

NATIONAL-LOUIS UNIVERSITY

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EMOTIONAL
CLEARING AND INTEGRATIVE PROCESSING THERAPY

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this project to John Ruskan, whose great teachings have inspired me tremendously. John is a teacher with a prolific body of wisdom that encompasses a “purity” in the blending of psychological and spiritual principles; I love that he delivers his message with heart, intellect, and grace.

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Abstract

This study intended to explore the value in Integrative Processing (IP) Therapy proposed by John Ruskan. The premise of this therapeutic approach states that no real healing or personal growth can occur unless working with the emotions is a central part of the therapeutic process. Integration and the art of Emotional Clearing is a practice that claims to help individuals to heal on a deep and personal level, while improving health, providing a sense of well-being, and helping individuals meet their personal goals. After the researcher's training and IP certification (See Appendix A), interviews were conducted with practitioners to explore their understandings on the efficacy of this proposed therapeutic approach. An interview with the creator of this approach is also part of the findings. Following a qualitative methodology using data obtained from interviews in a questionnaire format, it appears to suggest that IP Therapy can lead to perceived positive outcomes fostering clients' personal growth and development.

Introduction

“Eastern spirituality teachings are flooding the West, and Western technology is gravitating toward the East. We are each hungry for what the other has” (Ruskan, 2000, p. 12). Ruskan’s therapeutic concepts are the product of the blending of two cultural, intellectual, and spiritual traditions as they relate to personal growth.

Ruskan’s therapeutic technique is called Emotional Clearing (EC) or Integrative Processing (IP) Therapy. His integrated, therapeutic approach to treatment is derived from the traditional wisdom of the East as well as the contemporary psychological knowledge of the West, combining the most compatible elements from each tradition. It is a holistic, therapeutic approach designed to encourage the condition of accepting and including -not resisting - parts of yourself or your experience, in order to promote a greater sense of health and well-being as it relates to personal growth.

Ruskan’s counseling technique operates primarily on a feeling-related level. He points out that:

Feelings become painful and problematic only because they are not accepted, or *integrated*. We create pain through resistance and nonacceptance. To go beyond pain and to enjoy wholeness, we must learn to integrate those parts of life we find painful and would like to avoid. Once integrated, they are no longer painful. Instead, they add new dimensions to our existence (p. 10).

There are commonalities in the two traditions as well as differences as they relate to the typical role of “therapist” in the West and typical role of “guru” in the East. Ruskan (2000) shows that the guru provides the same kind of nurturing relationship that the therapist does, and for the same reasons. The guru accepts the “disciple” (client) unconditionally, knowing that acceptance from another is what the disciple needs to develop in himself in order to grow as a human being. The difference, however, is that in the East, the role of the guru is more comprehensive in scope, including, not only the various schools of psychology, but also adding into the mix, philosophy, religion, and physical culture and traditions - all with the same intent of addressing the issue of personal growth. Ruskan (2000) sets forth:

The student of the East learns, in this basic training for life, a vast and refined system of knowledge, including disciplines for strengthening and purifying mind and body. ‘Purifying’ has exactly the same purpose as in Western psychology, that of bringing to the surface suppressed material and dissolving unconscious blocks that interfere with the productive enjoyment of life (p. 13).

Gawain (1993) points out that it is interesting to look at the world from the perspective of “male” and “female” energy, and in so doing, has discovered some fascinating things. According to Gawain, the concept of personal energy in the Western hemisphere is characterized as being more masculine in nature. The

more traditional Western concept of energy has been focused primarily on developing the physical realm while all but ignoring the spiritual concepts. As a result, Gawain argues that we have made important technological progress, but we are experiencing a deep poverty of spirituality, a feeling of personal disconnection from our source. “These two worlds are drawn to one another just as men and women are – with a certain amount of fear and distrust, but an overwhelming attraction nonetheless” (p. 58).

Like female and male, mother and father, yin and yang, each element is necessary to fully actualize the other (Ruskan, 2000). “In the broadest terms, the East has represented the mother – the mystical, nurturing connection to the inner source of spiritual replenishment, intuitive healing, and growth. The West has represented the father – the rational intellect, the organizing, pragmatic principle that gives form and structure to the healing force” (Ruskan, 2000, p. xviii).

Ruskan’s theory postulates that we have become limited and ill at ease because we have unconsciously rejected parts of our feeling selves, forming our personal “shadow” that is created from painful, blocked emotions. Any experience stored as emotional memory (Malter, 2003) affects how we live our lives. Releasing old patterns and returning to balance allows us to align with our higher purpose and fulfill our highest potential. To “integrate” these feelings means to form into a whole; to reclaim, accept, and include what was previously apart from. “Processing” is a psychological term that refers to the concept of accepting and staying with the experience of this previously blocked feeling as it

begins to manifest, allowing it to unfold by itself in the here and now. Moving into greater wholeness as individuals by experiencing the release from integrating these rejected parts of ourselves and their subsequent blocked energy, is what this therapeutic technique is all about.

By combining therapeutic elements from the best of both Eastern and Western traditions, Ruskan's intention is to help heal the client in a way that a traditional Western therapeutic approach alone may not accomplish. IP Therapy is not necessarily the "quick-fix", but suggests to provide the client with the tools and understanding to effect life-long personal growth and development. Ruskan's approach was one of the first of the decade to identify the vital importance of releasing negative emotions as a key part of personal growth. His book is now published by Random House Publishing Company in New York, and an interested audience, according to the author, has been steadily growing.

Purpose of the Study

The present exploratory study is an attempt to investigate the usefulness of IP Therapy as a therapeutic tool to promote personal growth. This therapeutic technique is called Integrative Processing (IP) Therapy. The purpose of the study is to try to qualify the technique of IP Therapy and to identify the value as a therapeutic tool. Ruskan's theory states that no real personal growth or healing can occur unless working with and resolving the "trapped energy" of blocked, negative emotions takes center stage in therapy. This study will try to shed light

on this proposed approach and suggest recommendations based on these preliminary findings.

Basic Assumption

This study will attempt to put in evidence the technique, identify the therapeutic value and explore the possible usefulness of IP Therapy or Emotional Clearing (EC) as proposed by John Ruskan.

Literature Review

Part I: IP Therapy Overview

IP Therapy, by eliciting Eastern and Western methods of self-reflection and growth may have the potential to promote a more direct expression of emotion and feelings that would produce emotional clearing. Traditional therapy tends to rely mostly on the expression of negative emotions. IP Therapy promotes the experience of all emotions and feelings before integration, release and consequent healing can occur (Ruskan, 2000).

IP Therapy is a facilitated therapeutic approach and guided, inner-directed process that appears to enable the client to release the expression of difficult or painful emotions that have become blocked, resulting in creating a negative effect on one's sense of well-being and other mental, emotional, or physical conditions as they relate to limiting a person's emotional health. The IP Therapy technique involves first developing an unconditional acceptance of, and a trusting bond with, the client through the therapeutic encounter. Most counselor educators would agree that establishing rapport is an essential first

step to successful treatment (Austin, 1998). These conditions are considered fundamental in Ruskan's approach to a positive working counseling relationship. "The therapist lays the foundation for the relationship through actions that demonstrate caring, integrity, humanness, and skillfulness; and through an attitude that reflects unconditional acceptance of the client" (Ruskan, 2000, p. 119). Along with this, the therapist adopts a "not-knowing" attitude, and the value of the therapist lies not in attempting to shift the client's attitude or changing his behavior, but in focusing the client's attention on feelings that may be sitting at a deeper level, and in gently and skillfully guiding the client through the integrative processing steps for eventual resolution of the suppressed feeling(s).

The key ingredient that distinguishes this therapy technique from traditional counseling is what Ruskan refers to as "AlphaTrance". This is a deeply relaxed, meditative state induced in the client under the guidance of the therapist so that the client's unconscious can be accessed in order for painful, trapped feelings to be brought up for clearing and release. Ruskan's AlphaTrance is described as an altered state of consciousness that is similar to meditation, but different in that the counselor acts as facilitator to guide the processing of deeper feelings as they emerge. It is also similar to hypnosis except that there is no attempt made at reprogramming the individual's thinking. The therapist and client both enter into AlphaTrance during the core of the

counseling session. Ruskan aptly describes this “dualistic, energetic, vibrational resonance” that the IP therapist uses, as follows:

Using an expanded version of the basic healing trance induction, the therapist’s channeling of energy enables the client to go much deeper than possible alone, catalyzing the client’s trance experience. Once in trance, the conscious mind is to a large extent by-passed. Suppressed feelings are accessed through various techniques and then processed according to the steps of IP Therapy (AlphaTrance section, Para 2 in [http:// emclear.com /Curr.html](http://emclear.com/Curr.html)).

After the client gets comfortable in this relaxed state of consciousness, the client and counselor together explore issues that relate to emerging feelings. In addition to the feelings the client may be conscious of, it is likely other, more primary, core feelings may emerge from the subconscious. The client is then gently guided to bring these feelings up to explore and *experience* them. Ruskan’s theory is unique in that no outward or direct expression of feelings is required for this therapeutic healing to take place, only the *experiencing* of the feeling, which usually occurs on a physical and emotional level.

The client is supported by the skillful facilitation of the therapist, feels safe, and is continually, gently guided through the emotional clearing process. This unique therapeutic emotional clearing technique is the primary underpinning of IP Therapy and forms the basic difference to traditional counseling or talk therapy alone. As Ruskan (2000) clearly indicates, “It is a

spiritually-directed experiencing of these deeper, subconscious emotions, characterized by the presence of universal healing energies that the therapist is trained to bring forth, [along with] a strong sense of a Higher Witnessing, even with very painful emotions” (p. 11). Ruskan’s theory suggests that while the client is in AlphaTrance, left-brain functions such as thinking, analyzing and willfulness will naturally yield to right-brain functions such feeling, intuiting, and surrendering – all of which helps to move the suppressed feelings up for clearing, without cognitive resistance. Personal selfhood gives way to the power of a much larger identification – the entire universe. Logic yields to a state of pure knowing beyond need for rational demonstration (Nelson, 1994).

