

Part Three

ART AS A CHANNEL TO HIGHER STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

I was deeply inspired by the work of Carl Jung, Ira Progoff and other analytical psychologists who wrote about individuation, the Self, symbols, and the Unconscious. Equally inspiring were the works of Abraham Maslow, Ervin Laszlo, David Bohm, Rupert Sheldrake and Rudolf Steiner who described transcendent dimensions. Following in their footsteps, I will be making statements in this chapter that cannot be verified rationally, be measured by known instruments or perceived by the five senses; yet I have a known intuitive sense that they relate a non-material spiritual reality that is just as real as the material realm.

Instead of starting with a limiting bias and having to defend it against the anomalous, what if we started with the assumption that any class of inner experiences that have been reported, phenomena that have been observed, down through the ages and across cultures, apparently in some sense exist and have a face validity that cannot be denied. ⁵¹

THE ORIGINS OF ART

Images have been a primal language of humankind ever since the beginning of time. In the early cognitive and cultural development of the human species, before written languages developed, images served as the original means of communication. Over time, images evolved into alphabets and verbal language systems.⁵²

The human need to connect to a greater spiritual power has existed in cultures from prehistoric times to the present. Since prehistoric times we have used symbols and images to communicate with the divine. “The symbol is the primitive expression of the Unconscious, but at the same time it is an idea corresponding to the highest intuition produced by consciousness.”⁵³

Art-making was originally considered a form of prayer, and painting a spiritual act. The art historian Herbert Read believed that intuition and feeling provided the original motivation to make images.⁵⁴ Thirty thousand years ago, female shamans were believed to be direct channels of the Earth Mother, whom they worshipped as the primordial source of all creation. During their rituals and prayers, the shamans entered into trance states, during which they painted animal figures six to seven feet long within the innermost recesses of the caves, conceived to be the womb of the Earth Mother.⁵⁵ These images were their prayers to the Goddess, asking for a successful hunt to ensure the tribe’s survival.

In these rituals the shamans also expressed their gratitude and love to the animal world, which sacrificed their life for the tribe.

*Prehistoric art is suffused with love of form, of life and of the animal. Prehistoric art is based on knowledge, which comes from a sense of unity with its subject; perhaps also a sort of spiritual brotherhood, between humanity and the animal kingdom. This is what makes it supremely religious. Never, or practically never, is there any evidence of savagery, the perverted pleasure of murder, or the ecstasy of killing. Judging from his art, Paleolithic man seems to have been more sensitive, more in harmony with nature, the elements and the animal world than the modern hunter... It is probable that the Stone Age artist managed to identify totally with the image of the bison he knew so well, he searched for it and painted it with deep devotion...*⁵⁶

Pre-Christian societies engaged in rituals of sympathetic magic.⁵⁷ They believed that when making an image of a person, animal or deity, they captured its spirit. Through prayer, dance or ritual they emotionally connected to the images and created a powerful resonance with them.

Participants who experience The **I.am.I**TM Method of Spontaneous Painting also engage in a modern form of ritual and imagery identification. They surrender rational thinking and become a channel for the Unconscious to communicate in symbolic images. After spontaneously painting, the participants engage in group rituals which enhance their understanding of these symbolic messages, expressions from their awakening Authentic Self. (Refer to endnote for an example of a group ritual exercise. ⁵⁸)

The name 'The **I.am.I**TM Method of Spontaneous Painting was chosen to honor our Innate Authentic Multiple Intelligences, hence the acronym **I.am.I**TM. These intelligences include: emotional, creative, intuitive, imaginative, symbolic, spiritual, visual and kinesthetic ways of knowing. *Our innate intelligences and the ability to spontaneously create images are primal means of communication that have been with us since the beginning of time.* ⁵⁹

The fact that art-making has been with us since the beginning of time suggests it may possess an important function to access other dimensions of consciousness. I believe that Spontaneous Painting facilitates the evolution of human consciousness because it generates the expression our Authentic and Higher Self.

THE UNIVERSAL SELF AND THE SYMBOL

Note to reader: *The descriptions of the Higher Self and the Universal Self are not meant to devalue anyone's belief system regarding God, the Divine, or the soul. Nor does anyone need to believe in any of these concepts exactly the way they are stated here, in order to receive the benefit of The I.am.I™ Method of Spontaneous Painting.*

God said, I am made whole by your life. Each soul completes me.

