

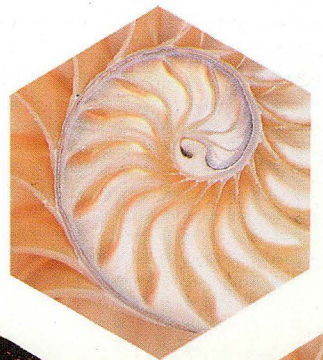
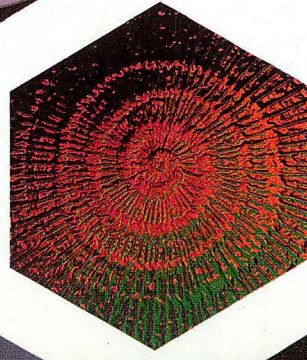
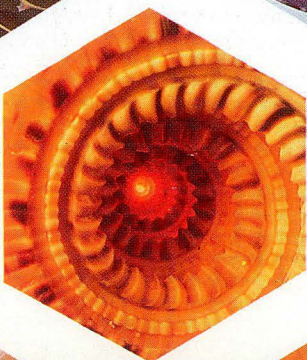
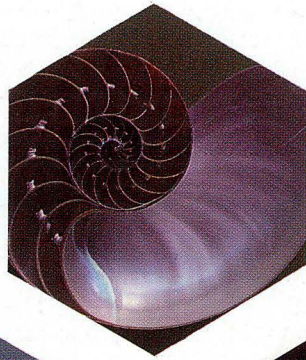
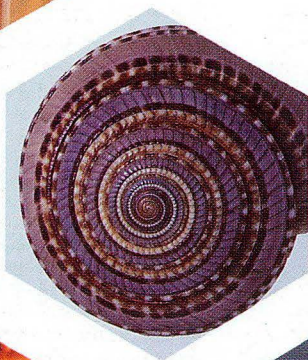
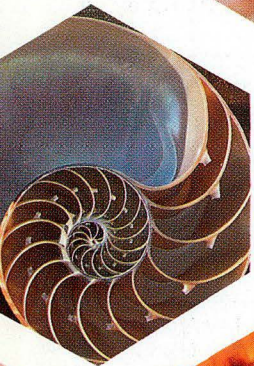
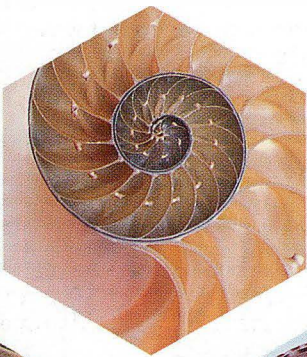
The Psyche

Transformation to the Centre

by T. N. Thiss

The psyche is the theatre of life. It is the stage upon which we enact the daily drama of our lives. It has two parts:

- the *conscious* part, a mere fragment of the whole, tends to separate, classify and differentiate. Its executive centre is the ego which presides over the multiplicity of parts, each one having its own qualities.
- the *unconscious* part, vast and unlimited, tends to unify, synthesise, and integrate. This is the world of the whole, the home of quality.



These two parts which co-determine the psyche live together in a dynamic state of creative tension. Like two charged electrodes with energy flowing within and between them, they work to maintain psychic balance. The centre of this unified psyche is the essence of our being, our human being.

The fine art of living, or managing, is finding a suitable balance between these two opposing yet complementary realms. For most of us this involves a transformation — a shifting of our centre from the ego to the psyche. This is rather like converting a one-room bedsit into a Palladian mansion. It takes time and we will pay a price for it, but the freedom our new quarters will give us can only be imagined.

The paradoxical nature of our psyche poses an immediate dilemma: our conscious world, governed by our ego, demands that we take charge and make things happen, while our unconscious world silently beckons us to let go and allow things to happen. Inevitably, we respond to the dominance of our ego and take action not knowing there is an alternative. In doing so we lose the vast and deep potential of our unconscious psyche. It is like taking a decision but not knowing the reason why.

“I find so much quality in silence.”

The resolution of this dilemma lies in our full participation in both worlds. We get out of balance if we centre ourselves in one to the exclusion of the other. Although we all have the capacity to fully experience both worlds, few of us do. Transformation has its risks and most of us are not willing to take them. For example, some of us seek refuge in the unconscious world to avoid the risks of daily life. We who do so may not see the new risks of becoming more passive persons, of being seen as too abstract or esoteric, of being out of touch with reality, and not in control of our own lives.