Using IP Therapy, Ruskan claims that a reasonable program would be that a client would expect to do from five to 10 therapy sessions with an IP facilitator, each session lasting 45 minutes or so, and then, if the client feels he has cleared some major feelings and acquired some of the tools of the practice, continue to work on his own as necessary, checking back in occasionally with the IP facilitator to monitor and evaluate progress on an ongoing basis.

The Basic Steps of IP Therapy

Based on Ruskan’s book, *Emotional Clearing*, the therapy process is presented as having four main stages that provide the conceptual framework and theoretical bedrock to his work: Awareness, Acceptance, Direct Experience and Transformation. Each stage has a set of skills appropriate to the process. These four basic steps provide the working matrix for his therapeutic technique:

Awareness. Occurs on the intellectual level: The client needs to have a basic awareness of the “triggering” event, including “owning” the experience or feeling of the event. This first step necessitates an understanding from the client of the basic principles of how to work on yourself and how to consciously decide to apply the principles. Awareness as it relates to Ruskan’s therapeutic model means understanding how feelings are suppressed and then possibly projected onto others. The client learns to take responsibility for his or her emotional experience.

Acceptance. Occurs on the mental level: The client learns to “let go” of resistance to the triggering event and accompanying painful feeling(s). Once the client accepts himself, these mechanisms of resistance and the like, become conscious and are then able to be “dropped”. In so doing, self-acceptance is brought forth and awakened in the client, and the gateway or channel to directly experiencing the feeling is opened. The client stops trying to resist or act out the feelings in other, more inappropriate ways.

Direct Experience. Occurs on the body level: The client can then “be in the feeling center”, or in the here and now with the triggering event. At this stage, the client’s feelings are entered completely without cognitive resistance, analysis, or blame. Direct experience means finally allowing and accepting the feeling experience the client has perhaps, been long resisting.

Transformation. Occurs on the spiritual level: “Witness” consciousness (i.e., Higher-Power consciousness) is activated and plays a major role in IP

Therapy. EC has at its core, an integral place for reliance on ultimate healing through a Higher Power. The “Witness” consciousness involves a powerful and necessary spiritual component, and operates in the AlphaTrance state to unconditionally guide the integration and healing process along for the client, often leading to a catharsis of suppressed emotions that naturally want to “come up” for healing.

As in IP Therapy, and throughout one’s healing process, according to Trout (1996) it is extremely important to cultivate what is called the “Witness Self”. The Witness Self, or Higher Witness is that part of you that observes what is happening, yet does not identify with thoughts, emotions, desires or sensations. It helps to provide a safe arena in which your painful feelings can come up for healing. As Ferrucci (1982) aptly phrased it in *What We May Be*:

We dis-identify by observing [our feelings]. Instead of being absorbed by sensations, feelings, desires, [and] thoughts, we observe them objectively without judging them, without wanting to change them, without interfering with them in any way. We see them as distinct from us, as if we were looking at a landscape. This attitude of serene observation can be practiced at any moment of our life, and its first effect is that of liberation. I am fearful, I observe my fear, I see its contours clearly. the “observer” self is the part in us that can watch any content of the psyche without getting caught up in its

atmosphere. This fact allows the whole personality to find a balance of which it would not otherwise be capable (p. 224).

Using the four basic steps of Ruskan's program, he advises that the healthiest approach to dealing with emotions such as fear or anger is simply to "be with" them. In particular, he counsels clients to beware of their own attempts to intellectualize away these difficult emotions. Even affirmations must be used with care, since these too, can become a further attempt to suppress difficult and unwanted feelings.

Theoretical Background

The core of the IP theory proposes that we all have feelings, but we unconsciously reject many of them, not allowing the feeling to complete its cycle and then release; consequently, the emotion is then unintegrated and stored as negative baggage in the psyche. The theory is based on the premise that we cannot rid suppressed feelings merely by expressing them through traditional talk therapy alone. Instead, we need to *experience* the feeling(s) in order for integration to occur. By consciously accepting a feeling, we start the integration process, and then the feeling is no longer pushed away.

Ruskan (2000) believes working at the emotional level is of utmost importance in the therapeutic relationship. He argues that our emotions are our connection to life; without them we are stale, hollow, and cut off from true fulfillment, but when they get out of control, we experience distress and discouragement. Releasing these strong emotions is effected through a deeper

experiencing of the feelings. This kind of experiencing may be different from what the client is normally used to in a more traditional counseling session (Ruskan, 2000).

The traditional western therapeutic effort is devoted, first, to uncovering or making conscious the feelings and patterns that are unconsciously influencing the client in undesirable ways from suffering. Second, traditional therapy is typically directed toward releasing stored negativity through various approaches, depending on the school of thought. Through the therapist, the client learns how to accept himself by outgrowing negative patterns (Ruskin, 2000). Ruskan's theory is different than traditional talk therapy in its intention to enable a person to more easily access these blocked emotions that are seemingly inaccessible to conscious awareness. In this regard, Ruskan's technique goes beyond the traditional underpinnings of a talk therapy approach alone.

According to the author, the capacity for "being in touch with" and integrating all of our emotions is of utmost importance because feelings are our connection to understanding life. Without them we can become stale, hollow, and cut-off from true selves. The theory suggests that self-blocking of our more difficult emotions occurs at the unconscious level, where we tend to be the most unaware. People who have achieved a desired state of self-acceptance and self-awareness may develop the capacity for feeling all of their emotions deeply, without resistance. Most people, however, may not know how to do this. So instead, feelings become blocked from entering consciousness – especially the

painful ones - creating an emotional imbalance. This buildup of suppressed feelings, according to IP theory, may result in the lowering of self-esteem affecting the belief systems which can lead to depression, and/or de-motivate an individual into compensating behavior(s) such as drug and alcohol abuse or food addictions in an attempt to feel better.

As we 'clear' our emotions and become aware of our feelings directly, the impulse to compensate for these unwanted feelings dissipates, and we may no longer be driven into addictive acting-out behavior.

Clearing the emotions and feeling component is the essential part to regaining a sense of well-being (Ruskan, 2000, p. 155).

The mechanism of suppression, therefore, creates much – if not all of – the mysterious subconscious that has been proposed and glamorized since Freud. Ruskan believes that depression is not as much a disease or illness as it is the result of “ignorance” and “mismanagement” of one’s experience. People fall into a pattern of suppressing feelings instead of allowing them to release, which, he believes can result in addictive tendencies, poor health, and depression. Further, according to Ruskan, suppressing feelings requires large amounts of psychological effort, resulting in a depletion of our energy. All chemical substances or drugs used to modify feelings - including depression - may only further suppress the destructive feelings and serve to block them from conscious awareness (Ruskan, 2000).

If we traditionally turn to pharmaceutical drugs as the means to control our unwanted feelings, we may only be digging ourselves deeper into the dark hole of suppression and consequent poor health. All chemically induced mood changes take us *out* of our feelings, and integration of emotions becomes impossible. But, integration does not mean an endless confrontation with pain. Once suppressed feelings are brought to a conscious level and cleared, it is unlikely that they will need to be treated again and again (Ruskan, 2000, p. 257).

Ruskan's integrated theory attempts to show that working directly with these deeper, unconscious feelings and emotions in general, can become a more vital, integrative process and primary path to healing and personal growth.

Part II: Historical/Theoretical Developments

While psychotherapy as a discrete discipline has a relatively short history of little more than one hundred years (Freedheim, 1992 as stated in Palmer & Woolfe, 2000) the role of the psychotherapist reaches back across the ages to the earliest days of human existence. In this more general, non-specific sense the history of counseling and psychotherapy is interwoven with the history of the way in which human beings have managed, and have been managed by, the psyche. Its central concern can be considered to be the making whole of the inner being or soul (Bettelheim, 1983), and as such the history of psychotherapy is the history of that age-old endeavor.

Psychology is and always has been primarily the science of consciousness (Ornstein, 1972 as stated in Cowley, 1993). The early history of psychotherapy and counseling is dominated by the development of different schools, each one eager to present its case against the others and each with its own language, which only those committed to its ideas would be likely to understand. Bugental (1978 as stated in Palmer & Woolfe, 2000) viewed psychotherapy as the science, art, and practice of studying the nature of consciousness and what may reduce or facilitate it. In the 1940s, Freud and his psychoanalytic theory (Thompson, 2003) was perhaps the initial major influence on all other formal systems of counseling and psychotherapy.

Certainly Freud's initial goal statement for psychotherapy, which lies at the heart of Ruskan's work, "to make the unconscious conscious", has remained the major function of Western therapies regardless whether the method of accomplishing that task has been to dynamically recover the past; get more behaviors under conscious control; enhance awareness through experiencing; or, with the fourth-force approach, walking with the client to the farthest reaches of human nature. Mallow, in 1971 (as stated in Cowley, 1993), reiterates that until now, psychotherapy has been mainly reactive to feeling bad, that is to having symptoms.

Nevertheless, in spite of psychotherapy's comparatively short life, a great complexity of ideas, approaches and movements have developed, which have inevitably been influenced and shaped by the social, economic, political and

cultural climates in which it has been formed (Buss, 1975; Cushman, 1990; Vandebos et al., 1992; Pilgrim, 1997 as stated in Palmer & Woolfe, 2000). Many other perspectives evolved as an extension of, or rebellion against psychoanalytical principles, such as the ego psychologists or neo-Freudians of the 1950s and the convincing ideas of Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, Harry Stack Sullivan, Erick Erickson and Wilhelm Reich, who felt that interpersonal aspects have a more significant influence on the development of the individual.

By the early 1960s, Rogers (1963) recognized that the psychotherapeutic domain was in chaos because of the growing number of conflicting approaches entering the fray, some of which did not fit into any recognizable mainstream orientation. Acknowledging that the hitherto self-contained orientations in which therapists had conducted their endeavors were breaking down in the realm of practice, he considered that the time was now right for the inevitable limitations of single orientations to yield to a more rigorous and direct process of observation of what actually transpires in the course of therapy. In many respects Rogers was ahead of the field in this direction, in that he was not advocating simply melding existing theoretical approaches, but rather that closer attention should be given to research allowing new insights into the process of therapy to emerge.