Hafiz

The Universal Self is a concept that different religious traditions call by many other names: God, Spirit, Elohim, Lord Krishna or the Almighty. In ancient matriarchal cultures, the Universal Self was called Earth Mother or Goddess. Philosophers have also referred to this concept as Unifying Mind (E. Lazlo) or Greater Mind (G. Bateson). Please use your preferred name of choice for this Supreme Intelligence – the creator of life, which I refer to as the Universal Self.

According to physicist Eric Jantsch, the universe is holographic. Micro-and macro realities are aspects of a unified hologram, where the whole exists in every part. David Bohm remarked that “the separation of the two—matter and spirit—is an abstraction. The ground is always one.”⁶⁰ Within this context, each individual mind is a miniature holographic elemental particle of a holographic system, comprising the Greater Mind or Universal Self. Everyone is part of an interconnected cosmological and holographic field of consciousness. We are divine elements of a divine whole. Our Authentic and Higher Self is an energetic extension of the Universal Self.

As systems theory and quantum science evolve, many scientists and researchers are looking to a greater wisdom and central organizing system that is responsible for directing life in the material realm. According to systems and quantum scientists such as Amit Goswami,⁶¹ Erich Jantsch,⁶² Fred Alan Wolf⁶³ and others:

*A new picture of the world has been emerging: a highly unified picture. In this picture the particles and forces of the physical universe originate from a single ‘super grand unified force’ and, although separating into distinct dynamical events, they continue to interact. Space-time has become a dynamic continuum in which particles and forces are integral elements. Every particle, every force, affects every other. There are no separate forces and things in nature, only sets of interacting events with differentiated characteristics.*⁶⁴

Mystics and visionaries have perceived this fundamental truth, which scientists are now beginning to confirm—that

all life in the universe is made of one substance. It is stated in *The Upanishad*, a holy ancient Vedic text from India, “O Svetaketu, by adopting the right method and means of knowledge one can know the essence of Atman everywhere in this universe; and Thou Art That.”⁶⁵ One of the principle *mantras* that has been chanted in India for centuries, “*I am that*” or “*I am that I am*,” means that God (Atman) and I are one and the same. I am not separate from God. I am Divine.

SYMBOLS BIRTH NEW LIFE

Scientist Rupert Sheldrake, the author of a controversial biofield theory asks: How do new ideas come into existence? Where do they come from? How do they grow? He posits that the brain acts more like a tuning system than a memory storage device, picking up signals as a television does. Sheldrake observed that the individual mind can connect to energetic fields outside of the body.⁶⁶

*Fields of new kinds of organisms must somehow come into being for the first time. Where do they come from? Perhaps they are organized by some 'higher' kind of field...*⁶⁷

Thus, the Universal Self and our Unconscious are various dimensions of one unified energy field. The human being’s Unconscious field is holographically interconnected to a vast cosmological field. The Universal Self communicates to our Unconscious field through the transmission of symbols. The creative process, our Innate Authentic Multiple Intelligences, **I.am.I**TM and Spontaneous Painting serve as powerful channels, which transmit symbolic energy from the dimension of the Universal Self to our Unconscious.

Symbols are messengers that shift energy. They contain pure potential that has not yet actualized into material form. The carrier of this energy potential, the symbol, takes on a unique definition once it comes into contact with each individual’s Unconscious.

Our body/mind is wired in such a way that deep emotion once stimulated, can be channeled through the creative drive. The creative drive and deep emotion are two organic elements which awaken and unleash the dormant symbols in the Unconscious.

The creative drive is just as powerful as the sexual drive for bringing forth new life. Once our Unconscious symbols are awakened, they can express through our Innate Authentic Multiple Intelligences during the act of painting spontaneously. Spontaneity allows our personal symbols to express organically in whatever form they need to, without being influenced by external direction.

In Spontaneous Painting, no external directions are given. The painter enters into a subtle level of engagement, and the thinking mind slows down. There is an absence of willfulness, resulting in a state of surrender. This mental state allows the painter to enter into the mystery of the unknown and receive the symbol.

