

# Connection through Suffering; Lessons from End of Life Care

Michael Kearney, MD  
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21 October 2005

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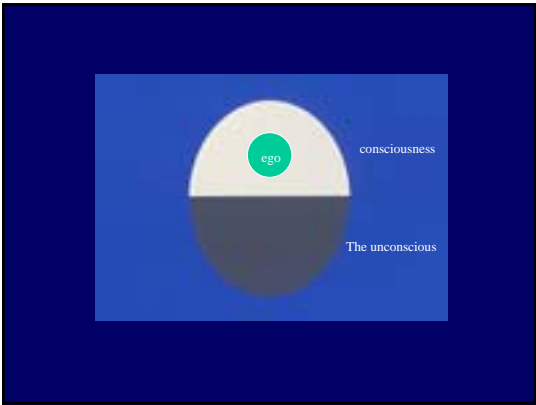
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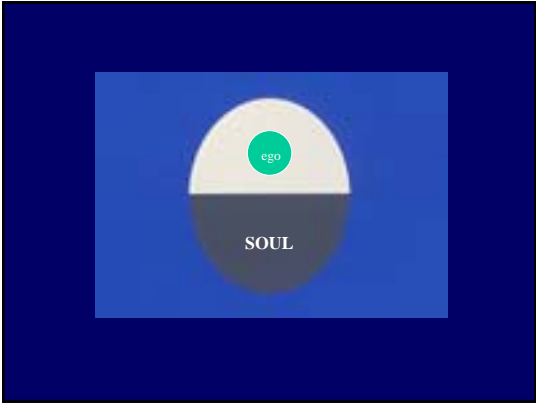
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*Fears of pain, of separation, of being overwhelmed, of the unknown are projected by the ego onto the unconscious*

*This can lead to a distancing from the unconscious, a reactive and often rigid adherence to the values of the conscious mind, and the experience of "soul pain"*

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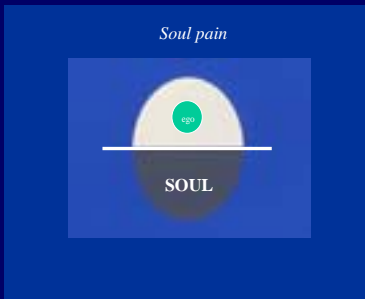
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*Soul pain*



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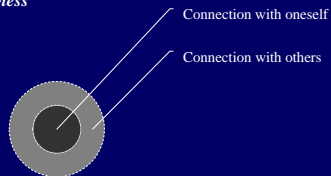
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*Health: connectedness*



*Healing (a definition in progress) ...*

*A relational process involving an experience of integration and wholeness, which may be facilitated by a caregiver's interventions and which is dependent on an innate potential in the patient*

*McGill Faculty Working Group on Healing in Medicine, 2002-2004*

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*Soul Pain: disconnectedness*



Disconnection from oneself  
Disconnection from others

*The experience of an individual who has become disconnected from the deepest aspects of him or her self – isolation, fear, hopelessness ...*

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*Soul Pain: disconnectedness*



Disconnection from oneself  
Disconnection from others

*The deeper and more intractable aspects of our patients' suffering, that are not amenable to a "quick fix" of any kind ...*

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**Ego-Self Axis**

Edward F. Edinger\*

\*Edward F. Edinger, *Ego and Archetype*, Shambala, 1992

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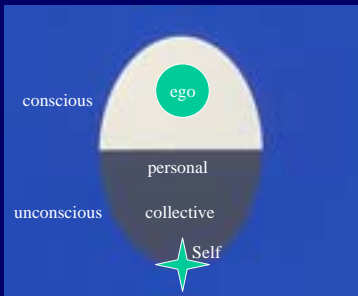
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Jung's model of the psyche



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**The Self**

Both the architect and builder of the dynamic structure which supports our psychic existence throughout life. ... Its goal is wholeness, the complete realization of the blueprint for human existence within the context of the life of the individual. *Individuation* is the *raison d'être* of the Self.

Anthony Stevens

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Anthony Stevens

The term 'Self' is used by Jung to designate the transpersonal center and totality of the psyche. It constitutes the greater objective personality, whereas the ego is the lesser, subjective personality. Empirically the Self cannot be distinguished from the God-image. Encounter with it is a *mysterium tremendum*.

Edward Edinger

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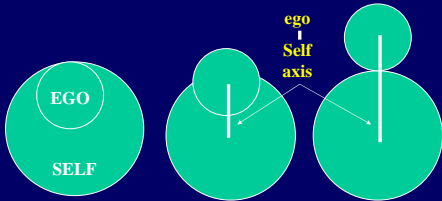
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The *ego-Self axis* represents the vital connection between the ego and the Self that must be relatively intact if the ego is to survive stress and grow. This axis is the gateway or path of communication between the conscious personality and the archetypal psyche.



Edward Edinger

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The connection between the ego and the Self is vitally important for psychic health. It gives foundation, structure and security to the ego and also provides energy, interest, meaning and purpose.

Edward Edinger

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What if the ego-Self axis is damaged?

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Damage to the ego-Self axis impairs or destroys the connection between the conscious and the unconscious leading to an alienation of the ego from its origin and foundation. ... When the connection is broken the result is emptiness, despair, meaningless and, in extreme cases, psychosis and suicide.