A term now in regular use to describe the zeitgeist or spirit of our age is “post-modernist”. The essence of post-modernism is a decline in the belief of

purist approaches to understanding physical, biological and social phenomena. This has permeated the whole field of human endeavor in disciplines as wide ranging as medicine, chemistry, architecture, art and politics. In the latter field, for example, the traditional boundaries between left and right have been largely obscured. According to Garfield and Bergin (1986), research indicates that counseling effectiveness can be explained best by “common factors,” variables shared by many approaches and exhibited by a variety of skilled counselors and therapists regardless of their therapeutic school. Where once there was a belief in purist solutions, now there is only doubt and a resort to a more flexible and pragmatic approaches to understanding the world in which we live (Palmer & Woolfe, 2000).

It appears there was a growing realization among many that the segregation of the therapies was both unhelpful and unrealistic (London, 1964). The increasing volume of psychotherapeutic literature meant that a reservoir of therapeutic interests and ideas was being created, into which flowed contributions from all the major approaches. A “back-flow” from the reservoir into the various contributing streams was beginning to occur. While those theoreticians bathing in the purist waters, some way upstream, remained unaffected, it was becoming more evident that considerable numbers in each “orientation tributary” were beginning to be influenced by the back-flow. If the theorists were unable or unwilling, to seek integration at their level, a growing

number of “artful” therapists from both the psychodynamic and behavioral orientations were trying to blend together techniques at the level of practice.

Counseling and psychotherapy, a domain which has always been prone to doctrinal differences and separatist tendencies is now increasingly coming to accept that there is little evidence that any one therapeutic method is always superior to all others for all types of problems and all types of clients or patients. This has continued to lead to a growing interest in flexibility of response and bringing together ideas from disparate schools. The terms “integrative” and “eclectic” have now come to be used increasingly to describe this process. As early as 1932 a voice sounding an eclectic/integrative note was raised by French in 1933 in an address delivered to a meeting of the American Psychiatric Association. It was an attempt to persuade colleagues of the similarities he considered to exist between two seemingly incompatible sets of concepts, namely Freudian psychoanalysis and Pavlovian conditioning (Palmer & Woolfe, 2000).

Ruskan’s work appears to go beyond the traditional underpinnings of the earlier momentum such as French’s attempts at desegregation; rather Ruskan’s integrative therapy seeks to demonstrate the possibility of an integration of two seemingly opposing concepts derived from very different schools of psychology to create a totally unique approach to psychotherapy and counseling.

In furthering the relationship of integrating various schools of psychology, Greenspan (2003) suggests that emotional suffering is universal, but few of us know how to cope with it in a healthy way. Conventional wisdom and many

forms of traditional therapies, advise us to suppress grief, fear and despair in order to move on and get back to “normal” quickly and without fuss. Keeping these emotions in the dark only makes things worse.

Greenspan (2003) reflects on the states that alienate us from negative feelings, which may not only temporarily insulate us from the pain of everyday life, but may also result in physical and mental illness. In turn, she argues that our desire for instant cures through traditional counseling practices alone has led to the ‘Prozacking of America’. To counter spiritual numbness, Greenspan moves toward integrating an East/West psychodynamic approach, and instead, advocates emotional alchemy, which she states is a way of being mindful of negative feelings and using their energy to transform grief into gratitude, fear into joy, and despair into faith.

The “Self” as Teacher

Caught up in a narrow materialistic worldview, Western psychology tends to systematically exclude humanity’s spiritual aspects from its models of the psyche. This omission causes it to ignore what is arguably for some theorists, the most important dimension of our full human potential: the study of consciousness – or spirit – itself. Eastern psychological systems have avoided this omission, so they believe in offering a more inclusive view of our authentic nature as participants in a universal mind with purpose and meaning. Because of its possible demonstrable usefulness, the time is right for us to integrate the

Eastern models into Western models of biological science and psychology (Nelson, 1994).

“Psychology’s connection to spirituality is critical,” states Ruskan (2000, p. 12). For the past fifty years or so, psychological therapy has been the most common means for people in the West to receive help in dealing with stressful emotional conditions. But today, Ruskan argues, the psychological aspect - as it relates to personal growth - has largely become separated from the spiritual aspect. Oftentimes, he comments, spirituality is often overlooked, or not desired, by persons who seek counseling for personal growth. Cowley (1993) discusses how the theories that “transpersonal psychology” offers contain a growing body of literature and theory related to the importance of the spiritual dimension of human nature and “higher states of consciousness”. In *Perspectives on Productive Aging*, Ellor (1990) notes that in the past, there was some risk for social workers to include the spiritual dimension into clinical practice. Ellor explains that:

. . . with the recent inclusion of the spiritual into the approved curriculum of the Council for Social Work Education, the exile of the spiritual dimension has been ended and now offers a challenge to all social workers to explore ways to fully understand and include the religious and spiritual dimension into practice (p. 18).

It is the importance of, and relevance to this relationship that Ruskan believes is largely missing in a more traditional approach to counseling alone. Nelson (1994) maintains that Eastern philosophy offers the Western mind an

opportunity to reconsider the mysterious connections between body and mind. Western materialism holds that matter is superior to mind, and that consciousness – or spirit – somehow arises from the molecular activity of the brain. In contrast, the Eastern view assigns consciousness a primary place in the universe, with matter partaking of the eternal play of Spirit at the lowest level of the great chain of being. Fox (1994) laments that the practice challenges facing therapists in the postmodern age call not only for the development of a more complex and inclusive understanding of what it means to be fully human, but also for a theory “big” enough to allow and facilitate quantum leaps in human consciousness.

IP Therapy is essentially an integrated, spiritual discipline aimed at personal growth. Ruskan’s book was dedicated to spiritual seekers everywhere, and was first conceptualized as a guide for working with troublesome feelings as they came up on the spiritual path. The scope of the work has since expanded to its present form as an alternative healing therapy, and is finding its way into more traditional therapeutic arenas. Many of the insights in EC are particularly devoted to the spiritually-oriented individual. “Spiritual” in this context, means an individual’s inner connectivity to a Higher Power. Ruskan (2000) believes that many people seeking the spiritual dimension as it relates to personal growth tend to seem unfamiliar with the importance of working with all the emotional components of the psyche. They approach inner growth by concentrating only on the spiritual, or

higher, idealistic aspects that they hope to develop, while ignoring the more unpleasant, emotional aspects of “the self”.

Often individuals lack awareness about the emotional self and even carry the theoretical assumption that the emotions are not really important, as in the popular movement toward cognitive and behavioral therapeutic approaches aimed at personal growth. In Ruskan’s integrated approach, the client learns to use his concept of, and apply value to, spirituality in encountering negative feelings as they come up. Ruskan (2000) states, “we invoke the spiritual as a transcendence to the psychological. Subsequently, the integration of feeling becomes a most powerful route to the spiritual” (p. 42). Ruskin’s theoretical approach strongly emphasizes the importance of releasing negative feelings as a key function of spirituality as it relates to personal growth.

In IP Therapy, the basic step of the Transformation component is the undercurrent that links the spiritual aspect of his program, and directly ties into the merging of Eastern and Western therapeutic tradition. Ruskan’s theory identifies the aspect of the Witnessing Consciousness concept as critical to the healing needed for personal growth to occur. Fox Valley Unity, (2004) published a 26th *Day of Lent Prayer* for one of its weekly church services, consisting of similar spiritual messages common to Ruskan’s theory about healing. The Lenten Prayer recites as follows:

Going through life’s experiences takes a great deal of compassion for oneself. When I resist a feeling such as pain or sadness, I also resist the

experience of the feeling. Not experiencing it only denies or prolongs the hurt. By gently being with the feeling, I allow its message to surface and be heard. Then I give it to God for healing and transformation. As I allow my feelings to be heard, felt and then released, I have the opportunity to look within, to lift up my heart, and reach out to embrace all parts of the situation without judgment. It is then that I receive the grace to traverse through any difficulty (2004, March).

Feelings can be painful and become problems when they are not accepted, or *integrated* by the individual. Instead these feelings are resisted, as the Fox Valley Lenten Prayer reads. The fundamental concepts in Ruskan's IP Therapy share this same belief. Ruskan (2000) further elaborates on this basic concept:

We create pain through resistance and nonacceptance. To go beyond pain and to enjoy wholeness, we must learn to integrate those parts of life we find painful and would like to avoid. Once integrated, they are no longer painful. Instead, they add new dimensions to our existence. These new dimensions cannot be foreseen. Life becomes richer, resulting in real - not pseudo - spiritual and material prosperity consciousness. We become artists of life and realize that what we were resisting was really inside ourselves, not a projection into the outside world (p. 96).

Part III: Ruskan's Approach As Compared To Other Proposed Approaches

Krishnamurti (2003) further elaborates on the necessity of the “spirituality component” in a therapeutic approach in terms of the importance of releasing suppressed feelings. He comments that when fear arises, we can invite our “soul” to sit with our frightened personality. When we bring higher energies into the presence of lower energies, the lower energies are then transformed, or integrated. He maintains that what is needed rather than running away, controlling, suppressing, or any other resistance, is understanding fear; which means to watch it, learn about it, and come directly into contact with it; that we need to learn about our fear(s), not how to escape from them.

Walsch (1995) acknowledges how he too, has come to understand the extraordinary importance of leading an integrated life; that is, of allowing himself to first notice, then to blend, all the aspects of who he is – those feelings that he and others called “positive” and those feelings that he and others called “negative” – into a grander whole. Walsch’s spiritual message about the importance on integrating all aspects of the self, links with Ruskan’s central theme in IP Therapy.

Ruskan (2000) believed that for a long while he and many others, mistakenly approached personal growth by concentrating only on the higher, idealistic aspects that he hoped to develop on his journey to personal growth while ignoring the more unpleasant emotional aspects of his experiences.

Maslow and his holistic hierarchy of needs theory, assumes that lower level needs must be satisfied or at least relatively satisfied (Feist & Feist, 2002)

before higher level needs can be met. When lower level needs, such as physiological needs, love, and belongingness are met, higher level needs such as self-esteem and self-actualization that tend to be of a more spiritual nature can then be achieved. Ruskan (2000) describes how IP Therapy works to release the blocked energy (at the lower level order) we carry from unreleased emotions by clearing the “planes” in ascending order. He points out:

For personal growth to result . . . the emotional plane must come before the spiritual plane. In our journey . . . we must clear the planes in ascending order: physical, emotional, mental, intellectual and spiritual. If we aim for spiritual growth for example with no attention to our emotions, we are bound to be unstable in our growth, and are likely to end up suppressing our emotions in the name of spirituality (p. 13).

