nature of oneself and the world.
- *Bandha*: Lock – bodily gestures or contractions that establish connections between energy channels (*nadis*) and aid in controlling the flow of vital energy in the practice of *pranayama*.
- *Brahmacharya*: One of the five *yamas* of Raja Yoga ; continence, control of and freedom from sensual cravings
- *Brahman*: The unmanifest supreme consciousness or God. The absolute reality of the universe, the cosmic Self which is described in Vedanta philosophy as *sat*, pure being, truth, and reality; *chit*, pure consciousness; and *ananda*, pure joy.
- *Chakra*: Energy center, center of consciousness in the subtle body
- *Chitta*: The mind-stuff
- *Bhakti Yoga*: Practice of love and devotion toward God
- *Dharana*: Concentration, the sixth limb of Raja Yoga
- *Dhyana*: Meditation, the seventh limb of Raja Yoga

- **Guna:** Attribute or quality. The three *gunas* of *Prakriti* or nature include *sattva* (equilibrium), *rajas* (dynamism) and *tamas* (inertia).
- **Guru:** Spiritual guide and teacher in the practice of Yoga, dispeller of darkness
- **Ha:** Sun
- **Hatha Yoga:** The physical aspects of Yoga practice, including postures (*asanas*), breathing techniques (*pranayama*), seals (*mudras*), locks (*bandhas*) and cleansing practices (*kriyas*).
- **I'svara:** Supreme cosmic soul; God
- **Ishvara-pranidhana:** One of the five *niyamas* of Raja Yoga; surrender to God and one's true Self
- **Japa:** Repetition of a *mantra*; gradually awakens the energy vibrations of which the syllables are the gross representation
- **Japa Yoga:** Science of *mantra* repetition, also referred to as Mantra Yoga
- **Jnana Yoga:** Yoga of knowledge and intellect, self-inquiry
- **Karma:** Law of cause and effect, action and reaction
- **Karma Yoga:** Right action; performing actions of selfless service while remaining unattached to the results
- **Klesha:** Obstacle or obstruction
- **Kriya:** Cleansing practice
- **Kundalini Yoga:** System of practices that includes the use of *asanas* (postures), *mantras*, (sound formulas used in meditation), *yantras* (visual diagrams used to focus on during meditation and mantra practice), *mudras* (postures and hand gestures), and *pranayama* (Yogic breathing)

- *Laya Yoga*: Focuses on the power of the mind and will
- *Mantra*: Sound formula used in meditation, a combination of syllables or words that correspond to a particular energy vibration. A *mantra* is the condensed essence of a particular teaching. With repeated practice, repetition of the *mantra* gradually leads to deeper meditation and the gradual unfolding of the teaching in the individual's life.
- *Mantra Yoga*: Yoga of sound and vibration, also referred to as Japa Yoga
- *Medha*: Wisdom
- *Mudra*: Seal or symbol, particular Yogic postures with hand gestures
- *Niyama*: Second limb of Raja Yoga, observance; used to regulate one's habits
- *Paramatman*: Supreme Self which is one with the individual Self (*jivatman*) in Vedanta philosophy.
- *Prakriti*: Nature. In Samkhya and Yoga philosophy it is the material and mental creation with which pure spirit (*Purusha*) has falsely identified itself on account of the ego.
- *Prana*: Universal energy or life force
- *Pranayama*: Control of the breath, fourth limb of Raja Yoga
- *Pratyahara*: Control or withdrawal of the senses from the external environment, fifth limb of Raja Yoga
- *Purusha*: Divine Self which abides in all beings. In Samkhya and Yogic philosophy, this is the pure Spirit which dwells within each of us.
- *Raja Yoga*: Royal Yoga, also known as Ashtanga Yoga or Eight-Limbed Yoga
- *Rajas*: One of the three *gunas*, or qualities of Prakriti. Rajas is the active, dynamic attribute of nature.
- *Sadhana*: Spiritual practice