E. Edinger

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*What generates the break in the ego-Self axis and the disconnection from soul?*

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*Fear\**

\* "Terror Management Theory"  
1. S. Solomon, J. Greenberg, and T. Pyszczynski, (1991), *Terror Management Theory of Self-Esteem*, in C. R. Snyder, D. Forsyth, (eds.), *Handbook of Social and Clinical Psychology: The Health Perspective*, Pergamon, New York, 21-40.  
2. S. Solomon, J. Greenberg and T. Pyszczynski, (1991), *A Terror Management Theory of Social Behaviour: The Psychological Functions of Self-Esteem and Cultural Worldviews*, in M. P. Zanna, ed., *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Academic Press, San Diego, 127.

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The dread and resistance which every natural human being experiences when it comes to delving too deeply into himself is, at bottom, the fear of the journey into Hades.

C. G. Jung

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In order to break out of the alienated state some contact between ego and Self must be re-established. If this can happen, a whole new world opens up.

Edward Edinger

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In order to break out of the alienated state some contact between ego and Self must be re-established. If this can happen, a whole new world opens up.

Edward Edinger

*How can we make this happen for our patients?*

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*Patient: The place of healing*



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Within whom the inner shift from disconnectedness to connectedness may occur\*

*Patient: The place of healing*



\* "Response Shift" - *Social Science & Medicine* 48 (1999):  
Editorial: Introduction to Symposium on *The Challenge of Response Shift in Social Science and Medicine*, Carolyn E. Schwartz and Mirjam A. G. Sprangers, pp.1505-1506  
*Integrating response shift into health-related quality of life research: a theoretical model*, Mirjam A. G. Sprangers, Carolyn E. Schwartz, pp.1507-1515  
*Clinical understanding and clinical implications of response shift*, Ira B. Wilson, pp.1577-1588

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Within whom the inner shift from disconnectedness to connectedness may occur\*

*Patient: The place of healing*



*"The pain is still there but I can live with it now ..."*

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*Hippocrates: rational, evidence-based, biomedicine*



Outside interventions: "the quick fix"

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*Asklepios: The healing principle*



*Facilitated by caregiver  
Experienced by patient*

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*The Hippocratic method*



*The Asklepiian method*



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*The Hippocratic Method*



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*The Hippocratic Method*



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*The Asklepiian Method*



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*The Asklepiian Method*



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*Healing as psychological and spiritual connectedness*

*"Our intactness as persons, our coherence and integrity, come not from intactness of the body but from the wholeness of the web of relationships with self and others."*

*Cassell EJ. The Nature of Suffering and the Goals of Medicine. OUP, 1991.*



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*The paradox of suffering*

*•"Healing", "meaning", "consolation", when and if they come, do so from within the individual*



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*The paradox of suffering*

*•"Healing", "meaning", "consolation", when and if they come, do so from within the individual*  
*•Seem to come by a patient staying with and in his/her suffering, made bearable by the presence of another human being*



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**The paradox of suffering**

- "Healing", "meaning", "consolation", when and if they come, do so from within the individual
- Seem to come by a patient staying with and in his/her suffering, made bearable by the presence of another human being



*"The best way out is through" Robert Frost*

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**The paradox of suffering**

- "Healing", "meaning", "consolation", when and if they come, do so from within the individual
- Seem to come by a patient staying with and in his/her suffering, made bearable by the presence of another human being



*"The best way out is through" Robert Frost*

*"There's a crack, there's a crack in everything,  
That's how the light gets in ..." Leonard Cohen*

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**The paradox of suffering**

*In being with another in their suffering, we, as caregivers, may also experience healing*



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*How can we as caregivers "awaken Asklepios"?*

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The focus here is on *the environment* in which the patient is located and held



*"Environment" = the container of care: action, relationship, presence*

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*"The most we can do is to prepare and hold the space where the miraculous may happen"*  
*David Findlay*

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"The most we can do is to **prepare** and hold **the space** where the miraculous may happen"  
David Findlay



**Action**  
**Doing to and doing for**  
**Knowledge and skills**

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"The most we can do is to prepare and **hold the space** where the miraculous may happen"  
David Findlay



**Action**  
**Doing to and doing for**  
**Knowledge and skills**

**Relationship**  
**Empathy, compassion**  
**The quality of care**

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"The most we can do is to prepare and hold the space **where the miraculous may happen**"  
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**Action**  
**Doing to and doing for**  
**Knowledge and skills**

**Relationship**  
**Empathy, compassion**  
**The quality of care**

**Presence**  
**Being with**  
**Waiting with**

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*How can we as caregivers "awaken Asklepios"?*

*•What we know and do*

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*How can we as caregivers "awaken Asklepios"?*

*•What we know and do*

*•How we do what we do*

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*How can we as caregivers "awaken Asklepios"?*

*•What we know and do*

*•How we do what we do*

*•Approaches that facilitate a reconnection with depth, with "the Self"*

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*How can we as caregivers "awaken Asklepios"?*

*•What we know and do*

*•How we do what we do*

*•Approaches that facilitate a reconnection with depth, with "the Self" e.g.:*

*Dream-work*

*Music therapy*

*Art therapy*

*Meditation*

*Body work*

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*•Who we are*

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*Body work*

*•Who we are*

*"We are the medicine" M. Balint*

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*The Rainmaker of Kiau Tchou*



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“Physician heal thyself” would appear to be the axiom. For it’s an Alice through the looking glass affair. When one sees a door reflected in a mirror, to reach the actual door, one must first move away from the mirror.

When you want to help a person towards healing you must, in some way, retreat into yourself to the level from which the healing flows.

Sri Madhava Ashish

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*Physician know thyself ...*

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