Chopra (2003) and his concepts of personal and spiritual growth appear to be similar to Ruskan’s in that Chopra suggests that the path to healing includes not only the search for the divine - which he refers to as the higher, idealistic aspects of our self - but also the total acceptance of the shadow self, the painful and difficult feelings that we can be prone to resist in our process of healing. Chopra further laments that unfortunately, many of us are afraid of the energy of painful emotions and so we automatically want to resist them. And when we refuse to experience our emotions, we block them up. They become trapped, and that entrapment drains our energy and brings continuing discomfort. Instead of

resisting emotion(s), Chopra comments that the best way to dispel them is to enter into the feeling fully, embracing it, and at the same time watching our resistance to it. Once these emotions are acknowledged, their energy may then be released.

Ford (1998) recounts that the shadow side of our personality wears many faces: fearful, greedy, angry, vindictive, evil, selfish, manipulative, lazy, controlling, hostile, undeserving, cheap, weak, critical, and judgmental. And the list can go on and on. Our shadow self acts as a storehouse for all these unacceptable aspects of ourselves. It contains all the things people pretend not to be and all the aspects that embarrass us. These are the faces – or masks - we don't want to show the world and the faces we don't want to show ourselves.

Everything that we hate, resist, or disown about ourselves takes on a life of its own, undermining our feelings of worthiness. When we come face-to-face with our shadow side our first instinct is to turn away. Often in traditional therapy settings, people spend vast amounts of time and money in an effort to do just that. Ironically, it is these hidden aspects people have rejected that need the most attention. When we locked away those parts of ourselves we did not like, unknowingly, we sealed away our most valuable treasures. These valuables are therefore hidden where we would least expect to find them (Ford, 1998, p. 72).

When you experience emotions such as fear, anger, guilt, shame, irritation, tension, worry, anxiety, depression, self-doubt, blame, judgment, self-pity, jealousy, or other, so-called, “negative” emotions, you can know they are arising from within (Roman, 1989). Ford (1998) urges that we must become intimate with our shadow selves; they are a holy and sacred part of each of us. Ford goes on to say that, “In this state you will begin to immerse yourself in the wonderful, mystical experience of being human” (p. 72). Roman (1989) also maintains that continually feeling these negative emotions devitalizes you. She goes on to suggest that to transform these painful, blocked emotions, the client needs to be willing to feel them and to acknowledge that they exist. With this important recognition or awareness, the client can then begin to heal.

Childre (2003) would agree with Ruskan’s theory regarding the importance of dealing with our emotions in the therapeutic setting. According to Childre, our emotions are the next frontier to be understood and conquered. He points out that to manage our emotions is not to drug them or suppress them, but to understand them so that we can intelligently direct our emotional energies and intentions. He goes on to state that it’s time for human beings to grow up emotionally, to mature into emotionally managed and responsible citizens, and says that no magic pill will do it.

Collins (2003) states that many individuals believe that there is need to keep a tight lid on our emotions. We fear that if we ever allow these emotions to be expressed, they will do serious damage. But if one summons up the courage

to truly feel emotions, they will discover that they don't last for too long. The monster in the closet turns out to be a pussycat. In fact, if we are willing to experience our emotions completely, without resistance of any kind, they burn themselves out in only a few minutes. The only thing that keeps emotions alive within over long periods is an unwillingness to acknowledge them. Collins explains that by starving emotions we become humorless, rigid, and stereotyped; by repressing them we become literal, reformatory and holier-than-thou; encouraged, they perfume life; discouraged, they poison it.

Buddhist philosophy maintains that consciousness is like a field with every possible kind of seed in it – seeds of love, compassion, joy, and equanimity; and also seeds of anger, fear, and anxiety. Consciousness is the storehouse that contains all these seeds, all the possibilities of what might arise in our mind. When our mind is not at peace, it may be because of the desires and feelings in our store consciousness. Hanh (1998) suggests that individuals need to look deeply into the nature of feelings to find their roots, and to see which emotions need to be transformed, Ruskan's theory borrows from Buddhism and other Eastern philosophies, believing it necessary to look deeply into the roots of our emotions to find the feelings that need transformation. "Psychology in the East has a built-in connection to spirituality" (Ruskan, 2000, p. 12). Hanh (1998) maintains that people should observe their feelings, whether they are pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. Hanh believes that this should allow the client to see

what has been preventing them from being happy, and stresses the significance in transforming and integrating these “good, bad, and ugly” emotions.

Theoretical Interfacing

IP Therapy is derived from and integrates interfacing Western psychologies and theories as well as Eastern spiritual and philosophical traditions in some of the following ways:

Humanistic psychology plays a large role in Ruskan’s work in that it is grounded in total acceptance and unconditional positive regard of the client. The concept of acceptance is a commonality in both Eastern and Western psychological traditions. Humanistic theories postulate that the real problem is that the client is not self-accepting, often not even having any concept of self-acceptance. Both theories support the concept of the therapist or facilitator accepting the client without conditions. Vital is the empathic, spontaneous, trusting bond between client and therapist (Corsini & Wedding, 2000; Ruskan, 2000). Humanistic skills or conditions are practiced in IP Therapy to enable the counselor to facilitate an environment of trust and productivity in the counseling session. “Unconditional positive regard can be startling and transformative because the problem is not what the client usually thinks it is” (Ruskan, 2000, p. 11). The basic tenet of Person-Centered Therapy as it fits with IP Therapy is that if the therapist is successful in conveying genuineness, unconditional positive regard and empathy, then the client will respond accordingly. “Any practicing therapist knows the power of listening and being understood; clients want and

need to be heard” (Ruskan, 2000, Derivation/Interfacing section, ¶ 4). “Through the therapist, the client learns how to accept himself, outgrowing negative patterns” (p. 11).

Gestalt, as expounded by Fritz Perls forms the core of the Western psychological theory behind IP Therapy. The projection mechanism in Perls theory is strongly emphasized in Ruskan’s technique as a means to understanding the nature of interaction and to enable the owning of events and feelings; the end goal being the integration of the split-off parts of ourselves. As Perls says, “I suggest we start with the impossible assumption that whatever we believe we see in another person or in the world is nothing but a projection mechanism brought on by the need to disown those parts of ourselves we would rather not look at” (Ruskan, Derivation/Interfacing section, ¶ 1).

Ruskan’s technique emphasizes the feeling and integration aspect of experience - not intellectualization - as being key. Perls (Corsini & Wedding, 2000) offers that, “...we do not analyze, we integrate.” The emphasis is on *experience* – not *intellectualization* (Ruskan, 2000). Ruskan agrees with Perls in that integration occurs as a result of unobstructed feeling. How to feel in such a way as to allow emotions to clear and not be re-suppressed – the core of Gestalt theory - is also the central theme of Ruskan’s psychological theory.

The general concept of the subconscious forms the basis to IP theory. This concept joins hands with the themes central to Freud’s psychoanalytical work. The concept of the unconscious is one of Freud’s most significant contributions

and is the key to understanding his view of behavior and the problems of personality. Freud believed that most of human behavior is motivated by forces outside conscious experience (Corey, 2004), and that suppressed feelings that take the form of our shadow self are to be considered a major component in the formation of the subconscious (Feist & Feist, 2002). IP Therapy is a powerful approach to shadow work, emphasizing the dualistic nature of experience and the need to integrate the negative. Acceptance of negative feeling as a prime manifestation of the shadow forms the basic approach to integration of the shadow. Until then, realization of the shadow tends to remain an intellectual concept (Ruskan, 2002, Derivation/Interfacing section, ¶ 2).

Analytical psychology, the psychodynamic method and personality theory created by Carl Jung builds upon Freud's perspective (Corsini & Wedding, 2000). Jung's description of the personal unconscious is similar to, but more extensive than Freud's (Ruskan, 2000). In Jungian theory, an individual's personal unconscious contains not only material unacceptable to one's ego and superego and therefore repressed (the shadow), but also material unimportant to the psyche, and temporarily, or permanently dropped from consciousness. According to Ford, (1998) to recognize that you have an issue with ongoing negative feelings is a courageous and mature step to intelligently taking care of yourself. Shadow work is not only intellectual; it is a journey from the head to the heart. Ford states, "We can not have the full experience of the light without knowing the dark " (p. 69).

Eastern philosophy also has a stake in the claim of the powers of the unconscious. For example, the subconscious is equated to the concept of Karma in Eastern philosophy and spiritual traditions (Ruskan, 2000). The concept theorizes that the build-up of energy from suppressed feelings accumulates and then attracts events into our lives upon which we project the feelings so that they can become conscious. Ruskan concludes that these suppressed feelings we carry influence us greatly. Further, he believes that these suppressed feelings that take the form of blocked energy limit the quality of our lives, undermine our relationships, and prevent us from achieving our goals.

IP Therapy purports to be this similar approach in reference to shadow work by emphasizing the dualistic nature of experience and the need to integrate negative or blocked emotions and feelings for personal growth to occur. Acceptance of negative feeling as a prime manifestation of the shadow self forms the basic approach to integration of these feelings (Ruskan, 2000) and the core of IP and its therapeutic properties.

Methodology

Design of the Study

This study will use a qualitative approach in order to detect the usefulness of IP Therapy. This explanatory, “human science” methodology was chosen for this study for two reasons. Firstly, searching for a straightforward relationship between receipt of personal therapy and clinical effectiveness may not be particularly fruitful. Secondly, because a human science approach is similar to

the practice of counseling psychology in that it focuses on subjectivity and stresses the achievement of an understanding as opposed to a demonstration of truth; it stresses collaboration with participants rather than a subject-object dualism; and it emphasizes holism in contrast to fragmentation.

The research participants – all therapists themselves – attended 48 "classroom" hours of training to become certified in the practice of IP Therapy. The researcher attempted to elicit participants' understanding of the meaningfulness and relevance of their experience in completing the required 48 hours of training in using IP Therapy – both from their own perspective, and to investigate their opinions as to the impact of IP Therapy on their personal growth. The goal of the study was to understand the IP contribution as participants understood it, rather than to test the validity of participants' opinions as to its objective contribution to clinical practice.