- *Samadhi*: Superconscious state, eighth limb of Raja Yoga
- *Samskara*: Mental impressions or latent tendencies hidden in the unconscious.
- *Santosha*: Contentment; the second of the five *niyamas* of Raja Yoga.
- *Samkhya*: A system of philosophy based on the duality of material nature (*Prakriti*) and pure spirit (*Purusha*). The goal of *Samkhya* is to discriminate between these two aspects of one's own being and attain the isolation of *Purusha*, which is called *kaivalya* (existence in pure spirit). *Samkhya* forms the philosophical basis for the practice of Yoga.
- *Sat*: Existence or Truth.
- *Sattva*: One of the three qualities (*gunas*) of *Prakriti* or nature, representing harmony, purity and balance.
- *Satya*: One of the five *yamas* of Raja Yoga ; truthfulness
- *Shaucha*: One of the five *niyamas* of Raja Yoga; purity, cleanliness
- *Siddhas*: Special powers of the body/mind that are awakened through Yoga practice.
- *Svadyaya*: One of the five *niyamas* of Raja Yoga; knowledge of the Self through study of the scriptures and one's own insights, intuitions, and internal states of consciousness
- *Svarodaya*: Science of breath
- *Tamas*: One of the three qualities (*gunas*) of *Prakriti* or nature; the quality of inertia.
- *Tantra Yoga*: System of Yoga that aims at liberation through ritual, visualization, and subtle energy work.
- *Tapas*: One of the five *niyamas* of Raja Yoga; fire, heat; practices that lead to perfection of body, mind, and senses
- *Tat*: That; the unlimited, unmanifested Absolute

- *Tha*: Moon
- *Trataka*: Practice of gazing at a particular object to strengthen concentration for meditation.
- *Vritti*: Wave or modification.
- *Yama*: First limb of Raja Yoga, which governs the laws of personal conduct; abstinence, control or restraint.
- *Yantra*: Visual diagram of a geometric pattern used as a focus for meditation and mantra practice
- *Yoga*: From the Sanskrit *yuj*, meaning to yoke, bind, or join; union

Sources: Definitions for the Sanskrit terms were derived from the following sources:

Rama (1998), pp. 118-138; Satchidananda (1990), pp. 237-248.

Appendix B. Introductory Letter to Solicit Volunteers

Rosemary Taurasi
1012 Oceanbreeze Court
Orlando, Florida 32828
(407) 737-2983
rosemary265@adelphia.net

Dear Colleague (personalized to teacher or therapist),

I am a graduate student in the Global (distance learning) program at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in Palo Alto, California. I am embarking on a research study for my Master's thesis that will explore the transformational effects of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy, and I am seeking potential participants who are willing to take part in this project.

I am looking for volunteers to participate in this study and invite you to refer any students/clients that you believe might be appropriate based on the following criteria. Specifically, I am looking for participants who have undergone therapy for a minimum of 6 months, and have practiced Yoga for at least one year.

I am seeking to discover how practicing Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy can deepen healing, enhance growth, and affect transformation. Results of this study will be presented in my Master's thesis. Participants' anonymity will be maintained at all times. I have enclosed copies of the *Introductory Letter to Potential Participants* that explains the nature of the study and what participation entails. Please provide a copy of this letter to any students or

clients you feel might be appropriate. It is my sincere goal to present and honor each individual's authentic experience, while maintaining confidentiality and anonymity.

Possible benefits of participating in this research may include the following: 1) Deepened understanding of one's experience, 2) Enhanced integration of experience, 3) Deepened healing and enhanced growth, 4) Transformation, 5) Contribution to the growing field of research on the beneficial effects of Yoga, and 6) Contribution to the field of research involving the integration of Yoga with psychotherapy, on which little has been done to date thus far.

Negative effects are unlikely, however there is the possibility that uncomfortable feelings may be brought up as a result of the interview. If this happens to occur, I will suggest that the participant bring these matters to his or her psychotherapy situation to resolve them. If a referral is needed for a psychotherapist, I will be happy to provide one.

Please contact me with any questions that you or your clients might have, at my home telephone number (407) 737-2983, or via e-mail, at rosemary265@adelphia.net. I appreciate your consideration and assistance and look forward to a rewarding and insightful research experience involving the transformational effects of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy.

With Gratitude,

Rosemary Taurasi

Appendix C. Introductory Letter to Potential Participants

Rosemary Taurasi

1012 Oceanbreeze Court

Orlando, Florida 32828

(407) 737-2983

rosemary265@adelphia.net

Dear Potential Participant,

I am a graduate student in the Global (distance learning) program at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in Palo Alto, California. I am embarking on a research study for my Master's thesis that will explore the transformational effects of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy, and I am seeking potential participants who are willing to take part in this project.

Specifically, I am looking for five participants who have undergone therapy for a minimum of 6 months, and have practiced Yoga for at least 1 year. I am seeking to discover how practicing Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy can deepen healing, enhance growth, and affect transformation. Face-to-face interviews will be conducted with each participant, and participants' experiences will be presented anonymously in the final study. It is my intent to present each individual's story as he or she actually experienced it. Results of this study will be presented in my Master's thesis.