Transpersonal communication involves the sending and receiving of messages that do not rely on the human sensory organs.⁶⁸ The mind has a sensitivity to receive this communication, the source of which cannot yet be scientifically explained. It is transmitted in a frequency that is beyond the range of what the body’s sense organs can perceive.⁶⁹ The Unconscious has an innate ability to receive these signals or energy patterns from the transpersonal dimension of the Universal Self, and transcribe them into symbolic images. Symbols are the carriers of our unique energetic code.

In this sense, everyone is an artist because everyone can do this, paint spontaneously. This is one of the things our symbolic intelligence does – express symbols into images.⁷⁰ When the Unconscious receives energetic

signals from the Universal Self, in the form of symbols, it can express them in the primal language of images via the Spontaneous Painting process.

The Universal Self transmits this energy to us because its intention is to create and help all life to evolve to a state of wholeness or Self-realization. Symbolic images are liberated through the creative drive for the purpose of advancing each individual's innate potential, Authentic and Higher Self and life purpose.

Spontaneous Painting is a portal through which the Universal Self communicates to our Unconscious in the language of symbolic images. Higher spheres of consciousness can communicate more directly with our Unconscious and our **I.am.I™** than with our rational mind.

THE SELF-DIRECTING PRINCIPLE

Life is a constant process of creation and regeneration. The **Self-directing Principle** is an organic developmental process in nature that operates outside of the confines of the rational mind. From the cellular to the cosmological, the Self-directing Principle evolves all life to greater states of wholeness and realization of the organism's fullest potential. Just as a plant is biologically programmed to grow toward the sun, our deeper being seeks to evolve toward more integrated states of balance and wholeness.⁷¹

The Self-directing Principle perpetuates this creative process in which all forms of life—from humans to plants to animals—are compelled to evolve towards their fullest potential. Aristotle used the term *entelechy* to describe this process whereby living entities evolved from a state of potentiality to actuality.⁷² For Aristotle, actuality implied a state of integrated wholeness.

Other philosophers such as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin⁷³ and Mircea Eliade,⁷⁴ as well as scientists such as Amit Goswami⁷⁵ Wolfgang Pauli⁷⁶ Ilya Prigogine,⁷⁷ and Ervin Laszlo⁷⁸ have written about an “intelligence” that they believe exists in all life forms, a consciousness that propels life to evolve as nature intended, in alignment with its “essential beingness.”

Dr. Ira Progoff, a therapist of holistic depth psychology believed that the deeper ground of our being, the Unconscious guides the Authentic Self-potential through a growth process to maturity in accordance with a directing principle.⁷⁹ Therefore, when we view the spontaneous collective work of a painter, we can map the developmental process of the Authentic Self in painting after painting. This is a clear example of how the Self-directing Principle evolves in nature.

When the mind is not given directions from an external source about what to paint, it provides Unconscious wisdom and the Self-directing Principle the opportunity to operate. Thus, self-organizing systems within the Unconscious will “spontaneously reorganize (themselves) to create something new, without the influence of any external force or executive plan.”⁸⁰ Because there is no consensual order imposed from without, the human psyche has an opportunity to discover its unique internal order.

The Self-directing Principle works with symbols to fulfill its energetic potential. It motivates the spontaneous painter to form goals that are in alignment with his or her Authentic Self and life purpose. When we express the Innate Authentic Multiple Intelligences and symbolic images via The **I.am.I™** Method of Spontaneous Painting, the Self-directing Principle has a chance to bring forth our potential in symbolic form. Operating within the human psyche, this generative principle Unconsciously guides us to activities and experiences that support Self-actualization or individuation.

OUR AUTHENTIC SELF AND HIGHER SELF

A person is an opening through which the Absolute can manifest.

Martin Heidegger

The goal of personality development is to evolve one's personal myth to match with one's destiny. This would involve the process of the unfolding of an individual's unique pattern of intended wholeness, integrating from the creative Unconscious all of who one is capable of becoming.⁸¹

There is a silent part of us that yearns to evolve and to become who we truly are. This is our **Authentic Self**, also referred to as our essence, authentic voice, original mind, intrinsic nature, and unique identity. It is scientifically proven that no two individuals of the human species are identical, nor have the same genetic make-up. Just as each individual has a unique fingerprint that marks his or her identity, each human being also possesses a unique Authentic Self. Aspects of our Authentic Self include such traits as inherent potential, inner wisdom and life purpose.