Population

The four research participants who participated in the IP Therapy training and who also participated in this study are female adults, all practicing therapists (See Appendix B). Participant No. 1 is a practicing intern/counselor; Participant No. 2 is a psychotherapist practicing transpersonal psychology; Participant No. 3 has a consulting/coaching business and is a facilitator and trainer; and Participant No. 4 is a practicing therapist and personal coach. Participants were informed that the nature of the research attempted to identify the therapeutic value in IP Therapy (See Appendix C).

Instrumentation and Procedure

An IP Questionnaire was developed and intended to explore the applications of the theory behind IP Therapy and to review its effectiveness (See Appendix D).

- a. Four participants were a part of the data collection. To collect data, two research participants filled out the IP Questionnaire directly and two research participants were interviewed with the IP Questionnaire used as format. Information was then gathered about each intern's experience with the IP Therapy process – all of whom acted in roles as “client” and “therapist” with each other for a total of 10 “giving” sessions and 10 “receiving” sessions. Each intern developed personal insights into the validity of the therapy as a proposed effective psychological tool and intervention for personal growth.
- b. An interview also was conducted with Ruskan, the class facilitator and author of the research theory (See Appendix E).

Results

All participants stated that their training and intern therapy sessions brought many positive outcomes and expressed in positive terms the application value of this therapeutic approach. A sample of the participants' interviews can be found in Appendix D.

The general results from the data collected from these interviews suggested that IP Therapy can lead to perceived positive outcomes in terms of

personal growth; also, they have affirmed that it can be an effective psychological intervention used as an alternative to, or in addition with, a more traditional counseling approach that uses talk therapy alone.

An analysis of the data suggested four core categories of findings:

a) personal growth experiences; b) reflection on the effectiveness of IP Therapy as compared to a more traditional talk therapy approach; c) reflection on the effectiveness of IP Therapy in treating addictions; and d) whether IP Therapy as a therapeutic method accomplishes the proposed personal growth as intended.

a. Personal Growth Experiences

Personal growth and development was often perceived as an important component of IP Therapy, even when participants acted in the training sessions as “client” but without any specific presenting problem. A specific personal growth aspect of IP Therapy seems to be validated as Participant 4 explains:

I have always “done” for everyone. In some respects it is selfless, but in other respects it is called “martyrdom”. So you have to create healthy boundaries, which I have struggled with for years. This particular kind of therapy has helped me tremendously with this patterned aspect of my personality. When you have ingrained, repetitive behaviors and then finally begin to recognize and process the associated “stuck” feelings, it can make a huge difference in your life in terms of freeing yourself from these self-limiting patterns and belief systems. IP Therapy has done this for me.

In a summary fashion as expressed by the participants, the perceived personal growth and development benefits included:

1. An increased sense of well-being, happiness and clarity
2. Alleviation of emotional stresses and anxiety
3. A profound socialization experience
4. A “freeing up” from self-limiting patterns and belief systems
5. More confidence
6. Ability to handle increased responsibility
7. A sense of inner peace
8. An increased sense of inner-strength
9. Less judgmental; more open-minded

b. Participants' Reflection on the Effectiveness of IP Therapy

Compared To Traditional Counseling Approaches

In reflecting on the effectiveness of IP Therapy as compared to traditional counseling approaches for affecting personal growth, all participants came to believe that they achieved an increased understanding of themselves, a greater sense of well-being and an increased ability to handle difficult situations, as this participant comments.

This technique is far superior. The emphasis on feeling the emotions and allowing them to be – is the best. All the traditional therapy I have had spent too much time allowing me to talk about feelings and also trying to fix me. This method trusts that feeling the feelings leads to their integration and healing, which I have found to be very true.

Other typical examples of participants' reflections on the effectiveness of IP Therapy as compared to traditional talk therapy counseling included:

1. How counter-productive it is in traditional counseling to focus mostly on your past and what or whom, is to blame.
2. IP Therapy seems more effective in helping to pinpoint "stuck" emotions and working diligently with these feelings so that we stop getting ourselves into the same predicaments and repeating patterns that are limiting and discouraging for us.
3. It is a useful tool to own and be able to use by yourself without the constant necessity for expensive, more traditional counseling.
4. IP Therapy is similar in many ways to the two traditions are in that they both borrow from theories associated with Freud, Jung and Perls, for example.

c. The Effectiveness of IP Therapy in Treating Addictions

As an example of application, participants reported that they felt IP Therapy might be useful for persons struggling with addictions, but only in conjunction with a comprehensive approach to treatment. Participant No. 4 had this to say:

Yes, I believe it can really help people who are struggling with addictions. I feel that addictive personalities have particular [self-limited, belief systems] or patterns, which IP Therapy is particularly helpful in addressing. It does not mean, however, that every type of addiction will always benefit and it also does not mean traditional therapies are necessarily excluded. For example, I

believe that using a 12-step approach as in AA programs may be very successful too. But I strongly feel that IP Therapy – because I believe that there is something going on at the spiritual level that can cause addictions – may help break loose addictive patterns. I feel it is a great tool that works at the core level to strengthen your inner resources.

Other typical comments from participants included “I think addictive personalities are difficult – at best – to treat, and in general, do not have a high success rate. Approaching any serious addiction using one treatment alone probably will be ineffective in the long run.” Also, Participant No. 2 had this to say: “I think this is very important for people struggling with addictions because experiencing your feelings and taking responsibility for them powerfully helps you control the addictive impulse.”

d. Does IP Therapy Work in the Way It Was Intended?

On reflecting on whether or not IP Therapy worked in the way it was intended, Participant No. 1 had this to say:

I do believe this therapy works in the way it was intended. If you practice it on a regular basis I think it can become like “an old friend.” It can work on several different levels. If you take it seriously and go through the process exactly as stated it can help to remove “baggage,” unleash possibilities, and strengthen your

character and your resolve. It can also just simply work as a way to support and strengthen you when you feel down.

Other examples of participants' comments about whether IP Therapy works in the way it was intended included: "It does work in the way it was intended but takes a certain level of mastery before you can truly incorporate and integrate it into the daily workings of your life." Others too, felt it takes practice to get good at it. Participant No. 4's answer was this: "I feel it takes some practice to get good at it, and I don't think that it is necessarily an easy technique to learn. The entirety of the transcribed interviews can be seen in Appendix D.

Discussion

The qualitative research in the present study makes no claims to the reliability or validity of the findings in the discussion. However, within the limitations of the research design it can be concluded that the IP Therapy program appeared successful in its ability and usefulness in promoting personal growth. Consequently, the findings of this qualitative study appear to suggest that IP Therapy can lead to perceived positive outcomes fostering clients' personal growth and development for the following reasons: It is a tool that intends to work at the core level to strengthen your inner resources according to the participants of the study; it appears effective in helping to evoke "stuck" emotions that "free-up" self-limiting belief systems; and overall, to have helped participants achieve a greater understanding of themselves. It also was

suggested that IP Therapy may take some practice to “get good at it,” and that it is not necessarily an easy technique to learn.

Within the descriptive, exploratory nature of this qualitative study, the participation of an author in the training and also in a personal interview can be seen as an advantage in that it gave this researcher a uniquely privileged perspective on the process. Author John Ruskan agreed upfront to the research being conducted to ascertain the validity behind his integrated therapeutic approach. Besides, similarly participants in the interviews were all going through the training experience simultaneously. The meanings ascribed to the findings can therefore be thought of as co-created within the participants, a process to which the use of interviewing may have contributed as an evaluative tool.

The IP Therapy training appears to be validated by participants as an important tool as it relates to personal growth. It is possible that additional, positive gains will accrue on further reflection and with greater clinical experience, as the study did not address maturational effects of continued therapy – both in the role of practitioner and client.

Limitations of the Study

There is a need for further research to extend the study and test the findings of the present study, the aim of which was exploratory only. It would perhaps be useful to examine recordings of the trainees therapy work after IP Certification was granted, and elicit accounts of interventions used and how they

were thought to relate directly to longer-term personal growth and development. It might also be valuable to conduct a comparison analysis of participants undergoing traditional talk therapy versus participants undergoing Ruskan's IP Therapy with similarly related issues.

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APPENDIX A

Professional IP Therapy Certification Program

Professional IP Therapy Certification Program

In October 2003, this researcher trained to become a Certified Integrative Processing Therapist (CIPT) to learn more about Emotional Clearing as it relates to IP's therapeutic value, first-hand. The program gave this researcher the tools and training to begin working as a professional IP Counselor upon completion, and also gave this researcher the knowledge and experience for this exploratory study to further understand the process and its perceived outcome(s) related to personal growth as it pertains to this study.

The IP Therapy training takes place over three weekends spaced approximately one month apart for a total of 48 "classroom" hours. Training was facilitated by John Ruskan, author of the book, *Emotional Clearing*. The requirement was to spend two days for three weekends each, in the intensive training program, and then break in intervals of one month while each of the students applied and practiced what he had learned. Between weekends IP Therapy sessions were practiced and performed with each of the interns, as well as with each intern's own clients, for a minimum of three sessions per week for ten weeks, totaling 30 IP Therapy training sessions. Interns are encouraged to take part in client work and exchange therapy sessions with each other beyond the minimum requirement to enhance skills and personal growth.

Brief documentation of all sessions was required and submitted to Ruskan for review before Certification in the training was to be granted. During the intern program, four reviews of each participant's personal taped client sessions

was performed - three from other interns, and one from John Ruskan. John's session reviews were detailed, and provided an invaluable learning experience to fine-tune the IP therapy technique(s).

This researcher is now Certified as an IP Therapist (CIPT) and listed as an IP Facilitator in John Ruskan's Emotional Clearing website at http://www.emclear.com/ECCounseling_facil.html.

Testimonials regarding the IP Therapy technique described in his book are available on John Ruskan's Emotional Clearing website at http://www.emclear.com/workingonyourself_test.html.