Participants will be provided with a list of open-ended interview questions in advance, so that they may begin to ponder their experiences prior to the interviews. Informal interviews will last between an hour to an hour and a half. Interviews will be tape recorded and later transcribed.

Copies of the transcribed interviews will be provided to each participant for review, and changes will be made as requested. It is my sincere goal to present and honor each individual's authentic experience.

Each participant will be asked to sign a formal consent form, giving permission to be interviewed and to have his or her experience presented in the study. Pseudonyms will be chosen by participants to maintain anonymity. Participants may withdraw from this study at any time without recourse.

Possible benefits of participating in this research may include the following: 1) Deepened understanding of one's experience, 2) Enhanced integration of experience, 3) Deepened healing and enhanced growth, 4) Transformation, 5) Contribution to the growing field of research on the beneficial effects of Yoga, and 6) Contribution to the field of research involving the integration of Yoga with psychotherapy, on which little has been done to date thus far.

Negative effects are unlikely, however there is the possibility that uncomfortable feelings may be brought up as a result of the interview. If this happens to occur, I will suggest that the participant bring these matters to his or her psychotherapy situation to resolve them. If a referral is needed for a psychotherapist, I will be happy to provide one.

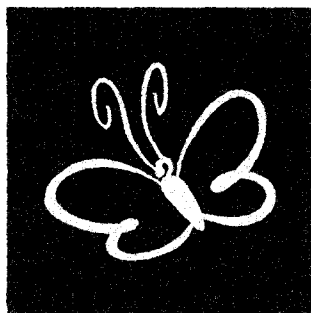
If you are interested in participating in this study, or if you have any questions, please contact me at my home telephone number (407) 737-2983, or via e-mail, at rosemary265@adelphia.net. You may also contact any of the members of my thesis committee with any questions you might have. The chairperson of my thesis committee is Dr. Irene Lazarus, (919) 493-6921. Committee members include Kartikeya Patel, Ph.D., Global Division Dean, (650) 493-4430, ext. 36 and Katherine McIver, Ph.D., (520) 275-5485. The Chairperson of the Thesis Ethics Committee is Roulette Wm. Smith, Ph.D. He can be reached at (650) 493-4430. I

appreciate your consideration and look forward to sharing your experience of integrating Yoga with psychotherapy.

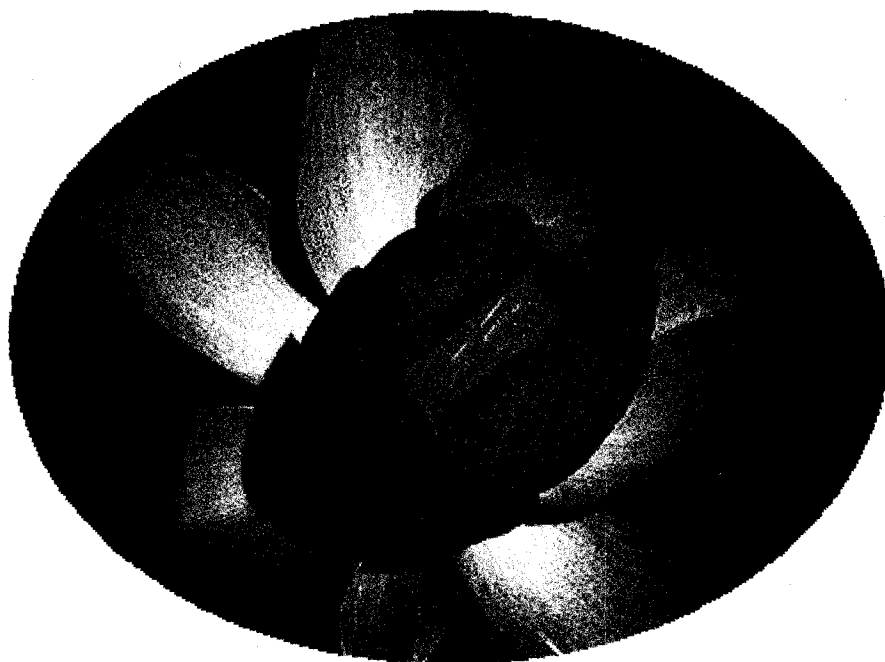
Respectfully,

Rosemary Taurasi

Appendix D: Research Flyer



Deepen Healing & Enhance Growth
Volunteers Needed
Research Study -
The Transformational Effects of
Integrating Yoga & Psychotherapy



