

EDITORIAL

The publication of this, our fifth issue of *Energy & Consciousness*, is on the occasion of our 4th International Core Energetics Conference in Phoenicia, New York. Our first conference was held in Greece, the birth land of the Founder of Core Energetics, John Pierrakos. This conference commemorates the founding of Core Energetics itself at its spiritual home, the Phoenicia Pathwork Center.

In ages past, seekers of the deeper mysteries of life left their homes and close relationships in favor of the seclusion of a monastery or a solitary journey, facing their inner and outer dragons with only their faith for companionship. The mythical, archetypal journeys of Odysseus and Psyche were followed in later centuries by Don Quixote and the Knights of the Round Table. In all of these the seeker travels essentially alone, completing the tasks ordained by the gods. For many people today, however, the wilderness that brings us face to face with our gods and demons is our relationships with other human beings.

Core Energetics and the Pathwork both address that wilderness as an important source of spiritual development. Souls are drawn to each other to help one another to complete their life tasks. If we bring our true selves into our relationships, our souls will be ground and polished through the character of those we love: through the praise, criticism, frustration, excitement, actions and inactions of the other.

Intimate relationships as a spiritual path are terrifying. If we wish to be true to ourselves, we face personal exposure, feelings of helplessness and the risks of eventual loss. But, if we are willing to deeply know and be known by another, our relationships can be far more gratifying than we ever expected. Two articles in this volume address these issues in a particularly poignant way. Helen Harkaspi and Joan Groom explore their spiritual journeys in the context of familial relationships.

In “Spiritual Strivings and Psychological Vulnerability” Helen Harkaspi explores the complexity of hope and dread engendered in spiritual strivings. She examines the criticisms of religion brought forth by Freud, Reich and other post-Freudians, and finds them both “right” and “wrong.” She concludes that the most profound connection to life that humans are capable of is a passionate aliveness in the here and now that transcends the splits and conflicts of our dualistic nature, and allows us to fully experience the rapture of being alive in our bodies.

“Consciousness Enfolding: Transforming the Schizoid God” is Joan Groom's deeply moving account of her transformational experience

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caring for her mother after cancer surgery. It is illustrative of the process of differentiation involved in deeply knowing and being known by another human being, of expressing who you are even when the other does not empathize, affirm or approve. By giving up the remaining vestiges of the child's hopes for unconditional love, we can truly find each other.

Although the Groom and Harkaspi articles are intensely personal, neither is as directly a statement of the author's philosophy as is Karyne Wilner's "A Personal Practice Philosophy: Body, Mind, Spirit and Emotion." Wilner makes clear her ontological assumptions, their source in her life, and their implications in her ongoing therapeutic practice. She has given us the gift of making explicit what most of us just drift along with implicitly and I hope all who read her article will question themselves as they peruse her fascinating peregrination. Modern physicists such as Einstein and Heisenberg have demonstrated the obsolescence of the notion of any real "objectivity." The best we can do is to examine and openly state our assumptions and biases and beliefs.

"From Girls to Women: The Gateway Years" is a penetrating and thoughtful analysis of girls' development from ages 8-13 in the context of the larger culture. Alison Birnbaum draws not only on her knowledge of the relevant literature but on her extensive work with young women as she highlights for the reader the ways in which girls' reactions to cultural messages become encoded within their bodies.

Finally, Jorge Stolkiner has contributed an important article on the techniques of breathing and how they can be used in the therapeutic setting. In his article, "The Emotional Functioning of the Breath and Its Applications in Therapy," he first surveys ancient practices and beliefs about the breath as well as 20th century techniques. He then explains the biological functions of respiration before exploring the use of different techniques of breathing for each character structure.

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