As spontaneous painters, we dive into the vast Unconscious ocean where our innate potential awaits discovery. This potential translates into specific aptitudes for music, art, numbers, healing, teaching or whatever our unique ability happens to be. When we do what we naturally love to do, such as play the guitar, cook healthy savory foods, breed animals, teach, invent something that does not yet exist, care for our family, or do whatever it is that brings us joy, meaning, and personal fulfillment, then we are connecting to an aspect of our Authentic Self. Joseph Campbell, who popularized the concept of "follow your bliss," indicated that by doing something that brings pleasure and fulfillment we would connect to our Authentic Self and be guided toward realizing our life purpose. Intense curiosity, interest or passion signals that a life direction has been aroused. It may well signal a deep desire on the part of the Self to actualize its potential when an individual feels drawn toward something, as if guided by an inexplicable inner urge, or motivation.

Our need for acceptance, in our family and other social groups, causes us to adopt a *persona*. This term was used by Carl Jung to refer to an outer social mask and the social roles we adopt to relate to others and the external world. The *persona* often masks the voice of our unique identity and Authentic Self. In family or classroom situations, we often assume social roles in order to gain recognition, approval or acceptance. We learn not to show or express to others what we truly feel for fear of criticism, teasing or rejection. Thus, the mask of the "good girl or boy" persona often conceals emotions of anger, sadness or fear.

As children become socialized, their *persona* continues to develop while their Authentic Self gradually hides within the Unconscious, remaining unseen and unheard. When the layers of social masks and socially acceptable behaviors that form our *persona* are peeled away, along with the layers of conditioned beliefs coming from our family, religion and ancestors, buried beneath the wounds, fears, and the ego's defenses, we discover our authentic innate and divine nature at the very heart of our existence.

While the Authentic Self includes the individual's unique essence and urge to grow toward one's highest potential, our **Higher Self** exemplifies eternal values such as love, peace, gratitude, joy, acceptance, forgiveness, compassion, and a reverence, trust and faith in a higher intelligence. ⁸² Our Higher Self embodies universal values of humankind. When our thoughts, feelings and actions reflect these values, we are acting from our Higher Self.

For example, some of these values would include the search for and expression of the truth, independent of personal economic gain (greed); wanting to learn new things and continually expand ones self-awareness; creating peace and harmony in one's relationships. Another value would expand our ability to feel universal love: toward all forms of non human life, for our species and for God. Though we often use the word "love" in connection with romantic and sexual feelings, it is also a profound feeling of deep connection, joy and oneness with life. Love, as creativity, is a force in the universe that supports life. In a state of love, our body-mind and heart feel cared for and uplifted.

Several researchers have identified higher aspects of consciousness. Battista ⁸³ distinguished eight main content areas of consciousness: sensations, perceptions, emotion, affect, cognition, intuition, self-awareness and the experience of oneness. Kroon ⁸⁴ stated that "mental" phenomena reflect an interplay between our brains and the "universal mind." According to our spiritual intelligences, we are all manifestations of God.

Roberto Assagioli believed that a Higher Self exists within the Unconscious mind, as stated in the following passage:

...from this region, we receive our highest intentions and inspirations – artistic, philosophical or scientific, ethical, 'imperatives' and urges to humanitarian and heroic action. It is the source of higher feelings, such as altruistic love, of genius and of the states of contemplation, illumination and ecstasy. In this realm are latent the higher psychic functions and spiritual energies. ⁸⁵

When we embody the consciousness of our Higher Self, we understand that our sources of happiness or fulfillment do not depend on others. Both the Authentic and the Higher Self operate outside the confines of thought and emotion that are based on fear, judgmental thoughts, or the need for approval or power over others. When the ego-logical mind focuses on these divisive thoughts and emotions, it separates us from our Higher Self. Our freedom is diminished by our own restrictive thoughts.