APPENDIX B

Bios of Research Participants

Bio

Participant 1

Participant 1 is working on her Masters in Psychology degree along with a Counseling Certificate for licensure as an LPC. She finished her Bachelors degree in Applied Behavioral Science from National-Louis University in 2002 and obtained an Associates of Arts degree in Human Services–Mental Health in 1998. She has done extensive volunteer work in the field of human services, such as crisis intervention services at Suicide Prevention Services, fundraising for United Cerebral Palsy and United Way, education mentoring at Francis Scott Key Schools and other various inner-city programs, direct-service volunteer work at Fox Valley Hospice, as well as other community organizations and services.

Currently, she is completing her counseling internships at Lutheran Social Services of Illinois and Suicide Prevention Services, where she is engaged in direct client service, counseling and crisis intervention. She is married with two children and four stepchildren, and lives in Chicago.

Bio

Participant 2

Participant 2 graduated from the University of Minnesota with a B.S. in Education, and taught junior high English for several years. She joined the Christian Science movement and served in many volunteer and paid positions until 1989. In 1990 she moved to Montana and began serving in the Church Universal and Triumphant, based in Corwin Springs, Montana.

In 2001, she married a church member who also enjoys serving in the church in many different capacities, such as summer rafting, camping, and swimming activities. An important part of the discipline of the spiritual community in which she lives, is the study of Psychology. Along with other church members, she and her husband have practiced *Inner-Child Therapy*, *Re-Evaluation Counseling*, *The Journey Work*, and *Compassionate Communication*. She learned about Integrative Processing Therapy from a church friend, and after studying the book for a year or so, participated in the training and facilitation offered by Ruskan in 2003. She has found the education and training therapeutic tools of IP Therapy to be invaluable and is grateful to John Ruskan. She and her husband use the techniques and she also uses it to assist others in their personal growth.

Bio

Participant 3

Participant 3 owns a consulting firm. She has helped hundreds of people discover their pathways to success through her twenty-five year career in counseling, consulting and leading empowerment seminars and retreats. Her ten years of experience working within human resource environments of Fortune 500 companies encompassed employee relations, mediations, developing and implementing employee development initiatives including effective communications and team development, recruitment and selection, and establishment of effective hiring practices. Her specialty in this area is team-based performance management.

As a facilitator of training and development, she has been instrumental in pulling teams together to develop and implement performance management programs such as ISO9000 quality improvement and strategic employee development initiatives that are multi-facility focused.

As a consultant, she further developed her coaching and performance management practice within Fortune 500 companies. As a personal development coach, she was recruited by Anthony Robbins, and trained by the world leader in breakthrough performance technology. She was chosen to be part of an elite group of Results Coaches personally selected by Tony, and is known as an expert in developing success strategies for individuals and teams.

She is a Certified Team Effectiveness Facilitator and Certified Career and Life Development Coach. She holds a Bachelors Degree in Business and

Management and a Masters Degree in Psychology, and is a member of the International Association of Coaches and TEC International Organization of CEOs and Executives.

Bio

Participant 4

Participant 4 is a Life Strategist with a consulting company, and has been providing coaching for individuals as well as corporate clients for the past ten years. She began her career with a Masters Degree in Psychology and Communication Sciences. Prior to launching a career as a Life Strategist she worked in the field of Hospital Administration and subsequently established Accreditation Consultants, Inc., which focused on business strategic development within the Healthcare Industry. Adding to her success as a coach, is the five years she spent living overseas. She has experience in dealing with culturally diverse populations and has gained significant experience in dealing with cultural differences both in and out of the workplace.

During this time, she became interested in wellness from a spiritual, physical, emotional, relational, and overall mental perspective. She returned to her original training in psychology and continued with extensive training with many well-known experts in the self-help and motivational industry. She realized that by assisting individuals to address their overall wellness in helping them to become aware of what contributes to their well-being, she was able to coach them into success both personally and professionally. The idea is to determine how balance shows up in an individual's life. Balance is unique to each individual. The goal is to understand your wellness through understanding each individual's uniqueness and discovering what creates balance for that

individual. Maintaining balance is an ongoing process, which evolves and grows as our lives change. She coaches each individual to look within to illuminate the positive, powerful and unique qualities of each person, and guides them toward integrating the less positive qualities within their personalities which have prevented them from getting what they really want in life.

Her consulting firm was established to allow her to focus on her mission as a Life Strategist and Coach. The firm exists to share knowledge that expands and strengthens the human spirit. The focus of coaching is to specialize on the key essentials of clarity, accountability and focus. The key is to facilitate each individual to set his own life course.

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Statement

Informed Consent Statement

I have been informed that I have been asked to participate in an exploratory study involving being interviewed and/or filling out a questionnaire. I have been informed that the results of this study will be used for research purposes only, and I can request a copy of the research report. I have also been informed that if I agree to participate I will complete a questionnaire and agree to be interviewed.

The questionnaire will ask questions related to the ways in which learning about, and engaging in, training and practice with Integrative Processing Therapy has affected my life.

I understand that my participation is voluntary. If, at any time during this study I wish to withdraw my participation, I am free to do so without any problems or consequences.

I understand that, after I have finished the study, the researcher will try to answer any questions that I may have in regard to this study or to my participation. If I have questions after that, I should feel free to contact the researcher by phone at (630) 625-2851.

I have read this statement. I understand that by agreeing to participate in this study, I have not waived any legal or human rights. Therefore, I give my written consent to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant _____ **Date** _____

Signature of Researcher _____ **Date** _____

If you have any questions regarding the study or your participation, please contact Barb Phipps by email at barb_phipps@hotmail.com or by phone at (630) 625-2851.

APPENDIX D

IP Questionnaire and Interviews

Integrative Processing (IP) Therapy Questionnaire

1. *Does this therapy technique have value for you? If so, what important changes/shifts have taken place?*
2. *How would you compare the effectiveness of this therapy to traditional counseling approaches with which you are familiar?*
3. *What do you feel are the main areas of personal growth this type of therapy addresses?*
4. *Are there any particular issues, concerns, or areas for growth you feel this therapy is more effective in treating than traditional counseling approaches?*
5. *Do you feel this therapy would work well for people struggling with addictions in particular? Why or why not?*
6. *In what ways has the IP certification training helped your own personal growth?
(Use some of your own personal examples)*
7. *Do you believe this therapy works in the way it was intended?*
8. *Do you feel anybody can benefit from this therapy? Or if not, what type of person could most benefit?*

Integrative Processing (IP) Therapy

Questionnaire

Participant No. 1

March 2003

1. Does this therapy technique have value for you? If so, what important changes/shifts have taken place?

I think it has tremendous value, and can be used on a regular basis for the purpose of personal growth by anyone willing to try a more spiritually-driven, alternative approach to traditional counseling. The important shift for me was that it helped me to see that I was constantly playing the “blame game.” I was always looking for a reason or a person outside of myself to explain away my problems.

2. How would you compare the effectiveness of this therapy to traditional counseling approaches with which you are familiar?

I believe different approaches all have their place. I think IP Therapy is particularly effective in helping to pinpoint “stuck” emotions, so that we stop getting ourselves into the same situations over and over and repeating patterns that are limiting and discouraging. I also believe that it is similar to traditional counseling in that it follows many of the same, more Western theories postulated by Freud, Jung and Perls, for example. They too, believed in the power of the subconscious and believed it played a vital role in our human development.

3. What do you feel are the main areas of personal growth this type of therapy addresses?

I feel such tremendous transformation on the level of creating healthy boundaries. I also feel that IP Therapy has great value for me in terms of freeing myself from self-limiting patterns and belief systems. I have an increased sense of self-awareness that seems to be one of the keys to getting anywhere.

4. Are there any particular issues, concerns, or areas for growth you feel this therapy is more effective in treating than traditional counseling approaches?

I believe that it can help provide for a greater sense of well-being, self-awareness and introspection, which – I believe are key in creating necessary change in your life. It gives you the autonomy and empowerment to make the shifts in your life that need addressing. It takes you away from “externalizing” your problems and helps you to focus on what you can do to affect change in your unhealthy life patterns and beliefs about your relationships – both personally and professionally.

5. Do you feel this therapy would work well for people struggling with addictions in particular? Why or why not?

I think it might work only in conjunction with a comprehensive treatment plan. I do believe it is an excellent place to start. I think addictive personalities are difficult to treat and in general, do not have a high success rate. Approaching any serious addiction using one treatment alone probably is ineffective.

6. In what ways has the IP certification training helped your own personal growth? (Use some of your own personal examples)

IP Certification has helped me to take a deeply honest look at myself. It has made me a better person in that I am less judgmental, more open-minded and willing to look at alternative ideas, more resilient with a strength and quiet power, and has provided me with a greater sense of well-being overall. It has not taken away all my problems but it has been a great tool to help calm my nerves, soften my heart, and provide clarity and comfort.

7. Do you believe this therapy works in the way it was intended?

I do believe this therapy works in the way it was intended. If you practice it on a regular basis I think it can become like “an old friend.” It can work on several different levels. If you take it seriously and go through the process exactly as stated it can help to remove “baggage,” unleash possibilities, and strengthen your character and your resolve. It can also just simply work as a way to support and strengthen you when you feel down. It is a wonderful tool to own and be able to use by yourself without the constant necessity for expensive, more traditional counseling.

8. Do you feel anybody can benefit from this therapy? Or if not, what type of person could most benefit?

I believe that it can work for anyone who is willing to look at it as an alternative approach to traditional counseling or “talk therapy.” It probably works best with those who are willing to delve deeply into themselves, who are willing to

delve into the recesses of their mind and hit the painful feelings, and who are open to exploring new avenues without quick judgment.

Integrative Processing (IP) Therapy

Questionnaire

Participant No. 2

March 2003

1. Does this therapy technique have value for you? If so, what important changes/shifts have taken place?

I feel more aware of the times that I'm escaping the present moment and all the feelings that I have.

2. How would you compare the effectiveness of this therapy to traditional counseling approaches with which you are familiar?

This is far superior. The emphasis on feeling the feelings and allowing them to be is the best. All the traditional therapy I've had spent too much time allowing me to talk about feelings and also trying to fix me. This method trusts that feeling the feelings leads to their integration and healing, which I have found to be true.

3. What do you feel are the main areas of personal growth this type of therapy addresses?

This therapy contributes to true inner peace and health. It increases awareness of the Higher Self, which also contributes to health, inner peace, and security.