The great majority of us seek refuge in the conscious world, shunning the unconscious as something that is irrelevant because it's out of our control. Fleeing from the fears of a confrontation with our inner selves we take a hedonistic plunge into the active and stimulating conscious world. We too are not aware of the subtle but serious risks we have assumed. When we become captivated by the conscious world we risk succumbing to the indulgence of self-gratification, the myopia of materialism. We risk losing touch with our spiritual origins and finding ourselves unable to discern purpose or meaning in our frag-

mented lives.

Our conscious world is but a fraction of the vast, unfathomed total psyche. Yet, because it has many joys and delights and because it is all we know, we are content with what we have, unwilling to change and experience the “unknown”. But consciousness has its problems and knowing this may help us make the transformation. Its nature is to fragment, to make distinctions. It identifies things by their unique qualities and separates them one from another. The curse of consciousness is to see the world in parts, in multiplicity.

Transformation involves expanding our consciousness, making some conscious inroads into the great unknown. The unconscious, like all nature, is a seamless whole. We get glimpses of this wholeness with the insight of intuition. Emerson said, “Our faith comes in moments; our vice is habitual, we see the world piece by piece, but the whole is the soul.” These flashes tend to unify our fragmented world. They knit the parts together. This is what gives meaning and wholeness to a piecemeal world. We need the unconscious to harmonise and synthesise our lives. Without it we lose the deep potential of our being. How transformation occurs remains a source of speculation. One way of visualising it is to see the process as a shift from the centre of our ego to the centre of our psyche. Because the psyche encompasses the ego, it is a shift to a new and larger centre. This is why we said it was like converting a flat to a mansion.

This new centre is the feeling world of BCC. It is characterised by feelings of goodwill towards others and a sense of well-being that conveys inner peace and strength. The world of the intellect is limited compared with the all-encompassing range of the psyche. When we move from ego-centredness to psyche-centredness, our relationships with people change. They become more open and trusting, more understanding and caring, more patient and tolerant. Because this new centre is formed with the unity of two opposites, it is uniquely equipped to cope with the stresses of life, to resolve differences, and to mediate disputes. Unlike the intellect which finds itself unable to reconcile two contradictory beliefs, the psyche sees these as parts of a larger whole. The common denominator is the new centre, itself a product of opposing forces.

The light of consciousness is a divine gift but it is up to each of us to develop it. We all have the natural capacity to do so. Developing this new centre is a simple task but not easy to do. It involves experiencing fully and feelingly our outer and inner lives by ever expanding our awareness and integrating these new elements into our

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being. This is the struggle and the challenge. Transformation has never been easy, simple as the process may be. Nor can it be done without a price, but all good bankers know that rewards come only with risks taken.

The President has said, “If we want power we have to come to the state of nothingness from time to time.” What he is saying is that we have to find that new centre within us. It involves clearing the “mental state or setting the stop watch back to zero”. Some people call it “zeroing out”. It clears the cortical clutter from our minds and allows stillness to take its place. In Luxembourg the President said, “I find so much quality in silence.” Concentration is critical — perhaps the most important skill of all. This will put us in touch with our new centre, the source of feelings. Here we are fully integrated with our whole psyche which gives us more “volume”. In our new “mansion” we can absorb more, assimilate differences, tolerate misunderstanding, avoid defensiveness. In short we can enfold the world within us, become “one with” our environment be it a person, or a marketplace.

We have said concentration may well be the key. It is nothing other than pure awareness. An easy way to access concentration is through interest. If we are interested in something we are more likely to concentrate on it. To be interested in a person is to concentrate on that person. This often generates more interest and the reciprocal process continues. If there is one secret to good human relationships, it would have to be this.

When we approach another from the centre of our psyche we experience the person fully and feelingly. We absorb them, become them. This is pure acceptance without any judgement. The old-fashioned word for it is humility. We have merely dressed it up in psychological finery.

The balance we achieve in the new centre is analogous to the development of a tree. It also lives in seen and unseen worlds. Its roots lie hidden from sight drawing life-sustaining energy from the inner earth. The visible structure of the tree is deployed to maximise its exposure to the outer light and air. The tree is centred to live fully in both realms — two strikingly different worlds, each complementing the other. It cannot exclude one, for the roots also need the light of day and the leaves need the unseen nutrients of the soil.