CONSCIOUS CHOICE: CORE LIMITING BELIEFS (CLB) OR THE NEW NUCLEUS

*The reality of the universe is a limitless ocean of consciousness in movement...
Consciousness is the field of all possibilities.*

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

CONSCIOUS CHOICE

Scientists are discovering what spiritual visionaries have intuitively known for centuries: All life is a vast, interconnected energetic field of consciousness. The nucleus of a human cell is connected to a star in a distant galaxy by this energetic field. Prominent quantum physicists, including but not limited to David Bohm, Fred Alan Wolff and Eric Jantsch now theorize that the entire universe is a creation that expresses consciousness.

Consciousness is a pure potential and neutral energy existing within all forms of life, until it identifies with a thought or feeling. Just as gravity or electromagnetism operates within an energetic field, our Unconscious resonates within a vast field that influences our thoughts, body rhythms and emotional states. Thoughts produce energy, and whatever thoughts you choose to focus on and believe in, you are investing with a certain energetic power. Consciousness is an energy that can be directed towards life-supportive or life-destructive behaviors and possibilities. Another distinguishing point is that thoughts are subjective by their very nature, in contrast to consciousness, which is defined as ‘neutral,’ in the same way as electricity is neutral. You can use it to light a room or to kill someone, but it is that thought that moves electricity towards being used for life or death.

When consciousness becomes a thought it generates electro chemical interactions between neurons and synapses and produces energy. The mental output can be measured by our brain wave activity.

According to brain research conducted by Richard Davidson in the United States, the brain has the ability to learn new things throughout one’s lifetime. This ability called “brain plasticity” signifies that learning new habits of mind, such as self-observation, may be possible but it requires mental training. Richardson’s research is very exciting because it suggests that just as we need training and practice in order to learn how to play a musical instrument or engage in a sport activity, may we also be able to train our minds to relax when we enter into stress, or learn how to develop states of inner peace and compassion? ⁸⁶

For example, Buddhist *Vipassana* meditation develops this “insight or mindfulness,” the ability to *impartially*

observe our thoughts as they arise. Awareness implies taking “*response-ability*” about how you choose to act. It requires that you exercise new mental habits of self-observation and thought-stopping so that you can consciously redirect the focus of your attention at any given moment. You no longer have to be ruled by such non-productive states as hatred, fear or confusion. Developing new thought reactions to old habit patterns (neuronets) requires practice and time.

Evolving human consciousness entails elevating your thoughts and focusing on what you want to manifest and bring into your life, rather than focusing on old patterns that are destructive. You can learn how to choose your thoughts and how to focus your attention in order to generate a shift in your thinking patterns. What attitudes and behaviors do you want to nurture and weave into the fabric of your life? Focusing on blame, hatred, and worry energetically strengthens thoughts that are not life-affirming.

The study of New Science has provided a body of evidence that thoughts can effect changes in the physical realm. The pioneering research conducted by cellular biologist Bruce Lipton has shown that there is scientific evidence that thoughts can create changes in the physical realm. According to the law of attraction, which is a metaphysical and philosophical principle, our thoughts, actions, and ideas transmit vibratory patterns.⁸⁷ Bruce Lipton’s book, *The Biology of Belief: Unleashing the Power of Consciousness, Matter and Miracles* can be the scientific explanation for the Law of Attraction.

In the ancient Buddhist text *The Dhammapada*, “The Path of Truth,” attributed to the Buddha Himself it is written :

All that we are, is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows foot of the ox that draws the wagon.

All that we are, is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him.

He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me – in those who harbour such thoughts hatred will never cease.

*For never does hatred cease by hatred here below: hatred ceases by love; this is an eternal law.*⁸⁸

CORE LIMITING BELIEFS (CLB)

Core Limiting Beliefs are habitual thought patterns that maintain an individual in a fearful state of mind, and in a field of deprivation. When your mind is governed by thoughts stemming from fear and identification with being a victim, you are resonating with an energetic field of scarcity consciousness. CLB act as a grid that blocks the expression of your Authentic and Higher Self. Here are some examples of CLB: “A catastrophe or danger is going to happen at any moment”;

“I am not good enough”;

“I will never get what I want”;

“How could he/she be so uncaring and mean to me.”