4. Are there any particular issues, concerns, or areas for growth you feel this therapy is more effective in treating than traditional counseling approaches?

Because this therapy allows for the unobstructed flow of energy in the emotional and physical body, I think it is more healing than traditional therapy. The theory also completely discourages blame or the acting out of negative feelings, so I think it is a powerful discipline that also contributes to the well being and happiness of the clients, in the sense that self-destructive behavior is clearly discouraged.

5. Do you feel this therapy would work well for people struggling with addictions in particular? Why or why not?

I think this is very important for people struggling with addictions because experiencing your feelings and taking responsibility for them powerfully helps you control the addictive impulse.

6. In what ways has the IP certification training helped your own personal growth? (Use some of your own personal examples)

I have accepted a new position in my church because I feel more confident and able to handle more responsibility. I have become more assertive with my husband, which has helped us both to take on more projects both personal and church-related.

7. Do you believe this therapy works in the way it was intended?

Yes, the goal is the transcendence of the opposites of human experience into the Higher Self and this it does, if you practice it.

8. Do you feel anybody can benefit from this therapy? Or if not, what type of person could most benefit?

I think that this therapy can benefit anyone. However, people who already have a spiritual practice may be more attracted to it.

Integrative Processing (IP) Therapy

Questionnaire

Participant No. 3

March 2003

1. Does this therapy technique have value for you? If so, what important changes/shifts have taken place?

I believe it has tremendous value. What it has reinforced for me is the idea that we all have the power within to change our state of mind at any given point in time. So IP Therapy, for me, really has helped me look at what is going on in any given situation without me necessarily becoming so emotionally over-involved with it. And that is hard to do without some kind of process to use such as this. I found the higher witnessing process the most beneficial aspect.

For example, I used the IP therapy process quite a bit during my recovery from my recent experience with breaking my arm and needing to have surgery. It helped tremendously because I was in so much pain – physically and emotionally – from the whole ordeal, and it helped me get through it in one piece, both on a physical level and an emotional level.

From a spiritual perspective, there is a perfect time for everything, and I believe, for me, the timing of the Integrative Processing training was perfect and helped right when I needed that level of support to help me get through the accident.

2. How would you compare the effectiveness of this therapy to traditional counseling approaches with which you are familiar?

It is difficult to compare because I really think they are two different animals. I see IP Therapy as a tool to use with clients that are receptive to a different approach. It is not ideal for everyone but for those who are receptive I feel it can be very beneficial.

3. What do you feel are the main areas of personal growth this type of therapy addresses?

One of the big personal growth areas for me specifically is the awareness of the reality you create at any moment in time. And for me, that is pretty important. Also, that we have choices, we can always choose differently (i.e., our attitudes, our positions, our paths, etc.) and that because our emotions do not always get expressed in the ways that they need, they just get buried and then continue to create those patterns in our lives that we just keep getting stuck in because we have all this emotional baggage or blockages that are created from not being able to express these feelings outwardly appropriately.

4. Are there any particular issues, concerns, or areas for growth you feel this therapy is more effective in treating than traditional counseling approaches?

In my opinion I think it's important to have both, or more than one in some cases.

Perhaps one feeds into the other, like a sort of handholding, rather than one versus the other. Any one method alone is often not effective in the long run for lasting change. Because human beings are so diverse, and because our lives

change so much I think it's important for us to have a "toolbox" to choose from in any given point in time.

I think it's important for people to have choices and each of us needs to find our own recipe. I believe that sometimes IP Therapy works, sometimes you need traditional counseling, and sometimes life coaching helps, and often you just need a friend to talk to. IP Therapy is simply another avenue that can be very effective for people to choose from.

5. Do you feel this therapy would work well for people struggling with addictions in particular? Why or why not?

I do not think that this therapy *alone* is going to stop an addiction, unless you are totally immersed in this therapy on an on-going basis with a strong facilitator. It depends on the level of addiction, and what the addiction is. I believe addictions are insidious and difficult to break, in general. I am not throwing IP Therapy out of the picture when it comes to addictions, I believe it could help in combination with other treatments or therapy approaches.

6. In what ways has the IP certification training helped your own personal growth? (Use some of your own personal examples)

I really think that my reason for going through the training at this time – because I don't believe there are coincidences or accidents – was specifically to give me this tool to help me through this period of time in my life. I think the training and the therapy practice sessions have been

particularly helpful in terms of my emotional well being, especially in direct relation to my recent injury.

7. Do you believe this therapy works in the way it was intended?

It does work in the ways it was intended; however, I believe it takes a certain level of mastery before you can truly incorporate it, and integrate it into your daily life on a regular basis, and get to a place where it really begins making a life-transforming change to your personal growth.

8. Do you feel anybody can benefit from this therapy? If not, what type of person do you feel would most benefit?

I believe anyone who is receptive to an alternative approach to therapy can benefit. People who are on a spiritual path, seem, in general to be more receptive to trying this approach to personal growth. My belief is that the person that comes to us for IP Therapy is receptive. I think anybody who is open and willing to search for alternative approaches to personal growth would be a good candidate for this type of therapy technique.

Integrative Processing (IP) Therapy

Questionnaire

Participant No. 4

March 2003

1. Does this therapy technique have value for you? If so, what important changes/shifts have taken place?

Yes, it has tremendous value. It shows me that there are alternative methods and approaches to healing. The other thing for me, which has been very valuable, is that I have been able to create boundaries in my life. This has been my biggest takeaway from learning this therapeutic process.

2. How would you compare the effectiveness of this therapy to traditional counseling approaches with which you are familiar?

From my perspective, traditional counseling approaches often focus on your past, and what or who is to blame. Relative to whether it is an issue with a parent, oftentimes they will try to make you see that the reason for your problems in the present is because of what your parents did, for example.

What I have seen with IP Therapy is it is a matter of being guided to whatever the Spirit guide brings you through the IP technique. And if there was any kind of negative interaction with someone in your past, you can bring that into focus and be able to “clear it,” [through this technique] rather than continuing to dwell on it.

I believe traditional counselors could perhaps incorporate IP therapy techniques into their more traditional approaches.

3. *What do you feel are the main areas of personal growth this type of therapy addresses?*

I have always “done” for everyone. I have always put myself out there in front of everyone – in some respects it is selfless, but in other respects it is called “martyrdom” and so you have to create boundaries, which I have struggled with for years. This therapy has helped me tremendously with this patterned aspect of my personality.

When you have ingrained, repetitive behaviors or patterns, and then begin to recognize those patterns - which IP Therapy really helps you do - it really can make a huge difference in your life in terms of freeing yourself from these self-limiting patterns and belief systems.

4. *Are there any particular issues, concerns, or areas for growth you feel this therapy is more effective in treating than traditional counseling approaches?*

I am not a big proponent of traditional therapy because I have seen too many people go into therapy and get hooked, with very little progress. It is much more cerebral. It is at the personality level. It says, “How can we effectively communicate here in this environment?” It is more of a traditional type of counseling. But personal issues relative to the relationship, I think a lot of those can be addressed in IP therapy.

IP Therapy can help to create a new awareness for us. It has definitely brought more clarity to me. And increased awareness seems to be one of the keys to getting there.

5. Do you feel this therapy would work well for people struggling with addictions in particular? Why or why not?

Yes, I believe it can really help people who are struggling with addictions. I feel that addictive personalities have particular patterns which can easily be addressed through the IP Therapy technique. It does not mean every type of addiction will always benefit and it also does not mean traditional therapies are necessarily excluded. For example, I believe that using a 12-step approach as in AA programs may be very successful too. But I strongly believe that IP therapy – because there is something going at the spiritual level to cause the addiction– can definitely help break loose those addictive patterns, at least in some of the cases. I feel it is a great tool that works at the core level to strengthen your inner resources.

6. In what ways has the IP certification training helped your own personal growth? (Use some of your own personal examples)

Again, it really helped me with boundary issues that I had been struggling with most of my life. Things like learning how to say “No” more often without feeling the nauseating pangs of guilt that were always associated with that.

7. Do you believe this therapy works in the way it was intended?

I have integrated it into many aspects of my life and for that reason feel it is very beneficial. I am probably not as good at doing the work on an individual basis for myself, but I do believe in the benefits of it. I think it takes practice to get good at it, and I don't think it is necessarily an easy technique to learn.

8. Do you feel anybody can benefit from this therapy? Or if not, what type of person could most benefit?

I believe anybody can benefit if they are open to trying a new approach. If they are resistant, they will not be able to go into an Alpha Trance, which is where the core level work is done. Generally, people that are on a spiritual path are usually more open and more willing, but anyone that is open to it can benefit, no matter what walk of life they happen to be in. Anyone open to trying something new would be a good candidate for this type of therapy.

APPENDIX E

Interview With Author, John Ruskan

Interview with Author, John Ruskan

This researcher interviewed the author of IP Therapy to gain further insights into his work and to better understand the complexities behind Emotional Clearing, or Integrative Processing Therapy as it relates to personal growth. The interview was approximately one hour long and conducted by phone. In this interview, the author talked about his background in the Arts and Psychology, and how he eventually came face-to-face with the concepts which “birthed” IP Therapy. In further discussion, he explained that, for many years he had been rejecting his “emotional self” in the name of trying to be a spiritual and positive person, and eventually saw this as a type of self-rejection. He saw many others struggling with the very same thing; rejecting themselves, not really honoring their more painful, and difficult emotions; and instead, aiming only for the higher, idealistic aspects of themselves. The importance of this self-discovery became the catalyst that brought him passion for bringing this therapeutic technique out into the community. Ruskan (2000) concludes:

I believe that IP Therapy can become another type of widely accepted psychotherapy such as Gestalt, Transactional Analysis, Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) or Bioenergetics. The time is right for an East/West [integrated] therapy, and people are responding strongly (p. 119).

In order to make this vision real, Ruskan has formed *The Institute For Integrative Processing*, through which he offers workshops and professional certification.

Interview with Author, John Ruskan

Interviewed by Researcher, Barb Phipps

February 12, 2004

BP: What compelled you to write the book *Emotional Clearing*?