For Information Contact

Rosemary Taurasi

407-737-2983 or 407-925-6396

rosemary265@adelphia.net

Your Confidentiality & Anonymity will be maintained

Appendix E. Formal Consent Form

As a participant in this study, I attest that I have read and understand the *Introductory Letter to Potential Participants*. By signing this form, I give my permission to the researcher to interview me with an audio recorder, and to present my story based on this interview in her Master's thesis. I understand that this work may later be published. At all times, my anonymity will be maintained. A pseudonym will be selected by me to be used on all written materials. I attest that I have read and understand both the introductory letter as well as this consent form and that any questions about this research have been answered to my satisfaction. My participation in this research is entirely voluntary, and no pressure has been applied to encourage participation in this study. I also understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time, without penalty or prejudice. The Institute of Transpersonal Psychology assumes no responsibility for psychological or physical injury resulting from this research.

Signature of Participant

Signature of Researcher

Date

Date

When the study is completed, if you would like to receive a copy of the results (i.e., of your individual performance or for the study as a whole), please provide your information below:

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

E-mail address _____

Appendix F. Interview Questions

Note: Wherever possible, please provide relevant examples as they relate to your responses, so that your experience can be portrayed to the fullest extent possible.

1. When did you begin psychotherapy, and for how long did you undergo therapy? Are you currently in therapy?
2. What type of therapy did you participate in? What is the theoretical orientation of your psychotherapist?
3. Why did you seek psychotherapy? What did you hope to achieve? What was your life like before you sought therapy?
4. Do you feel as though psychotherapy has helped you? In what ways? Please describe.
5. How long have you been practicing Yoga? When did you begin practicing Yoga? Have you been practicing consistently over this time? How often do you practice Yoga?
6. What type of Yoga do you practice? Where and when do you practice? Have you attended group classes, individual sessions, workshops? Do you have a home practice? Describe your Yoga practice.
7. Do you have a Yoga teacher, and if so, how has this affected your practice?
8. What brought you to Yoga? What was your life like before you began practicing Yoga?
9. Why do you practice Yoga? What is its meaning to you?
10. What do you feel the effects have been from your Yoga practice? Describe these effects, in terms of physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and any other effects that may come to mind.

11. Do you believe that practicing Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy has deepened or enhanced your healing and growth? In what ways? Please describe. Please give specific examples.
12. Do you believe that by practicing Yoga in conjunction with psychotherapy, integration of your experience has been enhanced? Please describe and provide specific examples.
13. What is your life like today?
14. What do you think of when you hear the term transformation? What does transformation mean to you?
15. Do you feel you have experienced transformation? Please describe your experience.
16. If you feel you have experienced transformation, what do you attribute this to?
17. Are you aligned with any particular religion? Describe your religious or spiritual belief system. How does Yoga fit within your religious or spiritual belief system?
18. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding integrating Yoga with psychotherapy?
19. Do you have any questions?

Appendix G. Follow-Up Interview Questions

1. As a result of participating in this research, do you feel you gained any particular insights, and if so, please describe.
2. Did you experience any particular feelings, either during the interview, or after, that you believe to be a result of the process?
3. Were your perceptions changed in any way?
4. Did you experience any changes of mind or changes of heart as a result of participating in this process? If so, please discuss. Changes of mind would include insights that have come about from engaging with Spirit. Changes of heart alter one's vision as to who one is and how one operates in the world.
5. Did you experience any of the following aspects of transformative change: Changes in self, increased connection to Spirit, or the desire to be of service in the world?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience as a result of participating in this process?

Appendix H. Questionnaire for Early Readers of the Study

Views and Definitions of Transformation

Transformation: A radical restructuring of the entire psyche, which may include changes in thinking, worldview, beliefs, feelings, motives, impulses, and values, as well as altered perceptions, such as heightened seeing and sensing, which change the way we feel about ourselves and the world (Metzner, 1998, pp. 1-3).

Transformation involving *changes of mind*: Insights that have arisen from engaging with Spirit (Clements, 2002).

Transformation involving *changes of heart*: One's view of who one is and how one operates in the world is changed (Clements, 2002).

Effects of transformation may manifest as:

Changes of self

Increased connection to Spirit

Desire to be of service to the world

Please consider these definitions of transformation, along with any other views of transformation that you may have. With these definitions in mind, please answer the following questions:

- 1) As a result of reading this study, do you feel as though you have been touched personally, as it relates to your own life? If so, please describe.
- 2) As a result of reading this study, do you believe that you have experienced transformation, based on the definitions above or based on your own view of transformation? If so, please describe. In what ways have you experienced transformation as a result of this study?