JR: I was going through a kind of resurgence of my own – a spiritual, psychological resurgence back in the late 80's. I got drawn up to the Ashram in Massachusetts and started having powerful experiences. I really got into the message of the teacher at the Ashram and wound up deciding to actually live there for a while in this one particular spiritual program. One of the things that he was teaching that I got very into was the idea of “emotional acceptance.” This refers to emotional acceptance of your feelings in particular - that was something that I never keyed into. It wasn't a large part of his total teaching – just something I honed in on in particular. I started applying that to my own meditations and discovered that I had been rejecting my emotional self for many years in the name of trying to be a spiritual and more positive person. I saw that type of self-rejection and what it had been doing to me over the years.

So when I started to reverse that and started applying the principles it seemed like a door had just opened. I felt like I was becoming aware of something that was an incredible truth. That nobody (or hardly anybody)

seemed to know about on the spiritual path. Because I saw many other people doing the same thing that I was doing . . . rejecting themselves, not really honoring their painful emotional parts. Since I had a lifetime of similar background that has been a major interest of mine – with yoga and psychology for example - I got so excited about it I just put it all together in a personal program and then I thought that this just seems so important, I should put it all together in a book for other people to read and learn about.

BP: That is so terrific.

JR: This is the first book I ever wrote.

BP: Wow, that is so great. I can completely relate to that cause that's kind of how I feel on the spiritual path too, although it seems, everything I read from here going forward seems to lend itself to your ideas, and to be about what you are referring to. That you really have to “own” the experience. And that's really okay – the good, the bad, the ugly. It's all good in a sense.

JR: Are you finding other teachers now that are talking about this same thing?

BP: Yes. I keep seeing this message more and more come out now in different teachings, different avenues, various books I read. It seems to keep hitting me. And I don't know if it's because that is now what I am paying attention to, or if those messages and your book have brought the

awareness forward. Or if it's just that when the Universe is ready to receive certain messages it just all comes forward from there.

JR: Kind of synchronistic.

BP: Yes, your book has, in a sense paralleled a lot of the other teachings that say similar things.

JR: The Buddhists have been saying this same thing all along. They talk about acceptance. But unless you are really pointed in the direction of it and told, "what I mean is this" to look at your feelings in terms of acceptance or rejection, it's easy to not really hear the messages or understand the meaning.

BP: To hear the sentence and not really "get it."

JR: That is really how it was for me for a long time. But there is a kind of synchronicity happening.

BP: Okay, let's move on to the next question. So what do you believe are the primary benefits of Integrative Processing therapy (or Emotional Clearing), both as a therapy and an empowering tool?

JR: A self-therapy tool as well?

BP: Yes, I guess that's what I would mean is a self-therapy tool or empowering tool to make change. How it strengthens you as a person?

JR: In terms of the therapeutic benefit what I see it doing is actually releasing the so-called negative repressed component of the subconscious. If you think of Western psychology, it really originated with Freud's idea of the

subconscious – he was one of the first to get that rolling. His whole thing was the idea of releasing the subconscious. He tried various methods and there was really some question over the years whether he was really successful in achieving his aims or not. But the goals that many people in the psycho-therapeutic community have retained is to advance that same direction of uncovering the subconscious and releasing it and a lot of psychotherapy has evolved in terms of the methodology that they apply and those very aims.

So my hope is that IP would be somewhere along the next milestone -- down the road of certain methodologies that really postulate that just by focusing inside in a meditative way and moving into this state of acceptance in a relaxed, even hypnotic place. The idea that releasing the subconscious can -- and doesn't necessarily have to be -- accompanied by expression on the outside, which many psychotherapeutic schools endorse or intellectualizing, It also includes a kind of understanding of how, let's say, the suppressed energy complex was originally formed. That might be nice to know, but it's not essential. Integration and the subsequent releasing can occur by means of conscious acceptance and conscious experience.

BP: That's really key right there.

JR: That is really the essence of the whole approach. And the empowerment is there as you release these. What we're really doing is loosening up the

blocks to the emergence of suppressed negativity into consciousness and then the subsequent integration and releasing. As we clear those blocks we find that they are the same blocks that have been preventing us from positive experiences and achievement. So empowerment in terms of achievement and attaining – not only of attainment of materialistic goals, but in terms of achieving more success with relationships in terms of heart-centered values, tends to happen more or less automatically. These blocks are released and this negativity is released.

There is no real need to psych yourself up or empower yourself to do a lot of reconditioning that a lot of self-betterment schools emphasize, which is to recondition yourself in a very kind of gung-ho attitude about doing better. But I think that's all in vein, really, as long as the negativity in the subconscious is not released. And when it is released, an empowerment occurs automatically.

BP: Yes, and I think it's also important to point out that once you do this, or once you release the negativity in the subconscious and start experiencing and owning it, it doesn't just help you achieve goals, and it's not a materialistic thing as much as it helps you become more of who you are, so that you can start feeling better about yourself. The way you described it in the book was great. You described how it just opens up who you are and helps you to become more authentic.

JR: Yes, exactly. It's really the path of self-realization.

BP: Yes. That is the definition I was looking for.

JR: It is getting away from conventional, stereotyped role-playing that we consciously adapt for various reasons and then when we grow out of that we start to individualize, and that can mean a lot of good things. And individualization is really the path that we're on to self-realization. It includes individualization on various levels but it all relates to what we think of as Enlightenment.

BP: Right. A sense of freedom. Just a release, a freeing. . .

JR: Yes, because we're not held down by those blocks anymore.

BP: Yes, that's what I think is so empowering . . . so powerful.

JR: Yes.

BP: Okay, my next question is what significance has this work had on you personally?

JR: It's just been a very important part of my personal path. A major turn from the type of path I was on to more of a heart centered path. Even though I was on the path, a lot of what I was doing was, perhaps somewhat mechanical and regimented. It occurred to me that maybe I needed to open up my heart more. This was a very important part of it. And I can also see that in this current life time where I've been so interested in the Arts, from a technical training in college where I was prepared for a career in Business and Engineering. Instead, I took a right-angled turn into the Arts. I really very deliberately took this right-angle

turn into the Arts, into studying Psychology and Yoga, and focusing on developing my self from a more humanistic side.

And I'm still on the path, and still working on it. But that's what has been most important to me. This current work has been a very important milestone along the way for me.

BP: Yes. Like what I've heard said, "The top of one mountain is the bottom of the next." It's not like we ever really get there. But it sounds like it's made your journey a lot more fulfilling, rewarding and richer.

JR: It's been opening me up as a person and I'm seeing what it means to be human. It doesn't mean everything is perfect – there are still challenges, but I see them as avenues of growth.

BP: Yes, you look at those challenges differently now.

JR: Yes.

BP: Okay, that's great. Do you feel this therapy will catch on in a bigger way and reach more of a general audience?

JR: Yes, I certainly hope so. The book has been out for a few years. It seems to be getting the attention of people who have been on the path for a while.

BP: Yes.

JR: It's not people who are brand new to the path. I didn't really have that in mind when I wrote the book, but I think that's kind of the way it's working out. So maybe by definition that when it's the amount of mass kind of exposure that it's going to get, but there's always the future. I was

in the Random House publisher's office one day talking about why the book was not selling better. And he said that maybe the book is just ahead of its time.

BP: I agree. I think this is the future. This is where we're going, and it's already here. And I think it's just a matter of people catching up to it - almost the other way around. That's why I'm so excited about the work. Because I think we're moving that direction. At least I want to believe that. I get somewhat confused because I'm not sure if it just happens to be the path that I'm on, the people I hang out with and whether they all just feel the same way, or if it's happening on a somewhat more global level at the same time.

JR: Yes, it's hard to tell. I can tell you have really been influenced by it and I can tell it's important to you. So that's really a good example of what I've been saying. I hope that it is ahead of its time and I hope there is a time when it will become better known. Sometimes there are other things that have become very well know such as TM for example. That became very popular. I'm not sure if one is more complicated or sophisticated than another, but that did reach a mainstream audience. So I don't know.

BP: I believe that what might confuse people is there is so much out there now. It's kind of a matter of which path do you want to take? It's almost like having a multitude of religions to choose from. Which religion makes more sense for me? It's like that on the spiritual path too. There are so

many different ways to go, different books to read and methods to learn and ideas and approaches behind that. And maybe people just kind of go, "Wow, here's another one." There is a lot more choice out there too. I get excited though, when I hear people say, "Oh, the Emotional Clearing book is just great!" I have given it to a couple friends and I have one friend who is so supportive of the work. She thought that maybe there was some way she could directly work with me and help me with my thesis. I love to hear when other people really catch on to it and feel that it is a great piece of information, and feel it's as important as I do.

JR: Yes that's great. The book came out in 1994. I self-published it, then Random House picked it up in 2000 and now it's back in paperback.

BP: Thank you so much for the interview. I really appreciate your time, John.

JR: Thank you. It was my pleasure.

INTERVIEW CONCLUDED

Bio

John Ruskan

Author of *Emotional Clearing*
and *IP Certification Training Instructor*

John has had a rich history of working in the arts and sciences. John has taught yoga, worked as a caseworker, and also as a woodworker, designing and building various projects. He also has a love of music, so he built his own recording studio and went into the studio business.

John wrote music and published CDs every two years or so, each of which represented a new musical-artistic concept and creation. There is the music, and two new books, which will appear soon, depending on how they will be published. The first of these new books is called *Between The Moon and The Walking*. It's a collection of evocative, short fiction pieces intended to complement the theory behind *Emotional Clearing* by awakening awareness of subconscious feelings through the use of artistic stimulus. The work deals with serious "shadow" or subconscious content. As in all his work, he attempts to bring depth and realism to the demographic audience of higher consciousness and psychotherapy by offering a sophisticated approach to healing.

His other new book is called *Emotion and Art*. This major work guides the reader in combining inner emotional work with one of its most powerful tools, creating and experiencing art. This book clarifies how to use art as a healing tool, and discusses the traps that artists fall into. The

book is not just a rehash of old art therapy principles, but attempts to break new ground in the field, as did Emotional Clearing. Artists will be attracted by the original insights into artistic manic-depressiveness, the three stages of the art process, recognizing the cut-off subconscious in the art, and breaking new ground in the practical psychology of how to successfully be an artist.